Émile Zola

The Fortune of the Rougons

A new translation by Brian Nelson

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

THE FORTUNE OF THE ROUGONS

ÉMILE ZOLA was born in Paris in 1840, the son of a Venetian engineer and his French wife. He grew up in Aix-en-Provence, where he made friends with Paul Cézanne. After an undistinguished school career and a brief period of dire poverty in Paris, Zola joined the newly founded publishing firm of Hachette, which he left in 1866 to live by his pen. He had already published a novel and his first collection of short stories. Other novels and stories followed until, in 1871, Zola published *La Fortune des Rougon*, the first volume of his Rougon-Macquart series, with the subtitle *Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire*, in which he sets out to illustrate the influence of heredity and environment on a wide range of characters and milieux. However, it was not until 1877 that his novel *L'Assommoir*, a study of alcoholism in the working classes, brought him wealth and fame. The last of the Rougon-Macquart series appeared in 1893 and his subsequent writing was far less successful, although he achieved fame of a different sort in his vigorous and influential intervention in the Dreyfus case. His marriage in 1870 had remained childless, but his extremely happy liaison in later life with Jeanne Rozerot, initially one of his domestic servants, gave him a son and a daughter. He died in 1902.

BRIAN NELSON is Emeritus Professor of French Studies and Translation Studies at Monash University, Melbourne. He is editor of the *Australian Journal of French Studies* and President of AALITRA (the Australian Association for Literary Translation). His publications include *Zola and the Bourgeoisie* and *The Cambridge Companion to Émile Zola*. He has translated and edited Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise*, *Pot Luck*, *The Kill*, and *The Belly of Paris* for Oxford World's Classics. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics have brought readers closer to the world's great literature. Now with over 700 titles—from the 4,000-year-old myths of Mesopotamia to the twentieth century's greatest novels—the series makes available lesser-known as well as celebrated writing.

The pocket-sized hardbacks of the early years contained introductions by Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, and other literary figures which enriched the experience of reading. Today the series is recognized for its fine scholarship and reliability in texts that span world literature, drama and poetry, religion, philosophy, and politics. Each edition includes perceptive commentary and essential background information to meet the changing needs of readers.

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

ÉMILE ZOLA

The Fortune of the Rougons

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by

BRIAN NELSON

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Brian Nelson 2012
The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First published as an Oxford World's Classics paperback 2012
Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Library of Congress Control Number: 2012002671

ISBN 978-0-19-956099-8

Printed in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

CONTENTS

Introduction vii
Translator's Note xxv
Select Bibliography xxvi
A Chronology of Émile Zola xxviii
Family Tree of the Rougon-Macquart xxxi
THE FORTUNE OF THE ROUGONS 1
Explanatory Notes 295

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

Readers who do not wish to learn details of the plot will prefer to read the Introduction as an Afterword

ZOLA'S ambition was to emulate Balzac by writing a comprehensive fictional history of his own society. He is the quintessential novelist of modernity, understood as a sense of tumultuous change. The motor of change was the rapid expansion of capitalism, with all that that entailed in terms of the altered shapes of the city, new forms of social practice and economic organization, and heightened political pressures. Zola was fascinated by change, and specifically by the emergence of a new, mass society. His epic type of realism is reflected not only in the vast sweep of his work, but also in its variety and complexity. In addition to his thirty-one novels, he wrote five collections of short stories, a large body of art-, drama-, and literary criticism, several plays and libretti, and numerous articles on political and social issues published in the French press at various stages of his career as a journalist. He was a major critic of literature and painting, and a significant political commentator long before the Dreyfus Affair. His main achievement, however, was his twenty-volume novel cycle, *Les Rougon-Macquart*, published between 1871 and 1893. In eight months, during 1868 and 1869, Zola outlined the series of novels he intended to write on the theme of heredity: a family, the Rougon-Macquarts, tainted with alcoholism and mental instability, were to intermarry, to proliferate, and to pass on their inherited weaknesses to subsequent generations. The fortunes of the various family members, as they spread through all levels of society, would be followed over several decades. The Rougons represent the hunt for wealth and position, their members rising to occupy commanding positions in the worlds of government and finance; the Mourets are the bourgeois tradesmen and provincial bourgeoisie; and the Macquarts, with the exception of Lisa Macquart (*The Belly of Paris*), are the submerged proletariat. Through his family Zola examined systematically the social, sexual, and moral landscape of the late nineteenth century along with its political, financial, and artistic contexts. Zola began work on the series in 1869 and devoted himself to it for the next quarter of a century.

The Fortune of the Rougons (*La Fortune des Rougon*, 1871) is the first volume of the Rougon-Macquart cycle. In his preface to the novel Zola wrote that the cycle would have two main themes, physiological and historical; the demonstration of the 'laws' of heredity would be paralleled by the portrayal of a society whose characteristics are exemplified by the Rougon-Macquart family: 'The great characteristic of the Rougon-Macquarts . . . is their ravenous appetites, the great upsurge of our age as it rushes to satisfy those appetites.' The cycle would portray 'a strange period of human folly and shame'. The symbolic possibilities of a family whose heredity is tainted would thus be used to represent a diseased society—the dynamic but corrupt France of Napoleon III's Second Empire (1852–70). *The Fortune of the Rougons* is not only the inaugural novel of *Les Rougon-Macquart* but also, in every sense, its founding text. As Zola wrote in his preface: 'The first episode, presented here as *The Fortune of the Rougons*, could bear the scientific title *Origins*.' The novel recounts the prehistory of the family, establishing the genealogical basis for the series through the expository flashbacks in Chapter 2 (the Rougons' past) and Chapter 4 (the Macquarts' past). Each descendant of the family's founder, Adélaïde Fouque (Aunt Dide), and the two men who shared her life, Rougon and Macquart, will be the protagonist of a subsequent novel: Aristide Rougon (*The Kill* and *Money*), Lisa Macquart (*The Belly of Paris*), François and Marthe Mouret (*The Conquest of Plassans*), Serge Mouret (*The Sin of Father Mouret*), Gervaise Macquart (*L'Assommoir*), Hélène Mouret (*Une page d'amour*), Anna Coupeau (*Nana*), Octave Mouret (*Pot Luck* and *The Ladies' Paradise*), Pauline Quenu (daughter of Lisa Macquart) (*La Joie de vivre*), Étienne Lantier (*Germinal*), Claude Lantier (*The Masterpiece*), Jean Macquart (*Earth* and *La Débâcle*), Angélique Rougon (daughter of Sidonie) (*The Dream*), Pascal Rougon (*Doctor Pascal*). The only exception is a third son Zola gave to Gervaise Macquart: Jacques Lantier, who was invented much later, in 1889, when Zola began to write *La Bête humaine*.

