Festivalization of Culture in Late Modernity

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Source to be evaluated: Guerra, Paula. "'From the night and the light, all festivals are golden': the festivalization of culture in the late modernity." Redefining art worlds in the late modernity (2016).

Evolving Thesis: Festivals are powerful cultural phenomena that weave together threads of identity, tradition, and collective memory as the convergence of night and light illuminates human shared experience through festivals, casting a golden glow upon the contemporary landscape.

Citation: Guerra, Paula. "'From the night and the light, all festivals are golden': the festivalization of culture in the late modernity." *Redefining art worlds in the late modernity* (2016).

Author Info: The author, Paula Guerra, is a well-known professor and researcher in the Department of Sociology at University of the Porto, Portugal, and Griffith University, Australia. She is the founder of All Arts Network and has been an important part of research centers including CITCEM and CEGOT.

Summary: The article explores the concept of festivalization in the contemporary culture of late modernity and discusses how festivals are the touchpoints of cultural and social participation. The author highlights the role of festivals in the cultural and creative dynamics with a massive increase in their diversity, locations, and audiences for the global expansion of the phenomenon. The article also examines the festival model of late modernity and how it plays a significant role in social interactions, contribution to the economy, creation of cultural and creative industries, and its influence on society as a whole. The author reflects on the rise in festival-goers in the past decade, the geographic spread of festivals, their unprecedented growth, and their influence on everyday life that have shaped a completely new way of life. Moreover, the research article reflects on the practices of embodiment that are associated with festivals, appropriation experience, and sociability of festival experiences marked by consumption which impact the society including media coverage, marketing, and globalization of the cultural heritage. This piece of research draws on the intensive study conducted since 2005 mirroring research related to Portugal's transformation of film and popular music, urban dynamics funded by the Science and Technology Foundation (FCT) focusing on festivals, and contemporary Portuguese urban aesthetics. The study combines qualitative and quantitative methods of research including content analysis and case studies. Moreover, the study substantiates the 'festivalization' of culture in Portugal through evidence in festival dynamics such as the geographical spread of the celebratory events, rapid increase in the number of festivals, and economic impact of festivals on Portugal that contribute to cultural industries and the national economy.

Quotation Analysis: “In the twenty-first century, all countries have been faced with a series of annual festivals, but also by diversifying the type of festivals, its location and its audiences. The festivals also become economically attractive to both the consumer and for the testing of culture. Festivals are a significant feature of the socio-economic and cultural landscape of contemporary everyday life. That is our focus here: to interpret the social, economic, territorial, and cultural impacts of the Festival making a provision for a fundamental matrix of identity restructuring, particularly in the field of youth cultures.” (Guerra).

In late modernity, festivalization has become the norm which views festivals as the repositories of memory that shape golden threads into an identified cultural identity. These threads weave cultural fabric across generations while transforming and affirming the identity and heritage from ordinary to extraordinary. As such events gain popularity in the modernized world, they also face an escalating tension between commercialization and authenticity. This usually happens because of the corporate sponsorships as well as the branded experience that dilute the true essence of festivals. In an era marked by globalization, modernization, urbanization, and digital connectivity, festivals have blossomed as communal spectacles and touchpoints. Moreover, festivals or local celebratory events, as repositories of memory imbued with resilience, sorrow, and joy, link human beings to the shared history and traditions of their ancestors. Music festivals, in particular, that pulse with rhythmic beats reflect a hunger for sensory immersion, authenticity, connection, and a yearning to break free from the mundane realities of life. The proliferation of these celebratory gatherings is more than mere entertainment and gatherings; they are rituals that punctuate human lives. Festivals provide a stage for collective performance through seasonal cycles, religious traditions, cultural heritage, or subcultural movements that enact symbolic narratives. These embodied narratives reflect that these events become liminal spaces that blur the boundary between the festivals and the routine. These acts challenge norms and reaffirm belongingness in cultural dynamics that invite humans to perform their day-to-day activities in a way that can bridge the gap between past and present in a rapidly changing modernized world. These celebratory events also negotiate meaning to affirm and transform identities in the realm of social media platforms as such spaces amplify personal celebrations through unique filters and hashtags.

Synthesis: In the era of modernity particularly after the twenty-first century, social and cultural participation through festivals characterized by diverse audiences, diverse types, and varied locations have witnessed an upsurge. Festivals promote a new way of life through marking appropriation, consumption, and globalization to foster sociability across borders. These festivals also emphasize the role of shaping individual experiences and contemporary societies through the intricate interplay between individuals, cultures, sociable dynamics, and globalization. “Historically, the festivals have been stated as important forms of social and cultural participation, celebration of space-time and sharing (values, ideologies, methodologies and beliefs), crucial for the structure of communities and society. In anthropological literature, the festival is a public ritual of interpretation; a real ‘carnivalization’ in which the community members participate (re)affirming and celebrating social ties (religious, ethnic, national, linguistic and historical), a relationship between the ontogenesis of the prevailing values and their projection in the societal future” (Guerra). Festivals are a multitude of

events that stand as pivotal moments in the human experience pulsing with shared purpose and meaning. They provide communal gatherings which provide people a platform for social interaction allowing them to actively engage in performances, rituals, and practices in cultural dynamics. Such interactions in society reinforce cultural identity allowing individuals to connect with other people beyond their immediate cultural and societal circles irrespective of religious practices, societal norms, and rituals. “An additional aspect of change in modern festivals is that the focus of events is gradually becoming more external to the communities that produce them. Originally, festivals were largely produced and celebrated by local people, without any consideration of the outside world. In modern society festivals are increasingly aimed to attract tourists from outside the local community, to attract the attention of the media and to develop an external audience as well as an internal one” (Richards). The phenomenon of modernity has led to the emergence of the idea of ‘festivalization’ of culture that has subsequently resulted in an exponential rise in the number of young festival-goers across the globe. Such celebratory events or festivals serve as crucial platforms for launching and projecting cultural heritage contributing to the financial landscape of the cultural and creative industries. Festivals in the era of modernity have become spaces where cultural dynamics and heritage are preserved and transformed according to specific geographical locations even from the outside spaces other than the local geographical regions where local festivals are celebrated.

Overall Evaluation of Source: The author meticulously sheds light on the intricate interplay between culture, festivals, and carnivalization or globalization, focusing on their significant role in shaping contemporary societies of the modern world in the era of modernity. Guerra presents a canvas drawing festivals as the threads of the past that shape the golden glow of the very existence of human beings in the present and future. Overall, the article presents the idea that festivals are not just frivolities at communal gatherings but are the dynamic expression of cultural heritage and social cohesion of human beings.

Works Cited

Guerra, Paula. “‘From the Night and the Light, All Festivals Are Golden’: The Festivalization of Culture in the Late Modernity.” *Redefining Art Worlds in the Late Modernity*, 2016.

Richards, Greg. “The Festivalization of Society or the Socialization of Festivals? The Case of Catalunya.” *Cultural Tourism*, Routledge, 2006, pp. 268–91.