

The Sacral and the Profane in the Space of Festive Culture

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Abstract: The problem of the study of “sacral” and “profane” in the discourse of the philosophy of culture has repeatedly been raised in numerous works of foreign and domestic authors. The fundamental development of the concepts of “sacral” and “profane” opens up grand-scale opportunities for the study of various forms of culture through the prism of the theory of “sacral”. The oldest collective form of culture that is extant to this day is the festivity, at the base of which there are “sacral” / “sacred” values and the truths of a particular society, no matter what type and era it belongs to. Modern socio-philosophical and cultural problems that arose at the beginning of the 20th century led to the emergence of value disorientation of several generations of people, which, in turn, has been leading modern society to even larger problems in all areas and directions of modern civilization. The major purpose of the study is to analyze and determine the interest and relevance to the study of the holiday as a mirror of the era, reflecting the images of the sacral and the profane in the culture of the people, their real aspirations, ideals, values and their consequences.

Keywords: Sacral, profane, culture, philosophy of culture, festive culture.

INTRODUCTION

In studies of the festive culture, there is an ambiguous position in relation to the cultural phenomena of the sacral and the profane. The main problems of the approach are based on the stable position of the sacral as an ontological category, characteristic of the traditional seasons, which have already lost their functional and symbolic significance in modern culture. However, the studies of social anthropology and cultural philosophy of the 20th century give a new insight into the phenomenology of “sacral” and “profane” from the standpoint of their cultural and social practice (Caraka, Hafianti, Hidayati, Willie and Muztahid 2019; Litvinova 2002). Hence, the purpose of the study is to attempt to actualize the study of the role, place and functions of these cultural phenomena in the space of modern festive culture, which in our country for a long time unnoticed such key categories as “sacral” and “profane” or “sacred” and “secular”. To achieve that goal, we take advantage of relevant studies in this field and try to consider them from a different angle.

In the domestic studies of the festive culture of the pre-revolutionary period, “sacred” and “secular” were traditionally understood as two polar worlds that governed the life of society. “Sacral” and “profane” were more related to the categories of space and time. Here, a high-day was understood as the world of “sacral”, “sacred”, “over-humdrum” space and time, and secular (“profane”) time and the associated organization of space were featured to weekdays. The

mythological and religious views of the worlds of a person belonging to an archaic and medieval society correlate celebration with the manifestation of the will of higher powers (God), and therefore a believer experiences deeply, responsibly and seriously. It is at the moments of the holiday that they come into contact with higher forces (“sacral”), which, subject to certain rules, could, in the mythological consciousness of a person, both benefit and destroy. Such a research approach in relation to the festive culture was observed among domestic scholars, among them are Bakhtin (1990) and Berdyaev (1990). With the advent of a new historical period in our country, up to the end of the 20th century, the concepts of “sacral” and “profane” were considered a remnant of religious cultural tradition and were not mentioned in scientific research on holiday theory.

Turning to foreign experience offers a slightly different angle of view. The most interest in the history of the study of the phenomena of “sacral” and “profane” begins with the loss of their positions not in theory but in cultural practice. The iconic “death of God” (F. Nietzsche) in philosophy, the development of the ideas of nihilism, scientific and technological progress and urbanization – these are just some of the reasons that have directly influenced the forgetfulness of the theory of “sacred” and “secular”. A little later, the problem that was made public by F. Nietzsche attracted the interest of many prominent scholars in the study of two binary positions “sacral” / “profane”, and the systematization of studies of the culture and life of traditional societies confirms the importance and need for the appeal and development of scientific interest in the study of these phenomena of the philosophy of culture. The result of the systematization of knowledge and approaches to

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the consideration of the “sacred” and “profane” is the emergence of some fundamental works on the theory of the sacral (Baudrillard 2018; Zenkin 2014).

