



## **Flirtations: Rhetoric and Aesthetics This Side of Seduction (Idiom Inventing Writing Theory FUP)**

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**Flirtations: Rhetoric and Aesthetics This Side of Seduction (Idiom Inventing Writing Theory FUP)**  
**What is flirtation, and how does it differ from seduction?**

In historical terms, the particular question of flirtation has tended to be obscured by that of seduction, which has understandably been a major preoccupation for twentieth-century thought and critical theory. Both the discourse and the critique of seduction are unified by their shared obsession with a very determinate end: power. In contrast, **flirtation is the game in which no one seems to gain the upper hand and no one seems to surrender**. The counter-concept of flirtation has thus stood quietly to the side, never quite achieving the same prominence as that of seduction. **It is this elusive (and largely ignored) territory of playing for play's sake that is the subject of this anthology.**

The essays in this volume address the under-theorized terrain of flirtation not as a subgenre of seduction but rather as a phenomenon in its own right. Drawing on the interdisciplinary history of scholarship on flirtation even as it re-approaches the question from a distinctly aesthetic and literary-theoretical point of view, the contributors to *Flirtations* thus **give an account of the practice of flirtation and of the figure of the flirt, taking up the act's relationship to issues of mimesis, poetic ambiguity, and aesthetic pleasure**. The art of this poetic playfulness-often read or misread as flirtation's "empty gesture"-becomes suddenly legible as the wielding of a particular and subtle form of nonteleological power.

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