

Zola's Dramatised Novels on the Athenian Stage in the Early 20th Century

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article examine les premières représentations sur la scène athénienne jusqu'aux années 1920, des pièces de Zola tirées des romans Thérèse Raquin, La Faute de l'abbé Mouret, L'Assommoir, Nana et basées sur les livrets de Zola et William Busnach. Par le biais des adaptations théâtrales zoliennes, portées à la scène grecque quelque vingt-cinq ans après leurs premières parisiennes, des actrices de renom grecques de tous âges telles qu'Ekaterini Veroni, Marika Kotopouli et Kyveli Adrianou tentèrent de combiner le star système avec l'avant-garde réaliste européenne. Il s'avère toutefois que ces adaptations de nature déjà mélodramatique et au caractère moralisateur déformé, ne débouchèrent pas sur la révolution naturaliste qu'on aurait pu espérer sur la scène grecque. C'est que le public athénien était déjà familiarisé avec le mélodrame et la pièce à thèse bourgeoise chers au XIXe siècle, et qui contenaient de semblables procédés stylistiques. La représentation de La Faute de l'abbé Mouret n'en fut pas moins une expérience remarquable pour la décadence naturaliste à ses débuts, qui influença les auteurs et dramaturges grecs de l'époque. Prenant pour champ d'étude le début du XXe siècle, période critique pour la réception en Grèce des œuvres théâtrales européennes, cet article retrace l'existence parallèle d'une résistance vigoureuse des intellectuels idéalistes grecs à une telle assimilation.

When Athenian theatre companies staged Zola's novels adapted for the stage from the turn of the 20th century to the period of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the naturalist movement and the spirit of positivism had fallen out of favour in France over the last two decades, and perhaps also in Greece.¹ There had been attacks on the movement by Alexandre Dumas fils, representative of the "pièce à thèse," as early as 1879 when the comedy *L'Étrangère* was published, and by the literary critic Ferdinand Brunetière in 1880 and in 1882 in his books *Études critiques sur l'histoire de la littérature française* and *Le Roman naturaliste*. Both accused Zola, the leader of the naturalist movement, not only for his lack of taste and

¹ The introduction of the naturalist movement in Greece encountered strong opposition, when the novel *Nana* was first published in serialised form in 1879 in the *Rabagas* newspaper, and in 1880 as a separate volume. On this issue, see Ioannis E. Galaios, "For and Against Naturalism: Critical Commentary on the Views of A. Vlachos, A. Giannopoulos and G. Xenopoulos," in *Naturalism in Greece. Dimensions, Transformations, Boundaries*, eds. Eleni Politou-Marmarinou and Vicky Patsiou (Athens: Metaichmio Press, 2008) 112-29; Areti Vasiliou, "The Constraints of Realism/Naturalism: The Case of Alexandros Moraitidis," in *Proceedings of the Colloquium: Early Reception of Realism and Naturalism in Greek Theatre*, eds. Antonis Glytzouris, Konstantina Georgiadi, and Maria Mavrogeni (Rethymnon: Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas/Institute for Mediterranean Studies, 2016), 109-27. In the period 1895-1922 the naturalist movement influenced a few playwrights (mainly Giannis Kambysis, Spyros Melas, Pantelis Horn, and Markos Avgeris). Since the European symbolist movement had also been introduced, Greek playwrights frequently mixed elements of naturalism and elements of the countervailing symbolism in their theatrical works. On this issue, see Walter Puchner, "'Unorthodox' Naturalism in Modern Greek Theatre: A Tale of Absence," in *Naturalism in Greece* (249-72). As the article by Nikolaos Episkopopoulos (1894) stated: "Naturalism and pessimism and the pragmatism (of the naturalists) is fading day by day. One contemporary explained, 'Zola has become a dead, respected relic of a past fashion, and Flaubert's accolades are no more, and have disappeared, and the modern novel tends once more towards romanticism, a modern, specific form of romanticism mixed with symbols and mysticism'; see N. Ep. [N. Episkopopoulos], "From Day to Day. A Lady's Letter," *To Asty* 20 June 1894.

psychological finesse and his morbid literary pessimism, but also for emphasising the brute, the base element, which transformed literary heroes into soulless, animalistic marionettes, lacking in human features. They also argued that the mere reproduction of nature was not the real goal of art. On the contrary, the real goal of art was for them the discovery of the inner soul of material objects, the idealisation of tangible reality and the emergence of the artist's ideals.²

On the other hand, in Greece, the aesthete Nikolaos Episkopopoulos commented in 1899 on the breath of fresh air in the literary scene coming from the symbolists Maurice Maeterlinck and Gabriele D'Annunzio.³ In 1901 Aristotelis Kourtidis, under the pseudonym Angelos Filanthropinos,⁴ mentioned that Zola had been cursed and abandoned even by his fans, because his novels copied nature "approximately as a blind man would see it."⁵ Clearly Kourtidis was referring to "Manifeste des Cinq" (*Le Figaro*, 13 August 1887), produced by the so-called third generation of naturalists (Paul Bonnetain, Joseph-Henry Rosny, Lucien Descaves, Paul Margueritte, Gustave Guiches), reacting to the indecency and crudeness in the published version of the *Rougon-Macquart* novel *La Terre*, whose author they accused of commercialising literature.⁶

At the onset of the new century Zola was not totally unknown to Greek readers. The unprecedented scandal which broke out in 1879-1880, because of the Greek translation of the novel *Nana* by Ioannis Kambouroglou (1879), automatically made the author widely known nationwide, as did the attacks on the "naturalist school" by idealist scholars Angelos Vlachos and Vlassis Gavrielidis. These critics contested the idea of slavishly copying reality, accused Zola of literary profiteering, decried him for his monotonous descriptions, for presenting morbid literary heroes, for using crude language and for a lack of imagination, plot and normal characters, which made his novels more like plain medical reports or commonplace journalistic tales, in their view.⁷

Those attacks were refuted by Grigorios Xenopoulos in 1890, who argued for the vital need for "enlightened observation and precise description"⁸ with the aid of the sciences and pure reason. In fact, there were numerous reports from Greek journalists who had lived in France during the last two decades of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century which conveyed information about performances of the French author's novels adapted for the stage in Paris and about publication of his new novels in France. From 1878 to 1922 many of his short stories and novels were also translated into Greek and published in serialised form in magazines or in separate volumes.⁹

² Marvin Carlson, "France in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Theories of the Theatre. A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984) 284-86.

³ N. Episkopopoulos, "Gabriele D'Annunzio," *To Asty* 21 January 1899; and N. Ep. [N. Episkopopoulos], "From Day to Day. A Lady's Letter," *To Asty* 20 June 1894.

