Introduction: Towards the Philosophy of Feasts

The topic of this essay is dedicated to the philosophical reflection upon the meaning of feast as the “radical reality.” I look at the feast both as a form of play¹ and a form of art, which shapes the real and enables us to approach the real. The feast makes it possible for the real to be affirmed and celebrated, which enables us to experience the truth.

The context in which the philosophical reflections upon the concept of the feast, analysed below, take place is modernity, and the modern understanding of time and temporality. This has a special importance given the secular tendencies of modernity. Religious feasts generate a specific religious reality; they create the symbolic world of faith in which the lived experience of the sacred occurs. The feast is conceived as a holy-time in which members of a particular community participate, and through this participation find their (cultural) identity. To speak of feasts (holidays) means to speak of sacred time. Actually, for philosophy, as Ugo Perone puts it, “holidays are the sacred within time” (Perone 2015, 314).

¹ The author uses the concept of “play” as an equivalent to the German word “Spiel,” especially in reference to Martin Heidegger’s philosophical vocabulary. In this sense, play also includes the game aspect implied by the German concept, together with other associated (some claim even original) meanings of the word, such as dance, or free movement. (Editor’s note)
What is certainly fundamental in this discourse is the concept of the “interruption of time.” It is a symbolic break in the course of time produced by a ritual celebration of holidays. The feast finds its own basis in the symbolic suspension of (everyday) time. However, the time of the feast is, in fact, the celebration of time itself. Such a feast-time is an opening of an unexpected depth of the sacred. As the centre of the cultural world of people, feasts constitute a form of social reality; they represent what is “truly real.” Therefore, the feast could be seen as the appearance of the real; feasts disclose the essence of the real, make it emerge, and make us encounter the present it is in. Conceptualizing the feast, which generates “the interruption of time,” makes us recognize the feast as a significant cultural experience. Feasts give their participants access to what is essential and significant in their cultural, social and religious identity. They are complex phenomena, where the real and reality are evident in their ambiguity, polarisation, multidimensionality and even contradictions. However, the feast is, ultimately, a celebration of the present time; the holidays are moments of revelations of the complexity of human reality. Therefore, feasts constitute a symbolic anchor of reality; they contain a surplus of pure abundance and gratuitousness that transcend the mundane spaces of everyday life. The feeling of fullness, emotional release and the experience of capturing the flow of time, usually accompany the feast’s temporality.

Feasts are also linked to human perception and various forms of human creativity. Art and play are two nodal categories that reveal, furthermore, the nature of the feast as a “radical reality,” which gives an access to new ways of seeing the world and envisioning the place and role of the human being in the world. Art and play enable reality to appear in their own manner. The feast can be understood both as an artistic activity and a play.

Art and play enable a particular perception of being; they shape a special worldview:

First of all, they transcend everyday life by celebrating particular events that have marked history, particularly community and its cultural identity. In this sense, feasts interrupt everydayness and enable us to find an orientation in the flow of time; they become
indispensable in our measuring of time. Through the interruption of the regular flow of time, feasts create the “real order” of time and the world imagined and lived in its ideal condition “as it should be.”

On the other hand, rites constitute feasts; they together provide the unity of time and history. In the ritual enactment, they found the unity between the historical present and the events we remember. Events and miracle gestures are celebrated as Divine gestures. Those events are present in the cultural memory and remain the points of orientation; they are, of course, of even higher importance for religious traditions. They are not remembered simply as something that happened a long time ago. On the contrary, what happened in the past is also happening here and now, in the present, within the ritual celebration. It is here, in this ritual celebration, that the particularities of history are gathered and made coherent, it is here where the communion is established. Feasts represent the repetition of the unrepeatable; the event left in the historical past is made operational in the flow of time. Feasts are the circular time in which the tension emerges with the eternal.

Particular understandings of the feast, as a shared expression and experience of the community, have been advanced in order to focus on the nature of the feast-events. This essay advances a particular understanding of reality as a result of the symbolic interruption of time. This understanding is based on a philosophical reading of feasts and the feast-time. By instituting the holy time, feasts sum up, within themselves, the mystery of beginning and the anticipation of the eschatological fulfilment. The celebrated event is, in fact, the happening of the present, which enacts the past and the future establishing the unity of time. Thus, the feast exists as a commemoration of the sacred origins (of the world) that arrive to the presence creating the community of the future.

