

Ionesco's First Reception in the French Press or A Love-Hate Story

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Résumé : *La Cantatrice chauve* est la première œuvre présentée par Eugène Ionesco à Paris, au début des années 50. Son insuccès a été total, au moins ceci est l'opinion générale, consignée dans plusieurs livres de critique littéraire et histoires de la littérature. Le thème qu'on propose pour cet article est la démythification de ce retentissant insuccès, en démontrant qu'il n'y a pas eu seulement de critiques négatives. On analyse les articles de critique théâtrale spécialisée publiés dans la presse française durant trois mois après la date de la première, le 11 mai 1950. Les journaux et les revues examinées font partie de la liste des publications les plus importantes de l'époque. Cet article tient à une investigation de plus grande envergure, centrée sur l'examen de la totalité des premières d'Eugène Ionesco dans la presse française.

Mots-clés: réception, première, presse française, *La Cantatrice chauve*

Eugène Ionesco's first night in Paris is in the fifties with *La Cantatrice chauve*. In the theatre summary of that season, Jacques Lemarchand includes one of the first comments on this play. In it he says: "*La Cantatrice chauve* de M. Ionesco ... n'entre évidemment pas dans la catégorie des plaisanteries pour lesquelles le public a un goût vif : son insuccès ne me surprend le moins du monde. *La Cantatrice chauve* nous invite à passer une heure dans l'univers le plus abruti, le plus mécaniquement absurde, le plus logiquement idiot que l'on puisse imaginer" [1]. In 2009, in *Le Figaro*, they say that "il est mort il y a quinze ans. Il aurait eu 100 ans le 26 novembre. Il fut un immense écrivain de théâtre, l'un des plus importants du siècle, joué dans le monde entier. C'est ce qu'on lit dans tous les dictionnaires" [2]. There is more than half a century between the two quotations and they clearly reflect the change operated in the way Eugène Ionesco is perceived and evaluated. In the beginning, during the fifties, this author did not have the approval neither of the critics, nor of the public, while today he is considered one of the most important names of the theatrical avant-garde of the years following World War II. How did this change happen? This is the question to answer by studying that part of the reception which can be especially significant for a mentality change: the press. Concretely, the exam will focus on the issue of the reception of Ionesco's premiere in Paris in the French press. It's obvious that this approach supposes a multiple reduction: it sticks to the *official* premiere and it does not take into account other theatrical activities [3], it focuses on one city, although this city has a special relevance for the theatrical life and its reception, and it chooses one but comprehensive source to check the reception; besides, no verification is made regarding the possible modification of the play's reception after the first night. All these limitations make possible a reception history which in its totality would be un-encompassable and they create a sufficiently coherent and representative space for the conclusions to have scientific strength.

Eugène Ionesco's work is inevitably linked to the Theatre of the Absurd. This theatre is a product of its reception, which makes studying the reception of the work of someone as important as Eugène Ionesco especially adequate as research subject. It should be taken for granted that his works were analysed from a great deal many points of view: there were exhaustive literary analysis of each and every of his works [4], of his motives, themes, characters and motivations [5], innumerable pages were written on his vital trajectory [6], his work was scrutinized with the magnifying glass of the philosophy, the history or the religion [7]. In spite of the fact that so much was written on him and his oeuvre, the study of his theatre's reception is quite limited: there are only partial studies, different from this investigation due to their subject matter (Ionesco's reception in different countries).

In order to carry out the purpose of this analysis, there were examined the French main reviews and newspapers of the fifties. The consulted newspapers were *Combat* [8], *Le Figaro* [9] and *L'Aurore* [10], together with *Les Temps Modernes* review [11].

