

***Sacrum* and Holiday: The Case of Tragedy in Jan Patočka's Thought**

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The article aims to elaborate the meaning of “holiday” in the context of Jan Patočka's late philosophy. The article addresses two aspects of Patočka's work. First, it presents Patočka's concept of the *sacrum* and its relation to the question of authenticity and modernity. Second, it connects these considerations to Patočka's earlier texts on Greek tragedy. According to Patočka, tragedy stands at the historical threshold between subjection to myth and openness to problemacy, the non-givenness of the final ground of meaning. This is not only due to changes in mythical narration, but also to the fact that tragedy is a form of manifesting ritualistic behavior. This context allows the author to discern various types of holidays regarding its meaning and the meaning of ritual practices: mythical and tragic, religious and modern.

Keywords: J. Patočka – holiday – *sacrum* – tragedy – everydayness – modernity

The aim of the article is to elaborate the meaning of holiday in the context of Jan Patočka's late philosophy. While the concept of holiday was not unknown to him, he does not approach this issue with systematic concern. Yet his works, especially the concept of the *sacrum* in his *Heretical Essays* and reflections concerning myth and Greek tragedy, provide important clues from which the meaning of holiday might be acquired. The article follows these lines in two parts. Patočka approaches the phenomenon of the sacred in connection to the crisis of modernity. For this reason, in the first part, I outline the paradox of modernity in relation to the experience of the sacred in the fifth of the *Heretical Essays*. As we will see, according to Patočka, European history in its true sense originates in an endeavor to bring the alienating and demonic *sacrum* to

responsibility. However, during the modern era, with its denial of the relevance of the sacred, this tradition has been forgotten.

In the second part, I trace the presuppositions of this account of the *sacrum* in Patočka's texts on myth and Greek tragedy, which precede the *Heretical Essays*. Patočka stresses that tragedy ambivalently stands at the threshold of history, because, on the one hand, it is indebted to non-critically accepted myth, and, on the other hand, the tragic poet in partially free creativity takes responsibility for the meaning of narrative. Yet, next to the reflective aspect of myth and tragedy, which are expressed in mythical story, Patočka also underscores that myth is a manifesting ritualistic behavior in which is the human being related to the wholeness of the world. In this context I characterize the meaning of holiday as a time reserved for this manifesting ritual performance and outline its typology, which is based on differences of meaning, which this behavior is supposed to manifest.

I. The Paradox of Modernity and the Experience of the *Sacrum*

According to J.P. Arnason, one of Patočka's crucial insights is the "civilizational paradox of modernity," which he first outlined in his unfinished essay *Supercivilization and Its Inner Conflict*. This paradox consists in the fact that modernity "is a cultural-historical formation which on the one hand transcends the framework of traditional civilizations, and on the other hand is, in comparison to them, incomplete" (Arnason 2010, 55). This problem attains a novel and reconsidered form in the fifth of the *Heretical Essays*. Here Patočka attempts to find the criteria of existential rising and decline by which the spiritual nature of modern society can be diagnosed. Patočka emphasizes that the identity of Europe since ancient Greece was formed by care for the soul, in which it was striving for ascendance from decadence by facing problematization, the fact that the ultimate ground of meaning is not given to us. This is only a prelude to examining how from this tradition the modern European technological civilization, which spread all over the planet, was born and in the end broke with it. What is novel here is the idea that care for the soul and its decline is essentially intertwined with the experience of the *sacrum*. Instead of addressing everydayness as the sole

or main source of human existential alienation, Patočka stresses that it is *the sacred* which is the strongest alienating power.¹