Today, two vectors in the study of these categories can be distinguished in scientific thought: the first is connected with the study of “sacral” and “profane” as an ontological knowledge (Bakhtin (1990) and Eliade (1989)) and the second – with the study of “sacral” and “profane” as a social value (Baudrillard (2018), Durkheim (1973)).

M. Eliade (1989) in his studies emphasized the immanent nature of the sacral and the profane. Within the simplest sensory experience, the phenomenon of “sacral” is traditionally understood as an internal state close to the sacred, divine in nature, tabooed, untouchable, and “profane” as close to the secular, purely human. At first glance, this understanding put the “sacred” and “profane” into two sides of perception: irrational and rational, but here immediately arises the problem (to which M. Eliade points) and it is connected with the peculiarity of the worldview of a society. The studies of M. Eliade allow for the consideration of the sacral and the profane in the context of their immanent nature, which determines the perception of the reality of being.

M.A. Pylaev (2011), in the study *The Category of “Sacred” in the Phenomenology of Religion, Theology and Philosophy of the 20th Century*, analyzing the experience of scientists in the field of concepts of these phenomena, notes the following: “the initial category in the study of correlative pairs of concepts “sacred and profane”, “sacred and secular” (desacralization), according to Sheffler, is the experience of the world ... The desacralized experience of the world is a separation from the connection with the sacred ... Thus, profanity opens up as an internal moment and the possibility of the sacred” .

Thus, the catalyzing dominant between the spheres of “sacral” and “profane” is the experience of the world.

E. Durkheim clearly divided and defined an ambivalent essence of the concepts of “sacral” and “profane” in their spatial correlation. According to E. Durkheim, “sacral” is the space of the symbolic, where everything collective (values, ideals, etc.) is sacral, and the space of “profane” is the individual space of a person (their daily worries, needs, actions). Analyzing the social theory of the sacral, V.M. Naidysh (2010) systematizes the approach proposed by E. Durkheim:

“sacral” and “profane” are the two worlds that oppose each other as polar opposites, as antagonists. The “profane” (secular) embraces the relationship of a person with the system of their direct material life ... The sacral is fundamentally collective ... The world of the sacral is ... a world of celebration, a world of collective tribal rituals that require the most active participation of all members of the collective” . It is a clear spatial division of the categories “sacral” and “profane” presented in the writings by E. Durkheim and other followers of the social approach that allows consider these two phenomena in the context of cultural experience, to catch their invisible, sensual form in the context of socio-cultural practices, including number, and in the context of festive forms. It should be borne in mind that this social approach to the theory of the sacral has had a huge impact on the development of a new vector in scientific thought.

The above statements confirm the idea of the possibility of considering the sacral within the holiday outside its divine essence and its relationship with religion. The sacral appears as a kind of symbolic system of practices that can transform and change in the process of development of culture, and accordingly in the process of development of holiday forms. If we take into account the possibility of representing the sacral as a sphere of collective being, then the holiday as a collective mode synthesizes and reflects the basic experience of “sacral” and “profane” spheres of cultural development, the experience of the world (Caraka *et al.*, 2020).

In primitive societies, the first experience of the festivities was expressed through magical rituals. The ideal world, which was a festivity from ancient times, transmitted collective representations of a particular society: norms of behavior, values and ideals, abundance and prosperity, as well as universal delight and universal grief – what represented a sacred, symbolic meaning for the collective. One of the oldest functions of the festivity was the regulation of sacral and profane spheres of human life, primarily with the help of symbolic codes – the space and time of the holiday. Taking into account the social theory of the sacral, one can see to what extent during the holiday the experience of juxtaposition of these areas at all stages of the development of human culture is structured and settled.

A kind of culmination of the confrontation between the spheres of “sacral” and “profane” in historical retrospect was the Middle Ages, where Christianity

became the dominant, axial parameter, finalizing the divide between the forms of folk and official festive culture. At the same time, the festive culture of the people does not die, but, on the contrary, forms its own, "... exaggeratedly unofficial, non-church and non-state aspect of the world, man and human relations". The birth and formation of a mass carnival action, where the sacred and the worldly, the real and the ideally utopian were intertwined, communicative relations were realized that were not conceivable in another, non-carnival time; where each sacral symbol created a laughable double-understudy became a confirmation of a previously expressed thought about the holiday as a phenomenon structuring and creating the reality.