⁴ Apostolos Sachinis, *The Literature of Aestheticism* (Athens: Hestia Bookshop Press, 1981) 188.

⁵ Angelos Filanthropinos, "The frailty of appreciation of poetic and artistic works," *Panathenaia* 13 (15 April 1901): 32-35. ["ὅπως θα την ἐβλεπεν περίπου εἰς τυφλός"]. The translation from Greek into English is my own.

⁶ Lawson A. Carter, *Zola and the Theater* (New Haven and Paris: Yale University Press/Presses Universitaires de France, 1963) 165.

⁷ Angelos Vlachos, "The Naturalist School and Zola. Letter to a Provincial Man," *Hestia* 8.207 (16 December 1879): 789-95; and Caliban [Vlassis Gavrielidis], "Émile Zola. *Nana* Compiled in Greek by FLOX," *Mhn Hanesai* 5 September 1880.

⁸ "Superstitions About Zola," *Hestia* 15.47 (1890): 321-24 and 15.48 (1890): 337-40. ["τὴν πεφωτισμένη παρατήρηση καὶ τὴν ακριβολόγο περιγραφή"]. The translation from Greek into English is my own.

⁹ Based on the Agisilaos Giannopoulos's Foreword to the independent 1880 version of *Nana*, Efstratia Oktapoda-Lu mentions that the Greek translation of the novel *L'Assommoir* began to be published in a newspaper before the publication of *Nana* (1879), but the name of the newspaper and the date of publication are not provided. The translation, probably done by Ch. Neokleous, was so bad that the newspaper stopped publishing it; see "Le naturalisme en Grèce: réception et traductions," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 77 (2003): 206. Efstratia Oktapoda-Lu also mentions that in 1872 Emmanouil Roidis translated the short story *La Journée d'un chien mort* and that the

Then, Zola himself essentially abandoned his scientific method for the theatre and novels after the completion of the *Rougon-Macquart* series and turned instead to the idealistic, optimistic, prophetic and socially reformative goals of *Les Trois Villes* and *Les Quatre Évangiles*. When he began writing opera libretti set to the music of Alfred Bruneau, a very opposite path opened up in Greece, that is, the adaptation of novels from his naturalistic period for the theatre, albeit with a quarter of a century delay compared to their Parisian premières. *Thérèse Raquin* was staged on 3 November 1901 at the Variety Theatre by the Ekaterini Veroni theatre company; it had originally been performed in 1873 at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, adapted by Zola himself. On 8 May 1912 two versions of *Nana* were produced in parallel by the rival Greek female stars Marika Kotopouli and Kyveli Adrianou: one at the Nea Skini [New Stage] in Omonia and the other at Kyveli Theatre. That work had originally been staged in 1881 at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu, adapted by William Busnach. On 23 May 1912 Nitsa Moustaka's non-central theatre company staged *L'Assommoir* at the Theatre Neapoleos; that work had been put on stage to great success in 1879 at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu, adapted by William Busnach with Octave Gastineau. Only the lyric drama *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* was staged simultaneously in Paris and Athens in 1907: in Paris the play was produced at the Odéon, adapted by Alfred Bruneau (a student of Jules Massenet), with music by Bruneau and directed by André Antoine, featuring the young actress Sylvie with Alexandre Vargas in the leading roles, opening the period of Zolian "lyrical naturalism."¹⁰ In Athens it was performed on 29 September 1907 at Syntagma Theatre by the Marika Kotopouli-Eftychios Vonaseras theatre company.¹¹

It is well-known that, without publicly appearing to be involved in the adaptation of his novels for the stage, Zola was an active participant in the process.¹² However, he delegated the actual stagecraft to experienced masters of the theatre. Between 1877 and 1888 his main associate was William Busnach, director of the Athénée theatre and a commercial writer of operettas, as well as works of féerie, opera-buffa, vaudeville, revue, extravaganza, and boulevard; according to Sarah Bernhardt, he was the wittiest man in Paris, because he possessed the gift of extreme sensitivity and knew all the secrets of commercial boulevard theatre.¹³ The adaptations

stories *Contes à Ninon* and *Madeleine Férat* were also translated. She recounts that publication of the translation of the novel *L'Assommoir* had also been undertaken but that Angelos Vlachos stopped it right at the start; see "La traduction de *Nana* en Grèce et son retentissement sur le naturalisme néohellénique naissant," in *Zola sans frontières. Actes du Colloque International de Strasbourg* (Mai 1994), éd. Auguste Dezalay (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1996) 185-206. On the Greek translation of Zola's novels, see also K.G. Kasinis, *Bibliography of Greek Translations of Foreign Literature from the 19th and 20th Centuries. Separate Publications*, vol. 1 (1801-1900) and vol. 2 (1900-1950) (Athens: Society for the Dissemination of Useful Books, 2006); and Vicky Patsiou, "Zola's Novels, his Readership and his Critics in Greece (1880-1930)," *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Comparative Literature. Relations Between Greek and Foreign Literature* (Athens: Domos Press, 1995) 589-99.

¹⁰ The term "lyrical naturalism" not only signified Zola's collaboration with Jules Massenet's student, Alfred Bruneau, who composed the music for a few of Zola's novels which were staged as lyrical dramas with libretti by the author himself (such as *Messidor*, *L'Ouragan*, *L'Enfant roi*, *Lazare*), but also signalled the period up to 1916, after Zola's death, when Bruneau composed not only the music but also wrote the libretti inspired by Zola's novels (*Naïs Micoulin*, *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*, *Les Quatre Journées*); see Jean-Sébastien Macke, "Le naturalisme d'Alfred Bruneau et Émile Zola: de la théorie à l'application," in *Le Naturalisme sur la scène lyrique*, eds. Jean-Christophe Branger and Alban Ramaut (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2004) 61-79. In those libretti, Bruneau combined Zola's naturalist principles with symbolism, fantasy, mysticism and féerie; see Jean-Sébastien Macke, "D'Émile Zola à Alfred Bruneau. Transpositions et permanence du naturalisme," *Excavatio* 9.1-2 (2004): 143-55.

¹¹ On the Parisian performances, see Carter 216, 218.

¹² Carter 48-49, 88, 102-129, 136, 207; Janice Best, *Expérimentation et adaptation. Essai sur la méthode naturaliste d'Émile Zola* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1986) 14, 62, 66, 72; and Philippe Lefrançois, "L'adaptation de *L'Assommoir* et de *Nana* à la scène," *Le Miroir de l'Histoire* 6.70 (Novembre 1955): 599-601.