But why first and foremost *the sacred*? Why does Patočka abandon Heidegger's claim² that to become authentic, one must become existentially self-transparent solely by removing the concealing veil of everydayness? For Heidegger it was the domain of everydayness which allowed for the *disburdening* of *Dasein* since it provides relief from personal responsibility by transposing it to the omnipresent anonymity of everybody (Heidegger 2001, 165). Patočka in no way undermines the idea that everydayness provides its own possibilities of seduction through which we conceal to ourselves the true state of our existence. Yet, in Heidegger's account there is one omission which made him blind to other possibilities of alienation. Even though the phenomena of bodily experience were not his crucial issue, it is still noteworthy and quite surprising that it was the immersion of *Dasein* in practical everyday activities which constituted his point of departure; and yet he did not address the plain fact that *Dasein* experiences these activities as a burden and toil. Patočka's understanding of everydayness, by contrast, is congenial with Arendt's reflections on human activities in *The Human Condition*, in which she stresses that labor – a word which is, by no accident, also used for the process of giving birth (Arendt 1960, 327) – is a painful activity which one seeks only under the coercion of vital necessity and menace of hunger and poverty (Arendt 1960, 48). Patočka in a similar vein writes: "The fundamental trait of work...is that it is involuntary; we accept it under duress, it is hard, it is a burden" (Patočka 1996b, 31). Through pain and toil, we *feel* our alienation directly as embodied subjectivity.

¹ As M. Cajthaml (2010, 141) notes: "The drama of struggle for the true human being in this essay is not grasped as a struggle of the historical human being against decadent everydayness, as in a series of earlier Patočka's texts, but mainly through various attempts of the historical human being towards an *incarnation* (*přivtělení*) of the dimension of sacredness into the dimension of true (free and responsible) human existence." It should, however, be noted that Patočka's considerations on the alienating power of the sacred have their predecessors in texts written during Second World War. Here he stresses experiences, such as the erotic dimension and sexuality, which seize the human being and break the immersion in the everydayness (see, e.g., Patočka (2014, 225 – 228)).

² I. Chvatík noted that with emphasis on the experience of the *sacrum* Patočka inherently criticized Heidegger's distinction between everydayness and authenticity: "one cannot view the opposition of the sacred and the profane as equivalent to Heidegger's opposition between authentic existence and the inauthentic decadence of 'the ordinary day in which we can lose ourselves among the things that preoccupy us.' Heidegger does not seem to have taken into account this orgiastic-sexual side of human life" (Chvatík 2011, 268).

The alienation felt in work and labor calls for liberation in the form of alleviation and relief, which “can assume various modes, ranging from a mere pause and momentary forgetting to the forms of the ecstatic and the orgiastic” (Patočka 1996b, 31). The burden of the work which refers to the burden of keeping us alive, thus points to a possibility where one can forget the numbing dullness of everyday trudging. In this possibility of alleviation in its radical forms – of erupting enthusiasm, ecstasy and orgasm – Patočka sees the origin of the experience of the *sacrum*. Under the spell of the sacred, one loses one’s own self, succumbs to this “liberation,” which temporarily releases us from the shackles of everyday preoccupation. In experiencing the sacred, however, a human being does not achieve authentic existential transparency. On the contrary, our alienation is actually deepened (Patočka 1996b, 100 – 101).

Through our toiling to get our daily bread the sacred attracts us with its seductive call. However, submitting to it is not without dangers. As Patočka notes, the sacred is heedless; behind the luring promise of relief it often hides its *demonic* nature (1996b, 99). Under its spell we forget ourselves and run the risk of losing our last ties to the ordinary world. Even more, it might take us by surprise, as it does Pentheus in Euripides’ *Bacchae* when he falls into madness because of a hubristic belief in the power of his own rationality. Or it can possess us as incomprehensible madness when the toll of normal everyday living is too high.

The distinction between *sacrum* and *profanum* is in Patočka’s attempt to characterize the etiology of modern technocratic era crucial. Its rationality denies the relevance of the experience of the sacred, which is approached with “positivist prejudice” (Patočka 1996b, 100). And yet, it is this blind spot, through which the alleged rationalistic sobriety culminates in the irrational eruptions of the 20th century (see also Majerník 2025, 555). The paradox of modernity does not consist merely in the fact that the religious sphere cannot ground its absolutistic views with the certainty which modern technoscience achieves in the domain of mere things. By denying the validity of the experiential encountering of the *sacrum*, modernity allows the secret spreading of its rule – as world wars, mad attempts to exterminate whole nations and classes by rational bureaucratic machinery, ideological witch-hunts and festivities testify. From the difference between the sacred and the profane Patočka comes to their modern permeation, in which the dividing line becomes blurred to such an extent that we can speak about “the demonic nature of day, of the everyday” (Hagedorn 2011, 252).

