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Original paper

BYUNG-CHUL HAN AND JOSEF PIEPER ON FESTIVITY AN ATTEMPT TO REHABILITATE THE CULTURE OF FESTIVITY IN THE TIME OF MERE SURVIVAL

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is an attempt to rehabilitate the culture of festivity in the present time of capital accumulation, labor hysteria, and health fetishization. By a comparative textological analysis of the works of South Korean–German philosopher Byung-Chul Han and German philosopher Josef Pieper, we have arrived at two potential fundamentals that might lead toward rehabilitation of festivity in the present time of non-festivity. The first fundamental is the endurance of tedium, and the second one is the arts and artistic literature. These two fundamentals have led us to a conclusion that the present-day man necessitates a new narrative for the culture of veritable festivity, formulated in serenity, contemplation, and love and based upon the divine, which is a *conditio sine qua non* of veritable festivity.

Keywords: Byung-Chul Han, Josef Pieper, anxiety, festivity, tedium, arts, artistic literature, contemplation

Introduction

These days, as ever, people organize various festivities and celebrations. Paraphrasing Friedrich W. Nietzsche, we could say that it is not a problem to organize a festivity, but it is difficult to find people who would veritably celebrate.¹ Modern festivities are contaminated by commercialization and consumerism (with Christmas possible being the best example thereof). They are reduced to artificial, merchant-created public holidays, to festivities void of any meaning. Popular ceremonies and festivities are the so-called events. They are typically consumeristic festivity forms that have an accidental, arbitrary, and voluntary temporal structure. These refer to mass events that do not aspire to create community and surmount its own self, what veritable festivities in their essence should do. Therefore, a question repeatedly asserts itself as relevant philosophical-theological issue worthy of a modern scientific approach, relevant for our assessment is whether the modern man knows how to veritably celebrate.

Vain festivities are not an entirely new phenomenon, as, e.g., the ancient culture knew these festivities and celebrations well. Unlike those times, we suppose that a *specificum* of today, in which leisure and festivity are completely instrumentalized and subordinated to a totality of the world of labor and consumption, is an oblivion of the essence of festivity, and therefore this paper's objective is to try to rehabilitate the fundamentals of the culture of festivity. To that end, and to theoretically justify the thesis that a modern human does not know to veritably celebrate, we will utilize a diagnosis of the society by modern South Korean–German philosopher Byung-Chul Han, who contemplates the issue of festivity, cult, and leisure in his works in a special way.

A textological analysis of Han's works will demonstrate a splendor of his ability to synthesize ostensibly contrastive philosophical movements, as well as of the ideas of various thinkers. When it comes to modern philosophical-theological thought about festivity, however, it is impossible to not to take into account a scholar who has dealt with that problem mostly from the Christian perspective—Josef Pieper. It is interesting that Han mentions Pieper nowhere in his works, although Han, in his discussion on festivity, starts from similar theses and conclusions as Pieper does. This has prompted us to a compara-

¹ The English translation of Nietzsche's original reads »The trick is not to arrange a festival, but to find people who can enjoy it.« Qtd. in Josef PIEPER, *In Tune with the World. A Theory of Festivity*, New York, 1965, 10.

tive textological analysis of thoughts by these two authors, but we will devote more attention to Han's thought, for we opine that it exactly provides a precise diagnosis of the present time of overall digitization, in which we try to entertain the of rehabilitating festivity, i.e., time whose pernicious consequences are indeed lucidly announced by Pieper.

Consequently, in the first part, we will present Han's diagnosis of the modern society in the present time of capital accumulation and »exhausted« religiosity of the very existence, desired to be compensated by labor hysteria and health fetishization. Thus, a human, willing to be confirmed and acknowledged, is fatigued up to his death and fails to find his inner tranquility, which is socially especially emphasized. Such a man renders his value dependent on a job and his comparison to others, which aggravates his proper functioning. We will try to see whether it is possible to truly celebrate in such a life ambience at all and what is actually encompassed by true celebration. In the second part of the paper, we will also try to rehabilitate some of the crucial fundamentals of the culture of festivity by a textological analysis of Han's and Pieper's works, as well as of the works of other authors.

1. Festivity in the time of a radical transience of life: Is it possible to truly celebrate in this time?

In the time of neoliberal capital accumulation, one takes care more about the very existence than about good existence, as only the »body of myself,« which should be sustained healthy at all costs, remains because of an individual's atomization, deprived of any narrative content, and because of a collapse of sociability. Corporeal health becomes, says Han, »an end in itself and exhausted up to its appropriateness without purpose.« Han thus propagates a known thesis that has become a new divinity, whereas people »exist as the living dead.« »Too much alive, in the sense of being corporeally too healthy to die, while being too dead to live,« phrases our author, Han.²

We would like to acknowledge that a concern over corporeal health to which Han briefly refers here has been a subject of interest of a broader scientific public for almost half a century. The philosophy of society has dealt with the problem even longer, whereby we would particularly emphasize a contribution by Sigmund Freud and his theses on the influence of civiliza-

² Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft Burnoutgesellschaft Hoch-Zeit*, Berlin, 2016, 106. All translations from Han are ours unless otherwise specified.

tion, body, and psyche on various suppressed neuroses and hysterias.³ Nonetheless, in his deliberations, Freud does not directly address the problem of body as such.

Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Max Weber, and Ernst Simmel have also exclusively connected the problem of the body and of the corporeal with other theories.⁴ Out of the philosophers who deal with the body as a social construct, we would especially single out Michel Foucault.⁵ In the past fifty years, authors have particularly discussed the issue of body – beauty relationship, whereby we could highlight several relevant studies, e.g., by Kenneth R. Dutton and Jon Stratton.⁶

A significant topic in the debate about corporeal health is also construed in the context of a relationship between biotechnology and medicine. Certainly, there is also a lot of literature, but we would single out Foucault again, who in his works frequently quotes that the body has become an object of surveillance in the medical, clinical, and, at a later day, pharmaceutical examinations.⁷

In modern literature, the comprehension of a relationship between cogitation, perception, and corporeal ability is also an important topic. In this respect, many authors owe their inspiration to psychoanalysts (e.g., to Jacques Lacan) and phenomenologists, but they also turn to theological deliberations. In a special way, John Paul II has also particularly distinguished himself herein with his »theology of the body.« Theologians frequently warn against the fact that we do not want to hear a bodily language nowadays, that we have completely silenced the body, and a »new body« has come to the fore. Of course, here it is not about the fact that the body has been significantly changed, but our view of the body has been altered in the time in which presentation is more important than nature.⁸

³ Sigmund FREUD, *Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness*, in: *The Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud. Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, Phillip Rieff (ed.), New York, 1908.

⁴ Karl MARX – Friedrich ENGELS, *The German Ideology: Part 1*, in: *The Marx–Engels Reader*, Robert Tucker (ed.), New York, 1978, 156.