It is crucial to note that academic discourse on the feast emerges in the context of the crisis of religion in the age of modernity. Most academic discourses on feasts have their roots in the modernity, primarily in the nineteenth century, which is the era of secularization. Modern humanities and social sciences placed the feast into an academic focus in order to understand time and
especially the meaning of time for the human being. The decline of religious tradition is not the only reason for such (secularized) interest in festivals.

Among anthropologists and philosophers, the feast has been re-evaluated by the new hermeneutical approach, which considers the cultural, ethical as well as ontological dimensions of the feast. In the early days of philosophical and sociological inquiry, with Emile Durkheim (Durkheim 1995) onwards, feasts became very significant: the feast was understood as the event of the sacred, which orders the communitarian life and structures the communitarian identity. Feasts reflect a special mode of the “real.” Contemporary feasts attract attention from the social sciences too, as performances that make the intimate reality of a society manifest in a particular way. Yet understanding societies is concomitant to exploring the ways in which people feast. Thus, we need to turn to religion again, as the feast-reality. This return of religion is evident in the hermeneutical philosophical tradition in which the question of feasts and their significance was posed with the utmost importance.

From this perspective, the feast can be understood phenomenological, grasping that way its transcendental meaning. To reach this aim, this essay provides a brief insight into the philosophical reception of the feast by three philosophers, Martin Heidegger, Hans Georg Gadamer and, in conclusion, Giorgio Agamben. By using the categories of art and play, these authors create a particular hermeneutical approach to the feast as the world in which the “radical reality” is ultimately rooted in the holy. The philosophical reflection about the feast is situated in such hermeneutical interplay (feast-play-art), which provides a particular way of approaching and sensing the real.

From the Feast to the Holy: Martin Heidegger’s Hermeneutics of Holy Day

The modern age can be considered as “anti-feast” (Arino 1997). If this is so, the secularization of religious holidays appears as one of the main topics in the modern cultural history. Secular modernity
has put the feast in the critical condition in which the feasting has been proclaimed as a desirable illusion. When the symbolic institutions of religion were proclaimed unreal, religious feasts were also subjected to a radical criticism. Their historical significance and efficiency were questioned. The criticism of religion is primarily a criticism of the symbolic. It is a criticism of religious rites and feasts that incarnate the religious reality. By subjecting religious symbols, rites and feasts to a radical criticism, modernity attempted to relegate religious traditions, and inaugurate a purely secular order. Since the age of the French Revolution, religious feasts have been exposed to a gradual decline of their social influence. This process has been paralleled by similar processes in religious communities and their (religious) practices. The rapid decline of participation in religious feasts and rituals is one of the most evident indicators of the modern condition. However, this phenomenon is ultimately a consequence of the deterioration of the feast system in general.

The modern age proclaimed that religion would vanish and religious feasts would eventually disappear. The event that marked this process was the violent abolition of Sunday and other Christian feasts in 1792 and the establishment of the Republican calendar. The revolutionary (secular) festivals assumed now the central role, replacing the role that the old Catholic tradition of feasts had previously held. The new festivals adopted symbols of immortality, processions, appropriate vesture, ritual objects and places, within the atmosphere of the enthusiasm for the new coming world born in and out of the Revolution. The new festivals emerged as the way of re-enacting the myth of the new (secular) soteriological order.

At the age when “the gods had left the world,” the sense of feast was still preserved in poetry. Poetry was seen as the way of sensing the feast. This is how Heidegger’s philosophy of the feast can be understood. The feast and art were closely united by opening to truth, as well as by mediating the sacred. As it is well known, according to Heidegger, art is, essentially, poetry. He defines art as the “setting-into-work of truth” and the poetry as the “founding of truth” (Heidegger 2002, 46). Art is a distinctive way in which truth
comes into being, but also art takes us into this openness and transports us out of the realm of the ordinary. Art is the place of openness. It is the happening of truth. Heidegger’s account enables a new standpoint for the consideration of the vocation of art. Art becomes the event of truth. He moved beyond the modern aesthetics, which evaluates art as a “beautiful object.” The question of subjective aesthetic experience becomes a part of the broader account on the modern age, with its forgetfulness of Being, the dominance of reason and the metaphysics of presence. Rather, art is the happening of the unconcealedness, the event of truth. It is here, in the event of truth, where we are called to participate in the event of the work and where we are drawn into the movement of its origin, which assumes the character of the feast celebration. Art is tied to the truth coming into being. Therefore, art is an epiphanical event where truth becomes historical, no longer grounded by the experience of subjectivity, but rather by participation. A work of art takes us out of the realm of the ordinary, and therefore it has a character of displacement and interruption of the ordinary life. In this light, the art is an experience of discontinuity through the participation in the event of the work that transforms our reality, and brings a new form of communion. In this encounter, beyond the subjective states and experience, the artwork opens up toward the being. This event has the structure of the feast celebration.