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Now that the theoretical frame is established, the actual analysis may begin. The absolute premiere of *La Cantatrice chauve*, Ionesco's first play, takes place in Paris on a Thursday, the 11th of May of 1950, in the small Théâtre des Noctambules, one of whose directors offers it to the troupe, the Nicolas Bataille Company. Phélip describes the moment: "la troupe obtient une audition au théâtre des Noctambules. Dirigé depuis 1939 par deux passionnés, Pierre Leuris et Jean Claude, cette sale est devenue, après des débuts difficiles, un haut lieu du renouveau théâtral. « C'est épatant, s'exclame Pierre Leuris, seulement ça ne fait qu'une heure ! Qu'est ce que vous voulez que je fasse avec une heure ? Écoutez, je veux bien vous programmer, mais à 18 heures, parce que j'ai un spectacle à 21 heures. Je vous fournis le régisseur, l'électricité, tout, je ne vous prends rien »" [12]. All beginnings are difficult and this one is no exception, since there is almost no audience present: "certains soirs, la troupe ne joue pas, faute de spectateurs" [13]. And the scant audience arrives led up the garden path by the actors, who have to do the promotion of the play all alone and disguise themselves as walking advertisements in order to occupy the empty seats of the theatre. Nicolas Bataille, the first director of the play, relates nine years after the premiere: "notre situation financière nous interdisant alors tout frais de publicité, les acteurs de la troupe se muèrent en hommes-sandwichs, et, environ une heure avant chaque représentation, on nous voyait arpenter le boulevard, avec des pancartes dans le dos" [14].

After the performance, the opinions on the play are divided. A first analysis reveals that it is not well received neither by the scant public ("Le public est partagé. Certains spectateurs fulminent : « Mais qu'est-ce que c'est que ces petits cons? Ils se foutent de notre gueule! » Un jour, en pleine représentation, une femme se lève, se heurte à la porte fermée et se met à hurler: « Je veux sortir! Je veux sortir! »" [15]), nor by the critics.

The reactions of the public are reflected in the critics' words [16]: two days after the premiere, *The Figaro* publishes an article signed by Jean-Baptiste Jeener. This is the first article to review the play and it is, undoubtedly, the equivalent of a cold shower for the dramatist. Jeener points to the fact that the term used by Ionesco to define his work, *anti-pièce*, is indeed adequate for what happens on stage; he adds that only the first five minutes of the anti-play are acceptable, since they move to laughter, but afterwards that gratuitous hilarity turns into a verbosity excess which tires the spectator. Jeener expresses his opinion without much consideration: "Pourtant, cette anti-pièce commençait bien : on riait, il y avait dans ses cinq premières minutes (mais cinq minutes peuvent-elles excuser une heure d'ennui ?) on ne sait quelle liberté saugrenue, facile et non sans tendresse puis l'absurde (vous savez l'Absurde géométrique, métaphysique, phonétique et symbolique) s'installa comme un conférencier payé à la ligne. Alors la générosité initiale de M. Ionesco se perdit dans un désert piétiné, monotone et jonché de cartes de visite jusques aux coups de génie de la verbosité assonancée" [17]. The only thing that the critic finds rescuable are the actors, whose interpretative talent he admires, but who would do better playing Molière o Vitrac [18]. His conclusion leaves no doubt on his point of view: "En attendant, ils font perdre des spectateurs au théâtre" [19].

This negative pronouncement will reiterate in posterior articles. The 23rd of May of 1950, in the *Le Rouge et le Noir* review, the critic Thierry Maulnier affirms that since this is an *anti-play*, he would like to value it with an *anti-critique* in which he would use "signes correspondant à des sons qui ne figurent pas dans notre répertoire alphabétique habituel" [20]. Beyond the irony in his words [21], Maulnier expresses a real necessity: a new critical vocabulary is needed in order to account for the new dramatic vocabulary used on stage by the Nicolas Bataille Company.