¹³ Carter 26, 102, 148; Best 61; Lefrançois 598-99; and Martin Kanés, "Zola and Busnach: The Temptation of the Stage," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 77 (1962): 109.

were published in French shortly after the Parisian premières. Therefore, the Greek theatre companies had published French scripts at their disposal and all they had to do was translate them. Yet, there is scant information about the Greek translators and the actual translated texts are hard to find. All we know for certain is that the comedy writer Babis Anninos translated *Thérèse Raquin* in 1900, which was staged by the Veroni theatre company.¹⁴ The translation was not published and is not to be found in any form in the archives of Anninos in the Korgialenios Library in Argostoli/Cefallonia.¹⁵ An actor was said to have done the translation of *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* for the Marika Kotopouli-Eftychios Vonaseras theatre company in 1907 but no name is given.¹⁶ It could have been the French speaking Mitsos Myrat, an actor in the Kotopouli theatre company at that time.¹⁷ Translations by actors from the Greek theatre companies are often short-lived documents, lost when the theatre companies cease to exist. Since such documents are rare indeed, the researcher must turn to the French adaptations themselves to come to an understanding of the type of show the Athenian audience would have enjoyed in the early 20th century.

Athenian audiences watched the works fragmented into successive, independent tableaux, presented in linear dramatic time, just as they had appeared in the French stage adaptations. The most important moments in the novels passed in front of their eyes like photographs or cinematographic sequences entailing the unavoidable, unexpected leaps in space and time that such a choice involves.¹⁸ The film-like speed at which the tableaux changed meant that audiences watched actors constantly enter and exit the stage, which did not aid comprehension of the work, as Greek critics commented at the performances of *Nana* in 1912, staged by the Marika Kotopouli and Kyveli Adrianou theatre companies.¹⁹ The realistic stage environment of “tableaux scénariotés,” as Busnach called them,²⁰ which also determined the theatrical action and the steps in the rise and fall of dramatic heroes, took the Athenian audiences to the damp, dark salons of the Raquin family near the Pont-Neuf, and exposed them to the repetitive drudgery of petit bourgeois triviality.²¹ During the crowd scenes in *L'Assommoir* which Zola himself asked Busnach to include when adapting the work,²² Athenians had the chance to view the day-to-day “tranches de vie” of typical representatives of the working class. They were taken on a tour of the miserable rooms of lowly hotels, gas-lit taverns packed with the idle, absinthe-drunk workers, the interior of family-run restaurants and laundries, and the outdoors to experience the loud life of the working class in public wash-houses and workplaces.²³ Watching *Nana* they became spectators able to witness the heterogeneous interaction between

¹⁴ The gentleman of the orchestra, “Athens-Piraeus. Theatre News,” *Akropolis* 3 November 1901; and Giannis Sideris, *History of Modern Greek Theatre 1794-1944*, vol. A' (1794-1908) (Athens: Museum and Centre for the Study of Greek Theatre-Kastaniotis Press, 1990) 174.

¹⁵ Ilias A. Toumassatos, *Haralambis (Babis) Anninos (1852-1934): The Ionian Islands' Roots and the Integration of a Cefallonian Writer into Athens' Cultural Life*, vol. B', diss., Ionian University, 2013, 877, 1009-039.

¹⁶ “Current Affairs. Zola in the Theatre,” *Patris* 28 Sept. 1907 (11 Oct. 1907): 1. *Patris* [Homeland] was a Greek newspaper printed in Bucharest (Romania) toward the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. Many Greek newspapers of that era contain two dates on each number (newspaper sheet); one date according to the civilian/state (Gregorian) calendar and one according to the religious Julian calendar. That's why there are two dates in the previously mentioned newspaper.

¹⁷ Andreas Dimitriadis, “Mitsos Myrat and the toolbox of posthumous fame,” in Mitsos Myrat, *My life* (Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2016) 397.

¹⁸ Best 186-91; Kanes 109-15; and Colette Becker, “Roman et théâtre: *L'Assommoir* d'Émile Zola,” in *Théâtralité et genres littéraires*, éd. Anne Larue (Poitiers: Publications de la Licorne, 1996) 249-57.

¹⁹ The Spectator [Theatis], “On the Nea Skini,” *Hestia* 9 May 1912; and “At the Kyveli theatre,” *Hestia* 9 May 1912.

²⁰ Kanes 110.

²¹ Émile Zola, “Préface,” in *Thérèse Raquin* (Paris: Charpentier, 1873) 11.

²² Best 69; and Becker 256-57.

²³ William Busnach, *L'Assommoir*, in *Trois Pièces tirées des romans et précédées chacune d'une Préface de Émile Zola: L'Assommoir, Nana, Pot-Bouille* (Paris: Charpentier, 1884) 41, 54, 65, 81, 107, 122, 148, 166, 183.

the Parisian aristocracy and the demi-monde parading through the heroine's deluxe boudoir,²⁴ a private space transformed into a public one.²⁵ Presenting the milieu of the aristocracy, the petite bourgeoisie, the working class and the demi-mondaines was something utterly unseen by Athenian eyes; for the entire 19th century they had watched either romantic, historical, national-patriotic dramas, or Greek folkloric musical vaudevilles and comedies of manners.²⁶

The Athenian critics recognised all the melodramatic interventions made to the stage adaptations either by Busnach or Zola himself,²⁷ which placed them on the cusp between boulevard theatre and naturalism, between tragedy and melodrama.²⁸ For example, the existence of the comic figures of drunk, idle workers like Mes-Bottes, Bec-Salé and Bibi-la-Grillade in the script for *L'Assommoir* provoked easy boulevard-style laughter.²⁹ In the same script, the tragic decline of the working couple Gervaise and Coupeau does not originate from the heredity factor, the impact of the rotten social fabric and the innate weaknesses of the heroes' characters, as is the case in the novel. But rather, their tragic decline results from the external fact of how it is represented on stage. Because of her erotic rivalry with Gervaise, Virginie, together with her partner Lantier, become the melodrama's classic traitors, causing Coupeau's accident, which leads him to inactivity and unemployment, the delirium tremens of alcoholism and his eventual death. He is followed to the grave by Gervaise, who dies of starvation on the snow-covered pavement of boulevard Rochechouart. Divine justice comes in the form of Poisson's blade, which stabs his adulteress wife and her lover Lantier to death.³⁰ In the case of *Thérèse Raquin*, Zola's purpose in the novel was to provide an anatomical study of two different personalities (a bloodthirsty nature in contact with a character of nervous disposition) free from concerns with divine judgement and ruled by the bestial demands of their flesh, their instincts and passions. The 19th-century French script presented neither the raw animal instincts that underpinned human emotions (passion and murderous insanity) nor the internal mental battles, tragic struggles and dilemmas faced by the characters. The double suicide of the guilty adulterers Laurent and Thérèse does not emerge from their gradual internal mental destabilisation, nightmarish remorse for murdering Camille, fear and mutual hatred of each other, but was only the result of the activation of the melodrama's mechanism of divine justice. The play's closing scene ends with the fixed, punishing, agonizing gaze of the old, paralysed Madame Raquin, who suddenly stands up, finds her lost voice, and demands the punishment of her son's murderers.³¹ The technique of cutting disparate "tranches de vie" was incapable of conveying on stage the author's panoramic presentation of the gradually documented unfolding of the pathological psychology of the *dramatis personae* and the complexity and ambiguity of human relationships which we find in the novels.³² Zola accepted this solution himself as he gave into commercial requirements, wishing to avoid defamiliarisation