Heidegger considered Hölderin’s poetry the essence of poetry: “For us, Hölderin is a pre-eminent sense of the poet of the poet,” who brings the poetizing word into the realm of thinking (Heidegger 1971, 34). And yet, Hölderin was called “the poet of the festival.” In the interpretation of Hölderin’s hymn As When on a Holiday (Wie wenn am Feiertage) – “the purest poetry of the essence of poetry” (Heidegger 1971, 44) – Heidegger undertook thinking of the essence of the feast through the essence of poetry. Hence, the holiday bears occasion for a meditation on concepts of nature and the holy. The poem opens with the exclamation that reveals the intimate core of the feast – the interruption of time and the incoming of the Holy. In Hölderlin’s words (quoted by Heidegger):
But now day breaks! I awaited and saw it come
And what I saw, may the holy be my word.

The poetic world of the holiday appears to be the (authentic) place to realize the “holy.” The poet exclaims: “May the holy be my word.” It is a hymnos in the original sense of the word; it is “praise” and “celebration” (Heidegger 1971, 76). The feast is an event of salutation in which the holiness is both greeted and it appears as a solemn greeting. The feast-time is the time of holiness, the holy-day. This is still preserved in the etymological roots of the term Feier-tag, claims Heidegger and continues:

The festiveness of the festival through which the festival is let to occur is the primordial greeting of greetings that Hölderin in his first hymn ‘As When on a Holiday...’ names the ‘holy’ (das Heilige). The festival as bridal festival is the event of the most primordial greeting. (Heidegger, 1971, 69-70)

The poet’s experience of the festival is a “golden dream” (Heidegger, 1971, 117-119) in which the “meeting of gods and men” occurs. The holy as the origin of the festival is considered an event (Ereignis), which is defined as the coming of the holy into presence. And “the festive character of the festival has its determinate ground in the holy”; “the holy lets the bridal festival be the festival that it is” (Heidegger 1971, 69-70). To name the holy belongs to the essence of poetry. The feast unveils the holy and by disclosing it, the feast elevates the holy. Elsewhere, Heidegger stresses that we should understand the word “the holy” in its original meaning: “the integralness of the whole of what is” (Heidegger 2001, 115). The holy is deeply connected with the fullness. Hölderin also calls the holy “the intimate” and “eternal” as the holy dwells in the essence of things. This is how the hymn reveals a holiday as the time of engagement – the day of the “bridal festival” – “the wedding day.”

At the age when “the gods have left the world,” at the time of “night” (Heidegger 1971, 92), what does the festival as a manifestation of the sacred and poetic world mean? The feast is the “meeting of gods and men.” To celebrate the holiday (feiern) means,
“setting oneself outside everyday activity, the cessation of work” (Heidegger 1971, 64). The feast, however, does not only mean interrupting time. In a holiday, we “step into the intimation of the wonder that is around us” (Heidegger 1971, 64). The feast provides us a disclosure of everyday life and authentic discovery of ourselves. On an authentic holiday, says Heidegger, we step into the festive mood that redeems our being and provides us the experience of “essesces.”

The feast becomes, again, a founding event, a source of something entirely new, which opens up the world to the experience of fullness and being. The feast is the stepping into the wonder and adoration, into the gratitude for the being. Therefore, in the festive world, things possess a special “gleam” (Glanz) which comes from the “lighting and shining of the essential” (Heidegger, 1971, 66). In the light of the sacred, the things show up their essence. Reality emerges in the feast mood in its intimate being. Heidegger emphasizes that the feast light shines through “the essential.” The world becomes transparent in the light of the feast; it reflects itself in the feast. Dance and play are considered an essential part of the feast celebration as “being bound into the hidden obedience and rule of beings” (Heidegger 1971, 66-67). The “event” or “happening” of the feast, at the age that has forgotten the feast of the holy, brings a new order of things. This order is reflected in the fundamental ethical structure in which the holy can be encountered and the community gathered within the “wonder” of the feast.

