

THE DECLINE OF THE HOLIDAY ACCORDING TO VASILE BĂNCILĂ

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ABSTRACT

Throughout his life, Vasile Băncilă analyzed the phenomenon of holidays in depth. One of the aspects researched by the Romanian philosopher and sociologist was the decline in the way contemporary people celebrate. Modern celebrations have lost the meanings that in the past helped people maintain contact with sacredness (metaphysical meaning), renew their morality (moral meaning), and preserve organic ties with their social peers (social meaning). The degradation of holidays coincides with the de-peasantization of man: a departure from the traditional foundations of existence. Comparing his modern-contemporary holidays with the ideal of celebration he discovered, Băncilă reveals several features of how modern man spends his festive time. Contemporary pseudo-holidays have the following features: the loss of traditional meanings (including religious ones) and their replacement with the idea that the holiday is just a time for rest, for revitalizing physical strength, free time when you can accomplish what you have not been able to do because of the job, or the opportunity to “escape the hustle and bustle of the city” by going out into nature. Also, modern holidays are fewer in number, similar in the way they are celebrated (levelling the way of celebrating), predominantly individualistic in character, and used by political regimes as a distinctive sign.

Keywords: Vasile Băncilă, holiday, the decline of holidays, Romanian sociology, the ethics of holidays.

1. SHORT INTRODUCTION

Little known to the general public today, Vasile Băncilă was one of a group of Romanian intellectuals from the interwar period who were recognized for their significant contributions to the development of Romanian culture. An exegete of Lucian Blaga's work, philosopher, ethicist, and sociologist, Vasile Băncilă distinguished himself from other interwar intellectuals through his reflections and studies on the phenomenon of the holiday. His works are based on a rather philosophical and sociological approach to this issue. Vasile Băncilă's sociology can be better understood if we study the ethicist's analysis of contemporary celebrations.

Comparing them with the ideal type of celebration, Băncilă observes that modern celebrations have strayed from their ideal purpose, paving the way for the

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affirmation of a non-festive psychology. The decline of celebrations is part of Vasile Băncilă's sociological studies, which bear the mark of his own vision, called "spiritual organicism":

"In sociology, V.B.'s position is contrary to empirical sociologism; society appears as the 'organic environment' that connects man to the totality, the 'instrument' through which a 'deeper will of things' creates differentiation, leading man to the edge of his destiny. V.B. calls this concept 'spiritual organicism' and designates 'ethnicity' as the most appropriate type of this society"¹⁴⁹.

Vasile Băncilă practices spiritualist sociology, in the spirit of the master of his generation – Nae Ionescu, who was also his teacher. Băncilă's approach also refers to Vulcănescu's manner of discussing peasantry, and thus to phenomenological sociology, focused on discovering the essence of reality.

"The idea of celebration is an idea of total organization of existence. Because celebration is a solemn dance of communion with all of reality, with all its necessary, possible, imaginable, or only suspected aspects. It is a communion with the transcendent; it is a communion with cosmic nature; it is a communion with society; it is even a communion with the animal and plant world and, finally, it is a communion with yourself, through the containment or melting away of contradictions, disappointments, and demands"¹⁵⁰.

2. THE DECLINE OF THE HOLIDAY. THE ROAD TO PSEUDO-HOLIDAYS IN MODERNITY

With the decline of the holiday, Vasile Băncilă moves on to operationalizing his system of thought.

We speak of the decline of a holiday when, within this human activity, its metaphysical, moral, and social meanings necessary for man's connection with the Transcendent and with his own community disappear or are replaced.

"So, holidays no longer play the important role they once did, which was metaphysical, moral, social, artistic, and pedagogical, paying homage to Existence,

¹⁴⁹ „În sociologie, poziția lui V.B. este contrară sociologismului empiric; societatea apare drept «mediul organic» care îl leagă pe om de «totalitate», «instrumentul» prin care o «voință mai adâncă a lucrurilor» creează diferențial, ducând omul până la limita destinului lui. V.B. numește această concepție «organicism spiritual» și desemnează «etnicul» drept tipul cel mai propriu al acestei societăți”, in Gheorghiu Geană, „Băncilă Vasile”, in *Enciclopedia online a filosofiei din România [Online Encyclopedia of Philosophy in Romania]*, n.d., Available at: <https://romanian-philosophy.ro/encyclopedia/bancila-vasile/>, Accessed on April 30, 2025.

