

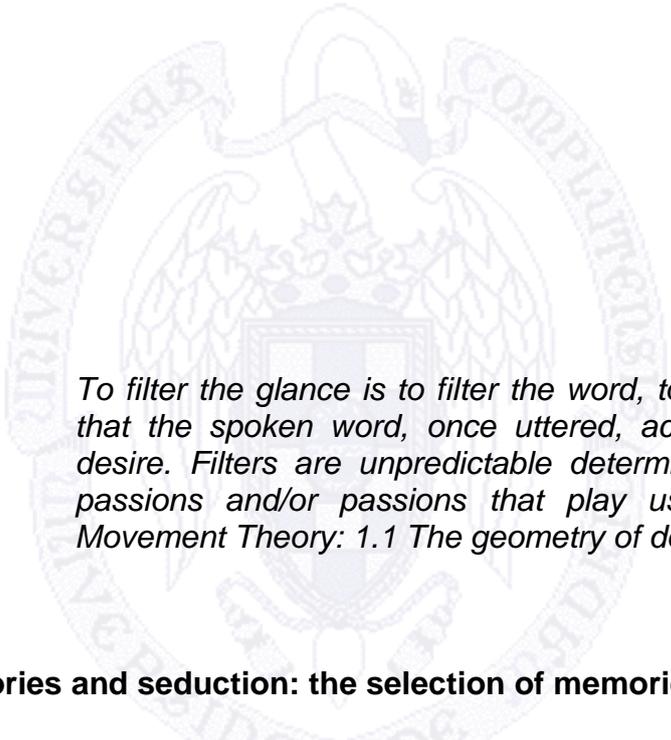
FILTERING THE DESIRE: THE EFFECTS OF TIME AND SPACE

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Abstract.- After a previous analysis of the glances, words and gestures in seduction, the author now reflects on the effects of time and distance, the latter being understood as space. Time does not go by for seduction, or rather time produces seduction. Seduction is understood as a song with an allure akin to the sirens' songs described by Ulysses.

Keywords.- *Memory of seduction, space of seduction, effects of time, effects of distance.*



To filter the glance is to filter the word, to filter the silence that the spoken word, once uttered, activates. Filters of desire. Filters are unpredictable determinations, plays of passions and/or passions that play us (in the Colour Movement Theory: 1.1 The geometry of desire)

Canto I. Memories and seduction: the selection of memories

All of us experience some kind of seduction from our own individual angle. No one is immune to it, even though they may think or say that they are. Every human being is granted the pleasure of being seduced or spontaneously becoming a seducer just like that, because of the effects of an outbreak that lies in wait, concealed, ready to explode.

A memory is seduction and all of us have or are susceptible to having memories. Life holds this sweet contingency in store for us. A passionately-felt song heard *ad nauseam* that never tires, a special food that halts or takes us back in time, an image that sparks off a chain of sensations, perhaps previously concealed feelings, a perfume, a scent we recall and associate with an idea, person, country, space or time...and like all of them: *a voice*, a word, an image or person and an expression or gesture. In short, something that is evoked especially and only for me and not for my neighbour, an entire spectrum of sensations.

A feeling akin to what we go through when we leave our customary space of reference: the place where we have grown up and loved and where we have roots in some way.

We always linger in the spaces that witnessed our birth and childhood, seduced by them. We may move, in other words, our bodies may move, yet the soul remains there forever.

The distance of space involves this feeling of missing what we once had and have now lost because of the effects of time and distance. Yet, the exact opposite may be true, since the roles are interchangeable: we may yearn for or feel we yearn for something better and depart in its quest, obliterating the memories, spaces, people and things we grew up amongst. The desire that seduces us urges and drives us towards this idea. Many of those who travel far beyond their borders long for things later: among others, to continue growing and growing old alongside those who were born in the same space they were assigned by luck or error. They undoubtedly continue to be seduced by the image they still keep for themselves, although another image may have been the one that drove them to distance themselves from their shores. Never Paris-France, never your jacket on the floor... the protective womb that is one's own home, city, country, etc., is devoured in the blink of an eye by the shared flat, city and country of destination, to which many move in search of a better life. To awaken knowledge, a new capacity, also leads us towards new horizons. Yet, seduction does not conclude upon arrival; the poetry never ends.