An equally striking historical example of the creation of the sacral through festive forms is the festive culture of the times of the French Revolution, which united the seemingly unconnected. Discarding the faith in the religious cult, the leaders of the French Revolution of 1789-1794 immediately formed a new cult dominant that reflected the ideas and values of the new statehood and spilling out into a single festive-carnival system forming a new reality: "The Altar of the Fatherland" replaces the Temple; The Supreme Being – God; "Decade festivities" dedicated to the Republic, People, Martyrs of Freedom, the Human race, Nature, Reason, etc. – a traditional holiday calendar. The sacred aspect of the holiday is already directly intertwined with the ideological. The cult and the corresponding attributes of worship – the symbolism, ritual performances, the plot basis and the real event, reflected in the celebration – are developed, created and transmitted through the festive culture. Moreover, the holiday calendar, adopted and functioning in a particular community, positions and affirms the basic values and ideals of this community, introducing them into the sacred sphere, "creates the world" .

From this position of the creation of the world through the holiday calendar, as a sphere of collective being, one can trace the transformation of the categories "sacral" and "profane" in the festive culture of our country.

The holiday calendar of pre-Christian Russia was built on the basis of the solar cycle, directly reflecting self-perception of a person as a particle of the universe. Since Christianity has been adopted in Russia, Orthodox rituals and rituals begin to occupy a significant place in the festive calendar, layering, penetrating into the national festive culture. Many

researchers note the dual nature of a traditional festive culture in Rus. In particular, Kuzmin (2012) believed that "contrary to a rather primitive and intrusive interpretation that it (Christianity) was adopted almost on the same day, and it was from "the Greeks" that that process was actually more complicated", due to the vast territory, remoteness and autonomy of the settlements. According to Sorokin (1979), "the archaic agricultural life and the corresponding worldview of a farmer gradually succumbed to the influence of Orthodox dogma. In turn, Christianity, with its inherent system of rites and representations, was forced to adapt to some elements of popular beliefs. As a result, the Orthodox and Old Slavonic pagan agricultural festivities have formed a kind of synthesis in the folk culture, and the dates of many of them actually coincide" . The sacredness of Christian festive actions is superimposed on profane, mundane forms of folk archaic culture (playing, feasting, fortunetelling, dressing, etc.) forming a kind of symbiosis that does not contradict the world view of the Russian Orthodox farmer.

With the formation and strengthening of statehood in the festive culture, there is a clear divide – the separation of the secular official holiday from the traditional folk holiday. This tendency is most clearly observed in the era of Peter I: the emerging split of Russian culture maximally deepens; new holidays and forms of celebration are created; a new sign language is formed; the holiday calendar "descends from above", in complete isolation from the traditional folk festive culture. Subsequently, this tendency persists and gains state status. The picture of the Orthodox monarchy of the cathedral is beginning to emerge, where the church plays the dominant sacred role, and the crowned heads are the anointed of God on earth.

After the February Revolution of 1917 all the tsar's dates disappear in the calendars, the October Revolution gives a start to the form of a new proletarian holiday calendar, which, along with the preservation of the New Year and most Orthodox holidays, introduces revolutionary values of the newly-born state. In subsequent years, an active formation of a new holiday calendar is going on, gradually ousting Orthodox holidays and introducing Soviet revolutionary ones. N. A. Berdyaev noted, "A special cult of revolutionary sanctity has formed in Russia. This cult has its saints, its own sacred tradition, its own dogmas". The introduction of the new holiday calendar required a complete replacement of the sign-symbolic system by the leaders of the revolution, a completely new, politically and ideologically verified picture of the world