⁵ Michel FOUCAULT, *The History of Sexuality, I*, New York, 1978.

⁶ Kenneth R. DUTTON, *The Perfect Body. The Western Ideal of Physical Development*, London, 1995; Jon STRATTON, *The Desirable Body. Cultural Fetishism and Erotics of Consumption*, New York, 1996.

⁷ Michel FOUCAULT, *The Birth of the Clinic. An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, New York, 1973.

⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, Boston, 2006; Hervé JUVIN, *L'avènement du corps*, Paris, 2005. For an even more extensive analysis of the problem, see Jeffery D. TATUM, *A Bibliographic Essay on the Body*, in: *The Hedgehog Review*, 3 (2001) 2, 124–136.

Nowadays, we exist in the time of »radical transience« of life and of the world. This transience is a »deficit in the essence« that causes a neurosis and irritability in a human being, to which he reacts with labor hysteria and productivity and with an exactly ecstatic health care. Our health instantly becomes more important than sovereignty and liberty, and the modern man resembles Nietzsche's »last man,« who absolutizes the value of health. In this health fetishization, »theology gives way to therapy.«⁹

In the time of radical transience, religions, which should provide a sensation of duration (i.e., eternity), have been »consumed,« according to Han. Generally, a religious and discursive »thanatotechnique narrative« has been created, and merely a compulsion to sustain and preserve the very existence has remained. In such a way, all of us become the *homines sacri*, since the success society »reduces everything to the very existence.«¹⁰

Han argues that the present-day *homo sacer* is in fact a *homo liber*, who makes himself a *homo sacer*. The difference is that, in comparison with the classical comprehension of the term, we are not excommunicated nowadays, but we are captivated in the neoliberal system. Originally, the *homo sacer* syntagma pertained to a human excluded from social life due to a transgression, being outside the legal order and possibly murdered without a punishment for that crime. In modern literature, this notion was addressed by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben in a peculiar way, being, nevertheless, primarily adherent to a biopolitical schema, which is, incidentally, exceeded by Han's psychopolitical one.

A »bare life« thus becomes a sacred life, which is to be sustained no matter what it takes, being closely associated with labor and capital acquisition. The very existence and incessant labor are a reaction to the negativity of death, to what the human nowadays wants to escape from. To save his very existence, the human becomes a glutton and a scrooge, an *animal laborens*, who acts like an animal in the labor and activity hysteria, being manifested in popular multitasking. Multitasking is not, as it is usually opined, a progressive form of activity but an indicator of civilizational retrogression, i.e., a method of survival in a society of success that represents a regression, an aspect characteristic of the animals which have to perform different activities at once to survive (e.g., feed the offspring, be vigilant about the biological enemies, sexual partner, etc.). Unlike animals, however, which are familiarized with relaxation and

⁹ Byung-Chul HAN, *Agonie des Eros*, Berlin, 2012, 18.

¹⁰ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 107.

passivity, the modern man considers such a relaxation to be a futile status and aspires to end it.¹¹ Indeed, one should also say that labor is a constituent part of life and that it represents a source of delight, self-realization, and enjoyment for the human, but labor is not good if it determines our life entirely. This is exactly what happens nowadays. People are frequently hidden behind labor to magnify the feeling of their own value, being constantly compared with others. That exhausts them totally so that they rapidly become fatigued, and that labor hysteria does not bear fruit.

In the present-day society, labor has a great significance, as people are frequently identified with their jobs. We may observe that labor is closely connected with identity, moral character, and human dignity, especially in the West. In literature, there are numerous studies dealing with the topic of dehumanizing labor.¹² In his study *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, Richard Sennett emphasizes that »flexible« capitalism underestimates significant character traits, such as confidence, labor dedication, and competence. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to compile coherent business narratives nowadays.¹³

It is therefore noticeable that many authors presently warn against a necessity to separate a job, labor, and life, which is a precondition of rehabilitating leisure.¹⁴ In theological and Christian-spirited artistic literature, labor is observed as an activity that simultaneously isolates the human from the created universe while positioning him in a relation to this universe. One may say that labor approximates us to God, it contributes to our spiritual well-being.¹⁵

Additionally, a sense of festivity—of an »exalted time«—has been lost in the absolutization of labor, production, and efficacy. From Han's point of view, »working hours that are totalitarized nowadays destroy that exalted time as a time of festivity.« In that sense, even a pause is calculated as a part of working hours and serves both as rest from work and allows us to work further. The

¹¹ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 14–15.

¹² For more information, see Harry BRAVERMAN, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, New York, 1974; Adam SMITH, *The Wealth of Nations*, London, 1776. We cannot, however, completely agree with Braverman that a revolution is the ultimate solution to the problem.

¹³ Richard SENNETT, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, New York, 1998.

¹⁴ Joanne CIULLA, *The Working Life. The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work*, New York, 2000. See also William HASSELBERGER, *Human Agency and the Ethics of Meaningful Work. A Bibliographic Essay*, in: *The Hedgehog Review*, 14 (2012) 3, 48–57.

¹⁵ For an excellent study about it, see Stefan WYSZYŃSKI, *All You Who Labor. Work and the Sanctification of Daily Life*, Bedford, 1995.

present-day time is only transient, profane one, and as such it is merely used as official hours. So, Han argues that we do have festivities today, but not the ones in the former sense of the word.¹⁶

The festivities of today are events or spectacles, not real festivities, since a fundamental difference between a real festivity and an event lies in temporality. Etymologically, the Latin *eventus* implies something that has »happened suddenly,« something that has »emerged.« It does not contain in itself a necessity of an »exalted time.« Han contends that it is a »temporality of the very present-day society, which has lost everything that obliges us and connects us.«¹⁷ Such a time of radical transience of life, of the world, and of a »deficit in the essence, being reduced to a mere survival,« is a depleted time, in which it is almost impossible to truly celebrate because eternity is a characteristic vital for the very core of veritable festivity.

In that philological respect, in an essay originally entitled »Hoch-Zeit,« in which he writes about the phenomenon of festivity in the time of non-festivity, Han briefly stops at the etymology of the German phrase *ein Fest begehen*, for the verb *begehen* is usually also translated as »go, walk on something, pass through something, bypass something.« Hence, in the German language, the notion of the verb *celebrate* is literally expressed by »passing through a festivity.« Passage is something opposite to transience, as the notion annuls a clear objective to which one aspires. Therefore, a festivity's temporality is something special, as nothing actually passes in a festivity, »the time of a festivity is intransient.« We may say that the time in which we truly celebrate is a variant of what we usually call eternity adapted to us. In that sense, while invoking Károly Kerényi, Han asserts that a festivity is an »exalted time which people spend with God.«¹⁸

Festivity creates communion between people, but it also creates a communion between man and God. It facilitates man to participate in the divine and renders intensity to the life, unlike a permanent job and production, which effectuate a life atrophy, for our life is more than labor. Kerényi emphasizes that something divine has to be involved in festivity, »whereby that what is otherwise impossible becomes possible.«¹⁹ A time without festivity in the time of non-festivity is exactly characterized by the fact that we have no relation-

¹⁶ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 108.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁹ Károly KERÉNYI, *Antike Religion*, Stuttgart, 1995, 43. All translations from Kerényi are ours unless otherwise noted.

ship with the divine, although we see that festivity emanates from religion. Let us say that man suffers because of radical transience of time, wherein nothing is permanent and wherein nothing can be relied on with safety. Therefore, man yearns for eternity, permanence, perpetual love he could rely on, and he finds them while celebrating God. Josef Pieper, we suppose, is also on that track when he claims that festivity may succeed only in an »approval of the world in the entirety,« which is being realized »in an extraordinary way« (implying both the visible and the invisible, i.e., the invisible in the visible, the sacramental).