¹⁵⁰ „Ideea de sărbătoare e o idee de organizare totală a existenței. Fiindcă sărbătoarea e o horă gravă de comuniune cu toată realitatea, cu toate aspectele ei necesare, posibile, imaginabile sau numai bănuite. E o comuniune cu transcendentul; e o comuniune cu natura cosmică; e o comuniune cu societatea; e chiar o comuniune cu lumea animală și vegetală și e, în sfârșit, o comuniune cu tine însuși, prin conținerea sau topirea contradicțiilor, [a] decepțiilor, [a] revendicărilor”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Declinul sărbătorii” [“The decline of the holiday”], in Vasile Băncilă, *Opere [Works]*, Vol. IV, edited by Dora Mezdrea, Brăila, Istros Publishing House, 2006, p. 339.

uniting the ontological with the historical, the general with the individual. [These] corrected existence, gave it meaning and fullness, and united people into a whole, both transcendent and historical, integrating these two domains into a splendid immanence”¹⁵¹.

Elsewhere in his writings, Vasile Băncilă uses the expression “denaturation” to describe the decline of the holiday¹⁵². By this term, Băncilă refers to the weakening of the primordial meanings of the holiday. However, instead of operationalizing them as above (metaphysical, moral, social, artistic, etc.), he simply calls them *traditional meanings*. The degradation/decline of the holiday means a departure from the traditional basis of existence, that is, its *de-peasantization*. In this way, the holiday degenerates into a *pseudo-holiday*.

“Either the conventional holiday, established from one day to the next, forgetting that the strength of holidays is guaranteed by the traditional background they include: Christian holidays, for example, have been grafted onto the background of Asian, Greco-Roman, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon holidays, sometimes even keeping the same days”¹⁵³.

The use of the word *traditional* reveals another aspect of the decline. The beginning of the distortion is marked by the transition from traditional to modern life. In other words, modernization is the process that led to the decline of the holiday, marking the emergence of pseudo-holidays with a weak metaphysical, moral, and social horizon. Therefore, the Romanian sociologist observes that peasants truly celebrate only if they “have remained uncontaminated by the city”¹⁵⁴, the city representing here the place where modernization has reached its peak.

“The world of the old times, and even today, the peasant world, insofar as it has remained uncontaminated by the city, gives us examples of how to celebrate the holiday”¹⁵⁵.

To understand Vasile Băncilă’s conception of the decline of the holiday, let us analyze in turn the loss of metaphysical, moral, and social meanings.

¹⁵¹ „Deci, sărbătorile nu mai au marele rol de odinioară, care era unul metafizic, moral, social, artistic, pedagogic, care omagia major Existența, unind ontologicul cu istoricul, generalul cu individualul. [Acestea] corectau existența, îi dădeau sens și plenitudine și uneau pe oameni într-un tot, în același timp transcendent și istoric, integrând aceste două domenii într-o splendidă imanență”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Filozofia sărbătorii (Fișe). Tipologia sărbătorii” [The philosophy of celebration. Typology of the holiday], in Vasile Băncilă, *Opere [Works]*, Vol. IX, edited by Dora Mezdrea, Brăila, Istros Publishing House, 2014, p. 86.

¹⁵² See Vasile Băncilă, „Declinul sărbătorii” [“The decline of the holiday”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2006, p. 349.

¹⁵³ „Ori sărbătoarea convențională, instituită de la o zi la alta, uitându-se că tăria sărbătorilor e garantată de fondul tradițional pe care-l includ: sărbătorile creștine, de exemplu, s-au altoit pe fondul sărbătorilor asiatice, greco-romane, germanice și anglo-saxone, câteodată păstrând chiar aceleași zile”, in *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁴ „a rămas necontaminat de oraș”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Pedagogia sărbătorii” [“The pedagogy of celebration”], in *Ibidem*, p. 529.

¹⁵⁵ „Lumea de odinioară, și astăzi încă, lumea țărănească, întru cât a rămas necontaminată de oraș, ne dau exemple de realizare a sărbătorii”, in *Ibidem*.