In short, seduction is like a gentle sunset one wishes would linger forever, a sunset we later fix in our minds. Looking at seduction straight on is like looking at a scalding fire, the sea's horizon, a starry sky. Not everyone enjoys watching the sun set, yet it is always there and anyone can stop and watch it whenever they like.

Seduction's unflinching gaze also distances one from the world and creates another type of space where all sense and meaning is different.

Canto II. The memory of seduction

Seduction has a history and produces one. Memory is not fair; at times, it is careless and disloyal, which is understandable when dealing with human beings and not gods. Yet the best-kept, most highly-cherished memory, the one that seems authentic, ever-burning, the one that remains latent in our minds, is the memory of seduction. It seems that time stands still for seduction, or rather that seduction may produce it. That must be the reason why.

A recount is always possible, the one that merits the most attention, and those who are seduced keep many things to recount to themselves, many things to investigate, since it is a transit, an initiation, a risky pathway that is being revealed.

The "credible recount" is a reckoning murmured over the years, since seduction always leaves traces in the memory. It is a memory saved and polished that intermingles with so many other sensations to which only those who have been seduced abandon themselves. Only thus do they select what has been experienced and choose to keep what most pleases their lesser god.

These memories are sometimes denied and then pleasing the memory is like enjoying a desire that existed, but was never totally satisfied either.

The "impossible memory" is the one we have not enjoyed, although we may be able to speak of it. It is desire made memory.

Seduction has no time, but many times; it always flourishes when experimentation, audacity and discovery are present.

Its duration can be extensive or intense. Seduction can be maintained intensely, by way of example, during the time that a show, a performance, the declamation of a poem, a master class, etc., lasts and is played with, without further ado. Whoever feels that seduction will admiringly or affectionately remember the person and space that bewitched them, but when that space and time are over, the spell is broken.

It can also linger, without the spell ever stopping. And then seduction is extensive.

Keeping the tension of seduction alive for a very long time is truly difficult. Should it indeed be seduction, the relationship established between the seducer and the seduced is intriguing and enigmatic, although in this case, both of them are linked to sustaining seduction; whoever attains it is an exquisitely rare conjurer with a myriad of facets that make him or her highly attractive. Other explanations may exist, which only the seducer and the seduced can provide each other. Then, it seems that the only combat that cannot be lost is death and not even that is lost in seduction. The hand of the seducer or seduced is eternally caressed.

A combat is maintained between seducer and seduced, a battle that consists in the seducer truly wishing to surprise the seduced and to do so deploys all sorts of amorous artifices. Yet in turn, the seduced hopes to maintain this seduction, which is why he or she will insist on flinging down new challenges for the seducer, so as to keep the relationship fresh, to nurture it and keep it alive.

Neither is there any possible death in seduction, although a battle takes place, and each one of the two – seducer and seduced – hopes to emerge victorious. And in fact they are in the end; they are without a doubt, because this combat has no final outcome, because the outcome is seduction itself.

Canto III. The basic and accessory components of seduction

The communication style between seducer and seduced is *sui generis*. What moves the seduced is the desire to satisfy some loss or lack. Yet, it is not a type of dissatisfaction, but rather the desire to find another kind of satisfaction.

It turns out to be an attack that repels; whoever is dissuaded as the seducer insists on maintaining communication. Persistence in this case indicates its true impudent and insolent nature, which the other hopes to dissolve, revealing its spell.

To demonstrate this dissolution of the other's presence, we must speak, gesture or look with evident displeasure; since in essence, words, glances and gestures are the tools used in seduction. If one does not speak, gesture or look, expressing a refusal, it is evident one wishes to carry on with the seduction.

The voice and mystery are transfigured to shape the seducer's image; words, with their mystery, know their target, know where to situate the so fervently desired seducer.

