Editorial

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Festive Studies*. It has been a rather long time coming, but we believe that you will find it worth the wait. As we noted in our initial call for papers, the journal's aim is to draw together all academics who share an interest in festivities, including but not limited to holiday celebrations, family rituals, carnivals, religious feasts, processions, parades, and civic commemorations. We invited submissions considering some of the methods and theories that scholars have relied on to apprehend festive practices across the world, the specific contributions of disciplines or areas of study touching on festivity, the methodological issues faced by scholars doing qualitative research on festivities across the globe, or analyses of specific festive occasions. There has been much groundbreaking work in what is clearly an emerging academic subfield, and we are delighted to present some of this exciting scholarship here. We hope that the journal (in tandem with its parent network, H-Celebration) will become a forum for showcasing and debating new theories and innovative methods. Our first issue provides a look at the emergence and development of festive studies since the late 1960s. It features articles that examine the state of festive studies as well as articles that consider festivity from a variety of methodological perspectives. Four book reviews round it off, allowing you to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field.

We would like to extend a hearty thank you to H-Net (the interdisciplinary forum for scholars in the humanities and social sciences located at Michigan State University), under whose auspices this journal was born and is published, and H-Net's president, Patrick Cox, who conceived of this project back in 2016. We particularly thank our production editor, Yelena Kalinsky, who has guided this new journal almost every step of the way, and our amazing managing editor, Cora Gaebel, who has been the glue that has held this enterprise together. We also extend our appreciation to our excellent copy editors, Basia Nowak and Charlotte Weber, as well as to Réa de Matas, who designed the journal's banner, logo, and layout. We thank the scholars who gave generously of their time to review the submissions, as well as the scholars who agreed to serve on our newly constituted editorial board. And finally, we thank the authors of the articles published here, who have borne with us patiently through this process and without whom we would not have an inaugural issue. We invite you, dear readers, to sample the richness of their offerings.

In his pithy opening piece, ethnologist Alessandro Testa explores the reasons scholars have studied festivals, rituals, and other collective events since the early twentieth century. He also explains what his own diachronic, multi-sited inquiry into festive events in Europe has taught him—mainly, that cultural performances can reveal more about the social life of a group than, say, their electoral behavior. For this to happen, however, Testa believes that a healthy combination of methods must be employed, including analogical reasoning, ethnography, and historical work. His hope is that such interdisciplinary work can be used by a variety of social agents (politicians, nongovernmental organizations, social workers, etc.) in order to deal with pressing issues such as immigration and integration, social resilience, and collective well-being.

In this issue's second essay, Laurent Sébastien Fournier also blends his own experience as a European ethnologist with his intimate knowledge of the existing literature in order to produce a wide-ranging appraisal of the field. From Ovid's descriptions of Roman festivals to the latest scholarship on the commodification and standardization of contemporary festivals, from James Frazer to Dorothy Noyes, Fournier explains how festive studies came to emerge as a distinct, interdisciplinary field. He then summarizes the challenges that scholars currently face when studying so-called traditional festivals. Finally, he considers possible avenues of research and advises scholars to "open their own minds and accept the seeming nonsense of the situations they document" in order to truly grasp the "otherness" of festive behavior.

In a piece soberly titled "The Archive and the Festival," Lisa Voigt builds on Diana Taylor's well-known archive/repertoire dichotomy to analyze colonial Latin American and early modern Iberian festivals (1500–1800). More specifically, she offers important methodological advice to those who may want to use archival records to reconstruct early modern festive repertoires. First, she shows how a comparative study of the multiple textual and visual representations of a single festival may mitigate the seeming inaccessibility of the original event by revealing conflicts and tensions that official accounts of the festival were meant to conceal. Then, she uses the example of Philip III's entry into Lisbon in 1619 to remind us of how the archive can actually precede and even shape the repertoire, thus complicating a traditional view of the archive as a more reliable documentary record of festivals. Third, she uses an example taken from her work on festivals in colonial South American mining towns to remind us that, like the repertoire, the archive does not only belong to the elites but can be appropriated by marginalized communities to defend their own interests. Finally, she draws attention to the biases created by the "digital turn" in historical research and advises scholars of festivals not to rely too much on the archive and to immerse themselves in the repertoire of present-day festivals that have survived in the places they study.