From this secret pervading of the sacred into the everydayness it follows that in Patočka's reflections the difference between the *sacrum* and the *profanum* does not fully overlap with the difference between everyday and holiday. *Sacrum* and *profanum* are concepts reserved for specific domains in which their respective experiences belong. By contrast, holiday and everyday temporally structure human life into rhythms in which there is time for activities in which we painfully sustain our vital being by labor and time for rites and practices in which the human being succumbs to the divine powers ruling over the world. A change in the meaning of holiday is concomitant with the modern denial of the sacred. Now the holiday is reduced to mere leisure. Yet, the demonic recklessness of the *sacrum* is not by its denial diminished but finds its own way of taking the helm.

Care for the soul originated in ancient Greece with the insight that a human life falls into alienation not only in everyday activities but also by yielding to the guiles of the demonic, enthusiastic and recklessly sacred (Patočka 1996b, 102 – 103). The rise from our fallenness into the domains of the *sacrum* and the *profanum* is, according to Patočka, intertwined with the discovery of the human soul as something free, which either strives to subordinate the sacred to responsibility or to integrate responsibility into its domain, as happened historically in philosophy and religion (Hagedorn 2011, 247 – 250). This historical change did not come about without preceding changes and presuppositions in the political and social realm of antiquity, which at the same time led to development in the sphere of literature as well as ritual practices. Patočka notes, "the Greek *polis*, *epos*, tragedy, and philosophy are different aspects of the same thrust which represents a rising above decadence" (Patočka 1996b, 103). In what follows, I turn to Patočka's reflections on ancient tragedy as a specific case of encountering and experiencing the *sacrum* and its relation to the care for the soul.

II. The Ambivalence of Tragedy

To understand the phenomenon of tragedy, we must pay attention to its relation to myth. Patočka makes a distinction between myth as a "symbolic form" in the sense of a way of thinking and reflection and myth as "a certain way of relating to the world" (Patočka 2004b, 391), an insight which comes along with ritualistic behavior:

In rites, dances, ceremonies, initiations, sacrifices, we comport ourselves not with regard to particulars, entering into the possibilities of maintaining ourselves amid the pulsing rhythm of the needs of life and the satiation of

those needs, but with regard to *the whole of all possibilities in which the world addresses us* (Patočka 2022, 240).

In ritualistic behavior one relates to the world as a whole, human life in this experience “is modified, integrated into the marriage of heaven and earth” (Patočka 2009, 330). Mythical relating to the world as a whole entails a pre-reflective manifestation of human eccentricity and precariousness. As Patočka says in *Plato and Europe*, a human being grasps himself in his eccentric position, that is, within the whole and from the whole and realizes that, while inevitably being part of the world, he does not belong to it throughout. On the contrary, the human being sees his own dependence on the powers which transcend and threaten him (Patočka 2002, 34 – 35).

Myth as a spoken story, by contrast, is the linguistic expression of the pre-reflective experience of the whole:

Myth, then, belongs to this context as *language that originates in rite. And given that in language the world is duplicated and thereby reflected, in myth we have also the first onset of reflection, the original instance of human reflection on humanity's overall relationship to the world* (Patočka 2022a, 240).

Since myth is this expression of our pre-reflective experience of the natural world as a whole, it is more than just a story, for the events which are presented have a founding character for the present era (Patočka 2002, 56 – 57). For this reason, the natural world of a mythical human being is pre-historical. The past is not something which is irrevocably lost in the stream of time. The past is ever-present; it is the beginning which rules over everything and determines the meaning of all that is to come. From this stability founded in the past, the prehistorical natural world attains a character of something that is taken for granted. From this it follows that pre-historical humanity ascribes to the world order an “objective” character, which is always already here. A human being is not responsible for the meaning and order of the world into which he is thrown. Thus, for mythical humanity there is no awareness of one's own freedom, of the possibility of care for the soul.