Now, not all the articles are negative: Ionesco has his champions too. Among them, names like André Breton, Raymond Queneau, Armand Salacrou, Jean Paulhan, all of whom attended small theatres, like the Théâtre des Noctambules, where they could take the pulse of the latest drama creations. All of them applause the premiere of *La Cantatrice chauve* and point it out as a milestone in the history of the theatre. Bigot and Savéan underline it: "Ces

deux pièces [*La Cantatrice chauve* and *La Leçon*] furent chaleureusement soutenues par des partisans déterminés, capables de percevoir leur charme ; essentiellement des écrivains comme Queneau, A. Breton, Salacrou, Paulhan, de jeunes metteurs en scène” [22].

Two days after Maulnier’s article, on the 25th of May of 1950, another article comments upon the premiere of *La Cantatrice chauve*. This time it is the turn of Georges Joly of *L’Aurore*, who speaks about the play of “M. Eugène Ionesco” [23]. Joly proves to have a perfect insight on the play’s content and formal mechanisms - “son inspiration comme ses effets sont d’une extrême simplicité et son humour strictement mécanique obéit à des ressorts que l’auteur ne cherche point à dissimuler” [24] - and he decides to speak out for the honesty Ionesco shows in his writing. Joly is conquered by the insistent and captivating story of the absurd in which the characters move on stage. The critic of *L’Aurore* is not paying gratuitous compliments but he is merely reporting what he sees: “il n’y avait pas là de quoi faire une pièce. L’auteur ne l’a point prétendu” [25]. And he continues: he observes “une sorte de petit ballet, dans lequel des figures inspirées de Robert Desnos ou de Raymond Queneau se croisent avec des entrechats verbaux dont la fougue participe du « lettrisme » explosif de M. Isidore Isou [26]” [27].

Joly’s conclusion underlines again the sincerity of his critic: “c’est plaisant et parfois un peu irritant” [28]. Is there a better way of describing the impression produced by *La Cantatrice chauve*, not only in the specialized public, but in the one without any previous formation? Joly too, just like Jeener and Maulnier before him, appreciates the actors, “parfaits interprètes” of the anti-play.

On the 29th of May of 1950, Renée Saurel comments upon the play from *Combat*, without obviate the reasons for which *La Cantatrice chauve* had not been well received: “cette “anti-pièce” de M. E. Ionesco serait en somme entachée du plus vilain naturalisme si le dialogue n’avait une fantaisie parfaitement bouffonne. Il n’y a pas de situation, pas d’action, les entrées et les sorties ne sont nullement motivées, chacun parle sans espoir d’être écouté, ni compris, chaque personnage vit à peine, dans une sorte de cercueil vertical et transparent” [29]. And yet, she presents what Jeener and Maulnier had perceived as inconveniences as elements that produce “une pièce intelligente et drôle, fort bien jouée, et que je vous conseille d’aller voir, entre deux averses” [30], changing the minus sign that they attached to them into a plus with her conclusion. Even the fact that “rien n’arrive, personne n’a rien à dire, c’est tout à fait comme dans la vie” [31] and that makes the play reassuring [32], it allows the public to recognize itself in it, says Saurel.

Where the very Ionesco recognizes himself, with all his intentions [33], is in the article published by Jean Pouillon in July 1950 in the *Les Temps Modernes* review. Pouillon makes a complete analysis of *La Cantatrice chauve*, identifying the play as “une excellente pièce réaliste” [34], just like Saurel had too, and clarifying that “une pièce véritablement réaliste ne peut absolument être une pièce comme les autres. Le réalisme au théâtre est nécessairement étrange; c’est pourquoi le côté burlesque de *La Cantatrice chauve* ne procède nullement d’une fantaisie arbitraire” [35].

Just like Saurel, Pouillon investigates beyond the apparent absurdity of the play. Unlike in the traditional plays, in *La Cantatrice chauve* the realism is not a means, but an objective in itself: “il ne s’agit pas d’imiter la réalité, il s’agit de la faire comprendre. ... Le spectateur doit être surpris par le spectacle de ce qu’il a coutume de voir sans comprendre” [36]. However the spectator is not only surprised, but horrified by the mirror Ionesco confronts them with [37], since for this author the game of reality is absurd in itself. The image created this ways will consequently lack the accustomed sense in the theatre plays and will turn into a nightmare, where the characters speak without saying anything, will be interchangeable between themselves and will end the play in the same point where they had begun it.

