Plato. Love as on the path from not-having to having. Something that “disappears” when the object is attained. This does not change even if you see love as renewable upon it’s demise. This picture is of love as oscillation. But this is a superficial view of it. The real thing, the pure essence of which is desire, is something else.

The thing desired may be valuable in and of itself. In case of personal desire, the payoff may be pleasure. But it is not only the attractiveness of the object that makes us willing to pay for it. It may also be the other way round, the fact that we have to pay for it makes us desire it.

“... it incarnates concession and withdrawal in the playful rhythm of constant alternation” (124a9-b1/135)

Flirtation as flattery: “Although you might indeed be able to conquer me, I won’t allow myself to be conquered” (124b/135)

Flirtation as contempt: “Although I would actually allow myself to be conquered, you aren’t able to do it” (124b/135)

Flirtation as provocation: “Perhaps you can conquer me, perhaps not – try it!” (124b/135)

Flirtation evaporates if a decision is made (124b9). An aspect of flirtation is revealed when a flirt flirts with one person in order to flirt with another. There is a double meaning of “with” – she uses a man as an instrument and she joins in an interaction with the other.

Semi-Concealment (125a3). Simmel has in mind here a variety of phenomena including suggestive/revealing clothing and talk that partially exposes the self. Key is that something is held back but that which is missing is hinted at. We might think about bathing suits in this regard – we don’t often wear flesh colored bikinis?

In any case, key element is that this is a dynamic process.

In the full text Simmel next discusses the sculpture known as the Medici Venus in which a female figure holds a hand in front of her breasts and pubic region but not over these areas. He uses his analysis to explain why people have such an ambivalent reaction to this statue. The figure attempts to cover herself but does not do so effectively. You look at her and you see a naked woman. The pose exhibits the tension between submission and denial as in flirtation. BUT it is not an image of a woman partially covering herself in front of an observer IN the art work, but she does so for the real spectator but does not succeed and to the museum-goer she is quite unveiled. Simmel says the “moments” of flirtation collapse into one another in different spheres – reality and art.

“People can almost see me but I won’t quite let them.”

“I would let myself be seen, but not by you.”

“Perhaps you can see me, perhaps not, take a look!”
Intellectual Flirtation

140/ 125b6 “In refusing and conceding... women are the masters.” What fundamental difference is Simmel trying to express/describe here?

**Role of chooser 140.7/ 126a2.** “...females exhibit a much more individual attraction and aversion toward the males than the males demonstrate for the females. Since the woman is the chooser she is influenced much more by the individuality of the man than he is by hers.” What does Simmel mean by individuality here? Remember is contrast between individual specificity and categorical genericness. If men pursue women qua women but women select men as individuals, women have more opportunity to “leave the choice in abeyance” 126a5.

Note that it is easy to read this as an attempt at an essential description of men and women. More instructive, though, is to read it as an analysis of the sociational possibilities generated by a particular set of differences.

Motives 126a.6ff. Freedom and Power. Note Simmel’s realistic assessment of position of women of his time and locating flirtation’s motives within this context.

Is the simultaneity of consent and refusal an indication of ambivalence or uncertainty? In general, not at all. 126b8. In genuine flirtation, the flirt is resolved, and the uncertainty is generated in the flirted with.
“Thrill of the chase” is partly a product of the excitement of the result leaks back into the process of getting there. Evolution of erotic sequence has associated pleasure with early steps, not just destination. 127a1-6.

Art and Play 128. Kant: art as purposiveness without purpose. Flirtation as having form of rational sociation but without committed goal of achieving any particular end. PLAY.

How is art different from flirtation? Both have this purposiveness without purpose quality, but art is from the get-go beyond reality. It IS just a representation. Flirtation is of reality, in reality. Flirt and partner play not with appearance of reality but with reality itself.

Cf. Bateson on animals playing at fighting?

END OF KIVISTO

Another point of commonality between art and flirtation is the fact that both are detached from the value reality of their objects. Artist and flirt both simply use things in their performance (GSOWSL 145-6). The “things” used are not take seriously in their own right.

GSOWSL 149.5 “Here as elsewhere, the relationship between the sexes provides the prototype for countless relationships between the individual and the inter-individual life. It appears as the purest example of so many processes because, from the outset, the form of these processes is defined by that fundamental limiting condition of our life.”

On page 150-1 Simmel further thinks through the question of whether flirtation can be a model for other forms of social interaction. Think of the various things and persons other than members of the opposite sex that one can have encounters with. Simmel says that things like how we approach an important decision, taking sides on an issue, having faith in a proposition or person can easily take the form of a simultaneous consent and refusal. And we even talk about this using the word “flirt.” We flirt with religious or political positions, for example. We spend time in the “for and against” or in the state of “perhaps” or in the state of deferring decision and this allows us to have a foretaste of both alternatives.

This is the generic form in which indecisiveness is transformed into a positive mode of action. “Although it does not make a virtue of necessity, it does make it into a pleasure” (151).

“... the tentative turning toward something on which the shadow of its own denial already falls” (151).