The feuds, when seen in this light, provide a natural counterpoint to the novels, the plays, and the criticism written by the authors described here, and not a contradiction to them. They are not irrelevant distractions or sideshows but avenues of greater insight into the literature that the feuding writers have created for us.


Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) and Emile Zola (1840-1902) engaged in one of the most ardent, wide-ranging and consequential literary feuds of all time, and yet no scholarly work, of either book or article length, has so far attempted a comprehensive view of their relationship. Excellent scholarship has been published concerning fragments of their long-running dispute, but this scholarship is not plentiful and the fragments dealt with have been small. The best scholarly work on this topic was published many decades ago and focused on the role played by their many acolytes and much less talented imitators\(^1\). The time has come to focus on the two leading
The primary conclusion of this paper will be that the Tolstoy-Zola feud possesses an amazing richness and multidimensionality yet to be acknowledged in print and that these qualities become apparent only if one stands back and takes a global view of the phenomenon. The primary aim of this paper is to create a road map for future research. The road map will be practical, including the chronological landmarks of their dispute and a functional bibliography of the key texts involved. The road map will also be theoretical, providing two or three conceptual frameworks for thinking about their relationship and how it evolved. What this paper most decidedly does not aim for, however, is an exhaustive account of the feud between these two very prolific, canonical authors. To begin with, such a goal would be foolhardy, not to say ridiculous. Furthermore, the goal of exhaustiveness would contradict this paper’s conclusion, which will be that the Tolstoy-Zola feud as a topic is both much vaster and much more intellectually productive than previously realized. This paper’s epigraph comes from a collection of essays on the most legendary literary feuds from 1870 to 2000 (more than the century mentioned in its title). A related study worth noting is Myrick Land’s The Fine Art of Literary Mayhem: A Lively Account of Famous Writers and Their Feuds. Although not works of original scholarship, the studies by Arthur and Land synthesize a great deal of research, much of it from leading academics, in devising their lists of important feuds between famous writers. Arthur’s and Land’s books provide a quick way to measure both the significance of the Tolstoy-Zola feud and the relative paucity of scholarly attention it has received. Simply put, Zola and Tolstoy appear frequently in both Literary Feuds and Fine Art, but never in relation to each other. Myrick Land actually discusses feuds that Zola and Tolstoy each had with other people – Zola with Alphonse Daudet, and Tolstoy with Turgenev – but without ever mentioning the far more
significant feud they had with each other. Significance may be a difficult thing to measure, admittedly, but consider two key facts. First, the Tolstoy-Turgenev clash, which Land recounts over several pages, may be viewed as one element of a larger Tolstoy-Zola feud, since Turgenev and Zola were very close friends and shared many opinions about Tolstoy. More important, though, is that the feud between Zola and Tolstoy far transcended literary culture, largely because the reputations of these two authors greatly expanded and diversified at the end of their careers. Their feud encompassed politics, culture, religion, feminism, ethics, military policy, international diplomacy, sexual morality, economics, and the social consequences of scientific and technological discovery. No dispute analyzed by Arthur and Land – and they discuss major cases involving well-known figures – comes close to being so multidimensional or to generating so many extra-literary repercussions. The epigraph from Arthur holds true for the Tolstoy-Zola relationship, although it was not written with them in mind. Moreover, the epigraph in context unwittingly underscores how theirs probably counts among the handful of history’s most important feuds involving authors. The paradox of how a phenomenon this significant could have gone, if not entirely unnoticed, then greatly underestimated requires some explanation. The simplest answer is that the late careers of both Zola and Tolstoy have always posed unusual difficulties for scholarly analysis, and their dispute is itself a product of the latter part of their careers. The lives and literature of both authors underwent radical changes toward the end, although Tolstoy’s changes began somewhat earlier, more at the mid-point of his career. Zola’s final novels, known collectively as Les Évangiles, are so very peculiar that French literature specialists ignored them for many years, while making little effort to hide their disdain. F. W. J. Hemmings, whose The Russian Novel in France provides valuable information on the Tolstoy-Zola feud without focusing on it, despised Zola’s Évangiles novels and
Once said as much in print. Yet the crucial final stage of the Tolstoy-Zola relationship cannot be explained without taking into account Zola’s *Évangiles*. Any analysis that excludes these novels from consideration will inevitably depict Zola and Tolstoy as having had small, intermittent disagreements rather than a long-running feud. Furthermore, better than any other texts, the *Évangiles* demonstrate how the dispute with Tolstoy profoundly affected Zola’s literary craft and his thinking on a wide range of issues. In recent years, the *Évangiles* novels have become the object of much closer scrutiny within Zola studies, and so the findings of this paper contribute to an important scholarly rehabilitation of these long-neglected works.

The last three decades of Tolstoy’s career have also been highly problematic for scholars, because he underwent a religious conversion so powerful that it led him to question the validity of the literary enterprise itself. On principle he abstained from literary creation for long periods of time, although he did eventually return to literature when he found the creative urge impossible to resist. Tolstoy’s very stance toward writing has stymied interpretation of many of his later works, because it is so different from what critics are used to. Richard Gustafson, author of one of the most significant reevaluations of the Tolstoyan œuvre in the last twenty years, explains the challenge that Tolstoy’s religious views have posed to scholars: Tolstoy’s literary works cannot be separated from his religious world view; they are the verbal icons of it [...] But Tolstoy’s works have not often been seen in this way [...] In Russia, his religious views, to the extent that they are perceived in his work, are considered an aberration. In the West Tolstoy has fared no better, for he is read within the context of the Western literary movement we call realism. Much of what is central to Tolstoy seems embarrassing to Western critics. Often it is passed over in silence or dismissed as unconvincing. What is there is commonly not seen because Tolstoy is judged by the canons of a kind of realism he did not intend to write.
An appreciation of the profoundly religious quality of Tolstoy’s late writings is a prerequisite to understanding his feud with Zola, because a fundamental disagreement over religion underlies every one of their disagreements. Gustafson actually believes that Tolstoy’s religiosity shaped his fiction from the very start, and he therefore challenges the significant distinction usually made between the early and late phases of Tolstoy’s career. Nevertheless, much more important for this paper is Gustafson’s explanation of the longstanding reluctance to interpret Tolstoy’s fiction in light of his religious convictions. If literary scholars have shied away from taking Tolstoy’s religion seriously, then they certainly have not considered worthy of investigation a long-running feud of his that was based on religious differences. Gustafson’s observation that Tolstoy’s religion prevents him from fitting the mold of realism, a mold that Western critics have repeatedly forced him into, has great bearing on the feud with Zola, because Zola was the leading practitioner of naturalism, the form of realism that dominated the late nineteenth century. Gustafson later explains that Tolstoy consciously set himself in opposition to the literary movement of realism, but this is really tantamount to saying that Tolstoy deliberately opposed the movement that Zola was identified with and led. Like most scholars, Gustafson says nothing about Tolstoy’s feud with Zola and does not mention Zola even once in his lengthy study. Nevertheless, Gustafson comes tantalizingly close in passages such as this: Realism, as understood in the nineteenth century, reflects a human reality that is shaped by the world in which people reside. Social, economic, and historical forces mold the individual, and God, at best, simply transcends the world [...] Tolstoy did not accept this deterministic and materialistic conception of human reality. He always defined himself in opposition to the non-spiritual and often outraged anti-religious world-views of those who dominated the intellectual life of his generation [...] Tolstoy’s concept of reality [...] stands in direct opposition to the concept
When Gustafson speaks of Tolstoy’s aversion to “deterministic and materialistic” literature, he is certainly alluding to naturalism. Naturalism, the form of realism advocated by Zola, was especially deterministic and materialistic and truly “dominated the intellectual life of his generation” in Europe for many years. Indeed, the principal essays in which Zola explains his naturalist views were first published in Russian translation in a Saint Petersburg literary journal, *The European Herald* (*Le Messager de l’Europe*), during the 1870s. Zola was not sufficiently established as an author in these years to convince Parisian reviews to publish his essays on literary theory, and so his close friend Turgenev used his influence in Saint Petersburg to persuade the prestigious *European Herald* to publish them. Thus, Tolstoy, who read very widely and in several languages, probably encountered Zola’s views on naturalism in Russian long before they were published in France or elsewhere.