Jean Pouillon reports an identic feeling of circular vacuity in the spectators’ reaction not only towards the play, but also towards themselves, since they discover after the play that nothing was said, nothing had happened: “il était là et il se retrouve là, stupide” [38]. And yet,

you must not allow the apparent inadequacy of the play to the spectators' reality mislead you: in Pouillon's opinion, Ionesco manages to describe this way another face of reality, its inherent absurdity: "bien sûr, il peut ensuite se secouer et se dire que la réalité humaine, ce n'est pas que cela. Mais c'est cela aussi" [39].

In august 1950, when *La Cantatrice chauve* was not played anymore, Jacques Lemarchand of *Combat* reviews the play, standing on the champions' side too. Lemarchand analyses "Le saison dramatique 1949-1950" and leaves *La Cantatrice chauve* for the end of his article "simplement parce que je ne savais très bien où les classer, deux œuvres pour lesquelles j'ai eu du goût, et qui ont fâché bien des gens, *L'Equarissage pour tous* de Boris Vian et *la Cantatrice chauve* de Ionesco" [40]. For this critic, it is obvious that *La Cantatrice* cannot be included into the category of the "plaisanteries pour lesquelles le public a un goût vif" [41]. And he continues: "son insuccès ne me surprend pas le moins du monde" [42]. This play penetrates into an absurd universe, lacking the most elemental logics. And the things might work, Lemarchand states, if the public had not realized that they are being mocked at, that they are the main component of the supposed senselessness of Ionesco's universe. In short, this critic thinks this play can be put on the same level as Henri Monnier's "*L'Enterrement*", that is, on the same level as a play with bitterly satirical elements [43]. Lemarchand finishes his article with an interrogation that proves that *La Cantatrice* counted on his approval: "Pourquoi ne pas parler seulement de ce que l'on aime ?" [44].

After its premiere, *La Cantatrice chauve* lasts on the stage for exactly 25 representations, until the 16th of June, in spite of being supported by names like André Breton. In 1961, Martin Esslin describes Ionesco's first days as follows: "*La Cantatrice Chauve*, billed as an 'anti-play', ... was coldly received. Only Jacques Lemarchand, at that time the critic of *Combat*, and the playwright Armand Salacrou gave it favorable notices. ... The theatre remained almost empty. More than once, when there were fewer than three people in the theatre, they were given their money back and the actors went home. After about six weeks they gave up" [45]. Eleven years after, Esslin registers almost correctly the reactions of the public and of the critics, but since he will become the maximum authority on the Theatre of the Absurd, his considerations will be repeated over and over again in the specialized critic and in the histories of literature.

However, once examined the reception of this premiere in the French press, one can reach the conclusion that the opinions of Ionesco's champions might have lost weight because of not being stated from the adequate "tribunes". There is not much Breton or Salacrou supported by Saurel and Lemarchand from *Combat* and Pouillon from *Les Temps Modernes* can do in front of Maulnier from *Le Rouge et le Noir* and less in front of Jeener and *Le Figaro*. The authority of *Le Figaro* and its critic is totally confirmed in this exercise of their power to shape the public opinion, whose initial result is the play's brutal failure in the eyes of the public.

Notes

[1] Lemarchand, J., "La saison dramatique 1949-1950", *Combat*, 1950, 5-6 August.

[2] Tesson, P., "Eugène Ionesco", *Le Figaro*, 2009, 27 November.

[3] Torres Monreal mentions in his article "El teatro de Lorca en Francia" that in order to make a complete analysis of Lorca's theatre penetration in France one should investigate, apart from the first nights of the professional companies, "los llevados a cabo por los Centros Dramáticos y compañías permanentes de la Descentralización; las representaciones en festivales mundiales y en festivales regionales de verano; los montajes por compañías no subvencionadas, por grupos independientes, por grupos amateurs, por colectivos universitarios" (Torres Monreal, F., "El teatro de Lorca en Francia", *Homenaje al Prof. García Rubio*, Universidad de Murcia, Murcia, 1989, p. 1349). None of these elements were taken into account in the present analysis.