1.1. Festivity as »exalted time« in which we »approve the world in entirety«

A real festivity involves a high intensity of life, and Pieper compares it to a *visio beatifica*, i.e., to a »seeing that confers bliss.« Pieper says:

This is to say that the highest intensification of life, the absolutely perfect activity, the final stilling of all volition, and the partaking of the utmost fullness that life can offer, takes place as a kind of seeing; more precisely, that all this is achieved in seeing awareness of the divine ground of the universe.²⁰

A tradition of this vision extends long before Christianity, to the era of the pre-Socratic philosophers. When Greek philosopher Anaxagoras was asked wherefore he was born, he replied »For seeing.« Pieper also refers to Plato's *Symposium* dialog, in which he »clearly expresses the traditional wisdom of the *visio beatifica*: 'This is that life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of divine beauty; this makes man immortal.' » Yet, this is not only about eschatology. It is about man as a terrestrial being that appears in history and that aspires to calm-down his desires by nature through vision. In this current life, the greatest happiness assumes a form of contemplation:

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For Pieper, festivity is more than a pause that interrupts quotidian labor practice. Of course, it is that as well, but it is primarily a period when we are free from servile labor hysteria and from earning for life. To veritably celebrate means to do something that is »in no way tied to other goals,« what has a sense in itself. Festivity, as well as the days of rest, should not be understood as neu-

²⁰ Josef PIEPER, *In Tune with the World. A Theory of Festivity*, 14.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

tral intervals of a kind, linked in a working week chain. By their essence, they exclude any form of the utilitarian. In this sense, Pieper says the following: »In voluntarily keeping the holiday, men renounce the yield of a day's labor.«²² This renouncement has been considered a pivotal element of any veritable festivity from time immemorial.

What is more, for Pieper the notion of festivity is also closely related to the notion of contemplation, which partakes a »simple intuition of reason; not the unrest of thought, but the mind's eye resting on whatever manifests itself.«²³ However, in this world managed by a concept of utilitarianism, contemplation is considered to be a luxury. Anyone who would explicitly demand such a thing might be realistically accused of labor sabotage. Exactly for that reason, a society in which labor dictatorship is present is a completely holiday-less one, scarce and poor, though it possesses an abundance of material goods. In Pieper's words,

A festival is essentially a phenomenon of wealth; not, to be sure, the wealth of money, but of existential richness ... Underlying all festive joy kindled by a specific circumstance there has to be an absolutely universal affirmation extending to the world as a whole, to the reality of things and the existence of man himself. Naturally, this approval need not be a product of conscious reflection; it need not be formulated at all. Nevertheless, it remains the sole foundation for festivity, no matter what happens to be celebrated *in concreto*.²⁴

We would like to add to these Pieper's deliberations that reality, our everyday life, is not always exciting; however, it is not about the fact that we always find something that would exclusively entertain us therein at all, but about the fact that we should try to feel what is. It ensues therefrom that the one who rejects to acquiesce to reality as a whole is in fact incapable of veritable festivity. Thus, Pieper suggests as follows: »[T]here can be no more radical assent to the world than the praise of God, the lauding of the Creator of this same world.«²⁵

For Pieper, »the most solemn festivity that can be celebrated at all is a ritual celebration.« According to our author, the cult facilitates festivity, provides its sense. Consequently, the highest form of such a »world approval« is vested in the divine worship, in the rite, in a laudation to the Creator. Thus,

²² Ibid., 14.

²³ Ibid., 13.

²⁴ Ibid., 20.

²⁵ Ibid., 24.

Pieper affirms for the divine worship that it is an »exalted time« in a right way. Sacrifice is a significant determinant of the cult, incorporating a liberal, voluntary offering, not exploitation. The sacrifice, being an integral part of the cult, is actually the highest possible opposition to exploitation, it is an uncalculated dispersion, a cornucopia which is not subordinated to a purpose. To celebrate a festivity denotes »to enter into the presence of the Deity.« We are led to conclude that human »approval of reality,« ritual celebration which is the only celebration in the right sense of the word, lies within the heart of each festivity, and there is no worse festivity violation than the rejection of the cult dimension of festivity.

When we say that the cult festivities are the real and veritable ones, we do not think that certain secular festivities may not also exist. They may, but not completely, for Pieper says that »a festival without gods is a non-concept, is inconceivable.« In that context, Pieper takes the festivity of carnival as an example. A carnival makes sense, namely, if there is Ash Wednesday. If we eliminated Ash Wednesday, we would also eliminate the carnival. Since there is no veritable festivity that would not make a living from a divine worship (as there is no festivity without gods), people are increasingly less aware of that connection, and therefore they elude it with various forms of virtual and ephemeral »festivities,« the so-called »events.«

Allow us to say, however, that Nietzsche indubitably was right when he claimed that festivities are condemned to failure if they are not preceded by certain religious, ritual templates that express gratitude to God for everything that has been created. This is a fire capable of »igniting« a festivity, and we may conclude, on Pieper's track, that it continues to have its strength, which might be a source of optimism in the attempt to rehabilitate the culture of festivity. In that sense, Pieper asks himself what we actually desire for our next of kin when we wish them, e.g., »merry Christmas.« What we wish to others is a »success of the festive celebration itself, not just its outer forms and enrichments, not the trimmings, but the gift that is meant to be the true fruit of the festival: renewal, transformation, rebirth.«²⁶

Nonetheless, we are evidently currently witnessing a rejection of the cult dimension of festivity. In the very title of the work *Vom Verschwinden der Rituale: Eine Topologie der Gegenwart*, Han points out that the cult has disappeared nowadays.²⁷ As a symbolical act that establishes communion, the cult assumes

²⁶ Ibid., 26–27.

²⁷ Byung-Chul HAN, *Vom Verschwinden der Rituale. Eine Topologie der Gegenwart*, Berlin, 2019.

an increasingly lesser significance. Once, the cult was man's symbolical technique because of which he felt at home in the world, he found his living and respite compartment in the cult in the homelessness and hurry of this world. Yet, the »disappearance of the cult« does not surprise that much, we suppose, bearing in mind that the society has lost everything that obliges us and connects us, which says a lot about the times we live in.