One seduces, imprinting a special rhythm in the voice. The most heartfelt song is the one that is performed: Jacques Brel, Nina Simone and Edith Piaf are only three examples, but many more that could be mentioned.

Whispering is seduction's most explosive and successful facet: it induces the amorous experience like no other. If the seduced holds the seducer in his thoughts, he will be able to utter the most charismatic whispers, the most beautiful croakings, the most incredible registers of the voice, since thought greatly aids the voice, since the voice can also be the one hand that caresses the other, when no possible proximity exists.

The voice's mystery lies in that although the one who emits it is not seen, it can have forms and inflexions that are transfigured into an especially desired body as a result.

Thus, jokes and anecdotes, ingenious stories, connect with the listener.

The writer's voice is the text, which obviously has different forms. The voice is a calm, yet powerful resource, and not only the voice, but rather what it seems to indicate. A person can be seduced by someone else without seeing the Other, only through the voice's effect. We can feel seduced without knowing who is writing or singing or speaking by these bodies that are defined upon being uttered.

Music also has different forms and virtuosos are admired because of that, yet without exceptional skills, music can in itself be the object of desire, knowledge. Songs spark so much passion because they have a voice and at the same time, contain forms, musical bodies. If the effect of the invasive image, which is evidently seductive, is missing, then melodies can also seduce. Yet, some

artists have managed to successfully link music, image and seduction.¹

Verses used to be accompanied by music in antiquity, something that is missing from contemporary poetry and that the cinema has nonetheless successfully achieved.

Dance expresses forms through the rhythms of shapes, the most unsuspected contents, the body's most hidden feelings.

To see or feel it all can make us tremble with seduction. Sometimes we can only manage to express our feelings through dance. Nothing more heartrending, and forceful than a good tango; nothing more pitiful and deeply felt than seduction's cry: "O path that time has erased, you saw us pass by together one day."²

Music has words not found in dictionaries, words that are hard for us to find in our customary expressions at times.

The seduced is not guided by sense of smell precisely and if he were, it would be by the metaphor of the sense of smell; in other words, the presentiment of what one seeks, what one finds in a certain person. Yet, one does not follow another because of scent. Yet, a type of scent or odorous sensation may be associated to that seduction and linger in the memory. The seduced does this because seduction is accompanied by poetic garb and one of them is perfume. If the seduced accidentally manages to encounter that odorous sensation, memory will irremediably be triggered and the seducer's image recalled. This type of association is like many other cases, in that *a gesture, a glance or a word*³ reminds us of something or someone.

Certain shapes, certain fundamental elements also irremediably remind us of the seducer's profile.

It is not only the seducer's gesture, but also how he uses it. It is not so much the expression that someone voluntarily produces, but also its shape, the definition of its contours, limits and spaces, which is why seduction is so tenacious, so forceful and... so irremediable as well.

The gesture of licking one's lips, winking an eye, the infinity of positions that hands can take, those movements that take control of contraptions such as fans or other things that are caressed by hands, the smile - in short, any movement

¹ Although many others exist, some of the most outstanding are the images accompanying the soundtrack to many of Stanley Kubrick's and Won Kar's images, which achieve a sensual force thanks to the effect of an extreme correspondence.

² A reference to Garbino Corría Peñaloza's lyrics (1926), in which love joins death. Although the tango was born without lyrics, it also sports them. When words are added, the songs seem even more of a lament.

³ Pérez González, A. Beatriz (2005)

that can in fact be provocative is not what accurately defines seduction's impulse. It is rather the mouth's outline, the measured pause between gestures, the very morphology that characterises a part of the seducer's body. All of them undoubtedly enclose more possibilities in themselves than an isolated gesture does. An isolated gesture can be provocative, coarse, yet it does not necessarily lead to seduction. That extraordinarily particular morphology leads to a seduction that makes us evasive, pensive and dreamy, that makes us - through some kind of mystery - find seduction in the Other. Because not all of those who have exercised seduction are seductive to others. Each person finds the throbbing desire that must be satisfied in the body of his particular seducer.

