

The Conversation of the Sexes



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出版者:Oxford University Press, USA

出版时间:1986-01-01

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780195036596

Can deep feelings between men and women transcend the purely sexual? Do men prefer sex scenarios written by men? How can men write these scenes from a woman's point of view? In this provocative book, Roy Roussel addresses these questions through a study of selected texts from the 17th and

18th centuries. He examines the writings of Donne (the Songs and Sonnets), Cleland (Fanny Hill), Richardson (Pamela) Laclos (Les Liaisons Dangereuses) and Congreve (the four comedies) and in each of them identifies two reasons why men seduce women: sexual possession, and beyond that, the desire to

have a private conversation with another, an intimate exchange on the individual's own terms without regard to any differences that might separate speaker and listener. Roussel contends that the aim of both forms of seduction is the establishment of a certain equality between participants.

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