²⁴ William Busnach, *Nana*, in *Trois Pièces tirées des romans et précédées chacune d'une Préface de Émile Zola: L'Assommoir, Nana, Pot-Bouille* (Paris: Charpentier, 1884) 209, 240, 261, 288, 315.

²⁵ Best 90; and Janice Best, "Portraits d'une 'vraie fille': *Nana*, tableau, roman et mise-en-scène," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 66 (1992): 160-61.

²⁶ Thodoros Chatzipantazis, *Outline of the History of Modern Greek Theatre* (Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2014) 157-267.

²⁷ E. Pantelidis, "Crimes on stage," *Kosmos Smyrna* 15 (15 July 1909): 254-55.

²⁸ Best, *Expérimentation et adaptation* 64, 186.

²⁹ Busnach, *L'Assommoir* 65-70, 77-80, 84-89, 91-99, 104-05.

³⁰ Busnach, *L'Assommoir* 107-22, 156-93.

³¹ Émile Zola, *Thérèse Raquin* (Paris: Charpentier, 1873) 130-44. On the combination of tragic and melodramatic elements in the script of *Thérèse Raquin*, and the combination of boulevard and melodramatic elements in the script of *L'Assommoir*, see also Best 28-29, 40, 55-58, 70-71, 79, 81-85.

³² Kanés 111-12; Henri Mitterand, "*Thérèse Raquin* au théâtre," *Revue des Sciences Humaines* 1 (oct. -déc. 1961): 489-516; and Best 207-08, 210-11.

for the wider public.³³ The moral manicheism which divided protagonists into disadvantaged, persecuted “good persons” and “bad” traitors, especially in *Thérèse Raquin* and *L'Assommoir*, and the intercession of divine providence, as in classic melodrama, for the punishment of the bad individuals,³⁴ undermined Zola's innovative claims to have created a new type of theatre free of conventions and the moralising of old melodrama and far from Scribe's “pièce bien faite” recipe which catered to the tastes of the mass market.³⁵

The fact that the adaptations gave in to commercial tastes was fully compatible with the level of perception of the Athenian public at the start of the 20th century. This public was already used to the repertoire of classic melodrama staged by the old Greek impresarios from the 19th century and the melodramatic moralising of family “pièces à thèse” by Alexandre Dumas fils, Victorien Sardou and Émile Augier, which the retiring female star Ekaterini Veroni employed in her attempt to modernise Greek theatre in the last decade of the 19th century by following Sarah Bernhardt's repertoire.³⁶ Consequently, the adaptations of Zola “tainted” with melodramatic and moralising elements did not collide with the general repertoire and the audience of the Veroni theatre company. In fact, one can imagine that the measured acting style, free of emotional excesses, for which the actress Ekaterini Veroni was renowned,³⁷ was a perfect fit for the requirements of the role of Thérèse Raquin, a role which required a high degree of coldness and restrained passion. In the final stages of her professional career, Veroni attempted to renew her repertoire with new productions of realistic works brought in from Northern Europe. Thus, in 1898 she staged Hermann Sudermann's *Honour* and in 1899 she staged *Magda* by the same playwright (mimicking Eleonora Duse's performance of the same play in Athens, 1899) and *Ghosts* by Henrik Ibsen. Lastly, in 1903, Veroni staged *Leonarda* by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson.³⁸ The staging of *Thérèse Raquin* is part of a wider effort for a limited-scope renewal of the Greek theatre scene at that time by older professional theatre companies which staged European realist works.³⁹

When Ekaterini Veroni first produced *Thérèse Raquin* in 1901, the Greek theatrical audience had not yet experienced the results of the ensemble work realised by the first Greek professional directors Konstantinos Christomanos (Nea Skini/New Stage, 1901-1905) and

³³ Zola, “Préface,” in Busnach, *Nana* 204; Zola, “Préface,” in Busnach, *L'Assommoir* 6-11, 16-17, 35. See too Zola's own words in André Antoine, *Mes Souvenirs sur le Théâtre Libre* (Paris: Arthème Fayard et Cie, 1921) 21, 93.

³⁴ Carter 15-19, 23, 37-41, 55-57, 105, 108-17, 129, 153, 207; Best 14, 33, 40-58, 69-87; Becker 255-56; Lefrançois 602; James B. Sanders, “Busnach, Zola et le drame de *L'Assommoir*,” *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 52 (1978): 109-23; Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine, “Tentation, fonction et construction du mélodrame dans *L'Assommoir*: un fait divers, Lalie Bijard ou ‘la petite mère’,” in *Zola sans frontières* 73-83; and Agnès Sandras-Fraysse, “L'opinion devant les adaptations théâtrales de Zola: Busnach, cornac ou prête-nom?,” *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 80 (2006): 195-213.

³⁵ Zola, “Préface,” in *Thérèse Raquin* 7-11, 35. For his innovative theatrical ideas in his numerous theoretical works, see too Carter 31-32, 59, 83-99, 129; and Best 34-36, 59-60, 186.

³⁶ For the old 19th-century impresarios, Dionysios Tavoularis, Dimosthenis Alexiadis, and Nikolaos Lekatsas, whose repertoire was brimming with classic melodramas, see Dimitris Spathis, “The Emergence and Establishment of Melodrama on the Greek Stage,” in *Melodrama. Typological and Ideological Transformations*, eds. Savvas Patsalidis and Anastasia Nikolopoulou (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2001) 165-226. On Veroni's repertoire of family “pièces à thèse,” see Eliza-Anna Delveroudi, “The Women Star System or ‘pièce à thèse’”: the Renewal of the Theatre Repertoire in Athens in the Last Decade of the 19th Century,” in *Issues in the History of Greek Literature. Tribute to K.Th. Dimaras* (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1994) 219-42; and Alexia Altouva, *The Phenomenon of the Female Star System in Greece in the 19th Century* (Athens: Herodotos Press, 2014) 207, 242-49, 260, 280.