That is far from the most significant irony of the Tolstoy-Zola feud. To begin with, the reverse experience began occurring about a decade later. In the 1880s, Tolstoy would have many of his most controversial works published first in the West, including in France, when Russian government censors banned them at home. In fact, when Russian censors blocked the staging of Tolstoy’s most celebrated drama, *The Power of Darkness*, Zola helped arrange its first public performance ever, at the Théâtre Libre in Paris. According to the available evidence, Zola possibly had mixed motives for extending this aid.

The greatest irony of the Tolstoy-Zola feud, however, is also the most important theoretical contribution that this paper hopes to make. It is this: the ideological divide separating Zola and Tolstoy shrank over time, even as their dispute became more envenomed. This observation has major theoretical underpinnings, because while it derives, as it must, from a close reading of a large number of their texts, it also draws upon the well-established literary theory of melodrama. The point is not that their feud itself was melodramatic, but rather that Tolstoy’s and Zola’s
increasingly polemical writings converged over time in a similar use of the conventions of melodrama.

Although once only a term of disparagement, melodrama as a genre and mode of writing has become an important field of literary study over the past forty years. Perhaps the greatest theorist of the genre has been Peter Brooks, whose *The Melodramatic Imagination* explains how melodrama as it is known today was born out of the French Revolution’s tumultuous conflicts over religion. Brooks reminds us that melodrama, with its sharp distinctions between good and evil, originally served overt political ends, even as it downplayed its agenda with protestations of simplicity and of adherence to little more than radical egalitarianism. Other specialists have emphasized the special status of politically engaged melodrama within the genre. Melodramatic principles manifest themselves concretely in the genre’s promotion of mostly conservative notions of family and of sex. Indeed, melodrama tends to sacralize the family, especially the mother-child relationship. Enemies on opposite sides of a political or cultural battle can both employ melodrama, but its emotional impact will typically come from the same source, an appeal to an idealized concept of family. Enemies will begin to resemble each other, including ideologically, as they resort increasingly to melodrama.

This dynamic of adversarial parallelism unfolded over time in the relationship between Zola and Tolstoy, but the dynamic is visible only if one looks at their feud from beginning to end, which is something that has not been done before. The ideological convergence of Tolstoy and Zola in their late texts conforms to the theory of melodrama in ways that are classical, even archetypical. First, they both employ melodrama in an openly adversarial context, which is fully in keeping with the genre’s birth out of one of the West’s supreme moments of political conflict, the French Revolution. Tolstoy and Zola both had many enemies in their respective countries, and their melodrama functioned as a weapon of combat against their domestic adversaries as much as against each other. The second archetypical quality of their melodrama is the way it is overtly concerned with religious disputes, just as the original melodramas of the French Revolution were. Third, the late writings of both authors are heavily preoccupied with family and sexual morality, even as they take up a host
preoccupied with family and sexual morality, even as they take up a host of other issues. Finally, the convergence of Zola and Tolstoy is itself archetypically melodramatic, because convergence is a phenomenon anticipated by Brooks’ theory of the genre.

Some examples of Zola and Tolstoy’s ideological convergence through melodrama are in order. The passages above from Richard Gustafson made clear that nineteenth-century literary realism relegated God to at most a very minor role in the depiction of human life. The adjectives “deterministic and materialistic”, used quite rightly by Gustafson, are often synonyms of atheism. Zola’s fiction turned increasingly hostile toward religion, such as in the Les Trois Villes novels, which immediately preceded his Évangile series, Fécondité, Travail and Vérité. By the time of the Évangiles, however, which were Zola’s final series of novels and by far his most melodramatic, Zola was openly trying to recuperate the sacred by proposing a new, but secular religion within the novels themselves. The cardinal virtues of the new secular religion are indicated in the titles of the novels: fecundity, work, truth and justice (the title of the only unfinished Évangile). The protagonists of the novels are also the apostles of the new religion, and their names, not surprisingly, are Mathew, Marc, Luke, and John. In one sense, Zola’s Évangiles are the most anti-religious or atheistic of his entire œuvre; but in an equally true sense, these same novels are by far Zola’s most religious, because he transposes so many elements of Christianity into his new, secular religion. Thus, at the very moment that Zola most tries to discard or reject religion, he most resembles a religious author, and no one more so than Tolstoy, whose idiosyncratic Christian devotion had led him many years earlier to write his own version of the Gospels.

Tolstoy can be seen converging with Zola on the issue of literary creation’s ethical dimension and its purpose. Tolstoy struggled mightily in the last thirty years of his life with the question of whether literary pursuits are moral in themselves and whether they can be reconciled with the strict form of Christianity that he adopted. Tolstoy’s extreme asceticism led him to believe that he should renounce literature altogether, or at least not write anything as long and complex as Anna Karenina and War and Peace. In the treatise on aesthetics, What is Art?, Tolstoy argues that literary works should be short, extremely simple, and
Tolstoy argues that literary works should be short, extremely simple, and instantly comprehensible, like the simplest folk tales or children’s stories. *What is Art?* attacks writers and other artists who violate Tolstoy’s primitivist aesthetic. Zola and his fiction are attacked by name in the treatise.

Yet at the very time Tolstoy was penning *What is Art?*, he was also working on a long and rather complex novel of his own, the only one he was to write after his religious crisis of 1878-1880. The novel he was writing is *Resurrection*, and it is an act of political engagement through literature that strikingly resembles Zola’s final novels, especially *Vérité*. Zola was never conflicted about the act of literary creation. For him, intellectual labor, including the writing of literature, was a good in itself, one of the cardinal virtues of his new secular religion. Moreover, Zola’s literature became more overtly political over time as he became involved in various socio-political causes, most notably, of course, the Dreyfus Affair. His final novels, and not only the *Évangiles*, address a large number or burning social and political questions. Prolific literary creation and political engagement were intimately connected in Zola’s late career.