Scientific Observation and Poetic Vision

As a writer, Zola was in many respects a typical product of his times. This is most evident in his articles on the role of the writer and the function of literature, which reflect his enthusiasm for science and his

acceptance of scientific determinism—the prevailing philosophy of the second half of the nineteenth century. Converted from a youthful romantic idealism to realism in art and literature, he began promoting a scientific view of literature inspired by the aims and methods of experimental medicine. He called this new form of realism 'Naturalism'. The subtitle of the Rougon-Macquart cycle, 'A Natural and Social History of a Family under the Second Empire', suggests Zola's two interconnected aims: to use fiction not only as a vehicle for a great social chronicle but also to demonstrate a number of 'scientific' notions about the ways in which human behaviour is determined by heredity and environment. He was influenced by Balzac; by the views on heredity and environment of the positivist philosopher and cultural historian Hippolyte Taine, whose proclamation that 'virtue and vice are products like vitriol and sugar' he adopted as the epigraph of *Thérèse Raquin* (1867); by Prosper Lucas, a largely forgotten nineteenth-century scientist, author of a treatise on natural heredity; and by the Darwinian view of man as essentially an animal (a complete translation of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, first published in 1859, appeared in French in 1865). Zola himself claimed to have based his method largely on the physiologist Claude Bernard's *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*, which he had read soon after its appearance in 1865. The 'truth' for which Zola aimed could only be attained, he argued, through meticulous documentation and research; the work of the novelist represented a form of practical sociology, complementing the work of the scientist, whose hope was to change the world not by judging it but by understanding it. When the laws determining the material conditions of human life were understood, man would have only to act on this understanding to improve society.

Zola was most truly a Naturalist, in the sense of being a writer who based his fiction on scientific theory, in the early novels *Thérèse Raquin* and *Madeleine Férat* (1868). In his 1868 preface to the second edition of *Thérèse Raquin*, a compelling tale of adultery and murder, he defended the 'scientific' purpose of the book in the face of accusations that he was the purveyor of 'putrid literature'. His purpose, he said, was to use a strictly experimental methodology to analyse the processes by which his characters (whom he calls 'temperaments') are completely dominated by their nerves and blood, are devoid of free will, and are drawn into every act of their lives by the inexorable laws

of their physical nature. Theory and practice had diverged considerably by the time, over a decade later, he wrote his lengthy polemical essay 'The Experimental Novel' (1880). But in any case Zola's Naturalism was not as naive and uncritical as is sometimes assumed. His formulation of the Naturalist aesthetic, while it advocates a respect for truth that makes no concessions to self-indulgence, shows his clear awareness that 'observation' is not an unproblematic process. He recognizes the importance of the observer in the act of observation, and this recognition is repeated in his celebrated formula, used in 'The Experimental Novel', in which he describes the work of art as 'a corner of nature seen through a temperament'. Zola fully acknowledges the importance, indeed the artistic necessity, of the selecting, structuring role of the individual artist and of the aesthetic he adopts. It is thus not surprising to find him, in a series of newspaper articles in 1866, leaping to the defence of Manet and the Impressionists—defending Manet as an artist with the courage to express his own temperament in defiance of current conventions. Zola's brilliant critical 'campaign' made Manet famous. Not only did he understand what modern painters like Manet were doing, but he was able to articulate it before they could.

Zola's 'scientific' representation of society in *Les Rougon-Macquart* is informed by a vast amount of dedicated first-hand observation, note-taking, and research—in Les Halles (*The Belly of Paris*), the Paris slums (*L'Assommoir*), the department stores (*The Ladies' Paradise*), the theatre (*Nana*), the coalfields (*Germinal*), the railways (*La Bête humaine*), the French countryside (*Earth*). Zola combines the approach of a reporter and sociologist with the vision of a painter in his observation of the modes of existence, the patterns and practices that characterize particular milieux. The texture of his novels is infused with an intense concern with concrete detail, and the detailed planning notes he assembled for each novel represent a remarkable stock of documentary information about French society in the 1870s and 1880s.

Zola's fiction acquires its power, however, not so much from its ethnographic richness as from its imaginative qualities. In his narrative practice he combines brilliantly the particular and the general, the individual and the mass, the everyday and the fantastic. His various narrative worlds, with their specific atmospheres, are always presented through the eyes of individuals, and are never separate from

human experience. The interaction between people and their environments is evoked in his celebrated physical descriptions. These descriptions are not, however, mechanical products of his aesthetic credo, parts of the text that can easily be skipped; rather, they express the very meaning, and ideological tendencies, of his narratives. Consider, for example, the lengthy descriptions of the luxurious physical décor of bourgeois existence—houses, interiors, social gatherings—in *The Kill*. The main syntactic characteristic of these passages is the eclipse of human subjects by abstract nouns and things, suggesting the absence of any controlling human agency and expressing a vision of a society which, organized under the aegis of the commodity, turns people into objects. Similarly, the descriptions of the sales in *The Ladies' Paradise*, with their cascading images and rising pitch, suggest loss of control, the female shoppers' quasi-sexual abandonment to consumer dreams, at the same time mirroring the perpetual expansion that defines the economic principles of consumerism. The observed reality of the world is the foundation for a poetic vision. The originality of Zola's fiction lies in its remarkable symbolizing effects. Emblematic features of contemporary life—the market, the machine, the tenement building, the laundry, the mine, the apartment house, the department store, the stock exchange, the theatre, the city itself—are used as giant symbols of the society of his day. Zola sees allegories of contemporary life everywhere. In *The Kill*, the new city under construction at the hands of Haussmann's workmen becomes a vast symbol of the corruption, as well as the dynamism, of Second Empire society. In *The Ladies' Paradise*, the department store is emblematic of the new dream-world of consumer culture and of the changes in sexual attitudes and class relations taking place at the time.

Realist representation is imbued with mythic resonance. The pithead in *Germinal* is a modern figuration of the Minotaur, a monstrous beast that breathes, devours, digests, and regurgitates. Reality is transfigured into a theatre of archetypal forces; and it is the mythopoeic dimension of Zola's work that makes him one of the great figures of the European novel. Heredity not only serves as a structuring device, analogous to Balzac's use of recurring characters, but also has great dramatic force, allowing Zola to give a mythical dimension to his representation of the human condition. For Balzac, money and ambition were the mainsprings of human conduct; for Zola, human

conduct was determined by heredity and environment, and they pursue his characters as relentlessly as the forces of fate in an ancient tragedy.