1.2. *The disappearance of the cult*

The cult transfers the values and order upon which a community is founded, and *sympallein* is being practiced through it.²⁸ The cult brings forth community without communication, but what we currently have is communication without community. As maintained by Han (and by certain sociologists as well), we live in the era of narcissism nowadays.²⁹ Narcissism avoids all objective forms in favor of subjective attitudes, hence the cult is incompatible with a narcissistic personality, for those who participate in the cult, if they are willing to do it truly, should position themselves into the background. The cult necessitates man's distance from himself, i.e., self-transcendancy which is a precondition of collectivity. Without resonance, which involves a relationship toward the Other, we are on our own, completely isolated. Therefore, Han believes, we may claim, that the present-day collectivity crisis is a crisis of resonance. That is, the reason he cannot agree with Hannah Arendt's thesis that the late modern *animal laborens* renounces his individuality and his ego to be amalgamated, while working, with an anonymous vital process of the gender.³⁰

Hannah Arendt says that the individual life of a late modern subject is »actually submerged in a comprehensive process of the gender, and the only active decision that is still being requested from an individual is to relax, to renounce his individuality.« Man is not passive, and if he was »to disappear in the process of the gender,« he would be more relaxed, he would achieve the relaxation of an animal, but he is everything but not relaxed. Actually, he is hyperactive and neurotic most of the time. Obviously, we cannot search for an answer to the question of why human activities are reduced to mere labor in Hannah Arendt's theses.

²⁸ Ibid., 56.

²⁹ See the excellent studies that deal with the topic sociologically: Jean M. TWENGE, *The Narcissism Epidemic. Living in the Age of Entitlement*, New York, 2009; Tim ELMORE, *Generation Y. Our Last Chance to Save Their Future*, Atlanta, 2010.

³⁰ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 18–19.

Han holds that a society of labor has been individualized into a society of success and activity, and the late modern *animal laborens* bubbles over with individuality, with his own ego.³¹ Conversely, the cult, so to say, without much fuss, connects people, and its symbolism speaks for itself, whereas the current time is poor in symbols, for the symbols do not tolerate acceleration, unlike information that circulates constantly.

Therefore, in this symbolical void of the modern world of information, it is not unusual that certain ritual metaphors that had once stood on the fundamentals of a community and that had stabilized life and provided the order have disappeared. It is forgotten that the cult may have a healing effect when people are internally torn due to the hecivity of life and labor. The cult reminds that our life is a celebration of our unification with God. Yet, the present-day way of life appears to be unstable, for it is based on permanent transition from one piece of information to another, from one experience to another, from one spectacle to another, without ever concluding and completing the things. Watching TV series may possibly be popular nowadays due to this reason because they exactly match that popular phenomenon of serial perception, manifested in permanent media consumption, the so-called »binge watching.«

In Han's view, this serial perception, which is mostly reduced to one and the same, is extensive and characterized by superficial attention, while the cult and religious practices require profound attention and contain in themselves a form of absolute conclusion (*Schluss*), as comprehended by Georg W. F. Hegel. Absolute conclusion is long and slow and is preceded by »retention in the Other.« The cult is characterized by such a form of »retention in the Other,« implying an exit from oneself and turning to »We.«³² Without that closure, conclusion, we mature without ever growing old, or we remain infantile consumers who never become adults, for we are never able to reach an end. That closure enables us to accept aging as we only should—as an opportunity to discover something new in our lives.

»We,« however, as a potential completion of an immensely accelerated system, has been disintegrated in a multitude of egos that exploit themselves deliberately. All forms of connection are broken so that flexibility is enforced and stimulated in a special way, as an isolated subject is being exploited most efficaciously when he is flexible. A narcissistic subject does not sense his self

³¹ Ibid., 19.

³² Ibid.

in a completed job but in a constant display of his self. On the other hand, what is finished, completed, exists as an independent completed object, as something completely independent of the production of oneself, to which a narcissistic subject aspires.

Thus, profanation of life, disappearance of the cult and festivity, accompanied by superficial attention and extensive communication, lead man to anxiety. The current man has almost no knowledge of serenity, for his life is being incessantly accelerated. Subsequently, Nietzsche writes as follows:

All of you who are in love with hectic work and whatever is fast, new, strange—you find it hard to bear yourselves, your diligence is escape and the will to forget yourself. If you believed more in life, you would hurl yourself less into the moment. But you do not have enough content in yourselves for waiting—not even for laziness!³³

1.3. *Life in anxiety*

Mere activism of the »bare life« does not tolerate either serenity of festivity or the cult or silence, for it is difficult for the present-day man to close his eyes and mouths at least for a while. We are indulging in limitless communication that paralyzes us and makes us lonely, therefore one may say that silence and solitude contain more proximity and more language than the current hypercommunication. Solitude is exceptionally important, for we prepare ourselves to converse with something that is authentically our own in solitude. As soon as we are aware of ourselves, our thoughts, we can converse with others correctly, open ourselves to others, sympathize with them. Of course, technology construes a serious obstacle to it.³⁴

Silence may certainly be a language, too, while communication noise is something like a thick concrete wall that exists between our hearts and an internal space of silence wherein God resides. We cannot be silent nowadays because we have lost the ability of being serene, being characteristic of rite and festivity, under the compulsion of communication and production, characterized by the intensity of life and contemplation.

In our opinion, the intensity of life also incorporates invigoration of life in others, for which a lot of insertion of oneself into the life of the other is necessary to really get to know the other, whereby our life acquires its sense and

³³ Friedrich NIETZSCHE, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Cambridge, 2006, 32.

³⁴ See more about this in: Sherry TURKLE, *Reclaiming Conversation. The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, New York, 2015.

intensity. Intensive life, life in fullness, relates, in our opinion, to the fact that we are not determined by a job and success, health and disease, recognition or rejection exclusively. Life in its fullness is, we may say, actually a life in which we come into contact with our internal source, from which we are impetuously cut by the concerns and problems. To live with full intensity implies seeing the essential in life.

We may interpret that fear lies at the root of this communication noise of today, which creates anxiety. Man does not want to feel anxiety, disturbance, and he tries to suppress it with activism just not to feel his heart's fear, instead of the recognition of real causes and tolerance of this anxiety (which is normal), instead of withstanding it as a demarcation of his own contingency. This restlessness, which constantly surfaces nowadays, is, in our opinion, only a proof that man lives in an illusion that he can be self-disciplined, self-corrected, self-restrained and self-improved by labor hysteria and exaggerated health care. One should not escape anxiety, however, it may exist, for it is the result of the illusion of self-sufficiency we live in. As soon as we acquiesce with our anxiety, we may feel serenity, which presupposes the things having a duration, and veritable festivity may then begin here. If, as we have stated, things are only utilized and consumed, there is no serenity here. Compulsion of production destabilizes life, too, disparaging what is permanent in life.