Ironically, what stirred Tolstoy to break his virtual vow not to write any more novels was a political crisis that he could not resist getting involved in. *Resurrection* was written to help the Doukhobors, an oppressed religious sect, whose members were trying to raise the money to flee Tsarist Russia after they got into serious trouble with the authorities for refusing military service on principle. The money raised from the sale of *Resurrection* was indeed used to finance the emigration of the Doukhobors. *Resurrection* bears many similarities to the novel *Vérité*, Zola’s engagement in the Dreyfus Affair through literature. Indeed, there is even the possibility that Tolstoy decided to help the Doukhobors partly in reaction to the prominent military dimension of the Dreyfus Affair, but the chief point here is that the only novel Tolstoy ever finished after *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* was a politically engaged work quite in the Zolian mode, particularly as exemplified by the *Évangiles*. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, Tolstoy, Europe’s premier religious/Christian author, and Zola, its premier écrivain engagé, appeared to swapping roles, even as they stepped up their criticism of each other.
A feud has to be mutual and overt, or at least known to both parties engaged in it. One person disagreeing with another does not constitute a feud, if the second person is utterly unaware of the disagreement. Feuds must be reciprocal, and they must endure much longer than short-term, everyday disputes. Feuds also typically have a trigger or precipitating event, to which all subsequent developments in the long-running quarrel are somehow related. The feud between Zola and Tolstoy is no exception to any of this. Although the Tolstoyan specialist Gustafson claims persuasively that the great Russian novelist conceived of his fiction in opposition to Western European realism from the very start of his career, the specific feud between Zola and him did not get underway until the late 1880s. Zola did not even become aware of Tolstoy until around 1880. In fact, few Western Europeans knew about Tolstoy before the mid-1880s, because Russia’s geographic and cultural isolation delayed the spread of the reputations of its great authors.

The precipitating event in the Tolstoy-Zola feud was the 1886 publication of Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé’s *Le Roman russe*. Vogüé had been a French diplomat in the Russian capital of Saint Petersbourg for several years. He had literary ambitions of his own, and while stationed in Saint Petersbourg, Vogüé took a keen interest in the nineteenth-century flowering of Russian literary genius, a truly remarkable phenomenon that was then largely unknown in the West. In part so as to be able to read this untranslated literature, Vogüé became one of the very first French diplomats to learn the Russian language. The widespread use of French among Russian aristocrats had obviated the need for French diplomats to learn Russian. As a way to explore his options for a possible future literary career, Vogüé established connections with the most prestigious French literary journal of the nineteenth century, *La Revue des Deux Mondes*. Vogüé began sending regular dispatches to *La Revue des Deux Mondes* in the form of “Letters from Saint Petersbourg”. Vogüé’s dispatches, published in the review throughout the early 1880s, attempted to explain Russian culture to the West. *La Revue des Deux Mondes*’s great prestige and wide circulation, even outside of France, ensured a very large audience for Vogüé’s essays. Many of his essays, of course, dealt with Russian literature.
course, dealt with Russian literature.

For all its prestige, *La Revue des Deux Mondes* was a very partisan commentator on literature and culture. In a word, its cultural leanings were quite conservative. The review had already waged a decade-long battle against Emile Zola and naturalism by the time Vogüé began using its pages to educate the French public on the marvels of Russian literature. Naturalism was repeatedly excoriated in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* for presenting a coarse and vulgar, not to say brutal image of everyday reality. Zola himself was considered almost pornographic in his depictions of sex, violence and everyday behavior, especially among the lower classes. Any careful reader of the review might have noticed the stark contrast between those articles attacking French naturalist fiction and those by Vogüé praising the novels of Russian writers such as Tolstoy and Dostoievskey.

Nevertheless, the agenda of *La Revue des Deux Mondes* to create an invidious comparison between Russian and French authors did not become completely clear until Vogüé collected for publication in book form many of his essays on Russian literature. *Le Roman russe* is that book, and in a long preface that Vogüé wrote newly for it, he makes abundantly clear that Russia’s novelists are superior to the French naturalists, who happened to form the leading school of French fiction at that time. Perhaps the most striking thing about *Le Roman russe* today is the moral ground on which Vogüé stakes his claim of Russian literary superiority. Vogüé champions the Russian novelists, Tolstoy included, because they are more religious and hence, in his eyes, more moral than the French naturalists.

Although Vogüé never uses the word melodrama and probably would have rejected it in this context, he especially likes the empathy and pity that he says the Russian authors display toward their poor and humble characters. He contrasts this with the brutal depiction of the lower classes by the Naturalists. Empathy and pity are two key components of melodrama, and while Vogüé’s literary interpretations of classic Russian novels are quite dubious today, he advances a melodramatic aesthetic in *Le Roman russe* that Tolstoy and Zola were, in a quite real sense, going to put into practice years later.
Thus, another irony of this feud, which was to last about fifteen years and ended only with Zola’s death in 1902, is that the text precipitating it foreshadowed the way it would conclude many years later. Long after their greatest masterpieces were written, Tolstoy and Zola fought over who could write the most melodramatic works, full of empathy and pity for the oppressed, but also conveying a very conservative sexual morality in works such as *The Kreutzer Sonata* and *Fécondité*, conservative sexual morality being another trait of melodrama.

It would difficult to exaggerate the impact of Vogüé’s *Le Roman russe* among the educated, book-reading class in France and other parts of Western Europe. French naturalist fiction suffered a slow but steady decline in popularity and in ideological adherence directly as a result of the fashion for Russian literature, a fashion that was significantly stoked by Vogüé. The rise of Russian literature at the expense of French naturalism is what Hemmings’s *The Russian Novel in France* and Lindstrom’s *Tolstoï en France* are mostly about. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, Hemmings and Lindstrom do not focus much on the relationship between Zola and Tolstoy themselves.

The naturalists did not sit passively by as their literary movement suffered this reversal. Lesser naturalists spoke out rather quickly against the Russian authors and especially against the tendentious use being made of their writings. Zola waited until an interview with the *New York Herald* in 1890 to launch his own public attack. Zola complained that Tolstoy’s then recently published *The Kreutzer Sonata* was “a nightmare born of a diseased imagination” and described the Russian novelist as “a compound of a monk of the Middle Ages and a Modern Slav” \(^{14}\). Zola also accused Tolstoy of having stolen his best ideas from French authors.
ZOLA DEFINES COUNT TOLSTOI.

He is a compound of a monk of the Middle Ages and a modern Sire.

A GENIUS, BUT NOT ORIGINAL

His ideas are French, clothed in a Russian Garb.

THE "KREUZER SONATA"

M. Zola Calls It "A Nightmare Born of a Diseased Imagination."

"WE ARE ALL ANIMALS"

The Author of "Assommoir" Does Not Believe in the Ideal Man.

FORNATT, 1890.

ZOLA ON TOLSTOI.

The Russian Has Only Copied French Ideas in a Platonic Garb.

[By the Commercial Cable to the Herald.]

The Herald's European edition publishes the following:

M. Emile Zola is spending the summer at Mendon, in the Department of the Seine-et-Oise, where yesterday a Herald correspondent met him, standing at the door of four men as he walked through a rough path that follows the windings of the Seine. The prophet of realism in literature was not in a mood for talks.

Two days ago he was on his way to Normandy, and he has since been giving several lectures to his students, who are in a state of high excitement.

The new Zola is said to have returned to his native land, where he will continue his work on the new novel, "Assommoir."
From Count Tolstoy's writings in general, M. Zola now turned to the particular work regarding which he had asked his opinion.

THE KROETZER SONATA.