By losing its metaphysical meaning, Băncilă considers the desacralization of the festive act. The sacred aspect of the holiday emerges from the philosopher's emphasis on the idea of "spirit". It is not surprising that Lucian Blaga's exegete even names one of the relevant articles on the subject "The Spirit of Celebration"¹⁵⁶. Meaningful holidays are religious ones, those that take place "according to a mystical program on earth". They represent the integration of man into sacred time, when he tries to reactivate the mythical time in the present – *ilo tempore*, that of the "beginning of beginnings".

"For him, holidays are a cosmology. The world is different for him during the holidays. These are manifestations, according to a certain mystical, regular, and eternal program, of an ultimate essence: holidays are religious and metaphysical phenomena for him. Changing the holidays is therefore a logical impossibility for him [the peasant]: how can you change them when they remain where they have always been, since they exist objectively and not in our convention? It is like saying that the heavenly bodies move differently than they actually do"¹⁵⁷.

"*Sacred time is reversible*, in the sense that it is actually a *primordial mythical time brought back to the present*. Any religious holiday, any liturgical Time, means the re-actualization of a sacred event that took place in a mythical past, 'at the beginning of beginnings. Religious participation in a holiday involves stepping out of 'ordinary' temporal duration and reintegrating into the mythical Time actualized by that holiday"¹⁵⁸.

Vasile Băncilă points out that the decline is also manifested by the weakening of the moral component of the holiday. The holiday represents the time when dynamic density – people's actions in accordance with moral norms¹⁵⁹ – is at its peak. Băncilă thus envisages a decrease in the dynamic density of society. Within

¹⁵⁶ See Vasile Băncilă, „Duhul sărbătorii” [“The spirit of celebration”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2006.

¹⁵⁷ „Pentru el, sărbătorile sunt o cosmologie. Altfel e lumea pentru el în sărbători. Acestea sunt manifestări, după un anume program mistic, regulat și etern, al unei esențe ultime: sărbătorile îi sunt fenomene religioase și metafizice. A schimba, deci, sărbătorile e pentru el o imposibilitate logică: cum să le schimbi, când ele rămân acolo unde au fost, de vreme ce ele există obiectiv și nu în convenția noastră? E ca și când am spune că astrele cerești se mișcă alt fel de cum e în realitate”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Motivele și organizarea reformei calendarului” [“Reasons for and organization of the calendar reform”], in Vasile Băncilă, *Opere [Works]*, Vol. III, edited by Dora Mezdrea, Brăila, Istros Publishing House, 2003, p. 18.

¹⁵⁸ „(...) Timpul sacru este reversibil, în sensul că este de fapt un Timp mitic primordial readus în prezent. Orice sărbătoare religioasă, orice Timp liturgic înseamnă reactualizarea unui eveniment sacru care a avut loc într-un trecut mitic, «la începutul începuturilor». Participarea religioasă la o sărbătoare implică ieșirea din durata temporală «obișnuită» și reintegrarea în Timpul mitic actualizat de acea sărbătoare”, in Mircea Eliade, *Sacrul și profanul [The Sacred and the Profane]*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2005, pp. 54-55, *quoted by* Radu Baltasiu and Ovidiana Bulumac, *Istoria Socială a României. Actualitate și problematică [The Social History of Romania. Current events and issues]*, Bucharest, University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2017, p. 117.

¹⁵⁹ Radu Baltasiu, *Introducere în sociologie. Spiritualitate, națiune și capitalism. Considerații de sociologie românească și weberiană [Introduction to sociology. Spirituality, nation, and capitalism. Considerations from Romanian and Weberian sociology]*, Craiova, Beladi Publishing House, 2007, p. 56.

the framework of the degraded holiday, man no longer tries to achieve “on earth, anticipating the state of Paradise”¹⁶⁰.

“Secondly, and closely related to this, holiday is harmony, light, euphoria, purity, kindness, fleeting majesty, as subtle as it is sovereign. During the holidays, every person, unless they are a gâte-fete, seeks to be a transparent wave in the river of light, to be better and more solemn, without being rigid, so that, with the cooperation of all and the great festive spirit, what our predecessors, often richer in spirit than us, called *trêve de Dieu*”¹⁶¹.