Historical and Political Themes

The early novels of *Les Rougon-Macquart* are strongly political in their anti-Imperial satire. Zola set out, in *Les Rougon-Macquart*, to tear the mask from the carnival Empire and to expose the frenetic pursuit of pleasure and appetites of every kind that it unleashed. *The Fortune of the Rougons*—a novel of political intrigue, treachery, and murder—describes the brutal beginnings of the Imperial regime as reflected in the way Pierre and Félicité Rougon turn Louis-Napoleon's *coup d'état* of 2 December 1851 to their own advantage. *The Kill* is a powerful picture of the large-scale financial corruption that accompanied the Haussmannization of Paris. *The Belly of Paris* centres on the ensnarement of a would-be insurrectionist, the idealistic Florent Quenu, whose actions threaten to disrupt the prosperous existence of his sister-in-law, Lisa, who embodies the mentality of the *petite bourgeoisie* who complacently support the Empire. *The Conquest of Plassans* shows the Bonapartist regime, through the agency of a priest, Faujas, establishing its hold over the provinces. *His Excellency Eugène Rougon* focuses on the cynicism and savagery of political life under the Second Empire. *Nana* describes the moral corruption of Imperial high society.

The central event of *The Fortune of the Rougons*, though not depicted directly, is the *coup d'état* of Louis-Napoleon. The historical background is as follows. In February 1848 a ban on a so-called reform banquet organized by the liberal opposition led to demonstrations in the Latin Quarter and the eastern part of Paris. Barricades went up, and a surge of revolutionary activity led to the abdication of the king, Louis-Philippe, who fled to England. A republic was declared, and political clubs sprang up to debate ideas for radical social reform. The demands of the revolutionary crowds quickly made themselves felt. On 25 February armed workmen interrupted the deliberations of the provisional government and demanded that the right to work should be guaranteed. This led to the drawing up of a decree guaranteeing the workers' right to work, and the creation of 'national workshops' for the benefit of unemployed workers. On 5 March universal male

suffrage was declared to exist. The electorate leapt from 250,000 to 9 million. It seemed that France really was undergoing profound revolutionary change, and for a while the idea of the revolution—socialist, romantic, utopian—captured everyone's imagination. Supporters both of the Bourbon royal family and of Louis-Philippe declared that they were republicans, priests blessed the 'liberty trees' which were planted throughout the country, bourgeois fraternized with workers in great demonstrations. But when elections took place on 23 April, the majority of those elected to the National Assembly were moderates, drawn mainly from the provincial bourgeoisie, including more than seventy nobles and not a single peasant. Leaders of extremist socialist groups were imprisoned, and both Karl Marx and the historian Alexis de Tocqueville described the situation as being one of class warfare. When the government decided, on 21 June, to disband the expensive national workshops, which provided money for the unemployed, workers and students took to the streets in protest. The government decided on brutal repression. The army and the National Guard, led by General Cavaignac, killed thousands of protesters; 1,500 were shot without trial, 25,000 arrested, and 11,000 imprisoned or deported.

On 12 November a new constitution was established. Its most notable feature was the election of a President for a four-year term by universal male suffrage. A Legislative Assembly would also be elected, but the balance of power between President and Assembly remained unclear. Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, the nephew of the Emperor Napoleon, had returned from exile, and presented himself as one of the six presidential candidates. An enigmatic figure, appearing above politics, he became a focus for those who wished to protest against the disorder of the last few years. He campaigned by offering something to everyone: order and security to conservatives, amnesty to socialists, freedom of schooling to Catholics, and the revival of the economy to all. But it was above all the magic of his name that brought in the votes. He won the election on 10 December by a large majority. Elections to the Legislative Assembly (13 May 1849) confirmed the swing to the right. Most of those elected to the legislature were monarchists; the republicans were in a minority. Political and personal freedoms were curbed by a number of measures, including laws to reduce freedom of the press and of political assembly, to restrict the suffrage, and to give the Catholic Church a dominant role in education.

As President, Louis-Napoleon began by playing along with the legislature, but when it became clear that he would be unable to revise the Constitution to renew his term as President, he began to dissociate himself from the Assembly, which had removed the vote from some 3 million Frenchmen; he pointed to his own position as the representative of the people. When, on 2 December 1851, his carefully planned and neatly executed *coup d'état* dissolved the Assembly, it was possible for this seizure of power to be presented as a democratic measure. It was announced that universal suffrage was restored and that the people would be asked by plebiscite to accept or reject what had happened. There were armed movements of revolt, especially in the south, and the repression involved the killing of some 1,200 innocent citizens and the imprisonment of about 30,000 more; 10,000 were deported, and sixty deputies, including Victor Hugo, were expelled from France. Louis-Napoleon's seizure of power was thus achieved by fraud, duress, and murder, but it had the overwhelming backing of the French people. The plebiscite gave its approval to Louis-Napoleon's overthrow of the Assembly by 7,350,000 to a mere 650,000. Following a triumphal tour of the provinces and some carefully stage-managed petitions, a second plebiscite, on 21 November, gave overwhelming support to the restoration of the Empire. On 2 December 1852, the anniversary of the *coup d'état* (and also the anniversary of Napoleon Bonaparte's coronation as Emperor and of his great military victory at Austerlitz), Louis-Napoleon formally became the Emperor Napoleon III. The Second Empire—in many ways an authoritarian and repressive regime—came into being. It lasted until 1870 and always lived under the shadow of illegitimacy.

The Fortune of the Rougons is set in the fictitious Provençal town of Plassans, which is based on Aix (where Zola spent the first eighteen years of his life) but placed in the Var, where republican resistance to Louis-Napoleon's coup was strongest. The novel tells the story of two young people, Silvère and Miette, seventeen and thirteen respectively, who join the woodcutters and peasants of the Var when they rise up against the coup. The structure of the novel is unusual. The first of the seven chapters focuses on Silvère and Miette, but then we lose sight of them completely until we rejoin them towards the end of the fourth chapter. The narrative of immediate events, which covers no more than a week, contrasts with the long stretch of history covered by exposition of the Rougon-Macquarts' past, which

takes us back to the birth of Adélaïde Fouque in the eighteenth century.