"The Kroetzler Sonata" is a nightmare," he said, "born of a diseased imagination. Since reading it I have not the slightest doubt that its author is cracked—will a "petit fleuve dans la vie". The theory developed in this book is anti-naturalistic. L'amour, peut-être, ce n'est pas, c'est la misère. Here is a man—there is a woman, in Nature's ordnance that they should seek one another, and you can no more hope to keep them apart by theorizing and philosophizing than you can hope to keep the wind from blowing or the tide from rising or the trees from bud-ding in the springtime. And yet this is the use of theorizing and philosophizing on an act which admits of neither and which you are as powerless to stop as you are to stop the rush of a locomotive by throwing yourself in its path! Tolstoi has tried to stop the locomotive and he lies crushed, and the engines dashes along and will continue to dash along to the end of time. I have said before that Tolstoi had the characteristics of a medieval monk.

WE ARE ALL ANIMALS.

"He has, as it were, shut himself up in a cloister, where he grasps upon the outside world only by loathing. But there is nothing relative in this—no sense of nature more than in mother. It is 'Animal'! The world cries; but we are animals, and why so acknowledge? Why seek to deceive ourselves? Why make a ridiculous pretence so higher and better and more spiritual than we are! Why set up an image which we can call an ideal man, but which we know in our heart is no man at all? We have the reality and why should we allow ourselves to pretend to worship a sham?

"As for Tolstoi's lives upon marriage, they are equally anti-natural with his theories upon love. Tolstoi is a paradox. I do not intend to discuss it, except in so far as it relates to our subject.

TOLSTOY'S CHARGE.

"Tolstoi has taken a particular case, and from it argued in the general. His husband and wife have no ideas, no sympathies, no tastes in common. The one has no cares for money, the other for music, and it is not that the least surprising that she should live in love with a woman. A similar thing, I have no doubt, happens every day. But Tolstoi expects always. There is logic in his argument and his observation is both at fault. Given a male sound in body and mind, and a female likewise sound in body and mind, and their union will be happy. But given bodily or mental defect in either, their life together will not be happy.

"The man seeks the woman. If she be not what we may assume he had the right to expect he would break over his deception, purchases not with it, but the workings of his mind will continue until one day he lies open before him and then his last testament is to look. So is it with the woman who goes to the man and finds him unsound. To find a man of vast intelligence, broad conceptions and sublime genius like Tolstoi, seeking to introduce a dissonant chord into the harmony of nature, leaves me with but one judgment to pass upon his 'Kroetzler Sonata.'"

"This book is a work of an imagination and sensibility; equally representitive of all classes and all times were the musical instruments arranged on the walls. There were pipes on which a Pan might have played, and upon which were heard with which Rome might have ascended. Juliet instead of telling nonsense about the "may morrow" and the blush on her damask cheek; there were Spanish castanets and mandolins, flutes, clarinets, violins, every sort of instrument from which the sound could be expanded, between a cottage doors standing by a window.

On several tables and chairs were brick-stands, but of the kind one often sees in drawing-rooms and made by the thousand, but the genuine article. This drawing-room was also a boudoir, for one of those necessaries of country-life stood under the raised glass window. I asked M. Zola if, like M. de Ledrede Hauy and Madelon, he was anything of a connoisseur.

"Anything but that," was his reply. "I got the billiard table for my friends. I can't play myself. I am too servious, and for some reason I am an exorable shot. I should do a lot of showing if I could manage to hit something now and again so as to relieve the monotony of missing.

M. ZOLA'S WORK.

In reply to further inquiries M. Zola told me that he worked every morning on a work, which is to continue the "Aragon Margot" series, and which is to portray financial life. In accordance with his custom he got all his material ready and classified his plot planned out, even to minute details, before writing out a single line of copy. Despite this his work is giving him a great deal of trouble, and, although machinery is disturbed, he does not expect to complete it before the end of the year.

"After that," he continued, "I have only two books to write in complete my "Aragon" series. Then I can consider my work done, and I shall be content to stand by it if it is the judgment of those who come after me. No, I have not a really decided preference for any one of my works, although, generally speaking, I might say I set the highest value upon "La Mante" and "L'Œuvre." My next book after "L'Ame" will be a kind of extension of "L'Œuvre," and after that I shall write one, if I live, which will make the series, and perhaps give it in the ideas I have just expounded to you.

I had thought of publishing an article of an article of the kind in Figaro or one of the reviews, but now I think I shall decide upon keeping it for the last volume of my series.
CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT DATES IN THE ZOLA-TOLSTOY FEUD

Tolstoy and Zola’s dispute over the following topics can be traced through this chronology:

A: Science and Religion
B: Sex and Reproduction
C: Work
D: War, Military Policy, Patriotism and Nationalism

(Late) 1860s Zola first learns of Tolstoy from Turgenev, according to the interview Zola later gives to The New York Herald in 1890 (“Zola Defines Count Tolstoï”)

1875 Ferdinand Brunetière joins the staff of La Revue des Deux Mondes and begins writing a series of articles attacking Zola and naturalism.

1875-1880 Zola has essays on French culture and Naturalism published first in Russian in the review Le Messager de l’Europe (The European Herald) of Saint Petersburg. The Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev helped arrange the publication of these essays (Brown 312-316; Zola, Le roman expérimental 1173).

1877-1878 Anna Karenina serialized and published in book form. The novel includes one direct reference to Zola (692). Tolstoy’s evident
familiarity with Zola’s views on naturalism at this early date suggests the Russian novelist had read Zola’s essays in *Le Messager de l’Europe (The European Herald)*.

1877-1880 Tolstoy undergoes a profound religious conversion, which leads him to rethink many fundamental questions, including the morality and value of literary creation.

(Early) 1880s Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé writes a series of articles on Russian culture for *La Revue des Deux Mondes*. The highly influential, anti-naturalist study *Le Roman russe* will emerge out of this series.

A.1 1880 Zola’s *The Experimental Novel (Le Roman experimental)*, a collection of essays on naturalist literary theory, is published. Five of the essays had originally appeared in Russian in the Saint Petersburg review *The European Herald (Le Messager de l’Europe)*. In the preface, Zola thanks all the people of Russia for having giving him a forum for his views before French periodicals and publishers were willing to.

In the title essay, Zola insists that the modern novel must adopt the methods of the experimental sciences: “[T]he experimental novel is a consequence of this century’s scientific evolution; it continues and completes physiology, which itself is based on chemistry and physics; it replaces the study of man in the abstract, of metaphysical man, with the study of natural man, subject to physico-chemical laws and determined by environmental influences; it is, in a word, the literature of our scientific age [...] le roman expérimental est une conséquence de l’évolution scientifique du siècle; il continue et complète la physiologie, qui elle-même s’appuie sur la chimie et la physique; il substitue à l’étude de l’homme abstrait, de l’homme métaphysique, l’étude de l’homme naturel, soumis aux lois physico-chimiques et déterminé par les influences du milieu; il est en un mot la littérature de notre âge scientifique [...]” (1186).
Although Zola’s fiction does not put scientific concepts into practice in such a doctrinaire way, his profound intellectual commitment to science will continue until the end of his life and will form one of his principal disagreements with Tolstoy.

1881-82 Tolstoy’s *The Four Gospels Harmonized and Translated* is completed and then published abroad in French, German and Russian, because censors ban it in Russia (Troyat, *Tolstoï* 482-483).