As for the loss of social character, the decline is recognized by the tendency toward atomization. Individualization manifests itself either through the loss or replacement of the community meanings for which the holiday is held, or through a decrease in the number of common activities that characterized the holiday in the past, or through a reduction in the number of participants.

“Consequence: holiday is something social. In two senses: 1. it must be something moral or at least neutral; 2) and that in society it is easier to achieve a state of holiday (events, gatherings, commemorations, social metabolism: in social holidays it is easier to achieve vital and moral fulfilment)”¹⁶².

The decline of the holiday denotes the existence of a de-peasantized society because, in Vasile Băncilă’s point of view, the eminently social holiday is the peasant one, when „the village celebrates holidays and events as if they were everyone’s own”¹⁶³.

“The people filled their time with holidays and gave them two higher meanings: a metaphysical (religious) meaning and a social meaning (true holidays are not individual, and even less individualistic, but communal: the whole village experiences holidays and events as if they belonged to everyone)”¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶⁰ „anticipativ pe pământ starea din Paradis”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Filozofia sărbătorii (Fişe). Ideea de sărbătoare: definiția sărbătorii” [“The philosophy of celebration (Fact sheets). The idea of celebration: definition of celebration”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2014, p. 56.

¹⁶¹ „Al doilea, și în strânsă legătură cu acesta, sărbătoarea e armonie, lumină, euforie, puritate, bunătate, maiestate fluidă, pe cât de discretă, pa atât de suverană. În sărbătoare, fiecare om, dacă nu e un gâte-fete, caută să fie o undă transparentă în fluviul de lumină, să fie mai bun și mai solemn, fără a fi rigid, astfel încât să se înfăptuiască, cu concursul tuturor și al marelui sens festiv, ceea ce predecesorii noștri, de multe ori mai bogați sufletește decât noi, numea *trêve de Dieu*”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Filozofia sărbătorii” [“The philosophy of celebration”], in *Ibidem*, p. 11,

¹⁶² „Urmare: sărbătoarea e ceva social. În dublu sens: 1. că trebuie să fie ceva moral ori cel puțin neutru; 2) și că în societate se realizează mai ușor starea de sărbătoare (ocaziile, convocările, comemorările, metabolismul social: în sărbătorile sociale se realizează mai ușor plenitudinea vitală și cea morală)”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Filozofia sărbătorii (fişe). Filozofia sărbătorii: Definiție” [“The Philosophy of Celebration (worksheets). The Philosophy of Celebration: Definition”], in *Ibidem*, p. 68.

¹⁶³ „satul trăiește sărbătorile și evenimentele, ca și când ar fi ale fiecăruia”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Filozofia sărbătorii (fişe). Filozofia sărbătorii” [“The philosophy of celebration (worksheets). The philosophy of celebration”], in *Ibidem*, p. 69.

¹⁶⁴ „Poporul a umplut timpul cu sărbători și le-a dat cele două sensuri superioare: sens metafizic (religios) și sens social (sărbătorile adevărate nu sunt individuale, și cu atât mai puțin individualiste, ci comunitare: tot satul trăiește sărbătorile și evenimentele, ca și când ar fi ale fiecăruia”, in *Ibidem*.

The loss of these meanings laid the foundations for a joyless psychology of modern man¹⁶⁵. In the following, we will delve deeper into how modern man perceives and experiences the holiday in decline.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DECLINING HOLIDAY

Below we will outline the characteristics of degraded holidays. As shown above, for Băncilă, talking about holidays in decline means analyzing the holiday in modernity by comparing it to its “peasant” ideal type.

Băncilă remarks that modern man no longer considers the profound meanings of the action. Moving away from the traditional background specific to the holiday means acting without looking at the holiday as a whole (during which the entire community was involved, all activities were related to the holiday, both to ritual prescriptions and especially to the holiday calendar). For example, Băncilă observes that Easter¹⁶⁶ the holiday is celebrated during his time without knowing the legend behind this traditional celebration¹⁶⁷.