To live a life in full intensity, it is necessary that *vita activa* (which is converted into hyperactivity nowadays) is incorporated into *vita contemplativa*. Apparently, the modern man has completely lost a sense of equilibrium between these two dimensions. The Christian tradition closely associates contemplation with recollection. Recollection involves the fact that we are concentrated on the essential in life, that trivialities are unimportant to us. A person who constantly jumps from one job to another and who fails to find the time for his or her own recollection and contemplation equals a person who spends the entire day in revery, playing, or running. Only in recollection, in which we are oriented to God, are we truly alive and completely vigilant. Recollected in God, we actually find ourselves. Recollection is an introduction to contemplation. Although we cannot contemplate the whole life, we should still be recollected, liberated from any pragmatical objectives, through the recollection be what we are in God. To be recollected, it is necessary, according to the Christian tradition, to spend time in prayer daily. We have to avoid everything superficial, from futile conversations to socializations. It is necessary to cherish silence and internal peace. It is essential to combine rest with labor.

It is possible to say that Han insists exactly on the rehabilitation of this equilibrium. An active life has to lead us to a mental life, but a thought has to emanate from what we have observed in ourselves and has to lead us to activity again. Thus, activity is inseparable from contemplation, mindfulness, and vice versa. Finally, Han defines that »man is not born for labor,« and the one who only works is not truly free. In that sense, he invokes Aristotle and emphasizes that a man who does not depend on necessities and compulsions is free. He disposes with his life to this effect, which is turned to the enjoyment of beautiful things, to »life that creates beautiful artifacts in the polis,« and ultimately to contemplative life, by which he is, while studying the intransient, »continuously kept in the domain of beauty« and celebrates the beauty.³⁵

In such a way, only literary authors and poets, politicians, and philosophers are truly free. Other life forms serve to the sustenance of life. Hannah Arendt specifies that, common to these three liberal ways of life, there is the fact that they »occur in the domain of beauty, i.e., in an environment of things that are not necessarily exploited, that do not have a defined purpose.«³⁶ In that sense, »a salvation of the beautiful is simultaneously a salvation of the political.«³⁷ Politics and politicians are far from that ideal picture. They are currently subordinated to judgment of necessity and utilitarianism and are unable to create beautiful social forms that would transcend the necessary and useful. A politician has to, to that effect, constantly modify the society to achieve more justice and joy in it. A person focused only on the useful does not, surely, prioritize this. Han says that politicians nowadays »work a lot but are not effective.«³⁸

2. An attempt to rehabilitate the culture of festivity

We have seen that festivity, for Han, implies exalted, in a certain sense intransient time, while the present-day temporality is profane, transient temporality of a control watch in the service of labor hysteria and ecstatic health care, aimed at the preservation of the »bare life.« In this »bare life« that breaks a relationship between the contemplative and the active (to the benefit of the active), everything that obliges us and interconnects us mutually disappears, for the dictatorship of the capital, production, and consumption does not tolerate

³⁵ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 114.

³⁶ Qtd. in: Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 114.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

resonance and profound contemplative (serene) attention of the rite and stability that emanates from a unique encounter with a necessity. Consequently, veritable festivities are almost impossible nowadays, because it is impossible to separate the official hours from the unofficial ones, and there is frequently no difference between a »living room and a production workshop.«

Hence, Han emphasizes that a »laptop and smartphone are our mobile labor camps.« Unlike the former labor camps, there is no Other as the exploiter today, who »forces us to work and exploits us.«³⁹ On the contrary, what happens is that we exploit ourselves, and we paradoxically believe that we are being realized that way. It seems especially important to emphasize that an individual appears to be extremely unaware of the fact that he exploits himself, but, on the other hand, he fails to see anything disputable in the publication of his data on social media. This is understood as communication, sharing of certain life situations and feelings with friends. Most frequently, neither communication nor friendship that we may speak about as such are present therein. All of that becomes in Han's opinion somewhat scopophilia.

Subsequently, to be able to speak about festivity in the real sense of the word at all, it is necessary, in Han's opinion, to primarily »profane labor, production, capital,« the Holy Trinity of capitalism, and transfer the working hours into a time of festivity.⁴⁰ It is dubitable, however, how to perform this, because the present-day world has become a marketplace in which there is nothing festive and divine and in which we are suffocating in the things that inundate us. »Proliferation of things has suppressed the void,« Han says.⁴¹ In the world without the divine, and thus without the holy, secret, exalted, there is no surprise (which is a commencement of philosophization), and we live in a »transparent department store wherein we are surveilled and guided as the transparent clients.«⁴²

We have seen that in the world dominated by tyranny there is no place for leisure and festivity. The notion of leisure is senseless nowadays, if not morally dubious. Han believes, however, that the sense of festivity is that man should primarily remain being man, that he should be exalted above his individualism (atomism) and fragmentation, and it can be observed in Pieper, too. Therefore, Pieper would say that the essence of leisure is in festivity, and man's spiritual status is significant for festivity, which should be characterized

³⁹ Ibid., 111.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 112.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

by spontaneity, absence of exertion, transcendency of any function of »leisure exploitation,« inaction, relaxation, and isolation from a labor role. Exactly due to the inability to realize these elements in labor tyranny, man is incapable of either celebrating or truly taking a rest, of experiencing leisure.

Multitasking prevents contemplation (which makes man what he is) because it disperses and fatigues an individual, for he has to distribute all his attention to a series of activities at once (and not to the reality as such). Thus, attention is being replaced by »hyperattention« (a diabolical attention that distracts), which does not tolerate tedium, let alone »profound tedium« that is a source of creativity and a »culmination of spiritual relaxation,« primarily opening a space for deep and contemplative attention. An unremitting hecivity does not create anything new, it is just reproduction and acceleration of the existent. For Han, it is significant to be tolerant to tedium, and we consider that it is especially important as one of the fundamentals of festivity rehabilitation.

2.1. *Through tolerance of tedium and »connective fatigue«*

In tedium, that calm after hecivity and hyperattention (focus on the digital), we become peaceful, able to listen to ourselves, to others, to God. On the other hand, being incapable of having a contemplative life, we are actually incapable of being surprised by the taxonicity of things (*So-Sein*), wherein there is no practicality and utility. Han emphasizes that a »Cartesian doubt has annulled the surprise,«⁴³ having thus also annulled a profound contemplative attention to be able to perceive even the »scent of things« (as stated by Paul Cézanne).⁴⁴

Nietzsche, who replaced the being with the will, opined that human life simply ends in lethal hyperactivity if any intellectual element is exiled out of it. He emphasizes the following: »From lack of repose our civilization is turning into a new barbarism. At no time have the active, that is to say the restless, counted for more.«⁴⁵

We may thank our capacity for profound contemplative attention to the cultural achievements of humankind, where philosophy belongs as well. Without that contemplative recollection, our sight wanders restlessly, not expressing absolutely anything. However, one may thank tolerance of life »in profound tedium« to philosophy as well. A man in »profound tedium,« who has developed tolerance toward to tedium, receives an impetus in the tedium

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Qtd. in: Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 114.