For Heidegger, the feast is the “bridal feast between men and gods”; it is the event in which “gods and men are greeted by the holy” (Heidegger 1971, 70). However, the focus is not on an individual, but on one’s participation in the event. What the feast celebrates is the form of engagement with the “object” of the feast: the feast is given as an encounter where subjectivity is surpassed and where intersubjectivity is enacted. Heidegger seems to suggest that what we encounter, through participation in the feast, transforms us. Therefore, feasts take us out of the realm of ordinary life; by transporting us, they transform us. The fundamental ethical structure makes the feast an event of gathering together within the
“wonder.” Thus the description at the age that has forgotten the feast, attempts to resituate the sense of the feast as a poetic dwelling. Hence, the holiday is lived as kairos, as the greeting of the holy and emerging of the community. The poetic thought of the feast becomes the remembrance of the sacred origin, the enactment of the grand time, which founds anew the time of the community. In the “needy times” of modernity, poetry becomes the way in which the feast can be concealed and the way in which the sacred can be encountered again.

The Feast as Reality: Hermeneutical Interplay
of Hans Georg Gadamer

Play is one of the central notions in H. G. Gadamer’s cultural philosophy. In Truth and Method as well as in his Salzburg lecture on The Relevance of the Beautiful, the play is an object of hermeneutical inquiries and the defining motif of the philosophy of art and language. Gadamer considers the play as one of the fundamental phenomena of the self-representation of the human being: “the play is so elementary a function of human life that culture is quite inconceivable without this element” (Gadamer 1986, 22). As such, play reveals an elementary experience of the humanity of the human being and the complexity of human cultural world.

Gadamer’s strategic use of the play as a fundamental theoretical category is primarily intended to achieve an understanding of the mode of being of the artwork. Such a hermeneutical approach to art demands an interpretative involvement within the experience of a work, which essentially moves toward a more complex aesthetic theory, by focusing on three topics: play (participation), art (representation) and festival (celebration). This approach clearly articulates the phenomenological and hermeneutical within the intention of disclosing the cultural realities of the play, symbol and the feast. In this way, Gadamer’s hermeneutical aesthetics seeks to propose a new form of realism: it reconstructs the vehicles in order to explain the experience through which the real reveals itself. Play,
art and festivals are the representations of reality as well as the modes of approaching the real.

Play is characterised by “free movement” and at the same time by self-discipline and order. However, play is neither conceptual nor purposive:

Now play appears as a self-movement that does not pursue any particular end or purpose so much as movement as movement, exhibiting so to speak a phenomenon of excess, of living self-representation. (Gadamer 1986, 23)

Gadamer asserts that play cannot be a sort of communication in a common sense. Rather, play unifies individuals and transforms them into participants. “If he really does ‘go along with it,’ that is nothing but a participation, an inner sharing in this repetitive movement” (Gadamer, 1986, 24).

The movement of play is not the fruit of the subjective reflection, neither are the players the essence of play. Rather, play is a presentation (Dastellung) through the players and their symbolic activities. From this point of view, the activity of play, as a self-representation, emerges as the special way to approach the real and to create the reality. This thought has important repercussions for the cultural philosophy of art. For Gadamer, the access to the being of the work of art is given in the play-activities, whose effect is to involve the participant in such a way that he/she entirely belongs to play. The reciprocity between the player and the play remains the fundamental act of representation. Play and artwork are both the modes of a self-movement, which requires the spectator to immerse oneself into the being and become a part of play (or art-events), like the ancient theoros who was not only a spectator but also a participant, transformed by the feast celebration. In this way, the primacy of play emerges over the subject. Play takes the player out of him/herself and immerses him into the event, which cannot be fully controlled by the individual but only participated in and received like a gift.
“Play” is also the main concept in the explanation of art; the same train of thought leads Gadamer in his aesthetics. The analogy with play implies that art is an event which concerns us, in which we participate and immerse ourselves in what “speaks to us.” The involvement is the key for understanding and interpreting the inner life of art. It should be noted that Gadamer’s discussion on art and feasts finds its origin in a critique of modern aesthetics, what he calls “aesthetic consciousness”: the subjectivization of aesthetics is revealed in the subject’s (personal) condition, feelings, understanding and imagination. This type of aesthetic experience (Erlebnis) is lived as discontinuous. The modern thought results in the understanding of art as an alienation from reality, like an abstraction from everyday life and some kind of a beautiful appearance rooted in a pure subjectivity. In contrast to the subjectivized aesthetics consciousness, according to Gadamer, play shows that the subject is drawn into a relationship with the larger hermeneutical structures. What Gadamer also intends to emphasize is that the subject is not the centre of the reality of play. He is rather de-centred, involved in self-transcendence and self-presentation, what is ultimately a mode of self-understanding. Artistic or play-representations always exist for someone as the work and the world “belonging together”; they are collocated into the fundamental intersubjective horizons. Concerning such interactive representation, play and art are expressly recognized as intrinsically relational realities in which the self-transcendence emerges as an intrinsic experience of being. Artworks and plays reveal constant tension between actors and spectators, between enactment and incompleteness, because they do not reach their finality: they are always repeated again and again. This is the main characteristic of play (Spiel), which originally meant “dance” (Gadamer 1975, 103). Dancing is a clear illustration of what “play” meant: it is a free but also patterned activity, unpredictable in its development and outcome.