³⁷ Altouva 209, 226, 255-56.

³⁸ Altouva 212-13, 353-64.

³⁹ The theatre companies of Evangelos Pantopoulos, and the Tavoularis brothers, as well as the Panhellenic Theatre Company, staged works by Gogol, Tolstoi, Ibsen; see Nikiforos Papandreou, *Ibsen in Greece. From Initial Acquaintance to Firm Establishment 1890-1910* (Athens: Kedros Press, 1983) 22-40.

Thomas Ikonou (Royal Theatre, 1901-1906) and their efforts to assimilate European theatrical naturalism and the true-to-life stage realism of André Antoine's Théâtre Libre.⁴⁰ Indeed, Antoine was influenced to a large degree by Zolian works⁴¹ and at a later point in time used early Zolian, illusionistic stage naturalism when the movement had already been rejected and replaced by other art forms.⁴² As students of the two first Greek directors, the young female stars of the Belle Époque, Marika Kotopouli and Kyveli Adrianou, made aware of that assimilation when they decided to stage works by Zola. Capitalising on their early initiation into naturalism, once they had left the Nea Skini and the Royal Theatre, the young female impresarios used Zola as the theatrical vehicle to fuel the star system, as the retiring star Veroni had already done. In any event, the adaptations of Zola's novels had also been associated with the star system from early on in Paris.⁴³ For that reason, the new Greek female stars who specialised in the commercial repertoire of French boulevard, combined the innovative experiments of their teachers with naturalism, revealing a desire to showcase themselves in the advantageous roles offered by Zola's scripts, and utterly neglecting the ensemble theatrical model their teachers had established.⁴⁴

When explaining the phenomenon of the female star system in Greece, it is essential to point out that when the two female stars emerged onto the open market of public spectacles at a very young age at the end of the 1910s, they abandoned the old system of corporative theatrical organisation, whereby all members of the company participated in the profits and losses of the business and created theatre companies under an impresario. These new types of theatre companies paid their staff depending on the demand for each actor in the public spectacle market. Thanks to their artistic flare, Kotopouli and Kyveli emerged as the main impresarios; and later they entered into contracts with specialists for the financial management of their theatre companies. The female star system remained alive on the Greek stage even during the inter-war years, whereas in Europe it had been replaced, since the end of the 19th century, by small independent theatres (such as Théâtre Libre or Théâtre de l'Œuvre) and even though ensemble companies had been set up in Greece in the early 20th century by the first local professional directors Thomas Ikonou and Konstantinos Christomanos. Kotopouli and Kyveli excelled in commercial French boulevard roles above all in which they could showcase their expensive gowns. They initiated the Athenian public into the European bourgeois

⁴⁰ For the realist repertoire of the specific theatre companies, see Papandreou 22, 40-54; Giannis Moschos, *Henrik Ibsen on the Greek Stage. From the Ghosts of 1894 to the Concerns of our Times* (Athens: Amolgos Press, 2016) 21-31; and Antonis Glytzouris, *The Director's Art in Greece. The Emergence and Establishment of the Director's Art in Modern Greek Theatre*, 2nd ed. (Heraklion, Greece: Crete University Press, 2011) 533-39, 548-50. On the monitoring of the developments in the repertoire of European independent/free theatres and specifically Antoine's Théâtre Libre by Christomanos and Ikonou, see Walter Puchner, *Konstantinos Christomanos as Playwright* (Athens: Kastaniotis Press, 1997) 142-44; and Ioulia Pipinia, "The Nea Skini and the Free Theatre Movement in 19th Century Europe," in *Proceedings of the Colloquium: Konstantinos Christomanos and his Age. 130 Years from his Birth* (Athens: Goulandris-Horn Foundation, 1999), 61-96.

⁴¹ On Antoine's artistic debt to Zola and on the performance of Zola's dramatised scripts by the French director, see Antoine 21, 29-30, 54, 76, 102, 141-42, 160, 162, 183. On relations between Antoine and Zola, see too Carter 33, 55, 149-52, 158, 163-70, 218; James B. Sanders, "Antoine et Zola," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 50 (1976): 9-18; and James B. Sanders, "Antoine, Zola et le théâtre," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 42 (1971): 51-60.

⁴² Claude Schumacher and John McCormick, "France, 1851-1919," in *Naturalism and Symbolism in European Theatre 1850-1918*, ed. Claude Schumacher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 17-18.

⁴³ On Sarah Bernhardt's portrayal of Renée from the novel *La Curée*, which never took place, see Carter 50-51. On the portrayal of the old Raquin by the famous actress Marie Laurent in the work's première in 1873 at Théâtre de la Renaissance, her repetition of that role in 1892 in the Vaudeville by André Antoine's Théâtre Libre, and her appearance in the adaptation of the novel *La Terre* in 1902, see Carter 37; and Schumacher and McCormick 71-72.

⁴⁴ Mary Kapi, "The Web of Female Roles in the Modern European Repertoire of the Kyveli Theatre Company in the First Years of its Operation (1907-1912)," in *Proceedings of the Colloquium: Early Reception of Realism and Naturalism in Greek Theatre* 162-82.

lifestyle and to the perception of comfortable materialistic well-being. Greek translations of the French works were produced in a hurry and performances were staged after just a few rehearsals, with the prompter necessarily playing a leading role. However, from time to time these female stars did stage plays from the European realist and symbolist avant-garde movements, which like "Hera's bath" would "purify" them after an entire theatrical season of artistic "defilement."⁴⁵

The star system reached its peak in 1912 when both Marika Kotopouli and Kyveli simultaneously staged *Nana*, that "obscene Parisian," that "Mary Magdalene of Paris."⁴⁶ The rivalry resulted in both a breakdown of diplomatic relations between them and an outcry in the Athenian press,⁴⁷ as well as a satire by Polyvios Dimitrakopoulos, in the Athenian music theatre revue *Cinema of 1912*.⁴⁸ 1912 was no coincidental year since the work was revived for second time in Paris by the leading actress Paule Andral.⁴⁹ All those European developments were closely monitored by the Greek stars via the French periodical *L'Illustration*.⁵⁰ The performance of *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* by the Marika Kotopouli-Eftychios Vonaseras theatre company in 1907 in honour of the actors Chrysoula Kotopouli and Mitsos Myrat⁵¹ is a noteworthy example of the staging of a rare literary work of early naturalistic decadence which also directly influenced the Greek symbolists. The Athenian press characterised it as a work against the celibacy of Catholic priests.⁵² Dramatising the forbidden carnal love of the ascetic priest Serge for Albine, a girl who grew up in the wild countryside, the work sought to re-examine the well-known Genesis scene when the original, innocent first-borns were cast out of the virgin, erotically-charged paradise.⁵³ Nature/Albine/Eve gives the abbot/Adam back his lost manhood in the shade of a magic, forbidden tree, wiping out the "wrong" of original sin. When her beloved abandons her to dedicate himself totally to the Church, Albine commits suicide amid the intoxicating scent of the flowers in the *hortus conclusus* Paradou, utterly submitting herself to the organic laws of the cycle of life.⁵⁴