was formed, transmitted to the masses through festive forms. Red scarves, bandages, banners, banners and slogans, images of sickle and hammer, faces and busts of leaders completely transformed the country. The function of the “first holiday”, the sacral creation of the new world, is assumed by the date of the October Revolution, the time is counted by the anniversaries of the revolution and futuristically rushes into the future (in contrast to the traditional holiday, appealing to the past). The very holiday forms are also on the turn, the most popular are mass actions with forward movement – parades, demonstrations, processions. Pocheptsov (1994), characterizing the deformation of the spatio-temporal characteristics of a totalitarian holiday, notes, “Standard life goes by within the framework of neutral space-time, perceived as insignificant, as the daily grind. But in those aspects where individual life begins to come into contact not just with the social life but with the life of the state and its apparatus, the symbolization of this space and time comes first”. The stands of Red Square (the central squares and monuments to Lenin in the province) function as a special sacred place, where “millions of demonstrators rushed ... to watch the leaders for a few minutes, to join “the holy places” and the gods”. The festive culture of the Soviet period “takes on the character of a carefully planned, sanctioned, orchestrated spectacle; the ideological framework and utilitarian propaganda goals openly and even deliberately appear; game, improvisational elements are discarded, washed out”.

An ideologically verified picture of the world, however, is rejected by the people and, since about the fifties, sixties, the Soviet holiday begins to separate, degrade, breaking up into separate elements – “voluntary-compulsory” participation in “sacred” action and “kitchen-apartment feast”. By the time the USSR collapsed, the official holiday calendar existing in the camp was already rejected by the people openly. Following an obsolete ideology, a festive culture based on false, far-fetched sacredness finds its failure. The spiritual void that covered the country in the early nineties was terrifying. The picture of the world collapsed. The general chaos of the economic, political, social spheres, as in a magnifying glass, was reflected in the festive culture. The next revision of the holiday calendar, the introduction of a new cultural and symbolic policy become an urgent need.

RESULTS

The era of perestroika gives rise to an ideological and cultural transformation and lays down fairly stable trends, the positions of which are still evident today:

- the search for national identity, ethnic sacredness leads to numerous programs for the revival and reconstruction of traditional folk holidays (based on the solar cycle and based on pagan roots, a shining example is Pancake Week);
- the need to stabilize society, the search for a bright dominant foundation, a kind of spiritual “bond” lead to the return and state support of Orthodox holidays (later, keeping this tendency, on January 7 – they elevate Christmas to the status of a state holiday);
- the attempts to establish a new statehood, to position power, determine the emergence of new holidays of the Russian Federation: June 12 – Day of Russia, November 4 – Day of National Unity, December 12 - Constitution Day of the Russian Federation (it should be noted that these holidays are not always understood by the people and are perceived simply as days off);
- powerful social and cultural inertia retains the holidays of the Soviet epoch: May 1, November 7, February 23, March 8, May 9, January 1 (November 7, the first holiday of the Country of the Soviets finally leaves the holiday calendar only in 2005, the rest of the holidays undergo ideological transformations, but remain, maintaining the status of the state ones)
- professional and local holidays that consolidate specific communities are actively positioned: Russian Science Day – February 8, Russian Culture Worker Day – March 25, World Theater Day – March 27, International Dance Day – April 29, International Museum Day – May 18, All-Russian Day of Libraries – May 27, Russian Cinema Day – August 27, International Music Day – October 1, Teacher’s Day - October 5, etc.