Silvère and Miette join the insurgents on the evening of Sunday, 7 December 1851. Miette is the orphaned daughter of Chantegreil, a poacher sent to the galleys for killing a gendarme who was threatening him with a rifle. Silvère (who prefigures Florent Quenu in *The Belly of Paris* and, to a certain extent, Étienne Lantier in *Germinal*) is the son of Ursule Macquart, the daughter of Adélaïde Fouque and her lover Macquart. Ursule, who dies of consumption in 1840, is the sister of Antoine Macquart and the half-sister of Pierre Rougon, the legitimate son of Adélaïde and her husband Rougon; she is married to a hatter, Mouret, with whom she had had three children, François, Hélène, and Silvère. Silvère develops idealistic republican views under the influence of his uncle Antoine. But Antoine has become a 'rabid republican' merely to seek vengeance on Pierre and his wife Félicité, who have ingratiated themselves into the bourgeoisie of Plassans; their 'yellow drawing-room' serves as a meeting-place for the conservative bourgeois who rally to Louis-Napoleon, while Antoine—the bastard of the family—is left in a state of penury. The insurgents enter Plassans, take temporary control of the town, and disappear into the night, taking with them, as hostages, the mayor, several functionaries, and the receiver of taxes, Monsieur Peirotte, whose house, status, and wealth Félicité has long coveted. In a brawl, Silvère blinds a gendarme, Rengade, in one eye with an accidental blow of his rifle butt. Four days later, having arrived at Sainte-Roure, the insurgents are surrounded by government troops sent from Marseilles, and massacred. Miette, who has been carrying the insurgents' red flag (a clear echo of the famous 1832 painting by Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Guiding the People*), is struck by a bullet and dies, enshrouded in the flag, as Silvère looks on. Meanwhile, in Plassans, Rougon has mobilized his Bonapartist comrades and captured Macquart, who had installed himself in the mayor's rooms in the town hall. The Rougons appear to have triumphed. But fresh fears grip the town, as a rumour spreads that the coup has failed, and further rumours circulate of cannibalism and marauding gangs of bandits. Pierre declares a state of siege and has the town gates locked. Finally, Félicité learns from a letter from her son Eugène, who has been working as a secret agent on behalf of Louis-Napoleon in Paris, that the city has fallen into the Bonapartists' hands. She strikes a bargain with Antoine, who, allowed

to escape, leads an attack on the town hall by a small band of his 'republican' associates—an attack which is in fact an ambush; several of the 'republicans' are killed, thus ensuring that Pierre comes to be seen as a hero by the conservative forces. Two days after the massacre at Sainte-Roure, the troops make their way to Plassans, bringing with them the few prisoners who escaped death. Rengade, the gendarme, recognizes Silvère and executes him in the old town cemetery, on the tombstone that had served as the sweethearts' meeting-place. Just before being shot, Silvère imagines he can see Aunt Dide watching from a distance. Pierre is rewarded for his services on behalf of Louis-Napoleon with the Legion of Honour and with the lucrative post of receiver of taxes.

The 'fortune' of the Rougons is thus paid for in blood. A key passage, describing Pierre and Félicité in bed after Félicité has explained to her husband her plans for the conquest of Plassans, brings together the motifs of blood, greed, and money: 'They kissed each other again and fell asleep. The patch of light on the ceiling now seemed to be assuming the shape of a terrified eye, staring unblinkingly at the pale, slumbering couple, who now reeked of crime under their sheets, and were dreaming that they could see blood raining down in big drops and turning into gold coins as they landed on the floor' (pp. 250–1). The blood turning into gold coins looks forward to the real gold pieces handed over to Macquart for having led his friends into the trap that ensures the Rougons' triumph. After the ambush, the bodies are left for the citizens of Plassans to inspect, as the visible evidence of Pierre's heroism. 'Thus it was that this grotesque individual, this pale, portly bourgeois, became, in one night, a fearsome gentleman whom nobody dared to ridicule any more. He had stepped in blood' (p. 269). Zola notes that each member of the Rougon family—Pierre, Félicité, Aristide—has a corpse on his hands: Pierre because of the deadly ambush; Félicité because she has virtually willed the death of Monsieur Peirotte, who is in fact killed by a stray bullet when the government troops begin the attack on the insurgents; and Aristide because he could have saved his cousin Silvère, but chooses to look the other way. With the Rougons' triumph, Aunt Dide goes mad. As Rougon hands over the gold to Macquart in the old woman's shack, she has a strange cataleptic vision, composed of a series of disconnected images of murder, treachery, gold, and blood. Silvère, her grandson, becomes confused with old Macquart, while the gendarme

killed by old Macquart becomes confused with Rengade, the vengeful gendarme who executes Silvère; and Pascal, with his naturalist's eye, seems to glimpse the family's future: 'For a moment he thought he could see, in a flash, the future of the Rougon-Macquart family, a pack of wild, satiated appetites in the midst of a blaze of gold and blood' (p. 281). The last scene of the novel describes the Rougons, in their yellow drawing-room, celebrating their triumph with a great feast. The final paragraph evokes the bloodstains that mark their fortune:

> . . . the strip of pink satin fastened to Pierre's button-hole was not the only splash of red that marked the triumph of the Rougons. A shoe with a blood-stained heel lay forgotten under the bed in the next room. The candle burning at Monsieur Peirotte's bedside, on the opposite side of the street, shone in the darkness with the lurid redness of an open wound. And far away, in the depths of the Aire Saint-Mittre, a pool of blood was congealing on a tombstone. (p. 293)

In an article in the opposition newspaper *La Tribune* (29 August 1869), Zola referred to Louis-Napoleon's *coup d'état* as a bloodstain that could never be washed away, however hard the supporters of the Empire might try to do so. As a vigorous opposition journalist in the last years of the Empire and after its fall, Zola played an active part in the campaign to keep alive the memory of 2 December. As David Baguley has noted, Zola's *La Tribune* article was prompted by the publication of Noël Blache's *Histoire de l'insurrection du Var en decembre 1851* (1869). Blache, a young lawyer from Toulon, described the savagery of the repression that followed the republican insurrection in the Var. His book followed hard on the heels of Eugène Ténot's *Paris en decembre 1851. Étude historique sur le coup d'état* (1868), which, along with the founding of Henri Rochefort's satirical newspaper *La Lanterne*, played a key role in the movement of *Réveil* ('Awakening'): that is to say, awakening to an awareness of the realities of the tainted origins of the Second Empire.[1]

Although the Empire collapsed soon after Zola completed *The Fortune of the Rougons*, turning the novel into historical fiction, the political force of the novel remains strong. Zola portrays sympathetically the insurrection in the Var, and graphically describes the

[1] David Baguley, *Napoleon III and His Regime: An Extravaganza* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 50–1.

butchery perpetrated by the regular army and the gendarmerie. Zola clearly reveals his sympathies at the beginning of Chapter 5, in a description of the moonlit march of the heroic army of insurgents through the Provençal countryside. They stand for the republican spirit itself.