[4] Martin Esslin deals in his *Theatre of the Absurd* (Esslin, M., *The Theatre of the Absurd*, Anchor Books, New York, 1961) with all the works of the dramatists of the Absurd, amongst which we find Ionesco. And it is indispensable to mention too the thorough analysis of two of Ionesco's most well known plays made by Bigot and Savéan, *La cantatrice chauve et La leçon d'Eugène Ionesco* (Bigot, M., and M.-F. Savéan, *La cantatrice chauve et La leçon d'Eugène Ionesco*, Gallimard, Paris, 1991).

[5] In this point, it is important to quote, as examples, the colloquium dedicated entirely to Ionesco, celebrated in Cerisy, France: *Ionesco : situation et perspectives* (Ionesco, M.-F., P. Vernois and C. Abastado, *Ionesco : situation et perspectives*,

- Pierre Belfond, Paris, 1980). Hubert and Coe also deal extensively with Ionesco in their respective books, both titled *Eugène Ionesco* (Coe, R. N., *Eugène Ionesco*, Grove Press, New York, 1961; Hubert, M.-C., *Eugène Ionesco*, Seuil, Paris, 1990).
- [6] Plazy is one of Ionesco's biographies, with his *Eugène Ionesco, le rire et l'espérance* (Plazy, G., *Eugène Ionesco, le rire et l'espérance*, Julliard, Paris, 1994), even though Simion too dedicates several articles to this subject, like "O biografie a omului retoric. Hugoliada lui Eugen Ionescu" (Simion, E., "O biografie a omului retoric. Hugoliada lui Eugen Ionescu", *Ramuri*, no. 12, 1984). The dramatist's daughter publishes his biography in 2004, under the title *Portrait de l'écrivain dans le siècle : Eugène Ionesco, 1909-1994* (Ionesco, M.-F., *Portrait de l'écrivain dans le siècle : Eugène Ionesco, 1909-1994*, Gallimard, Paris, 2004).
- [7] Some examples: *Ionesco's Imperatives - The Politics of Culture* (Lamont, R., *Ionesco's Imperatives - The Politics of Culture*, Michigan University Press, Michigan, 1993) and *Brecht and Ionesco: commitment in context* (Wulbern, J. H., *Brecht and Ionesco: commitment in context*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1971).
- [8] French weekly newspaper founded in 1944, published until 1974. Source: Wikipedia.
- [9] The oldest French newspaper, published for the first time in 1826. In 2009 it had a daily circulation of 314,316 copies. Source: Wikipedia.
- [10] Not to be confused with its homonym, published between 1897 and 1914. The consulted *Aurore* had a general subject matter, it was founded in 1944 and it distributed its last number in 1985. Source: Wikipedia.
- [11] *Les Temps modernes* is a political, literary and philosophical review founded in October, 1945 by Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir and published by the Gallimard Publishing House. Source: Wikipedia.
- [12] Phélip, G., *Le fabuleux roman du Théâtre de la Huchette*, Gallimard, Paris, 2007, p. 37.
- [13] Phélip, G., *Le fabuleux roman du Théâtre de la Huchette*, Gallimard, Paris, 2007, p. 37.
- [14] Bataille, N., "La bataille de *La Cantatrice*", *Cahiers des Saisons* 15, hiver, 1959, p. 248.
- [15] Phélip, G., *Le fabuleux roman du Théâtre de la Huchette*, Gallimard, Paris, 2007, p. 37.
- [16] Søren Kierkegaard, translated by Louis Mackey, affirms in 1843 that "as a matter of fact a theatre audience usually has a certain strait-laced seriousness. They want –or at least they imagine they want– to be improved and educated in the theater; they want –or at least they imagine they want– to have had a rare aesthetic experience. As soon as they have read the posters they want to be able to know in advance how the play will turn out that evening" (Mackey, L., "Farce is Far More Serious", *Yale French Studies*, no. 14, 1954, p. 3-4). Maybe the expectations of the theatre audience Kierkegaard speaks about in 1843 were the same in the Paris of the fifties.
- [17] Jeener, J.-B., "Au Théâtre des Noctambules "La Cantatrice Chauve" d'Eugène Ionesco", *Le Figaro*, 1950, 13 May.