⁴⁵ Friedrich NIETZSCHE, *Human, All Too Human*, Cambridge, 1996, 133.

to create something new, that completely escapes the dictate of efficacy. That is why we assert that the rehabilitation of veritable festivity requires indulgence in tedium. That condition, which is in radical opposition to hecivity and labor hysteria, is, in a way, also a precondition for veritable philosophization, being a precondition for real festivity as well.

Han and Pieper are apparently differentiated in the comprehension of tedium. Whereas tedium is the »culmination of spiritual relaxation« for Han,⁴⁶ it is a »counterfeit of leisure« for Pieper.⁴⁷ As maintained by Pieper, »only a person who has lost spiritual strength for leisure may be bored.«⁴⁸

To comprehend Han's understanding of tedium, one should bear in mind that his thought is founded on Martin Heidegger's ideas.⁴⁹ Thus, Heidegger's view, there are three types of tedium: »tedium because of something,« »tedium caused by something in itself,« and »profound tedium.« When speaking about tedium in his thinking, Han uses exactly this last Heidegger's syntagma: »profound tedium.«⁵⁰

Some philosophers call »tedium because of something« a »situational tedium,« caused by something defined in a situation, e.g., when we wait for someone, when we listen to a tedious presentation, or when we wait for a train while trying to »pass the time.« When it comes to »tedium caused by something in itself,« it is more difficult to find an adequate example, as *tedious* is not unambiguously defined. Nonetheless, an example presented by Heidegger is very suitable for our topic and is close, we believe, to all of us. This is, e.g., our participation in a dinner where the food, beverages, and music are excellent, during which we talk, enjoy ourselves, even assume the role of an entertainer, so that the time passes quickly. As soon as we arrive home, we realize that we were actually bored at that dinner, although we are not able to express what exactly bored us. We have not even tried to make time pass like in a situational

⁴⁶ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 114.

⁴⁷ Josef PIEPER, *Pohvala dokolici. Oslobodite se kulta rada i pronađite istinski smisao života*, Split, 2011, 87.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Other existentialists have also written about it. We single out the important deliberations by Søren Kierkegaard: Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, ©, Princeton, 1971, 281; Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, Princeton, 1980, 72. Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* was edited under the author's pseudonym of »Victor Eremita,« the articles were signed as »A,« and the rebuttals appeared under his auctorial pseudonym of »Judge William.« »Anti-Climacus« was, on the other hand, Kierkegaard's pseudonym in *The Sickness unto Death*.

⁵⁰ Graham HARMAN, *Heidegger Explained. From Phenomenon to Thing*, Chicago, 2007, 85–88.

tedium, but we have contrarily let the time proceed. It was still, however, passing the time.

Therefore, we see that tedium and passing the time are reduced to one and the same. In this case, passing the time is non-existent within a situation, but the very situation is primarily making time pass. Exactly for that reason, this passing the time is less visible, and it generally happens that we do not even notice that passing time is what we are dealing with. Awareness of tedium, which manifests itself later this time, is actually awareness of void. Although supper was pleasant and entertaining, this entertainment was in fact void, i.e., what we were dealing with did not fill us with anything, so we have remained empty although we were seemingly entertained and, what is more, were an entertainer in the company, says Heidegger.⁵¹

In that sense, the very tedium is what bores man, i.e., man is consumed with tedium. Heidegger writes the following about »profound tedium«:

Profound boredom, drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence like a muffling fog, removes all things and men and oneself along with it into a remarkable indifference. This boredom reveals being as a whole.⁵²

Heidegger's response to the question of what bores us would be the following: tedious things. »I am not the one who bores, but the boring things are what bore the man.« In superficial tedium, things leave us empty, including ourselves. »Profound tedium« is a sort of an ennui, being a fundamental mood of the modern *Dasein*.

Heidegger does not cite an example for such a tedium, because it is not related to a defined situation. There is no possibility of passing the time for that tedium. The reason for it is that man is in fact completely helpless toward that tedium, he feels nonsense of everything, even of his own existence, and is completely indifferent to everything.

»Profound tedium« may very easily slip into acedia, spiritual laziness, inertia, and apathy. A spiritually lazy person has a problem, for he or she is lazy to grasp the divine because it is inscrutable, hence he or she channels his or her desires in the satisfaction of material needs or he or she constantly escapes to the world of labor and entertainment.

Although, as we could phrase it, we will not find a direct indication of this negative result of »profound tedium« in Han, it is indubitable that it exists. In Pieper, we may find this negative (sinful) comprehension of an onto-

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

logical tedium being directly emphasized, whereas it is indirectly signified in Han in a discourse about labor hysteria and multitasking activism.

This culture of comprehensive labor, a complete victory of production, rapine, greed, purchase and sale, results in nihilism, which represents, according to Jean-Charles Nault, an »expulsion of man out of his home.«⁵³

Nihilism observes the reality and perceives it as unintelligent, completely void of meaning and itself. Consequently, one would say that we live in a disenchanted world (*Entzauberung* in German) and afford us intimidating liberty to treat someone as we like it because, as a matter of fact, a disenchanted world void of sense allows us to do so. In that liberty without truth, we are unprepared for sacrifice, and in fact captivate ourselves even more in a desire to preserve a liberty of our own. Only a touch of a hand of the Other may pull us out of this cage, for this spiritual inertia (or acedia, one of seven major sins) that has occupied our entire being, as all demonic thoughts, makes us depressed, sterile, indifferent, and pusillanimous.

Man needs the absolute Being, because he cannot find safety that relaxes, pacifies hasty life routine in himself. To be a veritable human being factually being implies being relaxed, serene. Of course, it does not imply absolute negligence of this world, but it involves awareness of the fact that it is necessary that this fragile thinking reed works while simultaneously living out of an illusion that it may constantly hold the reins of these things. It is necessary that man should deliver his life to God, who is »sustaining all things by his powerful command« (Heb. 1.3).⁵⁴ This is also a precondition of veritable festivity. Naturally, »profound tedium« may be comprehended so that we include other negative and nihilistic consequences in that notion and that we comprehend it as, so to say, »restless tedium.«

There is, nevertheless, serene »profound tedium.« It is, as we have stated, a »culmination of spiritual relaxation« for Han and may be a source of veritable festivity on that track, for only one who is relaxed may veritably celebrate. It is a source of time fulfilled in intensity of life, unlike mere working hours that fluctuates between tedium and a necessity to be entertained with something.

We have already concluded that the present-day life has lost that exalted intensity, and tedium is indubitably a specifically exalted human sensation.