Tragedy is indebted to both mentioned aspects of myth in the sense of ritualistic behavior and storytelling. As is generally known, Greek tragedy was part of civic religious festivities and, according to Patočka, should also be understood as a ritual practice in its own right. Tragedy is a rite inextricably intertwined with the story, which is not merely recited, but performed as action:

The choir is nothing else than a crowd, council and body of citizens, who perform a certain invocation of a powerful hero who is hidden from sight in the darkness of earthly night, a hero, in whose hands lie the success and ruination of all living members of the city; invocation escalates to evocation; evocation is a magical calling of the hero in bodily appearance, and the choir stands under the gnawing impression of this invisible, mysterious and almost ominous presence; here it suddenly *turns* its exarchon into a hero, a protagonist; it lets the hero become incarnated as protagonist getting rid of feelings of terror and penitent compassion with which he approached the grave and with which the pressure of invisible, night and death appeared (Patočka 2004a, 350).

As the terminology of this passage indicates, Patočka draws his view from Aristotle's theory that tragedy evokes feelings of dread (*phobos*) and compassion (*eleos*) in order to purify them. He also stresses the fact that tragedy is an imitation (*mimēsis*) not in the sense of empirical reproduction but in what is supposed to be in an ethical sense. Elaborating on the mentioned passage, we could say that while the present performance is an imitation of the past, in fact it is a past, which through performance of the rite captivates the present time and in allowing the experiencing of dread reveals to a human being his own precariousness, the facts of our existence, which we tend to overlook and avoid, because we "cannot stand and bear them" (Patočka 2004a, 354). Greek tragedy as a literary masterpiece is able to excite us with its conflicts. We can see in it, as M. C. Nussbaum says of Sophocles' *Antigone*, "a play about practical reason and the ways in which practical reason orders or sees the world" (Nussbaum 2001, 51), or the performance of abstract philosophical theories in particular actions. We should not see these moments without their intertwinement with rite. All these aspects might be present. But tragedy as a ritual is not a mere performance of the event but something which allows the audience to live through its experience.

Does this provide evidence for tragedy as a "thrust which represents a rising above decadence" (Patočka 1996b, 103), as Patočka suggests in *Heretical Essays*? Its embeddedness in the natural world of myth both as a ritualistic behavior and as a linguistic expression in the story indicates, at least at first glance, otherwise. In Patočka's rendition we see the enthusiastic efficacy at play. The audience is undergoing the experience of *mysterium tremendum*, touching the peripheral limits of experience, beyond which lurks the non-given, alien darkness of the night. Tragedy aims for the affective rapture of the audience, to submerge it to feelings of dread and compassion.

On the one hand, the performed story arouses the vertigo one feels when being overwhelmed by the manifestation of one's own eccentricity. On the other hand, it could be argued that by purification of these feelings this vertigo is soothed.

Yet, there are certain aspects of tragedy which point to the possibility of overcoming decline. First, according to Patočka, the advent of care for the soul in ancient literature comes along with a shift in the function of the author.³ Myth is a collective accomplishment which "as such does not present the world of an individual person...but rather the meaning of life for a certain *we*" (Patočka 2022b, 225). Tragedy presupposes this collectively shared, "objective" meaning of a community, for imitation "is always about meaning *constituted in advance*, which we now only adopt, present and bring into the mind" (Patočka 2004a, 351). It is the "objectivity" which is ritually performed by a certain community sharing the same world. But while a tragic poet is committed to this shared meaning, he takes responsibility for the meaning of the events he presents in composed narration (Josl 2023, 104, 108). He stands at the threshold between commitment to the presupposed objectivity of the myth, from which he draws material, and the responsible freedom in rendering this material into meaningful performance, which requires one's own active (self)examination.

