



A Study of the *Correspondance* of Gustave Flaubert  
as a Theoretical, Thematic, Textual and Biographical Survey  
in relation to his Principal Texts

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester  
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS submitted by Ms. Eisha M. Jayawardena for the Degree of M. Phil. and entitled "A Study of the "Correspondance" of Gustave Flaubert as a Theoretical, Thematic, Textual and Biographical Survey in relation to his Principal Texts".

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The objective of this thesis is to examine the private correspondence of Gustave Flaubert (1821 to 1880) in relation to his literary works. The Correspondance which extends over a span of fifty years from 1830 to 1880 shows the chronological evolution of Flaubert as a 'man' and a 'writer'. It gives an insight into his artistic perspective, preoccupations and personality. Flaubert's major works of fiction written during the last thirty years of his life between 1851 to 1880 exemplify these three aspects. The study is divided into three chapters. An effort will be made in the first chapter to apply the author's aesthetics as given in the Correspondance to a study of his fiction. It shows how a reading of this personal document can contribute to a theoretical understanding of his work. The middle chapter examines the link between the novelist's preoccupations as revealed in the Correspondance and some of the thematic strands in his fictional writings. It will demonstrate how a thematic understanding can be acquired by looking at his perspective of certain aspects of experience. The last chapter sets out to examine the portrait of Flaubert that emerges from his letters. It illustrates the importance of understanding the artist's character as unfolded in the Correspondance to interpret his aesthetic efforts. The study of the interaction between these two sources gives a perceptive understanding of his texts. It is the link between Flaubert's 'intention' and 'expression' that the thesis proposes to discuss.

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