1883 Brunetière’s *The Naturalist Novel (Le Roman naturaliste)* is published. This literary study is a tremendous attack on Zola and naturalism. As the Zola specialist Antoine Compagnon has written, “In *The Naturalist Novel*, Brunetière railed against Zola’s noxious influence on the French novel. He was naturalism’s fiercest enemy. Dans *Le Roman naturaliste*, il [Brunetière] s’était déchaîné contre la mauvaise influence de Zola sur le roman français. Il fut l’adversaire le plus acharné du naturalisme [...]” (111).

1883 Turgenev dies. He had been a close friend of Zola, as well as of other leading French writers. Just days before his death, he writes a letter to Tolstoy begging him to return to fiction and to cease letting religion interfere with his career as an author. Zola will cite Turgenev’s final letter to Tolstoy in a conversation that he has with Halpérine-Kaminsky years later. Halpérine-Kaminsky indicates that Zola approves of Turgenev’s opinion about Tolstoy (Halpérine-Kaminsky “Zola et Tolstoï” 103-104).

1886 *Le Roman russe* by Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé is published in book form. In this study, which helps spread the fame of Russia’s greatest authors, Vogüé says that Russian novels are superior to French ones, because the former are inspired by religion and thus more moral.
1886 Brunetière publishes an essay in praise of Schopenhauer and philosophical pessimism in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* (La philosophie de Schopenhauer). Schopenhauer’s great influence on Brunetière was noted by at least one prominent contemporary (Faguet 25-26). Tolstoy also had enormous debt to Schopenhauer, a fact that has been noted in Tolstoyan scholarship (Orwin 150-164). Zola, on the other hand, will attack Schopenhauer in his 1896 essay “Dépopulation”, and in his novel *Fécondité* (58). Zola will explicitly present his *Évangiles* novels as hymn to optimism: “Je voudrais un optimisme éclatant” (Cogny 13).

1887 Zola’s novel *La Terre* published, stirring up a storm of controversy. It is considered by some to be extremely vulgar, “a travesty of naturalism” (Brown 574-79). Tolstoy’s *The Power of Darkness* will later be compared to *La Terre*.

1887 Tolstoy’s drama *The Power of Darkness* is compared to Zola’s “coarse realism” as justification for denying permission to have it performed in Russia (Wachtel xi).

1888 Zola’s *Le Rêve* published, the religious theme of which has been explained partly as a reaction to new craving for religion exemplified by rampant Russophobia (Brown 598).

Febr. 1888 Tolstoy’s drama *The Power of Darkness* (*La Puissance des Ténèbres*) is performed for first time ever, at the Théâtre-Libre in Paris. Zola is instrumental in securing a Parisian performance of the play, which is banned in Russia (Jones 143-146). The play is successful, but controversial, and is compared to Zola’s equally controversial novel, *La Terre*. Also, some French naturalists gloat that their enemies, who had lionized Tolstoy, will have difficulty explaining the “naturalistic”
coarseness of this play (Vogüé, *La Puissance* 438-439).

**B.1** 1889 Tolstoy’s novella *The Kreutzer Sonata*, “widely available in privately-reproduced copies” throughout Russia, is soon published abroad in various languages (Ruddick 181). The novella and the essay that serves as its afterword stir up controversy throughout Europe for promoting universal sexual abstinence, even within marriage (Møller 92-127, 163-180). Zola will publicly criticize *The Kreutzer Sonata* twice, once in an 1890 interview with *The New York Herald* and in a much later, 1902 interview with *La Revue blanche*.

**B.2** August 1890 The long interview, “Zola Defines Count Tolstoi”, appears in *The New York Herald*. In the interview, Zola harshly criticizes Tolstoy and laments the effect of Vogüé’s *Le Roman russe* in diminishing respect for naturalism. Zola specifically complains about *The Kreutzer Sonata*, saying that it proves Tolstoy has “a crack in the head” (“il y a une petite fêlure dans sa tête”).

1890 Zola’s comment that Tolstoy has “une petite fêlure dans sa tête” (“a crack in the head”) makes a splash in the world press and is cited in a variety of newspapers (Møller 109-110).

**C.1** 1891 Zola writes the preface (“Lettre au traducteur”) to a French translation of Tolstoy’s *L’argent et le travail* (*Money and Work*). He writes the preface at the request of Halpérine-Kaminsky, the translator. Although he maintains a polite tone throughout the preface, Zola relentlessly criticizes Tolstoy’s socio-economic views, calling them contradictory and very impractical. *Le Figaro* will reprint Zola’s preface on 16 January 1892.
1891 *Les idées morales du temps présent* by Édouard Rod published. Rod attempts to explain the moral teachings contained in the writings of major contemporary authors. Zola, Tolstoy, Brunetière, Vogüé and Schopenhauer each receive an entire chapter in this comparative study of competing systems of morality. Tolstoy and Schopenhauer are the only non-French thinkers included in this study, which is focused primarily on intellectual and moral trends in France. Rod explains: “I believed it necessary to admit two foreigners into this gallery, Schopenhauer and Count Tolstoy, on account of the considerable influence they have exerted on today’s spiritual and intellectual climate”. (“J’ai cru devoir admettre dans cette galerie deux étrangers, Schopenhauer et le comte Tolstoï, en raison de l’influence considérable qu’ils ont exercée sur le mouvement des esprits”) (ii). This is further evidence of the enormous impact that Tolstoy had on French culture.

1891 Zola becomes president of the *Société des gens de lettres* (Mitterand, *Zola* vol. 2, 1016-1018). One of his responsibilities will be to help secure the copyright of French books in Russia. He collaborates with Halpérine-Kaminsky, who had been chosen by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate a literary copyright convention between the two countries. (Mitterand, *Zola* vol. 3, 55).

D.1 August 1891 Zola writes a column about his soon-to-be released war novel *La Débâcle* for the August 4 edition of the newspaper *Le Matin*. In the column, Zola calls war necessary and speaks of its benefits. Tolstoy will quote extensively from this column in his 1893 treatise *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (Mitterand, *Zola*, vol. 3, 54-55). *The Kingdom of God is Within You* will be a long defense of pacifism and the non-violent response to all evil.

D.2 Sept. 1891 In a September 1, 1891, column in *Le Figaro*, Zola praises war. The column is entitled “Sedan” and is a preview of novel *La Débâcle*. Zola writes: “Sedan has been fought, and this war, fought in France, is...
Zola writes: “Seulement, la guerre est inévitable. Les âmes tendres qui en rêvent l’abolition, qui réunissent des congrès pour décréter la paix universelle, font simplement là une utopie généreuse... La guerre mais c’est la vie même ! Rien n’existe dans la nature, ne naît, ne grandit, ne se multiplie que par un combat. Il faut manger et être mangé pour que le monde vive. Et seules les nations guerrières ont prospéré, une nation meurt dès qu’elle désarme. La guerre, c’est l’école de la discipline, du sacrifice, du courage, ce sont les muscles exercés, les forces raffermies, la fraternité devant le péril, la santé et la force.” (“War is inevitable. The tender souls who dream of abolishing it, who organize conventions that decree universal peace, are only fabricating a generous utopia... War is life itself! Nothing exists in nature, nothing is born, nothing grows, nothing multiplies except through combat. Creatures must eat and be eaten so that the world may live. Only warlike nations have prospered; a nation dies as soon as it disarms. War is the school of discipline, of sacrifice, of courage; it is muscles exercised, force strengthened, brotherhood in the face of danger, health and power”) (1415).