The second aspect presents a novelty in tragic narration, which results from the disruption of mythical moral order. While in *Heretical Essays* Patočka in passing mentions that epic poetry incites rising from decadence as well as tragedy, in an earlier text where he compares these two genres, stating that the moral world of tragedy is more prone to revealing of problematcity:

The epic presents the heroic moral world in that harmonic functioning where its fundamental powers, the law of the day and the law of the night, the law of the city and man and law of the family and woman, the law of the life and law of the death, the law of the general and law of the particular support and supplement each other; in tragedy their strife and conflict break out, here stand against each other the claim of eternity and the claim of life concerning public expediency. Both claims perform their mutual, inevitable movement and with it the disruption of the existence of that ancient moral world (Patočka 2004a, 355).

³ For a systematic elaboration of Patočka's thoughts on the relation between care for the soul and literature, especially with an emphasis on myth and the role of an author in various historical environments, see the works of M. Ševčík (2014, 41 – 78) and J. Josl (2003, 95 – 117).

Epic as well as tragic poetry are centered around conflict and strife. However, this plays a different function in the two. In epic the conflict in the end reveals the harmony of order, the meaning of which the human being passively accepts. Even in decadent iron age a just man can, according to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, rely on Zeus bestowing his blessings upon him (Hesiod, *Op.* 225 – 237). While tragedy rests on the epic narrative, the conflict here is much deeper. Because of the disruption of the mythical moral order the tragic poet cannot take its alleged objectivity for granted. Characters in tragic play are exponents of conflicting fundamental powers and laws, and their encounters adopt a form of strife, in which the actions, perspectives and attitudes are questioned. What is at stake here is the very meaning on which such actions and attitudes are grounded. Tragic characters problematize, for example, the concepts of prudence, reasonability, the profit or gain (*kerdos*) of a certain action or stance. In tragic strife the meaning of such concepts becomes blurred and fluid because the difference between the underlying meanings of right and wrong has lost its clear contours.

Let us at least briefly turn our attention to question of how the manifestation of problematicity resonates in Patočka's texts on tragedy. Patočka emphasizes Sophocles' famous characterization of a human being as the most *deinos* (Sophocles, *Antigone*, 332 – 372). The word *deinon*, due to its multiple meanings, is not easy to translate.⁴ Sophocles' use of *deinon* is a deliberate decision, for it refers to the ambivalence of a human being. On the one hand, the greatness of humanity consists in its awe-evoking power of human cunning manifesting itself in the arts and crafts. On the other hand, the very same greatness points to dreadful human fallenness, the possibility of turning to evil.

How does Patočka interpret this Sophoclean ambivalence of humanity? Sophocles' main idea is the idea of human *nomos*, which he translates as a law in the sense of a "ration" that one is due. Ration points to our limits; a human being is a being of limit in a twofold sense: on the one hand, we are mortals, and our life is determined by this fact from within and throughout. On the other hand, we are beings of *the surface*. Our greatness depends on our cunning and crafts by which we are able to coerce nature to give something which it would otherwise keep hidden. By ploughing the fields we gain crops; thanks

⁴ M. C. Nussbaum characterizes *deinon* as follows: "Most generally, it is used of that which inspires awe or wonder. But in different contexts it can be used of the dazzling brilliance of the human intellect, of the monstrosity of an evil, of the terrible power of fate. That which is *deinon* is somehow strange, out of place; its strangeness and its capacity to inspire awe are intimately connected" (Nussbaum 2001, 52).

to building ships and navigation skills we cross the seas. The domain of cunning rests on the fact that the "human being is a *seeing* and *knowing* being; seeing – knowing – craft is his sphere" (Patočka 2004b, 393). Since the ability to see presupposes visibility and givenness, our greatness rests on the condition of the Day, which lets things be enlightened. All this is but a surface: for the crops we carve scars on the skin of Earth, one of the oldest of deities, while the inaccessible depths of the divine sea allow us to sail safely. Human cunning is dependent on the powers of the depth, which we cannot bring before our sight nor control. These powers rule in embracing Night, which is their own domain.