Although the play does present some common naturalistic topics, such as the battle between the forces of instinctual free nature/naturalism (Albine) and religious constraint, and features the experimental naturalist doctor Pascal/Zola who orchestrates the biologically deterministic experiment into physical love between the young people,⁵⁵ it deviates towards the allegorical symbolism so typical of the decadent movement. Schopenhauer-like philosophical pessimism,⁵⁶ religious masochistic mysticism, lyricism, morbid aesthetic representation of the "maladie de l'âme" of the suffering hero and the sexual sensualism of men and plants are all

⁴⁵ Areti Vasiliou, *Modernism or Tradition? Prose Theatre in Athens in the Inter-War Years* (Athens: Metaichmio Press, 2005) 21-29, 72-79, 117-18, 150-52, 209-22, 242-44, 324, 332-40, 456-64; Glytzouris 57-59, 71-75; Chatzipantazis 339-51.

⁴⁶ "Nana – Rabagas," *Rabagas* 144 (23 December 1879): 3.

⁴⁷ M. Rodas, "The Fortnight. Athenian Theatres," *Kosmos Smyrna* 82 (15 May 1912): 205; and "The World. Once Again," *Hestia* 8 May 1912.

⁴⁸ Ch. Th. Daralexis, "Theatre," *Panathenaia* 280 (31 May 1912): 122-23.

⁴⁹ Lefrançois 605.

⁵⁰ Vasiliou 23.

⁵¹ "Theatres," *Kairoi* [Times] 29 September 1907; and "Daily Events. *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*," *Kairoi* [Times] 1 October 1907.

⁵² "Zola's hard work," *To Asty* 25 September 1902.

⁵³ On Zola's religious concerns in the novel, see Philip D. Walker, "Zola et la lutte avec l'Ange," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 42 (1971): 79-92.

⁵⁴ The tale of the stage adaptation is recounted in the article "Zola's *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*," *Acropolis* 29 September 1907.

⁵⁵ On the key thematic motifs in the 1875 novel, see Sophie Guermès, "Préface," *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* (Paris: Hachette, 1998) 1-45.

⁵⁶ A.A. Greaves, "Mysticism et pessimisme dans *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret*," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 36 (1968): 148-55.

elements typical of that style. According to Charles Bernheimer, naturalist fantasies about female fertility in nature gave rise to fin-de-siècle dilemmas about male sexuality, presenting the image of the masochistically castrated fin-de-siècle male who considered himself cut off from the natural cycle and impersonal reproductive objectives.⁵⁷

Firstly, the ascetic, emasculated priest affirms his revulsion against woman's and nature's reproductive capabilities, just like proponents of the European fin-de-siècle movement did, expressing also the "horror of life" through their specific aversion to the womb and the female reproductive system, and turning instead to all things artificial.⁵⁸ Just like the eccentric Des Esseintes in J.-K. Huysmans's novel *À rebours* (1884), hermetically cut off in the French countryside, experiments with exotic perfumes by growing poisonous flowers, and collects the artistic creations of the equally fin-de-siècle painter Gustave Moreau, so too the refined, effeminate abbé Mouret isolates himself in the enclosed surroundings of his presbytery with saintly votives, reciting on bended knee whispered prayers in front of the statue of the Virgin, in a theatrical religious performance of Biblical masochism along the lines of Swinburne and Baudelaire.⁵⁹

Through the statue of the Virgin Mary he worships precisely the idea of the immaculate conception and the idealised female purity and beauty she represents, in much the same ways as the European decadents used the Ovidian myth of Pygmalion. The embodiment of the marble artwork at the artist's hand, the artificial emergence of the "femme idéale" – yet "fatale" and dangerous at the same time – who reflects the sexual fantasies of the masochistic and narcissistic decadent artist, reveals the fundamental division among the decadents when faced with female nature: woman as the alluring object of worship, and as a threat, whose intangible, dangerous charms could force the artist to endure emotional tortures.⁶⁰ The fin-de-siècle duality of the female figure is complemented by the reverse side of sinful female nature, with its abominable reproductive goals; a type of Wildean Salome, embodied in the form of Albine, whom the priest rejects in a domineering/sadistic way after their earthly, carnal relations. Thus, on the one hand, there is the saintly, un-incarnate figure and, on the other, the earthy and diabolical, carnal female form. The two come together, in an image expressing the bipolarisation between virtue and sin and constituting the fin-de-siècle "algotagniac fantasy" – the womb and grave together.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Charles Bernheimer, *Decadent Subjects. The Idea of Decadence in Art, Literature, Philosophy and Culture of the Fin de Siècle in Europe*, eds. T. Jefferson Kline and Naomi Schor (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) 56-103. On Zola's general attraction to the aesthetic elements of the decadent style, see Jean de Palacio, *Figures et formes de la Décadence*, vol. 1 (Paris: Séguier, 1994) 16; and Antoine Compagnon, "Zola dans la décadence," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 67 (1993): 211-22. On the symbiotic relationship of the aesthetic movements, naturalism and décadence, which coexisted and which until recently were considered to be in conflict since it was believed that decadence preannounced exclusively symbolism, see, among others, David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995) 48; and Katherine Ashley, *Edmond de Goncourt and the Novel: Naturalism and Decadence* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005) 19-23, 32. The main difference between decadent writers and those from the naturalist movement are that the former praise decadence as a condition for artistic refinement while the naturalists reject it as a threat to culture. See Marion Schmid, "From Decadence to Health: Zola's *Paris*," *Romance Studies* 18.2 (2000): 99-111.

⁵⁸ Roger L. Williams, *The Horror of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) 10; Weir xiv.

⁵⁹ Suzanne R. Stewart, *Sublime Surrender. Male Masochism at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) 157.

⁶⁰ Jennifer Birkett, *The Sins of the Fathers. Decadence in France 1870-1914* (London: Quartet Books, 1986) 4; Martin A. Danahay, "Mirrors of Masculine Desire: Narcissus and Pygmalion in Victorian Representation," *Victorian Poetry* 32 (1994): 35-54; R.K.R. Thornton, *The Decadent Dilemma* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983) 194-96; Richard Jenkyns, *Dignity and Decadence. Victorian Art and the Classical Inheritance* (London: Harper Collins, 1991) 133, 141.