D.3 1892 Zola’s novel La Débâcle is published. Zola’s best-selling and most popular novel during his lifetime, La Débâcle praises war for its cleansing effects on a nation.

A.2 May 1893 Zola delivers a speech to the General Student Association in Paris on 18 May

C.2 1893. Zola calls on students to ignore the warnings, then widespread, that naturalism, positivism and science are dying. He urges young people to have faith in work and to devote their lives to it. The speech is widely interpreted as a critique of both Tolstoy and Brunetièr, although Zola mentions neither by name. This is the speech to which Tolstoy responds in “The Non-Acting” (Halpérine-Kaminsky “Zola et Tolstoï” 97-99).
D.4 1893 Franco-Russian military alliance is sealed. The Russian admiral Avelán and his entourage pay a historic visit to France in October to celebrate the new alliance. Zola takes part in the festivities and delivers a speech on October 26 praising the friendship between France and Russia (Mitterand, Zola vol. 2, 55-56). In his treatise Christianity and Patriotism, Tolstoy will severely criticize the alliance, Avelán’s visit to France, and Zola’s involvement in the celebrations.

1893 Ferdinand Brunetière becomes director of Revue des Deux Mondes, France’s most prestigious and influential literary journal. From this important position, Brunetière will continue his campaign against Zola and Naturalism.

D.5 1893 Banned in Russia, Tolstoy’s The Kingdom of God is Within You (Le salut est en vous) is published first in France in a French translation (Simmons 494). This treatise is one of the most complete statements Tolstoy ever makes on religion and ethics. It particularly develops his views on non-violence, pacifism and non-resistance to evil. The Kingdom of God is Within You includes direct criticism of Zola’s opinions on war, as expressed during the controversy over La Débâcle (165-166). Tolstoy calls Zola “the most popular novelist of Europe (165). The treatise also criticizes Vogüé’s views on war as expressed in the Revue des Deux Mondes (166-168).

C.3 August 1893 Tolstoy finishes his essay “The Non-Acting,” an extended critique of Zola’s May 18, 1893 speech to the General Student Association in Paris. In his essay “Non-Acting,” Tolstoy specifically criticizes Zola’s faith in work and science as being contrary to true Christianity. About work, Tolstoy writes: “Zola says that work makes man good; but I have observed the opposite: conscious work, the antlike pride in one’s work, makes cruel, not only the ant, but also man. The greatest malefactors of humanity (such as Nero and Peter I) have always been very
busy, never for a moment remaining without an occupation or amusement. But even if industry is not an obvious vice, it can in no way be considered a virtue [...] The exaltation of work is as monstrous as would be the exaltation of eating to the rank of a virtue" (51). Zola later makes work one of the four cardinal virtues of his *Gospels Évangiles* series of novels, and one of those novels has the title *Work Travail*.

A.3 About science, Tolstoy writes in “Non-Acting”: “And so, to follow the advice of Zola, by devoting one’s life to the service of what in our time and world is considered science, is not that dangerous?... All these men work for science assiduously and zealously, but I think that the time and labor, not only of all these writers, but even of many others, have not only been wasted, but have also been harmful” (48-50). Zola will overtly make a religion out of science to replace Christianity in his 1898 novel *Paris*, and his *Gospel Évangile* novels will be based on optimism concerning scientific progress: “Tout cela basé sur la science, le rêve que la science autorise” (Cogny 13).

Dec. 1893 Zola publishes an “Open Letter to the Russian Press” (“Lettre ouverte à la presse russe”). The letter is a call for a literary copyright convention between France and Russia. It is published in the newspaper *Le Temps* on 24 December.

1894-1902 *La Revue blanche*, a leading French literary review, begins publishing in its pages many of Tolstoy’s non-fictional writings soon. The prominence of this literary review and the large number of works by Tolstoy that it publishes ensure that the Russian novelist’s latest opinions will quickly receive a wide audience in the Parisian intellectual scene. In early 1902, *La Revue blanche* will also publish an interview with Zola, where he condemns Tolstoy’s views on sex.
D.6 March 1894 Tolstoy’s *Christianity and Patriotism* is published. This treatise denounces the Franco-Russian military alliance and a speech that Zola delivered in support of it (401). At the end of the treatise, Tolstoy criticizes patriotism in general for being unchristian, whereas Zola will strongly promote a form of patriotism in his *Évangiles* novels years later.

Nov. 1894 Brunetière makes a much-publicized trip to the Vatican, where he has a private audience with Pope Leo XIII. They discuss the new Franco-Russian alliance and the rebirth of Catholicism and Christianity in France. They also discuss the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the Pope suggests to Brunetière that he might later publish a summary of their meeting (Van Der Lugt 49-51; Sire 37-38).

A.4 Jan. 1895 At the Pope’s request, Brunetière publishes in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* his essay “After a Visit to the Vatican” (“Après une visite au Vatican”). This long essay delves deep into the role of science in modern society. Brunetière uses the expression “the bankruptcy of science” (“la banqueroute de la science”) and claims that science has failed to fulfill many of its promises. He says a turn from science toward Christianity, especially Catholicism, is needed to solve the moral problems of the day. The essay’s focus on science is more clearly indicated by the title it is given when published later that year in pamphlet form: *Science and Religion* (*La science et la religion*). “After a Visit to the Vatican” had an enormous impact, enraging naturalists and positivists, while giving hope to defenders of religion. (Brunetière, *La science* iv-vii; Van Der Lugt 57-70). A new, much more intense phase of the dispute between the partisans of science and those of religion begins with the publication of Brunetière’s essay.

A.5 April 1895 A group of prominent scientists, naturalists and French politicians hold a banquet to denounce Brunetière’s essay “After a Visit to the Vatican” and to honor science in the person of the famous chemist.
free-thinker and government minister Marcellin Berthelot. Zola delivers a pro-science/anti-religious speech at the banquet. Berthelot’s opinion that science must replace religion strongly influences Zola, who will model one of the most important characters in his 1898 novel *Paris* after Berthelot. (Mitterand, *Zola* vol. 3, 265-66). Tolstoy will denounce Berthelot and all those who think that science can supplant religion in his 1902 essay *What is Religion, and Wherein Lies Its Essence?*

B.3 May 1896 *Le Figaro* publishes Zola’s essay “Dépopulation”, in which he complains about authors who promote pessimism and discourage procreation (787-788). Zola’s complaint almost certainly contains an allusion to Tolstoy’s *The Kreutzer Sonata*. “Dépopulation” also explicitly looks ahead to Zola’s 1899 novel *Fécondité*, because Zola says in the essay that he has been considering writing a natalist (pro-procreation) novel for some time.

1896 Tolstoy re-writes in French his 1893 essay “The Non-Acting”. Tolstoy’s French translation is published twice, once with the help of Halpérine-Kaminsky and again in *Cosmopolis* (Wiener, Annotation 43).

1897 Brunetière makes a very successful lecture tour of America. At Columbia University he proclaims that naturalism is dead and heaps abuse on Zola (Compagnon 108-114).

