

SUE SAPERSTEIN

Failed Seduction/Optimum Seduction: Lost in Translation

Failures of seduction may be considered another translation of Freud's first sexual theory associated with hysteria and trauma. Seduction was the controversy that introduced Freud to the discovery of the sexual unconscious and its expression in fantasy. Lost in translation, and confounded with actual sexual abuse, infant seduction is now being reinserted into psychoanalysis as a primary requisite for the initiation of desire.

Failures of seduction in the clinical cases presented are associated with a repudiation of the feminine, which is located within maternal desire. Thus, maternal desire is impregnated with horror linked to "the internal void, without space, place or time." Horrors associated with seduction in an analysis act to dissociate or foreclose the necessary seduction for infant life to begin and go on being. What constitutes an ethical seduction that optimizes the potential to be?

"Be aware of what we say in the name of the mother" (Bollas) because we are and are not aware of all that we have ascribed to the mother, the maternal order, her figure and functions in the beginning of life. Bollas as well as Green alert us to the significance of the erotized absence and the absence of erotics in the maternal/infant emotional experience not currently addressed in the analytic encounter. Two clinical cases will be elaborated to reconsider the sexual address within the analytic exchange at primitive levels of emotional experience. If death or dying is part of sexuality, it is not surprising to find both analysands are as obsessed in fantasy with sexuality as with death: one fears death and seeks the sexual, the other fears sexuality and seeks death.

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