

## ABSTRACT

### WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF FLAUBERT, MAUPASSANT AND ZOLA

Jean A. Campbell

The objective of this thesis has been to produce an analysis of the treatment of women in Flaubert, Maupassant and Zola, three of the most well-known novelists of the nineteenth century. The authors and texts will be accorded individual focus, though points of comparison will be indicated wherever relevant.

In an attempt to present a balanced evaluation, the author has deliberately rejected a feminist viewpoint in favour of a historical, sociological and literary study.

The analysis brings to the fore the ambiguity, the sympathy or the contempt with which the authors have depicted their heroines and which are not always obvious from the first reading of their novels.

It has been found that the writers have accepted a pre-existing value system concerning women and have contributed to, elaborated upon and perpetuated a feminine typology which is essentially negative.