1897 Tolstoy’s *What is Art?* is published. This treatise on aesthetics includes two direct attacks on Zola, as well as harsh criticisms of other writers and artists, many of them French (96, 117-118). In one of his attacks on Zola, Tolstoy says that a story in a children’s magazine by a “completely unknown writer” concerning “the preparations for Easter in a poor widow’s family” was more artistically valuable than “the famous novels and stories of Zola” that are “praised all over Europe”. Tolstoy says
that Zola’s fiction is boring and that “no artistic impression results from it” (117-118).

**A.6** The conclusion of *What is Art?* is especially important, because Tolstoy there launches an attack on modern science for being elitist, perverted, and harmful to the lower classes (157-167). Although neither Zola nor Brunetiére is mentioned by name in this section, the conclusion of *What is Art?* is clearly a continuation of the dispute over science that began four years earlier. That earlier dispute involved not only Zola and Brunetiére, but also Tolstoy himself in the essay “The Non-Acting”, which was a direct reply to Zola. In the conclusion to *What is Art?*, Tolstoy insists that science and art are inextricably linked, which is a sentiment Brunetiére and, oddly enough, Zola both agreed with (*What is Art?* 157-165).


January 1898 Brunetiére delivers a speech January 18, 1898, that has remarkable similarities to Tolstoy’s *What is Art?* The speech, entitled “Art and Morality” (“L’art et la morale”), is soon published as an essay. Just like Tolstoy, Brunetiére deplores what he sees as a dramatic increase in the production of immoral art. Brunetiére praises Tolstoy and acknowledges frankly the similarities in their thinking: “I know that he is fighting the same battle that I fight here today” (“je sais qu’il soutient le même combat que je livre aujourd’hui”) (96-98). The critique in “Art and Morality” is almost as radical as in *What is Art?*, because Brunetiére states that nearly all art harbors some immorality (69). Brunetiére even suggests that some artists could justifiably abandon their vocation for the sake of morality, and he cites Tolstoy approvingly as an example (95-96, 106-107). As might be expected, Brunetiére’s essay also includes multiple attacks on naturalism and a particularly vicious insult directed at Zola (91).
A.7 March 1898 Zola’s novel *Paris* is published. In the novel, Zola complains about a return to religion within the educated, upper class, especially its youth. The novel complains bitterly about “all sorts of apostles” (“toutes sortes d’apôtres”) who help spread “the idea of the famous bankruptcy of science” (“l’idée de la fameuse banqueroute de la science”), which is almost certainly an allusion to Tolstoy and Brunetière (1302-1303). The novel suggests that the Church is winning converts among the rich and powerful with the secret intention of re-conquering France and “possessing the world” (“posséder le monde”) (1240-1242).

A.8 The last part of *Paris* speaks openly about the need to create a new “religion of science” to replace decrepit and destructive Christianity: “A religion of science, that will be the obvious, certain, and inevitable conclusion to humanity’s long march toward enlightenment” (“Une religion de la science, c’est le dénouement marqué, certain, inévitable, de la longue marche de l’humanité vers la connaissance”) (1560-1561).

A.9 One of the main characters in *Paris* is a famous chemist named M. Bertheroy, modeled after the real-life French chemist Marcellin Berthelot (Mitterand, *Zola* vol. 3, 265-266). Bertheroy is one of the heroes of the novel, personifying the great possibilities of science. Berthelot, on whom Bertheroy is based, was a highly successful and respected French chemist, who also worked in the French government in the latter part of his career. Like Zola, Berthelot had supreme faith in science and believed it would replace traditional religion. Berthelot gave speeches on this subject, and Tolstoy will begin a major 1902 essay on religion with a denunciation of one of Berthelot’s speeches (*What is Religion, and Wherein Lies Its Essence?* 49-50).

Finally, the novel *Paris* promotes a kind of nationalism, or at least an intense national pride, which contradicts Tolstoy’s Christianity.
intense national pride, which contradicts Tolstoy’s *Christianity and Patriotism* of four years earlier, an essay that had criticized Zola by name. Zola writes: “If the ancient world had Rome, now moribund, Paris would reign as sovereign over modern times, today’s center of all peoples […] Yesterday it [Paris] hurled the cry of liberty to the nations, tomorrow it would bring them the religion of science, justice, the new faith awaited by democracies […] And as the century was ending with it [Paris], the new century would begin and spread with it […]” (“Si le monde antique avait eu Rome, maintenant agonisante, Paris régnait souverainement sur les Temps Modernes, le centre aujourd’hui des peuples […] Hier il jetait aux nations le cri de liberté, il leur apporterait demain la religion de la science, la justice, la foi nouvelle attendue par les démocraties […] Et le siècle finissait par lui, et l’autre siècle commencerait, se déroulerait par lui […]”) (1566-1567).

**A.10** April 1898 In a savage review of Zola’s *Paris*, Brunetière invokes Tolstoy prominently in an effort to discredit Zola’s faith in science. Brunetière quotes directly from Tolstoy several times to show how science has not increased the sum of human happiness. Brunetière quotes Tolstoy saying that science “has stimulated luxury, multiplied human needs [and] made the life of mankind infinitely harder” (“développé le luxe, multiplié les besoins, rendu la vie des hommes infiniment plus dure”). Brunetière also uses sarcasm to claim that Tolstoy is a greater novelist than Zola and has more social concern than his French rival. Brunetière condemns the quasi-religious turn that Zola’s fiction begins to take at this time, Brunetière writes: “The need to believe is so intrinsic to humankind that, as soon as science believes it has triumphed over religion, it establishes a ‘religion of science’; and as we saw a moment ago, the novel *Paris* by Mr. Zola is at once the proof and the admission of this fact”. (“Le besoin de croire est tellement inhérent à l’homme que, dès que la science croit avoir triomphé de la religion, il se fonde une ‘religion de la science’; et, on l’a vu tout à l’heure, le *Paris* de M. Zola en est à la fois la preuve et l’aveu”) (“Revue littéraire: Le *Paris* de M. E. Zola” 929-930).
1898-1900 René Doumic publishes a series of articles in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, some criticizing Zola and naturalism in a manner similar to that of *Le Roman russe*, and others praising and justifying Tolstoy’s *What is Art?* and *Resurrection*. Doumic’s articles show how the *Revue des Deux Mondes* continues to champion Tolstoy throughout the Dreyfus Affair.

1898 Élie Halpérine-Kaminsky gives Zola a copy of Tolstoy’s *What is Art?* just before Zola goes into exile for approximately a year in England. Zola learns enough about the treatise to express strong disagreement about it to Halpérine-Kaminsky when he returns from exile (Halpérine-Kaminsky “Zola et Tolstoï” 106-107).

1898 Zola tried for slander as a result of "J'accuse" and decides to go into exile in England.

**D.9** 1898?-1900 Halpérine-Kaminsky asks Tolstoy to intervene publicly in the Dreyfus Affair, but Tolstoy refuses. Halpérine-Kaminsky claims Zola was offended by the refusal (Halpérine-Kaminsky “Zola et Tolstoï” 108-109).