The degradation of traditional meanings has led to the somatization and individualization of the meanings of life, even to the point of emptying social action of meaning. For him, holiday, argues Băncilă, is no longer a return to sacred time (metaphysical meaning), a form of spiritual ennoblement (moral meaning), or a form of renewing social ties (social meaning). Instead of these meanings, modern man celebrates for:

- to rest;
- to revitalize one’s physical strength;
- to succeed in accomplishing through work those things that could not be done during normal times (non-holiday periods) and
- to escape into nature, getting away from urban crowds for a while¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁵ Vasile Băncilă, „Declinul sărbătorii” [“The decline of the holiday”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2006, p. 350.

¹⁶⁶ Paștele Blajinilor este o sărbătoare populară, care nu are o rânduială specifică în tipicul bisericesc. (...) Paștele Blajinilor sau Paștele morților reprezintă în sine amintirea tuturor celor ce au murit, fie ei pregătiți – spovediți, împărtașiți și cu lumânare – sau nepregătiți. De obicei, în această zi, credincioșii depun ofrande pe morminte, bocesc morții, împart pomeni, întind mese festive în cimitir, lângă biserică sau la iarbă verde. (...) Blajinii, oameni blânzi și pașnici, s-ar afla într-o lume îndepărtată, la vărsarea Apei Sâmbetei în Sorbul Pământului. Ei sunt anunțați că a sosit Paștele de către oameni, care aruncă în apele curgătoare coji de ouă sparte în timpul înroșitului sau la prepararea alimentelor rituale (cozonaci, pască), in Petre Dobrescu, „Paștele Blajinilor sau Lunea Morților, dedicată spiritelor moșilor și strămoșilor” [“Easter of the Dead or Monday of the Dead, dedicated to the spirits of ancestors and forefathers”], in *Libertatea*, April 28, 2025, Available at: <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/pasteleblajinilor-sauluneamortilordedicataspiritelormosilor-si-stramosilor-1814405>, Accessed on September 20, 2025.

¹⁶⁷ Vasile Băncilă, „Pedagogia sărbătorii” [“The pedagogy of celebration”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2006, p. 534.

¹⁶⁸ Vasile Băncilă, „Declinul sărbătorii” [“The decline of the holiday”], in *Ibidem*, p. 349.

Another feature of the decline of holidays, besides the weakening of the depth of life, is the reduction in their frequency. If for the peasant, time and work were divided according to holidays: “it was precisely the working days that were attached to the holiday”¹⁶⁹ so that celebration took precedence over work, for modern man the celebration-work ratio has been reversed. The time devoted to work has increasingly taken over the festive time with the adoption of the capitalist system¹⁷⁰.

“In this spiritual configuration, what have holidays become? Their number has decreased, and those that remain have been largely distorted. (...) But the reduction in the number of holidays was not done out of deference to them, but primarily because of the interests of labor in the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie struck out at any obstacle to labor. And Protestantism and Calvinism came to its aid”¹⁷¹.

Along with the decrease in number, there has also been a levelling/homogenisation of the way in which they are celebrated. The loss of such varied traditional customs has led to the levelling of activities within modern pseudo-holidays. The levelling of holidays has meant that the way in which modern man prepares for them has also become increasingly generalised. The process of homogenisation of the way in which modern man celebrates fits into the trend of the McDonaldisation of society as theorised by sociologist George Ritzer¹⁷². We are witnessing the McDonaldization of celebrations, which means giving up the variety of customs specific to festive times in the name of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control¹⁷³.

Leveling has the effect of decreasing what Băncilă called festive receptivity – the degree of readiness to celebrate – and, with it, the joy experienced during the festivities.

“Unfortunately, the truth of this statement is also evident in the fact that people now tend to level the holidays, celebrating them in the same way, Easter as well as Christmas, without delving into the lofty and specific spiritual magic that each holiday embodies; or from the growing syncretism, now manifesting itself in the tendency to mix holidays and customs, to put up Christmas trees, to celebrate the same holiday twice, once Orthodox and once Catholic, or from the lack of spiritual aura of today’s holidays; in the past, people prepared for celebrations by increasing their festive receptivity, so that they could then experience the echoes”¹⁷⁴.

¹⁶⁹ „tocmai zilele de lucru erau anexate la sărbătoarea”, in *Ibidem*, p. 550.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 349.