Not always does an attraction exist in each person's apparent forms. Attraction is defined or configured by the object of seduction. By way of example, we might say that one person is extremely beautiful, if she is unmistakably so. Yet, beyond a coincidence in this type of overtly evident judgments, there are people who are more appealing – if not attractive - to each one of us, much more than others. That is why seduction's basic foundations not only lie in the movements made, but in the form; a form we keep inside of us, along with an irremediable impulse we cannot deviate. Therefore we feel obligatorily subjected to this morphology, in short, to this image.

Seduction is also composed of silences and there are people who find silence attractive and are also susceptible to seduction. Although it is not the most common vehicle, seduction can be thusly manifest. Just as certain images calm, certain silences attract calmly.

If the seduced finds silence in the seducer, it will probably confuse him. Seduction can become subtler and stronger because of the imagination's effect in this case; the spell can be calmed and appeased, but never halted if a strong attraction has arisen. This occurs because of memory's effect, since the seducer's image remains alive forever, although words do not exist, although communication does not exist. Thus, communication is not the essential component of seduction, but rather many other things that seduce in themselves.

Beyond any other product seductively sold to us, seduction is the only thing that is self-produced, that reinvents itself, that self-generates; it is the only thing that brims with happiness and enthusiasm, even when nostalgic, even when revealing a desire that is not always fulfilled.

As for proximity, the recommended dose of tension provides the key to the exact nature of this type of seduction, because in seduction, there is always a more or less thick kind of tension that becomes more or less transparent according to the Other's gaze and is attractive or repulsive as a result.

The power of seduction is the power of those who love and desire without the offering, without the final outcome being love in itself. Rather, one hopes that the Other notices one or vice versa.

Canto IV. The satisfaction of desire

This does not mean that seduction is chaste or has nothing to do with sex. Seduction's lust is the promise, the hope of those who follow down its path and is always in the mind of both seducer and seduced. That carnal desire does not have to be the final outcome, but can be kept alive. It is not only or therefore a spiritual desire, although many times it proves to be intangible, which is what Anaïs Nin's letter to the Collector demonstrates when it says that he "taught us more than anyone I know how wrong it is not to mix it with emotion, hunger, desire, lust, whims, caprices, personal ties, deeper relationships that change its colour, flavour, rhythms, intensities".⁴

Although its outcome may not exclusively be carnal passion, yet rather another kind of promise, seduction is not a naïve passion⁵. Lethargic, patient, stripped bare, the seduced observes what the seducer has prepared and what he or she is hoping for.

Love may be impossible in seduction, yet it is also the ultimate promise, a type of love akin to the one felt by Romeo and Juliet, akin to any kind of love that is unrealisable in itself or whose end is absolutely catastrophic, stormy and catatonic. We know this is not a typical love, the kind defined by custom and tradition.

The site of seduction is not dominated by reason. Unpredictability and emotion play a very important part⁶. Possible strategies do not fit and one struggles against the tide, improvising and creating. It is from this point of view that metaphors play a significant role in exciting desire; they make us apply what we see in other situations. They are the prelude that awaits the body.

The metaphors the seducer utters may or may not be understood by all; they may or may not caress all, may only – according to each individual's peculiarities - stop more, be more pleased with someone in particular or with everyone. As Alfonsina said:

*"The caress leaves my fingers for no reason
Leaves my fingers...in the wind, as it rolls,
The caress that wanders with no destination or object,
The lost caress. Who will recover it?"*⁷

⁴From a letter written to Anaïs Nin and Henry Miller's client, the "Collector", who commissioned them to write erotic tales and made them root out all poetry. The two writers survived the 1940s by writing for this Collector, whose name they never knew. In Isabel Allende (1997: 103 and following.)

⁵ In *Los ropajes de la seducción* [*The garb of seduction*], a canto not included in this paper.

⁶Jacques Lacan used a kind of vanishing of the symbolic field to describe imaginary entrapment. Seduction does not function according to rational principles; it is a kind cognitive entrapment only related to the affective.

⁷ Alfonsina Storni "La caricia perdida" (1999).

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