⁶¹ Jerry Palmer, "Fierce Midnights: Algotagniac Fantasy and the Literature of the Decadence," in *Decadence and the 1890s*, ed. Ian Fletcher (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980) 101.

The physical and mental illness, the algolagnia of the hero who vacillates between his submission to carnal love and his godly abstention from it, is a corollary of that mental dichotomy. The bipolarisation between illness and health which was at the core of the fin de siècle movement,⁶² is presented in the detailed description of the periodic cycle of crises and recovery of the priest's senses which either strengthen his virility (when his erotic side awakes) or emasculate him (when he refrains from physical love). His renunciation of physical love eventually drives Albine to commit suicide and re-integrate into nature, while the priest follows the path of emasculation without return until his utter surrender to pain through the worship of Christ on the martyr's cross. Consequently, love may be a passport to paradise, but it can also mean death, degeneration, the freezing cold of marble.

While the play gave the director Antoine the chance to associate himself with French current affairs, the law separating church and state had only been enacted in 1905,⁶³ in Greece the performance was linked more to the decadent mood among Greek aesthetes. The French-speaking critic and aesthete writer Nikolaos Episkopopoulos, who settled in France in 1904 under the literary pseudonym Nicolas Ségur, referred to the symbolism associated with the reproduction of the living world, and Wagnerian-like leitmotifs (such as the symphony of flowers at Albine's death). He classified Zola among the "idealistic, Dionysian, lyric" writers in the style of Hugo, and defined his novels as a blend of positivism and lyricism/romanticism. He characterised *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* as "Zola's *Tannhäuser*."⁶⁴ The leitmotif of the fecund symphony of flowers which surrounds both the couple's hedonistic carnal love or Albine's suicide, is apparent in the artistic creation of the Greek aesthete. Firstly, it is clearly visible in the early short stories of Episkopopoulos,⁶⁵ and Nikos Kazantzakis,⁶⁶ as well as the works of the director Konstantinos Christomanos, for example, the latter's symbolist novel *The Wax Doll* (1908),⁶⁷ and his symbolist play *The Three Kisses* staged by the Kotopouli theatre company in 1908.⁶⁸ Kotopouli's repertoire at that time engaged strongly with Greek plays in the decadent style along the lines of D'Annunzio. The performance of Nikos Kazantzakis's first theatrical work, *Day is Breaking* (1907) also presents the inexorable masochistic pain of the heroine which leads to suicide, the erotic hedonism and fecund blossoming of the flowers with all its erotic symbolism. The interconnections between erotic sensuality and the blossoming of flowers, as well as death, narcissism and hedonism, can also be found in the plays of D'Annunzio *The Dream of a Spring Morning*, *Francesca da Rimini*, *La Gioconda*, some of which were staged by Eleonora Duse herself, when she visited Greece in 1899 along with the Italian poet.⁶⁹

However, Zola is not only a part of the European aesthetic movement known as decadence; he is also associated with biological and moral decline. From 1892 onwards, he and the heroes of his novels were classified among the lewd members of the fin de siècle in

⁶² Thornton 181.

⁶³ Macke 73.

⁶⁴ N. Episkopopoulos, "Émile Zola," *Panathenaia* 49 (15 October 1902): 1-6; N. Episkopopoulos, "Zola's work," *Panathenaia* 57 (15 February 1903): 257-61.

⁶⁵ In the stories *Max the Knight* (1894) and *The Sun's Kiss* (1894), Episkopopoulos combines abundant blossom with the awakening of the protagonists' sexual instincts; see Sachinis 171-218.

⁶⁶ On the heroes' death among flowers in the story *The Snake and the Lily* (1906), see Sachinis 325-27.

⁶⁷ On the image of death among flowers in this novel, and on the identification of the fact that Christomanos had the work *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* in mind when writing his own novel, see Angela Kastrinaki, "Like the Almond Trees.' Ideas and Symbols in *The Wax Doll*," in Konstantinos Christomanos, *The Wax Doll, an Athenian Novel*, 2nd ed. (Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2016) 284, 326-30, 369-79, 424-28.

⁶⁸ Puchner 246-47.

⁶⁹ Antonis Glytzouris, *Eagle's Passions and Butterfly's Wings. The Early Theatrical Work of Nikos Kazantzakis and the European Avant-garde of his Age* (Heraklion: Crete University Press, 2009) 65-91, 105-36.

Entartung [*Degeneration*], the quasi-scientific work by Max Nordau,⁷⁰ released in Greek translation by Angelos Vlachos in 1899.⁷¹ *Entartung* introduced the dichotomy between health and illness as a corollary of modernism, transposing the biological theory of pathological degeneration – derived from the psychiatrist Bénédict Morel and the criminologist Cesare Lombroso – from psychiatric asylums to the avant-garde artists and their works.⁷² Throughout his Parisian and his Greek trajectories, Zola was stigmatised as a writer of immorality and squalor, the “Narcissist of ugliness.”⁷³ Precisely due to the conservative rhetoric about the moral, mental and neurological degeneracy of both Zola and his heroes, the Greek press was often quick to reassure theatre-goers, by spreading the word that his adaptations were free of the nudity and baseness of his novels.⁷⁴ Thus, the performance of *Nana* did not shock spectators, since the French adaptation was not only morally anodyne,⁷⁵ but also taught a moral lesson through the pitiable end met by this “destructive prostitute.”⁷⁶ A section of the Athenian public clearly left quite disappointed by the performances, since they expected to watch an immoral work,⁷⁷ which for those in the know was based on the life of real 19th-century Parisian prostitutes.⁷⁸ Both the Parisian spectators who saw the première in 1881 and the Athenians in 1912 watched a watered-down, weakened, polished version of *Nana*, that would not upset even the chastest of virgins.⁷⁹ While Kyveli dared to compromise her own female coquettishness to present the smallpox-ridden heroine’s lonely death, who fell victim to the very filth she spread to those around her – a scene which appears in the horrifying fifth act⁸⁰ – Marika Kotopouli on the other hand omitted it altogether due to haste and roughshod approach to the work.⁸¹ *Nana* was transformed into a totally decent heroine of boulevard and melodrama, a type of romantic Marguerite Gautier, even though Zola’s aim in showcasing the decline of his bourgeois characters was to criticise the decadence of the audience itself.⁸²

⁷⁰ Max Nordau, “Zola and His School,” in *Degeneration* (London: William Heinmann, 1898) 473-506.

