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Émile Zola's *Nana*: The Translation and Reception of a Queer Text in Late 19th Century Greek Literary Discourse

In 1880, Émile Zola's controversial novel *Nana* was introduced into Greek literary discourse. It provoked reactions, triggered changes, was considered "dangerous" and "corrupting" to the progress of the nation, but nevertheless attracted the interest of the reading public. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to examine certain moments of the Greek rewriting and reception of this challenging text. Translation is a way to influence or renew another literature (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990:27), it contributes to the creation and transformation of knowledge between different cultural contexts, and is thus a sign of cultural destabilisation and negotiation (Bhabha 1994; Bassnett 2011). In this paper, thus, I will attempt to read certain moments in the source and target texts in parallel in order to examine what kind of sexual knowledge the French novel brought to Greek literature, in terms of the representation and evaluation of female sexual queerness, and how this affected the Greek literary field. I will also focus on the important role of the Greek translator of the novel, Ioannis Kabouroglou, in this process of translation and transformation of sexual discourse. Translators are essential agents in the power-generating acts that create knowledge and shape culture, and they contribute to the transformation of discourses of power (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002: xxii), while they may intentionally manipulate texts to advance their own ideology (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990: 88) or mimic dominant discourses to ensure acceptance in the target culture (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990: 57). Thus, by mapping the translator's interventions in the rewriting process, his changes, evaluative comments, or moments of censorship in relation to the depiction of female queerness, I aim to explore whether his rewriting conforms to the dominant literary discourse and its requirements or challenges the Greek literary field (Simeoni 1998; Yannakopoulou 2012). So, I try to investigate whether he was a "cultural preserver" or a "cultural importer" (Sela-Sheffy, 2005).

The target text introduced not only the representation of female same-sex desire in Modern Greek literature, but also an entire vocabulary and thus a way of "speaking" about and signifying queer sexual desires and feelings. By analysing parts of this discourse, I will investigate how, behind its apparent attempt to condemn and stigmatise female queerness, it helped to bring queer femininities into readers' consciousness and make them more visible and speakable. I will also explore how the sexual knowledge contained in *Nana's* translation was disseminated and influenced Greek literary discourse in the late 19th century. Finally, in this paper, I will emphasise the "queerness" of the target text, meaning that Kabouroglou's rewriting is open to a web of contradictory readings, analyses, and perspectives and defies monolithic evaluations. By offering readers a diversity of thoughts and feelings and leaving them free to be repeatedly drawn to different and contradictory evaluations and conclusions about female sexual queerness, the Greek translation of *Nana* constituted an even more challenging text for Greek literature at the end of the nineteenth century.

Panagiota Vogiatzi is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Birmingham. Vogiatzi holds a BA in Medieval and Modern Greek Philology and a MA in Modern Greek Philology from the University of Ioannina. Her dissertation focuses on the comparative study of the different representations and conceptualizations of female queerness in French and Greek literature (1880-1940). She also analyses the Greek translations of certain French novels from this period that contain influential representations of female same-sex desire, and examines how sexual discourse and knowledge are rewritten and resignified in different cultural contexts. Her research interests lie in comparative literature and translation studies and their interaction with feminist and queer theories. She is particularly interested in cultural and historical understandings of and reactions to perceived "female sexual abnormality" and those female subjects who transgress the gendered expectations placed upon them.