> It was like a mighty wave of enthusiasm. The epic dreams that transported Miette and Silvère, big children that they were, eager for love and liberty, was so different in its sublime intensity from the sordid intrigues of the Macquarts and the Rougons. At intervals the trumpet voice of the people rose up and drowned the petty prattle of the yellow drawing-room and the bitter diatribes of Uncle Antoine. Cheap, vulgar farce was turned into a great historical drama. (p. 150)

A similar epic quality informs the description of the insurgent column in the opening chapter, while the evocation of the insurgents' courage and dignity in the face of defeat and death at Sainte-Roure is elegiac:

> Aglow with patriotic fervour the previous evening, they now shivered with cold, chilled in their hearts by the shameful submissiveness of a prostrate France. They alone, then, had had the courage to do their duty. And now they were trapped amidst the general panic, the deathly silence of the country; they had become mere rebels, who would be hunted down like animals. They had dreamed of a great war, of a whole nation in revolt, and of the glorious conquest of the people's rights! Lost and abandoned, this handful of men could only weep for their dead faith and their lost dreams of justice. . . . Although these men could now expect nothing but death or exile, there were very few desertions. An admirable feeling of solidarity kept them together. (p. 196)

Zola's choice of a provincial setting to recount the bloody origins of the Empire and of the Rougon fortune enabled him to reinforce his satire in terms of parody, and to achieve a kind of doubling of Marx's characterization of Louis-Napoleon, in his 1852 pamphlet on the *coup d'état* entitled *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, as a parody of his uncle. History, wrote Marx, repeats itself, 'the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce'. In the preface to the second edition of his pamphlet, Marx said it was the intention of the work to demonstrate how the class struggle in France created circumstances that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity, Louis-Napoleon, to play a hero's part. Zola derives much satirical comedy from Pierre Rougon's enactment—manipulated, moreover, by his wily wife—of

the role of a small-town Louis-Napoleon abetted by a few tinpot acolytes. As they set about 'saving' Plassans from the diabolical republicans, Rougon and his little band of retired tradesmen become comic characters in a mock-epic drama.

Zola characterizes Plassans in terms of its extreme provincialism and the rigidity of its social divisions. To begin with, the town is virtually cut off from the rest of the country by its natural setting—'Built on the plateau overlooking the Viorne, and bound on the north by the Garrigues hills . . . the town is situated, as it were, at the end of a cul-de-sac' (p. 33)—and its old ramparts:

These ridiculous fortifications, invaded by ivy and crowned by gillyflowers, are about as high and thick as the walls of a convent, and could easily be demolished by gunshot. They have several openings, of which the main ones, the Porte de Rome and the Grand-Porte, give access, respectively, to the Nice road and the Lyons road, at the other end of town. Until 1853 these openings were fitted out with huge wooden two-leaved gates . . . These gates were double-locked at eleven o'clock in summer and ten o'clock in winter . . . The locking of the gates every evening summed up the spirit of the town, which was a combination of cowardice, egotism, routine, parochialism, and devout longing for a cloistered life . . . No other town, I believe, has persisted so long in thus incarcerating itself like a nun. (pp. 34–5)

The self-enclosed town contains three further, closed worlds: the three groups (nobility, bourgeoisie, workers and traders) that inhabit the town's three distinct districts: the Saint-Marc quarter, the new town, and the old quarter. Plassans is a microcosm, in caricatural form, of nineteenth-century France. The caustic nature of Zola's satire is reinforced by the directness of his narratorial rhetoric, including the use of the first person ('ridiculous', 'cowardice', 'I believe'). It is as if Zola, whether consciously or not, has not yet found his voice as a Naturalist novelist, and reverts to the vigorous personal style of the polemical articles he published in *La Tribune* throughout 1868 and 1869.

Zola's irony is not restricted to the reactionaries, but is extended to individual 'republicans'. Just as Aristide Rougon is a turncoat merely waiting to see which way the wind will blow, Antoine Macquart is viciously unprincipled:

Every political party has its grotesques and its villains. Antoine Macquart, consumed with envy and hatred, and dreaming of getting his

revenge on society, welcomed the Republic as an era of happiness that would allow him to fill his pockets from his neighbour's cashbox, and even strangle his neighbour if he objected in any way . . . sometimes he invited his friends, and shouted for hours on end that the people were dying of hunger and the rich must share their wealth. He himself would never have given a sou to a beggar. (p. 119)

As for Silvère, his enthusiasm for the Republic is seen as a congenital nervous disturbance, while his head is full of muddled ideas derived from his haphazard reading of Rousseau and later, socialist writers:

A nature such as Silvère's, passionate yet self-contained, was fertile ground for the most exalted republican ideas. At night, in the little shack, he would read over and over again a work of Rousseau's which he had come across at a local second-hand dealer's . . . This book kept him awake until dawn. In his dream of universal happiness, so dear to the poor, the words 'liberty', 'equality', and 'fraternity' rang in his ears with the sonorous, sacred sound of church bells, which make the faithful fall on their knees. When, therefore, he heard that the Republic had been proclaimed in France, he imagined that the whole world would enjoy a life of celestial beatitude. His education, though very patchy, enabled him to see further than other workers; his aspirations did not stop at daily bread, but his extreme naivety, his complete ignorance of mankind, kept him in a dream-world of theory, a Garden of Eden where universal justice reigned. (p. 129)

The fact that Silvère's 'exalted ideas' are a facet of temperament and heredity, derived from the nervous hysteria of Aunt Dide, is indicated by his uncle, Doctor Pascal:

He talked to the doctor, with the grandiloquence of youth, about the people's rights, their holy mission, and their certain triumph. Pascal listened with a smile, and watched the youth's gestures and vigorous facial expressions with great interest, as if he were studying a patient, or analysing a passion, to ascertain what might lie behind this fever of excitement.

'How you go on! How you go on!' he finally exclaimed. 'You are your grandmother's true grandson.'