The lack of a unified line of official holiday culture is compounded by the opening of borders in real and virtual spaces. Streams of cultural intervention poured into the country, introducing the fashion for holidays that are completely alien to Russian culture, but with “widely promoted”, popular brands: Halloween, St. Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Groundhog Day, Chinese New Year, etc. “Initiative” holidays spontaneously arise – universally declared and celebrated by various state, commercial, public organizations; regional and small-town festivals aimed

at branding territories; anniversaries and memorials of the most various scale; advertising and marketing campaigns carried out through holiday forms. Analyzing modern holiday calendars, it is already difficult to imagine what space and time in modern society are for everyday life, and for holidays. Almost every day of the month is dedicated to an event, here are just a few examples: International Dieting Day – January 5, Birthday of Straws for Cocktails – January 3, International Thanks Day – January 11, International Eskimo Pie Day – January 24, World Day of Cats – March 1, Day of Water Sprite – April 3, Unemployment Day – May 21, etc. The list of “holiday” dates presented above could be treated with humor if it were not for the use of the data of “pseudo-holidays” for commercial purposes, which translate massively the pseudo-values of consumerism society. As a result, the abundance of utilitarian festivities fills everyday life, however, according to Cherednichenko (2002), “... the holiday itself does not concentrate on a holiday, at best it can exploit it”. One can cite a number of statements by authors exploring various aspects of modern holiday culture. In particular, Karpova (2001) writes, “The modification of holiday in a modern society of mass consumption is expressed in multidirectional trends: on the one hand, the degree of formalization of the holiday procedure decreases, symbolic privatization of official holidays takes place and the utilitarian nature of the celebration becomes more pronounced. On the other hand, the holiday remains an instrument for regulating social relations, which is manifested in its political commitment and ritual formalization”. Orlov (2003) believed that “... a factor stimulating the development of a festive culture is not only its spiritual side, but – in modern conditions – its pragmatic side, expressed in commercial approaches to holding holidays”. The “festive industry” is rapidly developing – theatrical costumes, properties and stage props are offered to the population; various literature, including toasts, congratulations, texts for karaoke, quest tasks, description of games, is published, grows up like mushrooms and generate like LLC, IE, PE, art studios and event agencies offering services for organizing and conducting holiday events. Thus, “... the holiday, densely covered with festivity, which was exclusively justified by it, became a successful product and was repeatedly palmed off for a variety of reasons. Holidays are not too successful, while festivity has captivated everyday life. It is embodied in the entertainment industry, in the stylistics of packaging, in window dressing, in fashion, in decorating with colored bulbs of winter trees, in loud, motley, uninhibited, hyper joyful

advertising.” Manipulations committed at the level of turnover lead to the leaching of the sacred essence of the holiday, the prevalence of the utilitarian-practical principle.

Many modern studies focus on the lack of the possibility for a modern person to receive sacred experience during the festivity. The essence of this position is based, on the one hand, on the understanding of the sacred as a purely ontological category, on the other hand – on the mythological consciousness that accepts the sacred as a fact of reality (which is naturally impossible in the modern world). The theory of “desacralization” of the holiday had a significant impact on the role and place of the holiday in culture, highlighting its entertaining and recreational functions. And, one cannot but agree with the basic tenets of this theory. Modern simulacra holidays erase the boundaries of holidays and everyday life, reality and illusion, “the sacred” and “the profane”, and do this not at the moments of time arranged by the ritual, but constantly. S. Zenkin (2014) presents very cogent arguments that reveal the essence of this problem; he writes, “Unprofaned nature” arises, according to Agamben, not as a result of one of the two eternally opposite beginnings – sacred or profane – that captures the entire space of social life, but because the structuredness of this space disappears. In the heart of each object there is its own, unavoidable border between “use” and “consumption” / “spectacle”, so that the potential difference between the objects themselves disappears. In such a situation, people of our time must re-search for some special means in order to restore the skill of profanation”. That is, the modern problem of the festive culture is not so much in “desacralization” as in the simulation of the sacred in the festive culture, in the creation of simulacrum holidays that blur the clear boundaries of “sacred” and “profane”.

