Journal of Festive Studies
Issue Seven Call for Papers

Joy as Resistance (Guest Editor Miguel A. Valerio)
Deadline for Abstracts: January 15, 2024

In addition to our guest-edited section described below, we always welcome submissions on a rolling basis, with no deadline for consideration. Please do think of us if your research or professional background touches on festive practices!

What is joy? Is it happiness, just an emotion, or something else? Something more? What are the possibilities of collective joy? Philosophers and scholars of affect and emotion have dealt with these and other related questions (e.g., Ehrenreich, Dancing in the Streets: History of Collective Joy, McMahon, Happiness: A History, White, Brief History of Happiness). These thinkers and scholars, however, have mostly focused on Western cultures and thought. More recently, there has been an attempt to broaden this scope (e.g., Stearns, Happiness in World History). And critical thinkers are increasingly becoming attuned to the ways joy informs ideology and political actions, including resistance.

Writing about how African Americans have survived against all odds in our anti-Black world, for example, Imani Perry defines Blackness as “an immense and defiant joy” (Perry, “Racism is Terrible. Blackness is Not”). Likewise, in her new book, The Politics of Black Joy, Lindsay Stewart invites us to rethink how we imagine the Black experience in the US South, not as one of just tragedy, but one where joy was sought and where joy shaped epistemological and political stances. Reflecting on a project that involved creating and distributing community currency in Puerto Rico, Frances Negrón-Muntaner puts forward the concept of “decolonial joy,” which she later defined as “an emotion of varying duration that results when people can glimpse and feel the possibility of a different future where neither colonialism and coloniality dominate their lives” (Negrón-Muntaner, “The Art and Politics of Valor y Cambio”). Finally, in her new book on solidarity in Latin American political activism, Diana Taylor celebrates the “joyous accompaniment” solidarity signifies (Taylor, ¡Presente!), while Nick Montgomery and Carla Bergman have proposed “joyful militancy” as a new way of doing political activism (Montgomery and Bergman, Joyful Militancy).

On the other hand, joy is not inherently progressive, as Sara Ahmed reminds us with the concept of “killjoy”: “We killjoy because we speak back, because we use words like sexism or transphobia or ableism or racism or homophobia to describe our experience, because we refuse to polish ourselves, to cover over the injustices with a smile. We don’t even have to say anything to killjoy. Some of us, black people and people of colour, can killjoy just by entering the room because our bodies are reminders of histories that get in the way of the occupation of space” (“Killjoy Truth”). What is this malicious, repressive joy that we kill? How is our own joy related to it, a response, or not? What is the role of gender in joy? In other words, how is joy experienced in varied ways through gender? How might killjoy become a joyful practice of resistance in itself?
In this special issue of the *Journal of Festive Studies*, we aim to further explore the varied forms joyful resistance can take. We propose a critical approach to joy that is attuned to the central way joy informs resistance, from the radical to the daily. We do not conflate resistance with joy, but rather ask how joy can shape resistance. Can joy be its own resistance? We attend to such questions as: What role does joy play in the lives of the oppressed? How have particular communities made joy central to the way they relate or respond to oppressive power, to each other, to outsiders? Who should say what joy is for a certain group? How do we theorize joy from below? What methodological tools are needed to account for joy in our research? What does it mean to make joy a strategy in academic work?

In line with the interdisciplinary nature of the *Journal of Festive Studies*, we welcome submissions of original research and analysis rooted in a variety of fields including (but not limited to): social and cultural history, anthropology, archeology, cultural geography, art history, architecture, decorative arts, technology, folklore, musicology, consumption studies, labor studies, museum studies, literary studies, and design studies. In addition to traditional academic essays, we invite short essays and creative contributions that incorporate digital media such as timelines and maps, photographic essays, digital exhibitions, interactive media, documentaries, illustrations, creative audio, and interviews that engage with festivity.

Please consult the journal submission guidelines. We ask that you submit an abstract by January 15, 2024. Completed article manuscripts must be submitted in summer 2024. A specific deadline is forthcoming.

If you have any further questions, please contact Miguel Valerio (m.a.valerio@wustl.edu).

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References

Ahmed, Sara. “Killjoy Truth: The More We Come up Against, the More We Need More.”


