The divisions over the Dreyfus Affair were mirrored in the literature of the period. But there was a further split, evident from the writing of contemporaries and which predated the Affair, between fiction appearing in the press and that from the world of "high" literature published in books. During the period, however, certain authors drew together these oppositions by first publishing their work as journalism and later assembling the same material together in volume. It has indeed been remarked that the Affair was a "battle of books" and that here, unlike the situation in the press, the field was largely dominated by the Dreyfusards. "One of the last great publishers resolutely committed to the defense of a sacred cause" was the Dreyfusard, Pierre-Victor Stock. It was "thanks to him that the Dreyfusards . . . won the battle" (Moller).

The Affair developed in ground fertile for polemic and racism. The way had been prepared in the publications of Eduard Drumont, in particular the author's "Jewish France" (1886) whose descriptions of scandals and denunciations of Jews enjoyed huge success. (B.6). Drumont's principal outlet during the Affair, however, was his newspaper, La Libre Parole.

Bernard-Lazare was the first to rise in print to Dreyfus's defense in a small, yellow-backed book published in Belgium in 1896 (Un Ereur judiciaire). Lazare's later analysis of illegalities in the case against Dreyfus is in the collection: "How to condemn an innocent man." published by Stock in 1898. (B.30).

Zola's open "letters" (to Youth and to France) which preceded J'Accuse...! were both published as brochures. These items and the author's famous denunciation, also published in a brochure, are in the collection (B.15, B.16, B.45). As well as providing a target for antidreyfusards, Zola's stance provided a beacon for the intellectuals. This role is commemorated in the Livre d'hommage des lettres françaises à Emile Zola, published in Paris and Belgium by the Société libre d'édition des gens de lettres during 1898. Tribute to the courage of Zola was also expressed through the frequent translation of his works. A Dutch edition of the first chapter of his writings on the Affair ("Truth"), published by Wink in 1903, is in the collection. (B.70). Of the many critics and polemical voices in the Affair, the voice of Séveryne was endowed with particular authority. The volume, "Towards the Light," published by Stock in 1900, assembles her perceptive press articles regarding the trials and states of mind of the actors and public during the period. (B.25).

Literature (prose or verse) might also provide justification and catharsis. Alfred Dreyfus turned to write a moving autobiography of his experiences based on his letters and journals from the time of his imprisonment on Devil's Island ("Five Years of My Life"). Published in French in 1901, the work was translated into English and other languages throughout Europe and America. (B.5, B.32).

Of the critical studies of the Affair, "The Proofs," by parliamentarian and socialist leader Jean Jaurès is a collection of articles published during 1898 in La Petite République. (B.22). Jaurès offers both a detailed analysis of the complexities of the cover-up and an appeal for justice for Dreyfus. Jaurès colleague, Joseph Reinach, later the author of a standard historical work on the Affair, wrote articles and pamphlets in support of Dreyfus including the moving "On Devil's Island" which aimed to evoke human sympathy for the prisoner (B.10).

A number of volumes in the collection document the pleas and minutes of the various trials of the Affair, in particular the trials of Zola and the second court-martial of Dreyfus (both published by Stock [1898, 1900]). Yves Guyot, political editor of the newspaper Le Siècle, published an analysis of the handwriting evidence and appealed for a revision of Dreyfus' case in his La Revision du process Dreyfus: faits et documents juridiques (Siècle and Stock, 1898) (B.62).

Certain works attempted to convey the Affair to the world public. Of the literary treatments from a perspective outside France there is Steevens, The Tragedy of Dreyfus, New York, 1899, Harding's Prisoner of Devil's Island (1899), and a remarkable work of poetry in Yiddish entitled, "Job," published in Galicia in 1904, and dedicated to, "the Greatest Sufferer of the Nineteenth Century, Captain Alfred Dreyfus at Paris." (B.14, B.9, B.49). A strange work by Horace Smith (A Captain Unafraid, The Strange Adventures of Dynamite Johnny O'Brien) appeared in 1912, mixing fancy with fact in the story of an American naval adventurer's alleged attempt to rescue Dreyfus from his island prison. (B.13).

As the Affair passed into history many of the elements were set down in the multi-volumed work of Joseph Reinach whose Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus was published by the classic organ of the "intellectuals," La Revue Blanche, from 1901. The Lorraine Beiter Collection includes the memoirs of the German military attaché (published posthumously) which excoriate Alfred Dreyfus from any suspicion of treachery with Germany (Count Max von Schwartzkoppen, The Truth About Dreyfus, From the Schwartzkoppen Papers, English ed. London: Putnam, 1931). Standard historical works of the last seventy years are also in the collection. These include the studies by Chapman (1955) and Halasz (1955), by Thomas, Kleeblett, Drouin and the many others who, since the centenaries of Dreyfus' trial (1994) and Zola's J'Accuse...! (1998), have continued to render the Dreyfus Affair historically present.