The inability to recognize the human surface and domain of gods is fatal, as Sophocles presents through the characters of Creon in *Antigone* and Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex*. In reference to Heraclitus, Patočka calls their inability *idia fronēsis*, "own understanding" (2022a, 243). As the word *idia* suggests, their perspective is incomplete, for it does not recognize the legitimacy of what is non-given. By contrast, to see from the perspective of the whole necessitates the recognition that the human and the divine *nomoi* are not equal. The Night is embracing and foundational for the Day. The thing appearing enlightened in plain sight is pervaded by the powers of the Night. Therefore, it loses clear determination and becomes environed by obscure contexts. From this indetermination, which seizes the givenness, it follows that one decision constitutes a future dilemma; *krisis* does not bring an eternal solution, but another *krisis* (Patočka 2004b, 393). What at first appeared as goodness is in the end revealed as a curse and fallenness for evil.

From Patočka's perspective, the Sophoclean characteristic of a human being as *deinos* reveals this fearsome (*deinos*) problematicity. That we are *deinos* represents our cunning, the ability to see and understand, to bring things under our control. However, the final insight is the understanding that we are deprived of the ultimate ground of meaning. Through Oedipus' destiny, Sophocles reveals that our short existence on the face of the earth is in the end nothing more than "blind wandering" (Patočka 2002, 62), because absolute knowledge is the prerogative of immortal gods. Oedipus, a character who is cursed and sacred at the same time (Patočka 2022a, 243), whose sanctity resides within his curse, embodies the terrifying ambivalence of the human condition and testifies to the claim that in the realm of meaning we are just blind wanderers.

III. The Meaning(s) of Holiday

Patočka's accounts of myth and tragedy could function as leading clues to an elucidation of the meaning of the holiday and its typology. His reflections in

this regard can be seen in connection to the distinction between the realms of the *sacrum* and the *profanum* in *Heretical Essays*. As mentioned above, in myth as well as in tragedy, Patočka distinguishes between the practical aspect consisting in ritual behavior and the linguistic, reflective aspect of the founding narration. The intention of ritual behavior is not aimed at particular things but at the affective experience of the world as a whole. An affective experience of the sacred is, naturally, different from the affectivity of everydayness. Since everydayness is dominated by activities of labor and work through which we satiate our basic needs, it inherently entails an ascetic approach. In order to reproduce our vitality we suppress our desires and pleasures. Furthermore, in our everyday comportment our intentionality is oriented not towards the world as a whole, but towards particular instrumental objects. While the “world” is still here, it is merely co-present as a latent background against which the particular beings-at-hand ascend to the foreground of our attention through their instrumentality and usability.

The affectivity of an encounter with the sacred forms an opposition to everyday toil. In contrast to (but also in connection with) ascetic everydayness, the experience of the *sacrum* presents an affective surrender or succumbing to the divine, which might adopt two different forms. On the one hand, encountering the sacred is concomitant with ecstasy, with being outside of oneself. Myth here speaks, as Patočka notes, “out of fervor, enthusiasm – outright ‘divine possession’” (Patočka 1996b, 142). In relation to the realm of the *profanum*, where we feel our vital bondage to our body in labor, enthusiastic submersion is felt as liberation. But to understand this experience as a mere liberation from vital necessity would limit it to the confines of the logic of everydayness. The divine has an appeal of its own. It not only addresses us with an attractive, seductive call, which promises temporary relief from human toils but is experienced in its superiority and domination. The *sacrum* might captivate us. For this reason, it might potentially become *demonic*. The divine occupies our experiential fringes, in which it appears alien and inhuman, where we cannot dwell without losing our own humanity. Submersion to self-forgetting enthusiasm is not unlike eating a lotus flower, when one risks losing connection with oneself as well as the ordinary world (Homer, *Odyssey* 9, 91–104). But submersion to the sacred might also turn to the madness of orgiastic fervor; we might become reckless and destructive like Agave in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, who tore her son apart without recognizing him.

