

## Commentator response: Linda Knight

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Seduction. To fall unknowingly (or maybe not) in love, to desire, to yearn, to want. Badly.

Being seduced. If you grew up in a Christian household, as I did, seduction had illicit sexual undertones attached (thanks to poor old Mary Magdalene) and was something that took you, the innocent, unawares. So, I read the theme of this Special Issue with interest and curiosity to see how the collection might entrance us with concepts and ideas from theorists that thrill, that illicitly stir deep feelings, and increase the heart rate.

Why write about seduction? Perhaps we in academia are so strait-laced and conservative in our ideas and thought we need to be seduced. And, if that is the case, how did scholarship become so controlled? So palatable? So digestible and ...approved? Are we all now finding ourselves in situations where, the only hope for each of us to have some form of freedom of thought is through seduction. To be mesmerized and stirred in deep places by the work of theorists, feminists, philosophers during their blinding states of drunkenness and teetering on the edge of insanity in fog-filled smoking dens. Typing out their obscene and extraordinary ideas with nicotine brown fingers and collapsing lungs, unable to discern boundaries between different relational states of being. Why would we, why do we desire this intellectual seduction?

Why is it absolutely vital that we ALL MUST BE SEDUCED? Because our creeping conservatisms and micro-fascisms make seduction vital for the survival of free thinking.

Rantala and Koro see that "Seduction functions as an infinite and becoming force" (2021, p. 47) full of intense potentialities and relationalities. The promise of something secretes desire in mundane encounters and everyday actions, used by us and on us. Sanctioned neoliberal seduction: the desire to perpetually self-promote and produce, produce, produce, is Berlant's cruel optimism as corporate desire keeping us busy. Other seductions are troublesome, individual. These incite undesirable desire. These seductions draw the attention of the good neoliberal scholar, stirring our loins and turning our efforts away from administration work. But these

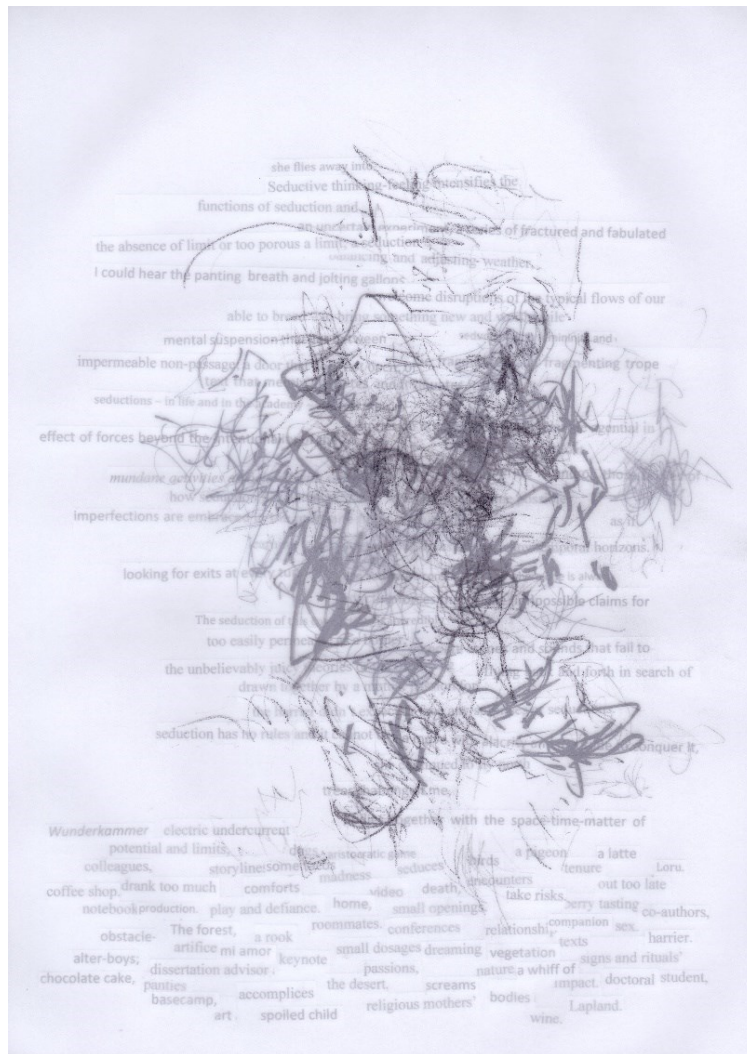
seductions flick on cerebral and corporeal switches we had forgotten about or didn't even realize we had.

Rantala and Koro refer to Baudrillard's proposition that seduction opposes production because it perpetually seeks something more, and perpetually drives us toward something other than what we do or see. Seduction is slippery, evading description as material, subject, object. Its multiplicity is its magnetism, because its multiplicity simultaneously exposes the order that rules generate as well as the tantalizing breaks and spaces that are also generated.

The papers in this collection tell accounts and stories of seductive events, seducing ideas, and passionate wrestlings with theories and ideas. The authors consider how forces work upon them and how they form part of more-than-human clusters of matters, bodies and energies that work on each other in seductive ways. The authors find spaces to rethink and re-work their experiences in relation to the affects that were felt or perhaps still reside, and the minute or monumental desires of/in/from those events.

I have drawn and drawn and drawn on the stories, passions, desires, memories, questions in the collection and have made a cartography, an 'inefficient mapping' (Knight 2020) of the seductive and seductions within them, making my own relationships with the desires and potentialities I saw.

What this collection shows is that academics and scholars are open to intense experiences and that they find powerful and creative ways to be intellectually and physically seduced.



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## References

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