¹⁷¹ „În această configurație sufletească, ce au devenit sărbătorile? Numărul lor a scăzut, iar cele cari au rămas s-au denaturat în cea mai mare parte. (...) Dar reducerea numărului sărbătorilor nu s-a făcut din spirit de deferență față de ele, ci în primul rând din cauza intereselor muncii în sistemul capitalist. Burghezia a dat cu bățul oriunde a întâlnit un obstacol adus muncii. Iar protestantismul și calvinismul au venit în ajutorul acesteia”, in *Ibidem*.

¹⁷² See George Ritzer, *The McDonaldisation of Society: Into the Digital Age*, Tenth Edition, Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2021.

¹⁷³ Radu Baltasiu and Ovidiana Bulumac, *quoted work*, 2017, p. 176.

¹⁷⁴ „Cât e de adevărată, din nefericire, această afirmație se vede și din faptul că oamenii tind acum să niveleze sărbătorile, să le serbeze la fel, Paștile ca și Crăciunul, fără să adâncească înalta și specifica feerie spirituală pe care o cuprinde fiecare sărbătoare; ori din sincretismul crescând, acum manifestându-se tendința de a amesteca sărbătorile și obiceiurile, de a face pom de Crăciun, de a serba de două ori aceeași sărbătoare, una ortodoxă, alta catolică, ori din lipsa de halo spiritual a sărbătorilor actuale; odinioară, oamenii se pregăteau pentru serbări, mărindu-și receptivitatea sărbătorească, pentru ca apoi să trăiască ecourile”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Declinul sărbătorii” [“The decline of the holiday”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2006, p. 350.

In some cases, modern man can no longer celebrate, being paralyzed by the fear of celebration. Băncilă observes that, within the framework of modern non-festive psychology, celebration can lose so much of its metaphysical, moral, and social meaning that it becomes merely

“a moment of emptiness, like an escape from reality (...) it is the day when [man] has no newspaper, no office, no noise”¹⁷⁵.

Modernity is also losing its ingenuity and purity, hence the reference to childhood as almost an adult stage, through parenting (which considers the child equal to the parent in terms of advice, raising a child being a “collegial” endeavor, a true “partnership”). The loss of the ingenuous character of an entire era is linked to Băncilă and the erosion of the pillars of festive time: the patriarchal village (with its specific customs) and childhood.

“Nowhere is the celebration more alive than in the world of children and in the patriarchal peasant world”¹⁷⁶.

We discover other features of the degraded celebration in his writings at the end of his life (1976). Without using expressions such as degradation or decline, we nevertheless notice in the characterization of contemporary celebrations (under the communist regime in Romania) a certain regret on the part of the author that they have strayed from their authentic roots.

- “1) Contemporary holidays are (...) mnemonic; that is, aided by the printed calendar;
2) mechanical, hurried, echoes, no longer blossoms of time;
3) either conventional or semiotic;
4) or they are ideological fabrications;
5) or public holidays;
6) or they are individual, small-scale, very limited celebrations; e.g., moments of eroticism or admiration, or small groups that get excited about something”¹⁷⁷.

The mechanical nature of the celebration contrasts with the sacredness of the event. It is no longer a “special”, “unusual”, or “separate” time, but “another piece

¹⁷⁵ „un moment de vid, ca o ieşire din realitate (...) e ziua când [omul] n-are ziar, când n-are birou, când n-are zgomot”, in *Ibidem*.

¹⁷⁶ „Nicăieri sărbătoarea nu e mai vie decât în lumea copiilor şi în lumea patriarhală ţărănească”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Pedagogia sărbătorii” [“The pedagogy of celebration”], in *Ibidem*, p. 532.

¹⁷⁷ „1) Sărbătorile contemporane sunt (...) mnemotehnice; adică, ajutate de calendarul tipărit;
2) mecanice, grăbite, ecouri, fără să mai fie înfloriri ale timpului;
3) ori sunt convenţionale, semiotice;
4) ori sunt confecţii ideologice;
5) ori sărbători de stat silnic;
6) ori sunt sărbători individuale, sumare, foarte restrânse; de ex., momente erotice ori de admiraţie, ori de grup mic, ce se entuziasmează pentru ceva”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Filozofia sărbătorii (Fişe). Tipologia sărbătorii” [“The philosophy of celebration (Fact sheets). Types of celebrations”], in *Ibidem*, 2014, p. 86.

of time” part of secular time. By “mechanical” Vasile Băncilă also refers to the formalization of holiday customs. Traditions are no longer a living part of the community. People still practice them out of inertia, without knowing their purpose, which is so well known in traditional societies.