⁷¹ An extract of the study appeared in 1899 in the newspaper *To Asty* and in 1905 in a separate volume; see Evgenios D. Matthiopoulos, *Through Pain Art Sprouts Wings. The Reception of Neo-Romanticism in Greece* (Athens: Potamos Press, 2005) 417.

⁷² Hans-Peter Söder, “Disease and Health as Contexts of Modernity: Max Nordau as a Critic of Fin de Siècle Modernism,” *German Studies Review* 14.3 (Oct. 1991): 473-87. On the use of degeneration theory (illness, sexual deviance) as a part of the bourgeois search for the meaning of respectability and nationalism, see George L. Mosse, “Nationalism and Respectability: Normal and Abnormal Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 17 (1982): 221-46.

⁷³ Dubbed thus by “Parisien” in an article dated 13 February 1881 in the periodical *Le Charivari*; see Sandras-Fraysse 204. See too, for example, the Greek reprints of the hard-hitting texts from the Russian critic Rostislav Ivanovich Sementkovsky, “Émile Zola. Article by the Russian critic Sementkovsky, translated by P.A. Axiotis,” *Review [Kritiki]* 1 (1 January 1903): 27-29 and 3 (1 February 1903): 91-94 and 4 (15 February 1903): 117-20, and by the Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz, “Sienkiewicz on Zola,” *Anatoli* 8 (October 1902): 258-66.

⁷⁴ Bloodhound [Lagoniko], “From city life. In a few short words,” *Hestia* 4 November 1901 (about the performance of *Thérèse Raquin*); and S., “From Yesterday to Today. Notes. Zola in the Theatre,” *Neon Asty* 25 September 1907 (about the performance of *La Faute de l’abbé Mouret*).

⁷⁵ Fearing French censors, Busnach and Zola had already cut the third tableau where *Nana* is stripped naked in her dressing room in the theatre of Bordenave; see Zola, “Préface,” in Busnach, *Nana* 200-02; and Lefrançois 604.

⁷⁶ “Theatre news,” *Hellas* 13 May 1912; “The Ladies of *Nana*,” *Hestia* 10 May 1912; and M. Rodas, “The Fortnight. Athenian Theatres,” *Kosmos Smyrna* 82 (15 May 1912): 205.

⁷⁷ R.P., “From the Theatres. *Nana*,” *Hestia* 9 May 1912; and “Theatres,” *Pinakothiki* 135 (May 1921): 66.

⁷⁸ Lefrançois 603; and Best, “Portraits d’une ‘vraie fille’” 160.

⁷⁹ In the French performance from 1881, the highpoint of *Nana*/Léontine Massin’s audacity was limited to lighting up a cigarette on stage, as testimony from a spectator of that time confirms; see Arnold Mortier, *Les Soirées parisiennes de 1881 par un Monsieur de l’orchestre*, Préface par Ludovic Halévy, vol. 8 (Paris: E. Dentu, 1882) 42-49.

⁸⁰ “At Kyveli Theatre,” *Hestia* 9 May 1912. On the hideousness of this scene for the Parisian audience of 1881, see Mortier 42-49.

⁸¹ The spectator, “At the Nea Skini,” *Hestia* 9 May 1912; and “Theatre News,” *Hellas* 13 May 1912.

⁸² Zola, “Préface,” in Busnach, *Nana* 200.

Throughout his life, the “stubborn heresiarch Zola”⁸³ fought real battles, as a convinced ideologue, in both the literary and political realms. His double conviction by the Supreme Court for his pro-Semitic involvement in the Dreyfus Affair, which shook the Third French Republic, cost him exile, his place in the French Academy and condemnation by the Roman Catholic Church.⁸⁴ He also frequently had to endure the bans of French censors in the theatre and in relation to publication of his novels.⁸⁵ In his final two novel trilogies he strived to spread free thought, science, socialism, peaceful internationalism, human rights and social justice; all views which conflicted with dogmatic ultra-Catholicism, French nationalism, militarism, racism and the total power of the banking system which was spreading through French society after the end of the Franco-Prussian war, and the declaration of the Parisian Commune.⁸⁶ All that led Pierre Bourdieu in the late 20th century to declare Zola the archetype of the artistically autonomous but nonetheless ideologically committed intellectual.⁸⁷

Although Zola had subversive ideas, the theatre never brought about the revolution Zola had envisaged, whether on the Parisian or Greek stage. The theatre may have always been his dream, but it was a dream he kept putting off, as Nicolaos Episkopopoulos stated in 1902.⁸⁸ The lacklustre bourgeois adaptations were not, in the end, foreign to the Athenian public in the first two decades of the 20th century, since they were used to social concerns and the moral lessons of the “pièce à thèse” and melodrama, as well as the bourgeois heroes of boulevard. As the 20th century wore on, and especially after Zola's death, the age when imprisonment of the first English translator of *Rougon-Macquart*, Henry Vizetelly, for immorality became a distant memory.⁸⁹ Although with some considerable delay, Zola enjoyed acclaim in both France and Greece.

⁸³ Aristotelis Kourtidis, “To the Writer,” *To Asty* 2-3 April 1893.

⁸⁴ For all these events in the Athenian press, see “Science – Arts – Philology – Theatre,” *Deltion ton Olympion* 29 (26 May 1896): 1; “Letters – Art – Science. Philology,” *Panathenaia* 7 (15 January 1901): 277; and “Zola's Expulsion from the Legion of Honour. Barbier's Resignation. A Letter and the Decree,” *Acropolis* 22 July 1898 [finally, Zola accepted the Legion of Honour in 1888].

⁸⁵ Carter 136-144; and Best, *Expérimentation et adaptation* 34, 153-55.

⁸⁶ Henri Mitterand, “Zola et l'internationalisme: un dernier rêve?,” in *Zola sans frontières* 11-22.

⁸⁷ In his works *Les Règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (1992) and *Libre échange* (1994); see Jeremy F. Lane, *Pierre Bourdieu. A Critical Introduction* (London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2000) 187-88; and John R.W. Speller, *Bourdieu and Literature* (Cambridge: OpenBook Publishers, 2011) 89-92.

⁸⁸ Nicolaos Episkopopoulos, “Émile Zola,” *Panathenaia* 50 (31 October 1902): 42-45.

⁸⁹ “Letters – Art – Science. Philology,” *Panathenaia* 52 (30 November 1902): 127; Rontakis, “Small Memorials. Zola,” *Life [Zoi]* 1 (November 1902): 53-55; and “Letters – Art – Science. Philology,” *Panathenaia* 100 (30 November 1904): 126.