The art and play activities are deeply transformative: they transform spectators into participants. Transformation here means that what now exists, what represents itself in play or art, is the lasting and true. The work is not enchantment, but reality itself. It
gives the way to access the real in its true being. Such a kind of
enactment has a symbolic nature. What symbolical representation
means is not a replacement or substitute:

Here ‘representation’ does not imply that something merely
stands in for something else as if it were a replacement or
substitute that enjoyed a less authentic, more indirect kind of
existence. On the contrary, what is represented is itself
present in the only way available to it. (Gadamer 1986, 35)

Thus, a work of art refers to what “is actually there” (Gadamer 1986,
35). As the concept of art and play as representation, characterizes
further the mode of the real, Gadamer also looks at the particular
phenomena of the feast. This also marks a singular view on
representation, which opens up the “true being.” The meaning of the
artwork is to be found in its discovery of the intimate existence of
reality: the artwork displays itself, but as a symbol it is also a vehicle
of the self-recognition. Through the artwork as well as through the
feast we understand ourselves. The art draws us into its world,
however it resituates us to ourselves. The feast is also an event of
revelation; it implies self-transcendence and freedom. The feast gives
the experience of a renewal and a profound transformation of our
being. The feast allows us to have a deep understanding of ourselves,
in order to grasp what we truly are and as what we might and should
be. Art reveals the reality of the human world, but the work of art is
always beyond its representation: it is surrounded by the aura of
uniqueness. This point emerges to clarify furthermore the festive
character of art and play. The true being of the work of art is
revealed in the remembering that characterizes the feast celebration.

The essence of the festival consists in the shaping of a
community. Feast celebrations are primarily events of gathering.
Feasts take us out of the average time and daily activities and make
us encounter the time of otherness; they immerse us in the
experience of solidarity, sharing and togetherness. In the community
we stand differently in the relationship to others, our subjectivity is
incorporated into the larger whole. In the feast gatherings, we step
into the “true being.” Hence, festivals are a form of representation of
the community: “A festival is an experience of community and represents community in its most perfect form. A festival is meant for everyone” (Gadamer 1986, 39). Gadamer, however, uses the category of the festival to effectively demonstrate the “intentional activity.” The intention explains the phenomenon of community. What unites us, involves us and gathers us is grounded in an act of intentionality. By an intentional act we participate in the event of the feast, as the feast becomes our own reality. In the being drawn into the festive mood consists the true experience of the celebration of the feast.

Gadamer asserts that “the mystery of festive celebration lies in this suspension of time” – and continues: “It is of the nature of the festival that it should proffer time, arresting it and allowing it to tarry. That is what festive celebration means” (Gadamer 1986, 42). Therefore, a specific temporality belongs to the experience of the feast. The feast produces a “slow time.” It suspends work-time and everyday life and initiates a “play” with time in such a way that the new order of events can emerge. In this distance and interruption of time appears a new, genuine reality, more profound and richer than anything else. In this light, the festival gives individuals a possibility to surpass their everyday understanding of themselves, and to see themselves as they “should be.” The feast provides a gaze able to reach a profound core of being.

Finally, celebrating a festival has the intimate connection with the world of art and both are the modes to access the “true being.” To understand this further, it is necessary to phenomenologically investigate the notion of the feast. Art possesses such a festive character according to its symbolic nature: the work of art does not simply refer to something, because what it refers to is actually there. Art as a feast implies the symbolic transformation in which the reality is recognized and taken part in. In order to define the feast as the temporal symbolic representation, Gadamer draws a contrast between “empty” and “fulfilled” time.