Naomi Milthorpe and Eliza Murphy's approach to festivity differs markedly from Testa's, Fournier's, and Voigt's, in that it apprehends festive sociability through the lens of literature, more specifically the writings of English satirist Evelyn Waugh (1903–66). In Waugh's novel *Vile Bodies* and his short story "Cruise," private, elite parties are depicted, not as "utopian occasions for transformative jouissance," but rather as unpleasurable waste. Referencing Roger Caillois's theory of games, the authors explore this notion of "wasteful play" and argue that literary texts, inasmuch as they provide evidence of "the felt and imagined experiences of social and moral transgression, bodily, mental and affective transformation, and class, race, gender, and sexual boundary-crossing" occasioned by parties, should be considered as key to our understanding of the cultural history of festivity.

In his essay, Thibaut Clément reflects on the cultural impact of Disney theme parks and their own brand of merry-making by looking at another oft-neglected type of discourse: that of fans. Known for their enthusiasm and near-devotion, Disney park fans often act as data collectors, curators, even historians, thus bridging the gap between fandom and scholarship. While fan labor is conducive to valuable expertise, Clément shows that in their attempt to preserve older attractions and protect the park from overwhelming commercialism, “Disney historians” often turn into “Disney custodians,” meaning they tend to issue a set of prescriptive attitudes on how to engage with the parks. Ultimately, Clément analyzes fan-created historical works as just another arena for fan participation in the parks, inasmuch as chronicling Disney history grants additional meaning and depth to the parks and allows fans to “actively shape and promote a favored mode of engagement with Disney products.”

With John Paul’s article, the journal experiments with a different academic format: that of the photographic essay. In the fall of 2016, Paul traveled to North Dakota as an invited guest of the Standing Rock Sioux to document the tribe’s early mobilization efforts against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) on Native American land. His photographs record the emergent encampment of American Indians and their allies, while his text provides a useful history of the DAPL project, followed by a stimulating examination of the scholarly concept of “protestival,” which has been used by participants and critics alike to describe the festival-like dimension of many alter-globalization movements. As a whole, the essay points to various ways in which photography can complement and enhance qualitative field research on festive events.

Adrian Franklin’s article focuses on Dark Mofo, a midwinter festival organized since 2013 by the Museum of Old and New Art (Mona) in Hobart, Australia. After describing its origins in the postcolonial imagination, its irreverent aesthetics, and its innovative use of urban space, Franklin assesses its social, cultural, and economic impact using a mixed methodology of participant observation/ethnography and nonrandomized sample survey. His conclusion is that by scaling up the museum’s carnivalesque exploration of sex, death, and the body to a citywide celebration of mischief and misrule on the winter solstice (June 21 in the Southern Hemisphere), the festival has played a major role in local urban regeneration and has helped narrow the gap between the art world and the residents of Hobart and neighboring Glenorchy, Tasmania.

From Australia, we move on to the Paraíba do Sul River valley in southeastern Brazil with Luciana de Araujo Aguiar’s article on *jongo*, a dance and musical genre rooted in the experience of slavery and related to *umbanda*, a syncretic religion that blends African, Roman Catholic, spiritualist, and Native American beliefs. Based on fieldwork conducted in 2014, the author shows how the quest for an “authentic *jongo* dance” often leads to disputes among various groups claiming to stage a “purer” or “truer” version of it. To her, the quest for “African authenticity,” that is, the recognition and legitimization of African origins during *jongo* performances, is a key aspect of identity construction among Brazilian blacks. This paper therefore focuses on the *jongo rodas* as a festive, yet competitive, event that exhibits the African ancestral past of Brazilian blacks as well as the signs and symbols of a contemporary Brazilian black identity.

We encourage you to dig in and enjoy this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Festive Studies*. We hope you will find the articles and reviews to be as fascinating and provocative as we did.

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