Then, in a whisper, he added, like a chemist taking notes:

'Hysteria or excitement, shameful madness or sublime madness. Always those terrible nerves!' (p. 195)

Zola's writing (for example, the description of the Aire Saint-Mittre, the old tombstone, and the army of insurrectionists) is just as powerful as in the later novels, though the demands of exposition may

make the structure appear static and awkward. But the very nature of *The Fortune of the Rougons* as the founding text of the Rougon-Macquart series means that a knowledge of the later novels will make it all the more rewarding to return to the 'origins'.

The Mythic Dimension

The historical vision embodied in *The Fortune of the Rougons* is a tragic one, and is reflected as much through symbolic and mythic expression as through direct statement. The tragedy is focused on the story of Silvère and Miette. Like the mythical figures of Pyramus and Thisbe, the two young people are separated by a wall, the wall that separates the Jas-Meiffren and the Impasse Saint-Mittre. One day Silvère opens the locked door in the wall. The door had been built in a single night by Dide and her lover, the poacher Macquart, scandalizing their neighbours. It has remained closed for forty years. Silvère, who longs to see Miette face to face, searches for the lost key. Having found it, one morning he unlocks the door and waits for Miette. They are delighted to be so close for the first time. But suddenly Dide appears in the doorway. Shocked to see the door open, 'like a yawning tomb', and wondering who is responsible for 'this violation' (p.174), she suddenly sees Miette and Silvère. 'Now she understood everything. Until the very end, she was destined to see herself there, in Macquart's arms, in the bright morning sunshine. For a second time the door had served as an accomplice. Where love had once passed, there it passed again. It was the eternal cycle, with its present joys and future tears' (p. 175). The door serves as a point of transition between linear time and cyclical time. For Aunt Dide, 'it was like an insurmountable rampart that shut off her past. She did not know, and did not want to know, what might now lie on the other side of the wall, in the Fouques' former property, where she had buried her love, her heart and her body' (p. 163). When she crosses the threshold, it is as if she is suddenly transported from the present into the past, and at the same time is able to see into the future. As Naomi Schor has written:

> To pass from one side of the door to the other is only to exchange spatial enclosure for its temporal equivalent, to go from the circle to the cycle; for the cycle is but the circle translated into the dimension of time. . . . the cycle condemns each generation to repeat the actions of the preceding one.

> Silvère must die like Macquart, Miette like the Marie on whose tombstone the lovers sit. The cycle appears to be a metaphor for heredity. . . . The myth of eternal renewal masks the relentless determinism of heredity. Topography, history and biology all condemn Zola's characters to a life where free will is powerless to act, to bring about change. Repression inevitably follows revolution in all of Zola's political novels.[2]

Love and death are focused on the tombstone which is present in the first and the final pages of the novel. It bears an ancient inscription, half-obliterated by time: '*Here lies… Marie… died…*' Miette (whose own name is Marie, of which Miette is the Provençal diminutive form) feels that the stone foretells her own fate; and Silvère, in the moments before his execution on that very stone, sees again, in his mind's eye, Miette's death on the battlefield: 'he heard the sharp crackling of gunfire and saw a standard fall to the ground before him, its staff broken and its folds drooping like the wings of a bird brought down by a shot. It was the Republic expiring with Miette under the red flag' (p. 290).

Those who see the world in terms of money, power, and status are victorious; those who represent love and liberty are cut down. From the perspective of the ending of the novel, it is possible to see how history and myth intersect. We must return, like Silvère, to the abandoned cemetery of Saint-Mittre and the aura that surrounds it. In 1851 the old people of Plassans could still remember having seen the walls of the cemetery when they were still standing, though the place had been shut for years. The earth, gorged with corpses for over a century, 'exuded death' (p. 5), and a new cemetery had had to be established on the other side of town. The abandoned cemetery had then gone through 'a process of purification' (ibid.) by covering itself every spring with thick vegetation. The black soil, into which the gravediggers could not sink their spades without turning up some human remains, was extraordinarily fertile, seeming to ooze with sap.

> Around this time the town council decided to put this communal property, which no longer served any purpose, to some use. The walls bordering the roadway and the blind alley were knocked down; the weeds and the pear trees were pulled up; and what remained of the cemetery was moved. The ground was dug several metres deep, and such bones as the earth was willing to yield up were piled in a corner. For nearly a month the youngsters, who

[2] Naomi Schor, 'Zola: From Window to Window', *Yale French Studies*, 42 (1969), 38–51 (at 50–1).

lamented the loss of the pear trees, played *boules* with skulls, and one night some pranksters went so far as to hang femurs and tibias from all the bell-ropes in the town. This scandal, which people in Plassans still remember, was not put to rest until it was decided to have the bones thrown into a hole which was dug for the purpose in the new cemetery. But practical work of this kind is usually carried out very slowly in provincial towns, and for more than a week the townspeople saw a solitary cart removing human remains as if they were simply removing rubbish. The worst of it was that the tumbril had to travel the whole length of the town, from one end to the other, and the badly paved streets meant that fragments of bone and handfuls of black soil were scattered at every jolt. There was no religious ceremony of any kind, just a slow, clumsy cartage. Never had a town felt such disgust. (p. 6)

As Naomi Schor suggests, the 'myth' of the Aire Saint-Mittre may be seen as a transposition of the French Revolution. The textual detail most redolent of 1789 and its aftermath is the tumbril used to transfer the bones through the streets to the new cemetery on the other side of town. The memory of this sight—as of the tumbrils carrying people to the guillotine at the time of the Revolution—inspires terror in the townsfolk, just as the old cemetery inspired horror for a number of years, until 'people gradually grew accustomed to this empty spot' (p. 7). What also provokes fear and disgust among the townspeople is the extraordinary fertility of the soil, and in particular the monstrous pear trees with their enormous fruit. The old cemetery is full of teeming life: 'On the hottest days you can feel the warm, voluptuous breath of the dead rising from the old graves' (p. 8). These are the dead who call insistently to Silvère and Miette later on; and it is out of the cemetery that their love is born: 'they would tell each other that their love had shot up like some luxurious plant in the special soil fertilized by dead men's bones' (p. 190). Just as Silvère and Miette are eventually killed, so the old cemetery is shut, and the 'liberty tree'—symbol of the hopes engendered among the working class by the 1848 revolution, and a clear echo of the pear trees—is ritually felled by the reactionaries, to the delight of Félicité Rougon and the habitués of her drawing-room. The metaphoric meaning of the opening description of the abandoned cemetery—and its focal point, the tombstone—becomes clear. It signifies not only the French Revolution and its tumultuous legacy of fear and hope, revolt and repression; it also expresses a vision of life as an endless process of birth–growth–decay–death–rebirth. Death is a necessary condition of new life and,

as Martin Turnell has written, 'fertility contains the seeds of corruption as death contains the germ of life'.[3]