- [18] Whereas the reference to Molière is not open to misunderstandings, the mention of Roger Vitrac is to the least surprising, since he had been one of the promoters of the Surrealism and had founded in 1926 with Alfred Jarry a theatre which advocated for a provoking, unusual dramaturgy to break with the conventions in vogue at the time. Nowadays Vitrac is considered in the histories of literature as one of the precursors of the Theatre of the Absurd. See, among others, Couty, D., *Histoire de la littérature française*, Larousse, Paris, 2002 and Béhar, H., *Vitrac, théâtre ouvert sur le rêve*, Labor-Nathan, Paris, 1980.
- [19] Jeener, J.-B., "Au Théâtre des Noctambules "La Cantatrice Chauve" d'Eugène Ionesco", *Le Figaro*, 1950, 13 May.
- [20] Maulnier, T., "Farces, attrapes et pièces en toutes langues", *Le Rouge et le Noir*, 1950, 23 May.
- [21] Maulnier does not abandon the irony in his entire article: "J'ai longuement réfléchi à la manière dont je pourrais rendre compte à mes lecteurs de ce spectacle. J'ai finalement composé une "anti-critique" de l'"anti-pièce" ... Mais le secrétariat de rédaction de ce journal se refuse à l'imprimer, en déclarant que son imprimerie ne veut pas fondre ... les caractères originaux qui eussent été nécessaire. Heureuse Compagnie Nicolas Bataille ! La parole n'est pas tributaire des servitudes de l'écrit" (Maulnier, T., "Farces, attrapes et pièces en toutes langues", *Le Rouge et le Noir*, 1950, 23 May).
- [22] Bigot, M., and M.-F. Savéan, *La cantatrice chauve et La leçon d'Eugène Ionesco*, Gallimard, Paris, 1991, p. 202-203.
- [23] Joly is not the only one who has doubts about the spelling of Ionesco's last name. Jean Pouillon too, in the article he publishes in *Les Temps Modernes* in July, uses the *Jonesco* form. In time, most of the critics will know this last name well enough so that there are no more spelling uncertainties.
- [24] Joly, G., "La Cantatrice chauve fait voler les perruques", *L'Aurore*, 1950, 25 May.
- [25] Joly, G., "La Cantatrice chauve fait voler les perruques", *L'Aurore*, 1950, 25 May.
- [26] Isidore Isou (31st of January of 1925 – 28th of July of 2007), born Ioan-Isidor Goldstein, was a poet, film critic and French visual artist of Romanian origins. He is especially known as founder of the Lettrism, artistic and literary movement inspired in the Dadaism and the Surrealism.
- [27] Joly, G., "La Cantatrice chauve fait voler les perruques", *L'Aurore*, 1950, 25 May.
- [28] Joly, G., "La Cantatrice chauve fait voler les perruques", *L'Aurore*, 1950, 25 May.
- [29] Saurel, R., "La Cantatrice Chauve" de E. Ionesco reprise de "La Quadrature du Cercle" de Valentin Kataiev", *Combat*, 1950, 29 May.
- [30] Saurel, R., "La Cantatrice Chauve" de E. Ionesco reprise de "La Quadrature du Cercle" de Valentin Kataiev", *Combat*, 1950, 29 May.
- [31] Saurel, R., "La Cantatrice Chauve" de E. Ionesco reprise de "La Quadrature du Cercle" de Valentin Kataiev", *Combat*, 1950, 29 May.
- [32] This is exactly what she writes: "Quoi de plus rassurant que cette "anti-pièce" de M. E. Ionesco qui s'intitule, sans raison, "La Cantatrice chauve" ...?" (Saurel, R., "La Cantatrice Chauve" de E. Ionesco reprise de "La Quadrature du Cercle" de Valentin Kataiev", *Combat*, 1950, 29 May).
- [33] Ionesco confesses so years later in *Entretiens avec Eugène Ionesco*: "Il y a quelqu'un qui a très bien compris la pièce. C'est Jean Pouillon. Il a écrit dans *Les Temps Modernes* en juin 1950 un papier où il expliquait à merveille ce que j'avais voulu faire" (Bonney, C., *Entretiens avec Eugène Ionesco*, Belfond, Paris, 1966, p. 69).
- [34] Pouillon, J., "La Cantatrice Chauve, pièce de E. Ionesco, au théâtre des Noctambules", *Les Temps Modernes* 57, July 1950, p. 172.
- [35] Pouillon, J., "La Cantatrice Chauve, pièce de E. Ionesco, au théâtre des Noctambules", *Les Temps Modernes* 57, July 1950, p. 172.

