

DOUBLE EXCESS

EDITORIAL

Superabundance is appropriate to festivals and holidays. When they are successful, festivals and holidays are meant to go on. Thus, “Spazio Filosofico” continues with the same concept once again, like Scheherazade, who does not stop narrating, and adds ever new contents to her stories. The consideration of a fullness – that is, a “much” – that nevertheless is not enough characterizes Ugo Perone’s thinking. To him, on occasion of his 70th birthday, “Spazio Filosofico” has dedicated and devoted the contributions gathered in the last two journal issues.

Finitude (of nature, existence, or space-time) discloses itself as still insufficient and launches itself beyond itself precisely at the very moment when it is considered in the fullness of its expansion. Fullness is explosive, and thus it is creative. Ugo Perone has thoroughly meditated on the polyphonic richness of existence, the intensity of the fragment, and thus the double excess (of the finite over the non-finite and vice versa) that must be preserved. Festivals too are fragments because of their feature of towering among ordinary times, which festivals suspend, between interruption and retrieval.

“The mysterious ulteriority against which the finite clashes” – the formulation appears in Perone’s book, *Nonostante il soggetto* [*Despite the Subject*] –¹ expresses the protrusion of the penultimate into the ultimate, of the ordinary into the extraordinary, of weekday time into holiday time. This tension between two excesses, which do not end, lets emerge the possibility of a joyous and fruitful interruption. Cheerfulness, the power of being able to live well, and tenderness that becomes protection characterize festivals and holidays, whether private or public, religious or religiously civic. Self-repetition, recalling a beginning that has already gone and has already happened belongs to what is solemn. Festivals interrupt the flow of ordinary time and open up in a suspension that refers to an origin. The origin is ungraspable in itself; yet, it constitutes the present and it irradiates the now. Festivals are always accompanied by lights because they illuminate something or someone, disclosing their most authentic and highest meaning.

The essays gathered in the current and past issues of “Spazio Filosofico” explore the depth enshrined in festivals and holidays, and disclose their essence as lying in what is worth staying and thus being remembered. Festivals and holidays magnify the exceptionality of the individual (of the beloved), the irruption of the infinite, the beginning of a shared history. These are all themes present in Perone’s works. By exceeding everydayness, festivals and holidays attest their feature of exception, and hence of threshold on which one can gladly linger. They stand between times: the past, to which they refer, the present, which they suspend, and the future, which they open and relaunch. Their temporality is the immediacy of the *kairós*, which only lasts in the

¹ U. PERONE, *Nonostante il soggetto*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino 1995, p. 162.

moment – moment that must be seized with the wisdom proper to attention. Here too, as ecstases between times, in the uncontrollable tension of their fragmentary feature, festivals and holidays are doubly exceeding.

Holidays and festivals are charged with an identity memory that is always at risk. Festivals and holidays may in fact vanish when the sense to which they refer is no longer meaningful for anyone. Thus, some holidays and festivals disappear because they have stopped expressing a shared experience. In them, there remains only a memory interesting merely from an archeological or historiographic perspective. In all situations and in their essential nature, festivals and holidays are subject to the risk of not being successful. Those who wish to celebrate know that they need to pay extreme attention to all details so that the celebratory initiative succeeds in the splendor that it deserves. Every celebration is preceded by a preparatory stage; festivals and holidays depend on a will full of desire, but then they rely on the free course of their success: they may blossom and flourish or they may be a delusion and fail. One can do everything so that the ceremony succeeds, but then the outcome is beyond one's control.

Festivals and holidays are accompanied by gifts, and gifts are followed by the joy of gratitude. The festive atmosphere is overwhelming; it retains features of abundance, profusion, prodigality, and excess that surpasses the rigor and measure of the daily present. Because of these features, festivals and holidays resemble artworks, which transfigure means into decoration or symbol and thereby upset what is obvious by referring it to a height or depth that have always been there but usually have gone unnoticed. Or they are similar to vacations, which are always already other than ordinary time and have their own private and social sacredness. A renewal of vital energies should spring from the emptiness enabled by the break. It is perhaps not by accident that, under different names, all cultures celebrate the return of the spring. In the Christian tradition, the holiday by excellence is Easter, the only *festus dies*, which announces the impossible and overcomes the repetition of cycles by tearing them apart. Festive days disclose time in its essential features, not as referral to permanence but rather as its complete transformation. Without escaping time, without giving up the present, the grace of holidays and festivals, which nourish themselves at an inexhaustible source, spreads.

While rejoicing, one enjoys what exists. This kind of happiness tastes like the absolute; in fact, it does not consume itself according to the economic logic of lack and satisfaction. The joy for a successful celebration increases without weakening. The delight that such a celebration offers is an ascent from the “much” that, as Perone teaches us, is not enough, to the “even more,” from the positive to its increment. Festivals and holidays pursue an ever richer promise; they intensify a pleasure that, rather than consuming itself, increases. It seems that nothing could be added to the intensity of something one enjoys. On the contrary though, one can still add extending the enjoyment of such a good; for example, a festival or holiday can be extended through the participation of one's own friends.

As a reply to the surprise for the gift of the two journal issues devoted to festivals and holidays, Ugo Perone wrote: “I truly do not know how much of all of this I have consciously initiated. Having been the occasion that made this happen certainly fills me with joy. The festival goes on. You are the festival. Exchanging thoughts is a festival.”

The readers may perhaps enjoy and share the feelings that the thought of festivals is capable of arousing – always beyond all measures.

The Editors

(Translated from Italian by Silvia Benso)