The observer of the violent birth of the Second Empire and of the Rougon fortune, Pascal Rougon, stands apart, to such an extent that he 'did not seem to belong to the family' (p. 61). The role he plays in the novel is that of Zola's delegate—a kind of mirror of the author, the Naturalist writer, within the text. Devoted to scientific research, 'he had been studying the great problem of heredity, comparing the human and animal species with each other, fascinated by the strange results he obtained' (p. 62). When Félicité asks him about his political opinions, he replies that he 'must be a republican, if that means being someone who wants everybody to be happy' (p. 89). Like Zola, he disapproves of violent revolution; he will not participate in the republicans' armed struggle, but tends the wounded as best he can. He will reappear twenty-two years later in the final volume of the Rougon-Macquart series, *Doctor Pascal*, as a heroic, almost messianic, old man prophesying a glorious future. In the intervening period, as Zola wrote the successive novels of his series (and indeed later, with his final, utopian works), his delineation of the conditions necessary for a well-ordered republic would take shape and his social vision would evolve, becoming increasingly inflected towards hope and regeneration.

[3] Martin Turnell, *The Art of French Fiction* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1959), 130.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

I AM very happy to have produced only the second new translation of *La Fortune des Rougon* since the late nineteenth century (the other translation is by Robert Smith, published by Grand Oak Books in 2011). The novel was translated anonymously for the publisher Henry Vizetelly, who published this translation in 1886. Graham King has commented on what he terms the 'glutinous prolixity' of this anonymous translation (*Garden of Zola: Emile Zola and his Novels for English Readers* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1978), 376). This comment is only mildly uncharitable. Ernest Vizetelly, Henry's son, revised but did not greatly improve this translation for Chatto & Windus (1898). Nevertheless, it is Ernest Vizetelly's version that various publishers have seen fit to reissue in recent years.

I wish to record my gratitude to the French Ministry of Culture (Centre national du livre) for a grant that enabled me to spend some time at the Centre International des Traducteurs Littéraires in Arles.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Fortune of the Rougons (*La Fortune des Rougon*) was serialized in the newspaper *Le Siècle* from 28 June to 10 August 1870 and, after a hiatus due to the Franco-Prussian War, 18–21 March 1871. It was published in volume form by the Librairie Charpentier in October 1871. It is included in volume 1 of Henri Mitterand's superb scholarly edition of *Les Rougon-Macquart* in the 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', 5 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1960–7). Paperback editions exist in the following popular collections: Folio, ed. Henri Mitterand, preface by Maurice Agulhon (Paris, 1981); Classiques de Poche, ed. Colette Becker (Paris, 2004); GF-Flammarion, introduction by Robert Ricatte (Paris, 1969); Classiques & Cie, ed. Anne Cassou-Noguès (Paris: Hatier, 2008).

Biographies of Zola in English

Brown, Frederick, *Zola: A Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1995; London: Macmillan, 1996).

Hemmings, F. W. J., *The Life and Times of Emile Zola* (London: Elek, 1977).

Schom, Alan, *Emile Zola: A Bourgeois Rebel* (New York: Henry Holt, 1987; London: Queen Anne Press, 1987).

Studies of Zola and Naturalism in English

Baguley, David, *Naturalist Fiction: The Entropic Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

—— (ed.), *Critical Essays on Emile Zola* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986).

Bell, David F., *Models of Power: Politics and Economics in Zola's 'Rougon-Macquart'* (Lincoln, Nebr., and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).

Bloom, Harold (ed.), *Emile Zola* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004).

Hemmings, F. W. J., *Emile Zola*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

Lethbridge, R., and Keefe, T. (eds.), *Zola and the Craft of Fiction* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990).

Nelson, Brian (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Zola* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

—— (ed.), *Naturalism in the European Novel: New Critical Perspectives* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1992).

—— *Zola and the Bourgeoisie: A Study of Themes and Techniques in* Les Rougon-Macquart (London: Macmillan; Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1983).

Walker, Philip, *Zola* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).
Wilson, Angus, *Émile Zola: An Introductory Study of his Novels* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1964 [1953]).

Articles and Book Chapters in English on The Fortune of the Rougons

Armstrong, Marie-Sophie, 'The Opening Chapter of *La Fortune des Rougon* or the Darker Side of Zolian Writing', *Dalhousie French Studies*, 44 (Fall 1998), 39–53. Repr. in *Emile Zola*, edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004), 185–203.
Chaitin, Gilbert, 'The Voices of the Dead: Love, Death and Politics in Zola's *Fortune des Rougon*', *Literature and Psychology*, 26: 3 (1976), 131–44, and 26: 4 (1976), 148–58.
Schor, Naomi, *Zola's Crowds* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); '*La Fortune des Rougon*', pp. 8–21.
Ziegler, Robert, 'Blood and Soil: The Stuff of Creation in *La Fortune des Rougon*', *Studia Neophilologica*, 69: 2 (1997), 235–41.

Background and Context

Baguley, David, *Napoleon III and His Regime: An Extravaganza* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

Further Reading in Oxford World's Classics

Zola, Émile, *L'Assommoir*, trans. Margaret Mauldon, ed. Robert Lethbridge.
—— *The Belly of Paris*, trans. Brian Nelson.
—— *La Bête humaine*, trans. Roger Pearson.
—— *Germinal*, trans. Peter Collier, ed. Robert Lethbridge.
—— *The Kill*, trans. Brian Nelson.
—— *The Ladies' Paradise*, trans. Brian Nelson.
—— *The Masterpiece*, trans. Thomas Walton, revised by Roger Pearson.
—— *Nana*, trans. Douglas Parmée.
—— *Pot Luck*, trans. Brian Nelson.
—— *Thérèse Raquin*, trans. Andrew Rothwell.