⁵³ Jean-Charles NAULT, *Le démon de midi. L'acédie, mal obscur de notre temps*, Paris, 2013.

⁵⁴ The New Jerusalem Bible. *The Complete Text of the Ancient Canon of the Scriptures with Up-to-Date Introductions and Notes*, New York, 1985.

Referring to Walter Benjamin, who calls profound tedium »a dream bird that sits on an egg of experience,« Han interprets that these »nests of relaxation and the times of a dream bird« have disappeared nowadays.⁵⁵ We do not tolerate tedium in our time, which, we deduce, is a by-product of fulfilment of various desires and pleasures.

In the history of modern philosophy, many authors have discussed the issue of tedium. We may mention Arthur Schopenhauer, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich W. Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell, Walter Benjamin, Henri-Louis Bergson, and Frederick Sontag. Heidegger's analysis is unquestionably the most comprehensive.

Literally translated from German, tedium is a long, eternal waiting (*Langweile*), and philosophers have noticed that people avoid it for this reason, i.e., that they are not tolerant to tedium and constantly aspire to find entertainment to appease this discomfort of waiting or pass the time. If we do not have patience to wait, however, we cannot notice a miracle and cannot wonder. In the time when people constantly run back and forth, nothing miraculous occurs.

Thus, we may conclude that the rehabilitation of the culture of festivity implies a state of »profound tedium,« which is a precondition for wondering. Consequently, at the root of the rehabilitation of festivity also lies the rehabilitation of veritable philosophy, transcended above the world of labor and utilitarian objectives. Another thing is also interesting in tedium: we can extinguish it for a while, but »profound tedium« perpetually surfaces anew and is imposed like an eternal waiting for something that somehow never arrives. We hold the opinion that what we are waiting for in »profound tedium« is actually the only veritable festivity.⁵⁶ »Profound tedium« is a destiny of man's position in the universe which he can bear alone with difficulty, without the Other one, ultimately without God.

We have seen that this tedious long waiting may lead us to satisfaction of some ephemeral, mundane corporeal needs. On the other hand, it may lead us toward a direction of activism. With both of them, we actually try to extinguish tedious waiting for the realization of that ultimate veritable festivity, which is the goal we aspire to. The ability to live consists, we infer, exactly of patient waiting for what proceeds in a »conspiracy« with the divine and with a frequent cry to the divine to experience God's benevolence and dulcitude of life in community with Him.

⁵⁵ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 15.

⁵⁶ See more about this in: Sergio BENVENUTO, *The Silent Fog*, in: *American Imago*, 75 (2018) 1, 1–23.

It may sound paradoxical, but we do think that »profound tedium« is a precondition for self-transcendancy that does not allow for our relationship toward the human being to ever become tedious. Ultimately, each man is contingent, but if we notice a divine secret in him, then we may constantly experience the Unlimited, Infinite, Non-Exhaustive in him, which is in fact never tedious, but which is preceded by »profound solicitation« emanating from the imposed imperatives of the present-day society.

In addition to »profound tedium,« another fundamental of the rehabilitation of festivity culture may, in our opinion, be found in Han, being »connective fatigue.« This unusual syntagma relates to relaxedly doing nothing with others, i.e., to the opening to the Other, which is different from »separative fatigue,« accompanied by an inability to watch, candor, and aphasia. Separative fatigue is closely connected with violence, it is a »me-fatigue,« a sequestered fatigue without the world, without »we,« a fatigue that destroys the world, a secluded fatigue of a tired and hysterical *homo digitalis*.⁵⁷

Conversely, »connective fatigue« returns amazement to the world, and therein man is not tired of another man but tired together with him, this is a joint fatigue in which one may enjoy, to refer to the »Essay on Tiredness« from Peter Handke's 1994 collection *The Jukebox: And Other Essays on Storytelling*. »Connective fatigue« is a counterpoint to the logic of efficacy, e.g., when we relaxedly smile being tired of everything, do nothing, do not aspire to be someone and something, and being so tired celebrate and approve life in entirety. Though rare, moments of fatigue are invaluablely significant, since we become somewhat more liberated therein. Being tired, we do not have the energy to work anymore, and a space is opened to pondering our weaknesses, vulnerability, and human fragility. A *meditatio mortis* also sets us free of labor hysteria and of the neoliberal capitalism's health fetishization in a special way.

Of course, we are of the opinion that we should find the right measure here as well, for as much as rush and labor hysteria are problematic, so may exaggerated sluggishness be problematic as well, i.e., that passivity in people who occasionally spend all their energy to satisfy personal spiritual needs or are so perfectionists that they always go in circles and cannot make a decision, and therefore rather do nothing. A sense of measure emanates from internal harmony of our being.

⁵⁷ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 33–34.

2.2. *Through arts and literature*

In addition to profound tedium and fatigue that bring forth amazement and thereby veritable philosophization as well, the arts and literature are also imposed as festivity fundamentals. Festivities are connected with artistic and literary expressions in a special way. The arts and literature are reminiscent of religious roots of festivity especially when disappearance or oblivion threaten them, as when we speak about ritual celebrations. Of course, works of art are not a festivity, they are a contribution, a medium, but not a festivity substance *per se*.

In the time in which there is no festivity, the fact that the arts are in a crisis should not surprise us. For Han, »the works of art have once been the monuments to the exalted time. They are the eyewitness to the exalted happy moments of a culture.« In the past, they existed in the cult only, as cult activities, and had cult value. Nowadays, however, works of art do not possess cult value, they are preserved in museums or bank vaults, which are, as Han has it, »the Golgotha of the arts.«⁵⁸ These are places of zero time, localities of no-time that prevent artistic works from being an expression of intensive, flourished life.

We have seen that this intensity has vanished in the levelling of everything only to facilitate merchandise and information flow and provide for undisturbed communication and consumption. Thus, we have a world inundated with merchandise because of which a connection with everything divine, eternal, is being suffocated and broken.

As a result, to restore the very nature of festivity, it is primarily important to point, through education, to the fact that »the arts and festivity join hands; both are nourished by affirmation of Creation.«⁵⁹ Evidently, it does not imply an authorization of any pragmatism situation, for the following is frequently the case:

Pragmatic states are characterized by their lack of reality. Rather, what is meant is affirmation of the true creaturely Being of the world, of things and of man, the Being on which all pragmatic states rest.⁶⁰

Thus, Pieper is right when he purports the following: »There can be neither festivals nor fine arts without that prior affirmation, the nature of which is perhaps best conveyed by that great word: love.«⁶¹ Without love, we may not expect that a good and beautiful story and poem, or any other artwork, will

⁵⁸ Byung-Chul HAN, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*, 109.