- [36] Pouillon, J., "La Cantatrice Chauve, pièce de E. Ionesco, au théâtre des Noctambules", *Les Temps Modernes* 57, July 1950, p. 173.
- [37] By acting this way, Ionesco puts in practice the principles enunciated by Alfred Jarry, acknowledged precursor of the Theatre of the Absurd, in one of his essays, "Arguments sur le théâtre": "Lo que pretendí fue que, al levantarse el telón, la escena resultase para el público como ese espejo de los cuentos de madame Leprince de Beaumont en que el vicioso se ve con cuerpo de dragón y testuz de toro, según la exageración de sus principales vicios. Y, de tal manera, no es asombroso que el público quedase estupefacto a la vista de su inmundo doble, formado ... de la eterna imbecilidad humana, de la eterna Lujuria, de la eterna glotonería, de la bajeza de los instintos erigida en tiranía, de pudores, virtudes, patriotismo e ideales de gente bien comida; de un doble que, hasta entonces, no se le había presentado por completo" (Jarry, A., *Ubú rey*, edited by Lola Bermúdez, Cátedra, Madrid, 2002, p. 189).
- [38] Pouillon, J., "La Cantatrice Chauve, pièce de E. Ionesco, au théâtre des Noctambules", *Les Temps Modernes* 57, July 1950, p. 173.
- [39] Pouillon, J., "La Cantatrice Chauve, pièce de E. Ionesco, au théâtre des Noctambules", *Les Temps Modernes* 57, July 1950, p. 173.
- [40] Lemarchand, J., "La saison dramatique 1949-1950", *Combat*, 1950, 5-6 August.
- [41] Lemarchand, J., "La saison dramatique 1949-1950", *Combat*, 1950, 5-6 August.
- [42] Lemarchand, J., "La saison dramatique 1949-1950", *Combat*, 1950, 5-6 August.
- [43] Henri-Bonaventure Monnier (1799-1877) was a French dramatist, caricaturist and actor. He is known and remembered as the creator of Monsieur Prudhomme, character who according to the *Dictionnaire des écrivains de langue française*, "semble l'incarnation la plus réussie du "stupide XIXe siècle" dans sa version bourgeoise" (Beaumarchais, J.-P., D. Couty and A. Rey, *Dictionnaire des écrivains de langue française*, Larousse, Paris, 2001, p.1234). It is this aspect, of critic of the bourgeoisie, which causes the two dramatists to be compared, in the beginning.
- [44] Lemarchand, J., "La saison dramatique 1949-1950", *Combat*, 1950, 5-6 August.
- [45] Esslin, M., *The Theatre of the Absurd*, Anchor Books, New York, 1961, p.90.

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