A CHRONOLOGY OF ÉMILE ZOLA

1840 (2 April) Born in Paris, the only child of Francesco Zola (b. 1795), an Italian engineer, and Émilie, née Aubert (b. 1819), the daughter of a glazier. The naturalist novelist was later proud that 'zolla' in Italian means 'clod of earth'

1843 Family moves to Aix-en-Provence

1847 (27 March) Death of father from pneumonia following a chill caught while supervising work on his scheme to supply Aix-en-Provence with drinking water

1852–8 Boarder at the Collège Bourbon at Aix. Friendship with Baptistin Baille and Paul Cézanne. Zola, not Cézanne, wins the school prize for drawing

1858 (February) Leaves Aix to settle in Paris with his mother (who had preceded him in December). Offered a place and bursary at the Lycée Saint-Louis. (November) Falls ill with 'brain fever' (typhoid) and convalescence is slow

1859 Fails his *baccalauréat* twice

1860 (Spring) Is found employment as a copy-clerk but abandons it after two months, preferring to eke out an existence as an impecunious writer in the Latin Quarter of Paris

1861 Cézanne follows Zola to Paris, where he meets Camille Pissarro, fails the entrance examination to the École des Beaux-Arts, and returns to Aix in September

1862 (February) Taken on by Hachette, the well-known publishing house, at first in the dispatch office and subsequently as head of the publicity department. (31 October) Naturalized as a French citizen. Cézanne returns to Paris and stays with Zola

1863 (31 January) First literary article published. (1 May) Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* exhibited at the Salon des Refusés, which Zola visits with Cézanne

1864 (October) *Tales for Ninon*

1865 *Claude's Confession*. A *succès de scandale* thanks to its bedroom scenes. Meets future wife Alexandrine-Gabrielle Meley (b. 1839), the illegitimate daughter of teenage parents who soon separated, and whose mother died in September 1849

1866 Resigns his position at Hachette (salary: 200 francs a month) and becomes a literary critic on the recently launched daily *L'Événement* (salary: 500 francs a month). Self-styled 'humble disciple' of Hippolyte Taine. Writes a series of provocative articles condemning the official Salon Selection Committee, expressing reservations about Courbet, and praising Manet and Monet. Begins to frequent the Café Guerbois in the Batignolles quarter of Paris, the meeting-place of the future Impressionists. Antoine Guillemet takes Zola to meet Manet. Summer months spent with Cézanne at Bennecourt on the Seine. (15 November) *L'Événement* suppressed by the authorities

1867 (November) *Thérèse Raquin*

1868 (April) Preface to second edition of *Thérèse Raquin*. (May) Manet's portrait of Zola exhibited at the Salon. (December) *Madeleine Férat*. Begins to plan for the Rougon-Macquart series of novels

1868–70 Working as journalist for a number of different newspapers

1870 (31 May) Marries Alexandrine in a registry office. (September) Moves temporarily to Marseilles because of the Franco-Prussian War

1871 Political reporter for *La Cloche* (in Paris) and *Le Sémaphore de Marseille*. (March) Returns to Paris. (October) Publishes *The Fortune of the Rougons*, the first of the twenty novels making up the Rougon-Macquart series

1872 *The Kill*

1873 (April) *The Belly of Paris*

1874 (May) *The Conquest of Plassans*. First independent Impressionist exhibition. (November) *Further Tales for Ninon*

1875 Begins to contribute articles to the Russian newspaper *Vestnik Evropy* (*European Herald*). (April) *The Sin of Father Mouret*

1876 (February) *His Excellency Eugène Rougon*. Second Impressionist exhibition

1877 (February) *L'Assommoir*

1878 Buys a house at Médan on the Seine, 40 kilometres west of Paris. (June) *A Page of Love*

1880 (March) *Nana*. (May) *Les Soirées de Médan* (an anthology of short stories by Zola and some of his naturalist 'disciples', including Maupassant). (8 May) Death of Flaubert. (September) First of a series of articles for *Le Figaro*. (17 October) Death of his mother. (December) *The Experimental Novel*

1882	(April) *Pot Luck* (*Pot-Bouille*). (3 September) Death of Turgenev
1883	(13 February) Death of Wagner. (March) *The Ladies' Paradise* (*Au Bonheur des Dames*). (30 April) Death of Manet
1884	(March) *La Joie de vivre*. Preface to catalogue of Manet exhibition
1885	(March) *Germinal*. (12 May) Begins writing *The Masterpiece* (*L'Œuvre*). (22 May) Death of Victor Hugo. (23 December) First instalment of *The Masterpiece* appears in *Le Gil Blas*
1886	(27 March) Final instalment of *The Masterpiece*, which is published in book form in April
1887	(18 August) Denounced as an onanistic pornographer in the *Manifesto of the Five* in *Le Figaro*. (November) *Earth*
1888	(October) *The Dream*. Jeanne Rozerot becomes his mistress
1889	(20 September) Birth of Denise, daughter of Zola and Jeanne
1890	(March) *The Beast in Man*
1891	(March) *Money*. (April) Elected President of the Société des Gens de Lettres. (25 September) Birth of Jacques, son of Zola and Jeanne
1892	(June) *La Débâcle*
1893	(July) *Doctor Pascal*, the last of the Rougon-Macquart novels. Fêted on visit to London
1894	(August) *Lourdes*, the first novel of the trilogy *Three Cities*. (22 December) Dreyfus found guilty by a court martial
1896	(May) *Rome*
1898	(13 January) 'J'accuse', his article in defence of Dreyfus, published in *L'Aurore*. (21 February) Found guilty of libelling the Minister of War and given the maximum sentence of one year's imprisonment and a fine of 3,000 francs. Appeal for retrial granted on a technicality. (March) *Paris*. (23 May) Retrial delayed. (18 July) Leaves for England instead of attending court
1899	(4 June) Returns to France. (October) *Fecundity*, the first of his *Four Gospels*
1901	(May) *Toil*, the second 'Gospel'
1902	(29 September) Dies of fumes from his bedroom fire, the chimney having been capped either by accident or anti-Dreyfusard design. Wife survives. (5 October) Public funeral
1903	(March) *Truth*, the third 'Gospel', published posthumously. *Justice* was to be the fourth
1908	(4 June) Remains transferred to the Panthéon

FAMILY TREE OF THE ROUGON–MACQUART

Adélaïde FOUQUE
(Tante DIDE)
1768–1873
m. ROUGON   Lover of MACQUART

Pierre ROUGON
1787–1870
m. Félicité PUECH

Eugène ROUGON b. 1811

Pascal ROUGON 1813–1873

Aristide ROUGON (SACCARD) b. 1815

Sidonie ROUGON b. 1818

Marthe ROUGON 1820–1864 m. François MOURET 1817–1864

Maxime ROUGON (SACCARD) 1840–1873

Clotilde ROUGON b. 1847

Victor ROUGON (SACCARD) b. 1853

Angélique ROUGON 1851–1869

Octave MOURET b. 1840

Serge MOURET b. 1841

Charles ROUGON (SACCARD) 1857–1873

Child born in 1874 to Clotilde and Pascal ROUGON

FAMILY TREE OF THE ROUGON-MACQUART