The most proper feature of the feast is its fulfilment. As a mode of temporal representation, the feast has the character of repetition and enactment. Festivals are distinctively “fulfilled time,” not a linear
temporal succession, but entirely different, fulfilled in “every moment of its duration”: the time only becomes festive with the arrival of the festival. The festival’s time is significant because it is different. What we celebrate is the return of the event in history. Naturally, the celebration refers back to an event, but the event concerns primarily our present. In the return of the event lies the reality of the feast. The presence is there, not only a representation but also the happening of the event in our presence. The reality of the feast fulfils itself only through this temporal happening of the presence of the event. However, every feast is different and it celebrates the difference established between the everyday time and the time of the feast’s fulfilment. Gadamer seems to suggest the discontinuity of the feast-time as an event, which inaugurates a new form of temporality – the “unique time.” The distinctive temporality of the feast has the character of the reality of presence, because the feast is the enactment of what is a foundational event. This also marks the difference compared to the usual experience of time. Feasts make a special effect by suspending the everyday experience of “empty time” and introducing the “fulfilled time.” Feasts make us aware that we stand in the “real time,” in which past, present and future are intimately linked.

The feast transports us out of the realm of the ordinary and, at the same time, ties us with the core of the real. Thus, the feast is seen as an arena for the presentation of reality, based on symbolic knowledge. It is clear that the festive experience is transformative: there is a displacement from the everyday and participation in the event in which the authentic reality takes place. The feast shapes the reality as a time of difference and plurality. The feast realizes the trans-subjective experience of continuous and discontinuous with everyday life. Following Gadamer, feasts cannot be separate from reality. The feast is, rather, the reality itself. In fact, feast refers to segregated areas of being, which consent to reach the real life, the deeper level of reality. Recognizing that feast reconciles with the real life, clarifies that the sense of reality is encountered only through the playful and ritual interruption of time.
Closing Remarks: Towards the Sanctification of Time

The return of festivals in the late modernity seems to resituate the lost sense of the real. The festive ethos, as the totality of acting, thinking and speaking, is going through an effervescent revival. The conviction of many scholars is that the arena of feasts in our lives appears again, in its ethical form. However, what is still removed from the conscience of the modern people is “sanctification.” This is what Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben asserts. The form of the festival still exists but it has been emptied from its most proper reality – the sacred.

Despite the faint air of nostalgia that still surrounds the feast day, it is all too obvious that it cannot be experienced today entirely in good faith. In this spirit Kerenyi compared the loss of festivity to the condition of a person who wants to dance but can no longer hear the music. We continue to perform the same gestures our grandparents taught us – to abstain more or less completely from labour, to prepare with more or less care the Christmas turkey or the Easter lamb, to smile, give gifts, and sing – but in reality we no longer hear the music; we no longer know how to ‘sanctify.’ (Agamben 2011, 106)

“Sanctification” represents the core of the festive ethos. However, this reality of the feast emerges only if time is suspended and then inaugurated in the new order of existence. Agamben begins his explanation of “interrupted time” by introducing the “inoperativity” of the Jewish Sabbath as abstention from everyday activities. Inoperativity is the act of God put in the creation of the world according to Genesis. The reality which emerges from this kind of suspension becomes redemptive and profoundly sacred:

The feast day is not defined by what is not done in it but instead by the fact that what is done – which in itself is not unlike what is accomplished every day – becomes undone, rendered inoperative, liberated and suspended from its ‘economy,’ from the reasons and aims that define it during the weekdays. (Agamben 2011, 110-111)
What is done on the feast day is immerged in the other mood of thinking, sensing and imaging. The festive condition sanctifies time and defines a particular mode of living and being.

Feasts have a vital importance for religion. The feast appears as a condition of the access to the real, where religion lives in the ritual enacting. The feast celebrations imply the act of a symbolic creation of the world and the act of grateful celebration of the true being. Only within the spirit of the feast, as it was previously noted, do we encounter the “real.” However, the reality of the feast is accessible only by the participatory approach. This holistic way of sensing the real is characteristic of religious consciousness. In the feast celebration, the ritual offers an access to the original event, which is repeated through the transformation into the greater “hermeneutical structure.” The feast transforms the event into the ritual structure, but also transforms the ritual structure into an event. Only through this play- and art-transformation is the feast reality achieved and the possibility of the event of the sacred is disclosed.

The philosophical reflection on the feast as a particular poetic meaning of the real, provides a certain response to the fragmentation of the religious culture in the modern and contemporary culture. The desire of the religious individual is always to live the “sanctification of time” as the authentic condition of his/her own humanity. The deepest potentiality of the religious feast consists of mediating the redemption of time and offering the possibility for the transformation of the human world – into the world “as it should be.”
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