

parallax

Yes

What would an edition of an academic journal devoted exclusively to the act of affirmation look like? Probably not very academic, given that academia in general and the university in particular could hardly be described as the most affirmative of places. To be educated is to learn how to say 'no', no to everything that stands in the way of our own self-recognition as the guardians of a truth or an idea that can only be grasped in the tiny space remaining after the erasure of everything else. Everything that is misguided, muddle-headed, naive and confused: the thought of the other, acknowledged (so ironically) as one's 'peer'.

56 To read is to construct a theatre of war, to write is to take up arms and do battle with all of those who would block the path that leads to our own big (or not so big) idea. The heat of thinking can here only be generated by the friction of contraries rubbing each other up the wrong way. A heat designed to burn and ultimately incinerate the other in a life and death struggle for recognition (and a permanent academic post).

How about a much bigger 'no', a no to all of the above, to all of the petty squabbling dressed up as 'healthy debate', the myopic entrenchments promoted as 'schools of thought', the leaden dogmatism celebrated as 'conviction' or 'the political'; how about a big 'no' that would make room for a big 'yes'.

So, what might this big 'yes' look like? Well admittedly it could look very bad, a ghastly regime of agreement, where a quagmire of consensus sucks all and sundry into an undifferentiated community of care and enabling; where the warm glow of an assumed oneness replaces the searing heat of endless strife. But surely there are more interesting ways of saying 'yes', neither contradictory nor consensual but contestational, interruptive rather than responsive, the affirmation rather than the negation of difference.

The contributors to this edition will be drawn from a range of disciplines and will reflect the different ways in which affirmation can itself be affirmed. There is no desire to propose or promote any particular model of yes-saying, something that hopefully will result in a series of interruptions and contestations that will open up both thinking and practice/performance to their own possibilities without the need to contradict or negate the other.

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Potential contributors are encouraged to contact the guest editor:

Gary Peters
Chair of Critical and Cultural Theory
Faculty of Arts
York St. John University
York YO31 7EX
UK
Email: g.peters@yorks.j.ac.uk

call for papers