However, the affectivity of encountering the sacred might adopt another form. As we saw in the case of tragedy, it reveals the hard truth of human

eccentricity, which is connected with emotions of dread, fear, sorrow, but also compassion. Next to novelties in the narration, we should not see this affective element without its connection to the ritual character of theatrical performance. The audience did not approach tragic drama as a mere spectacle, but as a vivid encounter with the sacred. A performed tragic play is not only *about* the divine; for humanity still embedded in the natural world of myth, *it is* divine. Through the rite of performance, Sophocles' tragedies allowed the auditorium to live through the normally avoided experiential fringes, but also the dangers of human ambivalence.

In the narrative aspect, which is concomitant to the ritualistic and affective one, the original experience is explicated into a story which has a foundational character. Relation to the world as a whole is here differentiated and presents it as a structured and meaningful order, clarifies the divine and human and their relation as well as the overall human condition. The founding narration might have at least two different outcomes. On the one hand, myth provides meaning, which is "modest, but reliable" (Patočka 1996b, 12). Human life is revealed here in its finitude and hardships, but the possible shaking impact of problematicity is diminished and soothed by meaning, which is taken for granted in passive acceptance. Thus, myth might function as an alleviation from awareness of human precariousness. But, on the other hand, the tragic foundational myth can also point in another direction. As we have seen, Sophocles' tragedies present human nature as *deinos*. Human existence evokes awe and terror not only through the capacity of insight, but mainly through understanding that our ultimate insight is awareness of our blindness.

As we can see, the meaning of holiday cannot merely inhere in providing relief from our numbing everyday comportment. The interplay between ritual, affective relating to the world and storytelling aims to reveal the meaning of the whole and calls for direct human participation and experiencing of this event.

This structure, which is inherent in holidays, allows us to briefly outline its meaning in the context of religion. As already mentioned, Patočka differentiates religion (and mainly Christianity) from the mythical cult, because in religion human alienation not only in everydayness, but also in relation to demonic sacredness is transcended. In other words, in religion care for the soul and its rise from inauthentic decline to free responsibility takes place. Thus, in the case of religion the meaning of holiday undergoes a transformation in which, however, the basic structural components of ritualistic affective relation to the whole and the foundational narration remain preserved. While Patočka does not thematize the ritualistic aspects of religion,

he pays attention to its affective dimension, which also retains the element of enthusiastic involvement (Patočka 1996b, 142). In *Heretical Essays* Patočka stresses *mysterium tremendum* as the core experience of Christianity through which one yields to emotions of guilt and anxiety, but also love, repentance and hope (Patočka 1996b, 107, 108). This experience takes place in relation to the narration of the foundational event in which God is revealed as a God-Human who in selfless love gives his life on the cross to redeem us from our sins. Through narration of this event, the soul attains a personal relation to the absolute goodness of God and with it a novel and intimate engagement in its own being. For this reason, *mysterium tremendum* here bears a slightly different tenor than in tragedy. It does not consist in mere awareness of one's own blindness and distance from the divine insight. This moment is here present as well but arises from personal responsibility for the condition of one's own soul. An individual person is responsible for "the truth of (their) own destiny" (Patočka 1996b, 107), for salvation and closeness to God as well as for fallenness for evil and guiles of inauthenticity. As we can see, the meaning of holiday in religion retains the elements of ritual behavior, affectivity and the narration of the foundational event. But these constitutive moments are transformed into effort to incite and renew the care for the soul.

And finally, in the era of modernity, the meaning of holiday undergoes a radical change, which rules out its subsumption under one type. On the one hand, as the matters of religion became understood as a private affair, the meaning of holiday was reduced to mere leisure time as opposed to everyday toil. On the other hand, in cases where everyday instrumentality is exalted to a new absolute, as in the communist ideology of the past century, the meaning of holiday is simultaneously transformed into celebration of everydayness. However, one of the crucial conclusions of the fifth of the *Heretical Essays* is that despite our losing touch with the original meaning of holiday, the domain of the potentially demonic *sacrum* remains here.

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