As for traits 3, 4, and 5, these are based on one of the ambivalent effects of the modernization of society (Wilbert E. Moore), namely: preserving the function of symbol of identity and cultural continuity for traditional practices¹⁷⁸. Just as traditions and celebrations in decline retain their function as a distinctive sign of community. Hence the semiotic character of the celebration.

If a pseudo-holiday can serve as a representation for a community, why couldn't it also serve as one for a political regime? Băncilă notes that the communist regime in Romania exploited the holiday by giving it an ideological character. Moreover, the holiday was used by the political regime to “shape” citizens.

“Leaving aside the increasingly despotic political factor, which also uses commemorations to shape or persecute people ideologically, there is something deeper, much deeper, and this worries us: people today feel that their spiritual heritage is disappearing because of the accelerated pace of time or history. They want certain events to remain in their memory, to be relived, to remain relevant in some way. And so, they establish the practice of commemorations, which has become almost an industry”¹⁷⁹.

Another indicator of the decline of celebrations is individualization. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the social meaning of celebrations is being replaced by an individual one. We are talking about self-centered celebrations, focused on the individual. It no longer matters how the entire community celebrates, as the individual becomes the one who determines what happens during the festivities.

The monetary quantification of an activity that is essentially moral takes place within the framework of modern pseudo-holidays. Customs are practiced not for their beauty, but for financial gain. That is why, in some of his articles focused on the pedagogy of celebration, the philosopher encourages the education of children to abandon this aspect of non-festive psychology:

¹⁷⁸ Wilbert Ellis Moore, *Social Change*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Publishing House, 1974, p. 102, quoted by Ion Ungureanu, *Paradigme ale cunoașterii societății [Paradigms of knowledge of society]*, Iași, Junimea Publishing House, 2002, p. 239.

¹⁷⁹ „Lăsând la o parte factorul politic, din ce în ce mai despotic, care se folosește și de comemorări pentru a modela sau persecuta ideologic pe oameni, dar e aici și ceva adânc, mult mai adânc, și aceasta ne îngrijorează: omul actual simte că-i dispare zestrea sufletească din cauza timpului sau istoriei accelerate. El vrea ca anume fapte să nu dispară din memorie, să mai fie trăite, să rămână actuale, într-un fel. Și atunci instituie practica comemorărilor, devenite aproape o industrie”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Filozofia sărbătorii” [“The philosophy of celebration”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2014, pp. 18–19.

“To show them the customs of the past, to teach them to love them with all their hearts, to respect them exactly as they were, and to practice them not for commercial interests, as some children do at Christmas, but for their beauty”¹⁸⁰.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Vasile Băncilă distinguished himself through his studies on celebration. His analysis of modern man's capacity to experience festive moments is of utmost importance, which Băncilă reveals from the perspective of spiritualist sociology. In this article, we have presented the Romanian philosopher and sociologist's conception of the decline of an activity so characteristic of human beings.

The decline or degradation of the holiday represents the process of losing or replacing the metaphysical, moral, and social meanings that made life meaningful. The *loss of meaning* is part of the process of de-peasantization of society.

Băncilă reiterates what was said at the time, even in Durkheim's era, that modernization weakens celebration, man's capacity for integration into the metaphysical. In other words, to speak of the decline of celebration is to analyze the modernization of society. Removed from its peasant and religious background, which encompasses metaphysical, moral, and social meaning, celebration in the modern era becomes merely a means of recreation, with a strongly individualized character, subject to a process of standardization and reification, of weakening ingenuity and childhood. In the void thus created, ideologies, marketing, parenting psychologies appear.

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¹⁸⁰ „Să le arate cari erau obiceiurile de altă dată, să-i învețe să le iubească din tot sufletul lor, să le respecte întocmai cum au fost și să le practice nu pentru interese negustorești, cum fac unii copii la Crăciun, ci pentru frumusețea lor”, in Vasile Băncilă, „Crăciunul copiilor” [“Children's Christmas”], in Vasile Băncilă, *quoted work*, 2006, p. 236.

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