**B.4** 1898-1903 Zola’s Gospels *Évangiles* (*Fecundity*, *Work*, and *Truth*) are written and published. The novels’ titles indicate the cardinal virtues of a new and supposedly better secular religion. In *Fecundity*, Zola complains about authors who promote pessimism and a return to religion. *Fecundity* is primarily a paean to maximum procreation and in that respect flatly contradicts Tolstoy’s *The Kreutzer Sonata, Resurrection* and *The Relations of the Sexes*. In his 1902 interview with *La Revue blanche*, Zola will speak...
D.11 1898 A group of Tolstoy’s friends urge him “to join a group of Russian liberals who were signing a manifesto soliciting a reprieve for the French officer Dreyfus, charged with high treason” (Troyat, Tolstoy 564). Tolstoy refuses and becomes angry, asking “Was Dreyfus a man of the people, a muzhik, a sectarian? No; he was an officer, that is, one of the worst possible sort” (Troyat, Tolstoy 564). Tolstoy’s daughter Tatyana/Tanya records in her diary on 5 February that her father said “It would be a strange thing that we Russians should take up the defense of Dreyfus, an utterly undistinguished man, when so many exceptional ones have been hanged, deported or imprisoned here at home” (Troyat, Tolstoy 564).

1898 Brunetière publishes Après le procès, one of the most influential anti-Dreyfusard pamphlets. Après le procès also expresses a great deal of scepticism toward science, the same kind of scepticism that Tolstoy will attribute approvingly to Brunetière in 1902 (Après le procès 3-16, 77-82).

1899 Victor Basch of the University of Paris claims that Tolstoy has been one of the two great influences on Brunetière after 1888, especially in terms of his opposition to science (348-378).

D.12 1899 Tolstoy’s novel Resurrection is published to raise money to help the Doukhobors, an ascetic and pacifist religious sect, to flee Russia. The Doukhobors are being persecuted by the Tsarist government for refusing military service. Tolstoy started and then abandoned work on Resurrection many years earlier, but he resumes work on it definitively in 1898, around the time he refuses to intervene in the Dreyfus Affair. Tolstoy’s purpose in writing Resurrection, along with the novel’s plot, bears important similarities to the Dreyfus Affair, and especially to Zola’s high-profile participation in the Affair. Zola intervened to help liberate a man falsely convicted of treason, while Tolstoy intervened through this
man falsely convicted of treason, while Tolstoy intervened through this novel and other writings to help free from persecution an unpopular religious sect. The plot of *Resurrection* itself concerns a wealthy and powerful man, much like Zola or Tolstoy, who intervenes to help liberate an unfortunate woman falsely convicted of murder. One major difference between *Resurrection* and the Dreyfus Affair is that Tolstoy’s novel and the religious sect it benefits reject military service in all its forms – Tolstoy refused to help Dreyfus because he was a military officer – whereas Zola only opposed the top French military leadership, which he believed was corrupt.

By writing *Resurrection*, Tolstoy breaks his previous religious vow not to create long, complex works of fiction, and so his motive of helping the Doukhobors can be assumed to be quite powerful.

**B.5** *Resurrection* also promotes Tolstoy’s belief in universal celibacy by including a highly sympathetic character named Simonson who preaches this ethic (474-475). Thus, *Resurrection* resembles earlier *Kreutzer Sonata* and the later work of non-fiction *The Relations of the Sexes* on the issue of sex, a subject on which Zola vehemently and publicly disagrees with Tolstoy.

1899 After returning from exile, Zola tells Halpérine-Kaminsky his view of Tolstoy’s *What is Art?*. Zola’s conclusion is this: “In sum, Tolstoy’s opinion will not make us stray from the path we are following: that is because as a thinker, he is detached from reality; as a creative force, people have exaggerated his worth” (Halpérine-Kaminsky “Zola et Tolstoï” 108).

1899 In a review of Brunetière’s long and influential career, the English magazine *The Fortnightly Review* states that Brunetière had “proclaimed in Tolstoï the herald of a new epoch in French literature” (Bastide 507).
1899 Brunetiére converts to Catholicism in a very public gesture after a five year movement in that direction (Faguet 29).

**B.6** 1900 An article entitled “Fécondité versus The Kreutzer Sonata. Or, Zola versus Tolstoy” appears in the English magazine The Fortnightly Review (Lynch 69-78).

**B.7** 1901 Tolstoy’s *The Relations of the Sexes* is published. This work is a collection of extracts from Tolstoy’s diaries and letters. As in *The Kreutzer Sonata* and *Resurrection*, Tolstoy here promotes universal celibacy, including in marriage. He writes: “Man must always, under all circumstances, whether he be married or single, be as chaste as possible, as Christ and after him Paul expressed. If he can be so abstinent as not to know women at all, then this is the best he can do. If, however, he cannot restrain himself he should seldom as possible give way to this weakness, and in no way look upon sexual intercourse as a pleasure” (27).

1902 Tolstoy expresses disdain for Zola to a correspondent for La Revue des Deux Mondes who visits him at his Russian estate Yasnaya Polyana. Tolstoy also expresses the greatest admiration for Brunetiére and emphasizes his agreement with Brunetiére’s belief in the “bankruptcy of science” (Bentzon 895-896).

**A.11** Feb. 1902 Tolstoy’s pamphlet *What is Religion and Wherein Lies Its Essence?* is published. Early in the essay Tolstoy complains about a speech by Marcellin Berthelot in which the French chemist “told his hearers that the day of religion has passed and religion must now be replaced by science” (49-50). Berthelot was Zola’s model for the heroic
fictional chemist Bertheroy in the 1898 novel *Paris*. The image of Berthelot/Bertheroy in Zola’s novel is extremely positive, but Tolstoy severely criticizes him here. Also in this essay, Tolstoy refers to Paris as “the metropolis of the educated world” where “the same [anti-religion, pro-science] thought is continually and ubiquitously expressed in every form, from philosophic treatises down to newspaper feuilletons” (49). Not only does this show Tolstoy’s keen interest in Parisian intellectual life, but it almost certainly includes an allusion to Zola, one of the acknowledged leaders of the intellectual current that Tolstoy denounces. The rest of *What is Religion and Wherein Lies Its Essence?* contains a thorough critique of modern science, reminiscent of the earlier essay “The Non-Acting”, which was a direct attack on Zola. This pamphlet also shows how Tolstoy’s understanding of Christianity is significantly connected to his rejection of modern science, to which Zola is wholly devoted.

**B.8** 1902 In one of his last interviews, Zola criticizes severely Tolstoy’s views on sex and religion. The occasion of the interview is the recent publication of Tolstoy’s *The Relations of the Sexes* (*La Question Sexuelle*). Zola cites *Fécondité* as a reply to Tolstoy’s ideas on sex, especially his call for universal celibacy (Léon 381-382).

1902 Zola dies under mysterious circumstances. The possibility of assassination has still not been ruled out (Mitterand, *Zola* vol. 3, 807-813).

Octo. 1902 Anatole France delivers the main eulogy at Zola’s funeral, in which he contrasts Zola with Tolstoy. France calls Tolstoy’s œuvre “a city of resignation,” whereas Zola’s is a “city of work” (“Discours prononcé aux funérailles” 9).
1928 Halpérine-Kaminsky publishes an essay in *Le Manuscrit autographe* in which he recounts the long-running feud between Zola and Tolstoy. Halpérine-Kaminsky tells of many private conversations he had with Zola in which the French novelist complained about Tolstoy and others in which the Russian novelist complained about Zola. Halpérine-Kaminsky says he regrets having served as an intermediary in the feud.

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