

Public Abstract

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The Emergence of Narrative Identities

Extreme Metal is a form of dark tourism and leisure activity whose artistic radicalism and underground scenes invoke intense debates from musicians as well as audiences. Traditional cultural studies have assumed that its disenfranchised and transgressive music expressions are an ideological resistance to increasing homogeneities of industrialized society. As such, considering the nature of festivals as a mechanism where culture is created and transmitted, the operations and promotions of Extreme Metal festivals are inevitably engaged in the wider cultural politics of Extreme Metal. The roles of festival producers thus must be emphasized, who act as powerful agents in engaging artists, developing audiences, arranging programs, and so forth. Indeed, no festivals can be simply described as improvised events - they are carefully programmed, planned, and constructed for audiences to hear and see. With this in mind, this study serves to explore the experiential predicament of these culturally embedded event producers.

In particular, the identities of the festival producers compose the focus of investigation for this research. That is, considering the contested contexts that are at play in shaping the very existence of Extreme Metal, the producers are constantly acting as intermediaries between these contexts. The discursive practice by which they give meaning to their festival production practices, contain profound dissonance between 'what they imagine their selves to be' and 'what they actually are' as related to their turbulent 'referential world' of Extreme Metal festival production.

With this in mind, this study employs the theoretical framework of narrative identity in the examination of the 'referential world' by which identities are related. Narrative identity is considered as an approach to understand how people resolve themselves, life events, actions, and other forces in their life. Considering that a self, in narrative, is given meaning through the narrator's relation of the self to their referential world, analyzing the narrative moments where conflicting contexts are at play provides a sensitization to the struggle of Extreme Metal cultural transgression within festival production. Specifically, it is learned how this tourism is considered 'dark.' In doing so, three main research questions are asked: 1). How can we understand the festival producers' identities as negotiated and emerged from the interview narratives? 2). In regards to the festival producers' identities, what socio-cultural forces in relation to the apparatus of Extreme Metal are involved? 3). How do such findings illuminate the makings of tourism festivals at large?