At the same time, it is not necessary to unequivocally state that the sacredness of the holiday is completely lost. The most stable forms of celebration preserve the basic elements of the sacred mystery that takes a person to the ideal world of the holiday, which stands over everyday life. As a rule, a person’s touch with the sacred / sacred occurs at the beginning of the festival, or at the moment of its culmination, which is expressed through ritual forms of celebration which play the role of a symbolic transition into the space and time of the over- humdrum sphere of life: lighting candles, the collective pronunciation of prayers, chanting, gift, oath, exchange of rings, etc. At the same

time, the profane sphere is expressed in the material experience of the holiday: in enjoying the material abundance, feasting, demonstration of material and spiritual experience being accumulated and created during the workday. For example, the New Year, which has survived all social, economic and political disasters, is by far the most beloved, revered, massive public holiday in Russia. The real event – the beginning of a new calendar period, is already taking us into the sphere of the sacral, symbolizing universal renewal and prosperity. Numerous rituals associated with the celebration of the New Year begin long before the event (the festive decoration of a city, an apartment, a house, institutions, the installation of the Christmas tree, the search for gifts, costumes, the purchase of products for the festive board, etc.) and form an emotional background that can be described as joyful anticipation. On the eve of the New Year, we create an ideal world, and being full of hope, we enter it. A culmination miracle is the battle of chimes and the president's address, to which the whole country listens with sinking heart, certainly standing, with champagne glasses in their hands and a cherished, unspoken desire, which will certainly come true in the New Year. And it doesn't matter whether it is fulfilled or not, everything will happen next year again – a tree, candles, chimes, a sense of a miracle.

Another, perhaps the most striking example of a modern holiday that embodies the phenomenon of the sacral, the only state holiday experiencing its rebirth, truly national, popular today is Victory Day, the holiday that touches everyone in our country, has a historical event basis, is capable of integrating the nation, realizing a sense of ownership, declaring citizenship of a single state. It is no coincidence that the Immortal Regiment action, which appeared in Tomsk in the spring of 2012, so swiftly swept the whole country and went beyond its borders. To celebrate Victory Day today, all the components characteristic of a large-scale public holiday are realized: reliance on real eventual historical content; personal involvement of each individual of celebrating community; state support, including financing, large-scale media coverage, personal participation of top government officials, etc.; spectacular and monumental, solemn forms of celebration; well-established, familiar, understandable and accessible symbols (St. George ribbons, red banners, portraits of veterans). And here true is J. Baudrillard's statement that "culture is a place of sacrament, temptation, initiation, symbolic exchange – limited in size and highly ritualized". It can be stated without exaggeration that the modern celebration of

Victory Day for most Russians is a kind of real sacred mystery.

CONCLUSION

These examples do not exhaust the depth and significance of the problem, research in the field of the relationship between the sacral and the profane in the holiday from the point of view of the social approach and culture and value practice of these phenomena in the space and time of modern culture will be extended. At this stage of the study, it is necessary to summarize the following:

- Despite the fact that the main problems of the approach are based on the stable position of the sacral as an ontological category, characteristic of traditional holidays, which have already lost their functional and symbolic significance in modern culture, studies of social anthropology and cultural philosophy of the 20th and 21st centuries open a new look to the phenomenology of the sacral and the profane from the standpoint of their cultural and social practice and allow projecting these categories on a modern holiday culture;
- Today, the sacral appears as a kind of symbolic system of practices that can transform and change in the process of cultural development, and accordingly, in the process of developing holiday forms as a sphere of collective being where the holiday as a collective mode synthesizes and reflects the main experience of "sacral" and "profane" spheres of cultural development, the experience of the world;
- the modern theory of "desacralization" of the holiday is associated, first of all, with the simulation of the sacral in the festive culture, in the creation of festive simulacra that blur the clear boundaries of the sacral and the profane, with the abundance of the holiday industry that has filled everyday life, the absence of a clear line of state holidays, national ideas;
- the main aspects of the sacral inherent in the very phenomenon of the holiday as the antithesis of everyday life, an ideal world located in sacred time and space continue to live

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Received on 13-11-2020

Accepted on 14-12-2020

Published on 27-12-2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.252>

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