⁵⁹ Josef PIEPER, *In Tune with the World*, 41.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

be created. Joy that we have created, an existential goodness of things, participation in the divine Being, prevalence of death, everything that essentially constitutes traditional festivities, is a pure gift. Bearing in mind that none can donate himself, we receive a gift from the Other, hence something that is exclusively human cannot be real festivity. In the modern world, men possess an innate talent, »which impels them now and again to escape from the restricted sphere where they labor for their necessities and provide for their security to escape not by mere forgetting, but by undeceived recollection of the greater, more real reality.«⁶²

As it was from time immemorial, man may transcend the world of hysterical labor and the bare life by prose, poetry, or another form of artistic expression.⁶³ Although we have argued that these forms of expression are not festivities, they exalt us above pragmatism and utilitarianism of the world, ensue from festivity although they have faded away or have been forgotten, and may, »by virtue of their evocative power, once again become a step toward a new festival to be celebrated in the future.«⁶⁴

Although we are of the opinion that the arts are one of the ways of rehabilitating the culture of veritable festivity in the time of non-festivity, we deem that it is also necessary to consider numerous cultural conditions that have effectuated the fact that the arts nowadays have lost their ability to exert influence upon society in which we live. Further research on this problem should also take into account the influence of the arts within a society domineered by the free market, information technologies, and political power. Moreover, they should encompass the issues of certain alternative structures, communities, and institutions necessary for the arts to regain their role in social life. It undeniably entails the key issue of the way in which the arts may retain their creative character if they are subordinated to the market demands.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ There is much seminal literature in that sense. See, e.g., Tyler OWEN, *Creative Destruction. How Globalization Is Changing the World's Cultures*, Princeton, 2002; Michael PRYKE – Paul DU GAY (eds.), *Cultural Economy. Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life*, London, 2002. See also a high-quality Dustin Kidd's essay which we have used in this analysis: Dustin KIDD, *Art and Contemporary Culture*, in: *Hedgehog Review*, 6 (2004) 2, 94–105.

⁶⁴ Josef PIEPER, *In Tune with the World*, 41.

⁶⁵ In the context of discourse about the purpose and function of the arts, it is significant not to forget that the arts transcend practical objectives. See more about it in: Matthew ARNOLD, *Culture and Anarchy*, London, 1960; Ronald BARTHES, *Image – Music – Text*, New York, 1978; Immanuel KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft. Schriften zur Ästhetik und Naturphilosophie*, Frankfurt a/M, 2009.

Conclusion

In an attempt to rehabilitate the culture of festivity, we have analyzed Han's and Pieper's major works. In a special way, Han's trenchant reflections have served us in the analysis of the overall social situation, in which we contemplate the rehabilitation of the culture of festivity. By virtue of this research, we have arrived at the results, i.e., at two potential fundamentals upon which we should build the culture of festivity. The first is tolerance of tedium and indulgence into »connective fatigue,« whereas the second one is artistic expression.

On these premises, a conclusion must be reached about a necessity of an absolutely new life narrative, from which a new time would ensue, a life form which would rescue us out of this wild idle speed, reducible to a mere survival. We hold the opinion that it should incorporate contemplation and love as the pillars.

Contemplation involves an experience of communion between man and the divine and awareness of good and the fact that everything will be good. With contemplation, time ceases to run and is therefore closely connected with festivity, for indeed veritable festivity stops implacable passage of time. Festivity is characterized by facility, non-exertion, and in each veritable festivity we participate in the eternal God, who transcends time. Thus, we may say, we celebrate our unification with God in veritable festivity. Certainly, in addition to this impassable temporality, contemplation (and festivity) also entails, by virtue of love, a completely active sensibility and recognition of benevolence and pulchritude of the created universe. Consequently, only the one who truly loves, desires, and acknowledges the benevolence of this world in its ultimate affirmation may veritably celebrate.

In the rehabilitation of that festivity in this accelerated world, a mere deceleration will render us a great assistance. The world should be re-enchanted to create a healing power that could oppose collective narcissism, which is, according to Han, one of the greatest causes of the disappearance of veritable festivities and rituals. It is significant to deliberate life forms different from constant consumption and communication. This is possible only in contemplation, in the closure of eyes in the world in which that closure, let us not be misled, becomes almost impossible in the inundation of pictures and information, so that we have in action a constant addition and accumulation of one and the same, an excess of positivity, and a continuous, limitless, and infinite information dissemination, which effectuates exaggerated production

and consumption, but, clearly, each exaggeration frequently leads up to the collapse of the entire system.

On this track, we are of the opinion that it would be presently necessary to establish miniature relaxation oases in which we will be »profoundly bored,« tired of the hecivity of a world of labor, connected in conversation in which we listen to our collocutor almost pathologically and are surprised by the taxonicity of things (*So-Sein*) in this communion, in which there is no efficacy and practicality and by the means of which something new and genuine is created. In our view, it primarily presupposes that we should cease to be the intractable and merciless masters to ourselves, led by the dictate of success, and that we should think of our souls as not to become internally void and incapable of life in a community and of interpersonal relations because of dissatisfaction, frantiness, apprehension, and nausea caused by labor hysteria.

Each family may become such a microcommunity on a local level, which has an expansion potential on the macrolevels as such. Indubitably, academic and scientific communities possess a potential to become such oases. These communities are necessary if we desire to truly celebrate life, and life is a gift which we should sincerely celebrate.

Due to a perfidious logic of neoliberal capitalism, based upon the fact that an individual exploits himself, whereby self-exploitation is perceived as liberty, we may say that a trial of such rehabilitation is an immense but necessary challenge, which, in our considerations, has remained on the level of an attempt. We hope, however, that we have succeeded, by virtue of this attempt, in filling the scientific gap at least partially when it comes to aspirations of rehabilitating the culture of festivity in this time of non-festivity and futile festivities, or that we have offered certain guidelines for further attempts of the festivity rehabilitation in the time of non-festivity together with Han and Pieper.

Sažetak

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POKUŠAJ REHABILITACIJE KULTURE SLAVLJA U DOBA PUKOGA
PREŽIVLJAVANJA**

Šimo ŠOKČEVIĆ

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*Cilj ovoga rada jest pokušaj rehabilitacije kulture slavlja u današnjem vremenu akumulacije kapitala, histerije rada i fetišizacije zdravlja. Komparativnom tekstološkom analizom djela južnokorejsko-njemačkoga filozofa Byung-Chul Hana i njemačkoga filozofa Josefa Piepera došli smo do dvaju potencijalnih temelja koji mogu voditi k rehabilitaciji slavlja u današnjem doba neslavljenja. Prvi temelj jest podnošenje dosade, a drugi umjetnost i umjetnička književnost. Ta dva temelja dovela su nas do zaključka da je današnjemu čovjeku za kulturu istinskoga slavlja potreban novi narativ, oblikovan u spokoju, kontemplaciji i ljubavi te utemeljen na božanskome, koje je *conditio sine qua non* istinskoga slavlja.*

Ključne riječi: Byung-Chul Han, Josef Pieper, nespokoj, slavlje, dosada, umjetnost, umjetnička književnost, kontemplacija.