

Seduction and the Stereotypical Portrayal of the Seducer and the Victim in Selected Victorian Novels

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Abstract

The Victorian era corroborates the widespread phenomenon of seduction. Many authors reflect this in their novels. This creates a corpus that portrays the seduction phenomenon, the stereotypical seducer and his victims. This thesis investigates these aspects relying on the critical framework of feminism, narrative theory and new historicism. The thesis focuses on four novels, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850), Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853), George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) in chronological order. The common denominators among the novels are the existence of seduction process, a seducer and a victim. This thesis reveals that seduction phenomenon is a dreadful process where wealth, delusions and false promises of love and marriage are utilized by the seducer who is stereotypically a rich man from the upper class to stereotypically exploits a female from the lower class to fulfill his desires then abandon her to suffer and bear the consequences.