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100th anniversary of Anton Chekhov's death in Barcelona

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Abstract. The interest towards Anton Chekhov's theatre entered a new phase in the end of the seventies of the 20th century in Barcelona. A quarter of century after Franco's death the translations of Chekhov's plays into Catalan and representations thereof recorded a new growth: translators and artists were trying to fill the gap resulting from the cultural crisis suffered under the dictatorship by introducing into the national cultural system some of the most recognized authors of the world, already considered classics in the western neighbour countries (France, Great Britain, Germany). The 100th anniversary of Chekhov's death offered a perfect occasion to pay tribute to the Russian author's memory. The present research sums up the principal events dedicated to the centenary of Chekhov's death in 2004 in Barcelona and focuses on the staging of "Uncle Vanya" by Joan Ollé, one of the most memorable interpretations of this play in Catalonia, in order to evaluate the reception thereof through the analysis of periodical issues. Based on Hans-Robert Jauss's approach to the literature as a constant interaction between the work of art, the public and the author, the study sheds light on the reception of Chekhov's theatre in Catalonia and its evolution from the first direct translation of the play until a key staging which, in turn, became a reference for the following generations. The analysis concludes that the centenary of Chekhov's death may be considered an inflection point in the history of his reception in Catalonia. Thanks to the production of the first canonical staging of "Uncle Vanya" in Catalan, Chekhov's name stopped being associated exclusively with popular performances produced by foreign companies.

Keywords: Chekhov's theatre, Catalonia, Uncle Vanya, Catalan, Joan Ollé's versión, translation, dialogue, literature, intercultural communication, drama translation, evolution of reception

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El centenario de la muerte de Ánton Chéjov en Barcelona

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Resumen. El interés por el teatro de Antón Chéjov se revivió a finales de los años setenta del siglo XX en Barcelona. Un cuarto de siglo después de la muerte de Franco se activaron las traducciones de las obras de teatro de Chéjov al catalán y las escenificaciones basadas en estas: los traductores y artistas intentaban llenar el hueco de la crisis cultural que había aparecido durante la dictadura, introduciendo en el sistema cultural nacional las obras de algunos de los autores más reconocidos del mundo que ya gozaban de fama en otros países occidentales vecinos (Francia, Gran Bretaña, Alemania). El centenario de la muerte de Chéjov sirvió de una buena ocasión para rendir homenaje a la memoria del autor ruso. El presente artículo resume los eventos principales dedicados al centenario de la muerte de Chéjov en 2004 en Barcelona y se centra en el montaje de *Oncle Vànïa* [Tío Vania] del director Joan Ollé, una de las puestas en escena más memorables de esta obra en Cataluña, con el fin de evaluar su recepción a través de varias publicaciones periódicas. Basándose en el enfoque de H.-R. Jauss hacia la literatura como una interacción constante entre la obra, el público y el autor, el artículo arroja luz sobre el teatro de Chéjov en Cataluña y su evolución desde la primera traducción directa hasta un montaje clave que, a su vez, se convirtió en un referente para las futuras generaciones. El análisis concluye que el centenario de la muerte de Chéjov puede ser considerado un punto de inflexión en la historia de su recepción en Cataluña. Gracias a esta primera versión canónica de Tío Vania, el nombre de Chéjov dejó de asociarse únicamente con los montajes populares de compañías extranjeras.

Palabras clave: el teatro de Chéjov, Cataluña, *Oncle Vànïa*, versión de Joan Ollé, la traducción como un diálogo, la literatura como una comunicación intercultural, traducción de dramas, evolución de la recepción

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Столетие со дня смерти А.П. Чехова в Барселоне

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Аннотация. Интерес к театру Антона Чехова в Барселоне перешел в новую фазу в конце семидесятых годов XX в. Спустя четверть века после смерти Франко значительно увеличилось количество переводов пьес Чехова и новых постановок на каталанском языке: переводчики и артисты пытались восполнить пробел культурного кризиса вре-

мен диктатуры, внедряя в национальную культурную систему произведения признанных авторов мира, давно считающихся классиками в западных странах-соседах (Франция, Великобритания, Германия). Возможностью отдать дань памяти русскому писателю стало 100-летие со дня смерти Чехова. В исследовании представлены основные мероприятия в 2004 г. в Барселоне, посвященные столетию со дня смерти Чехова. Особое внимание уделено постановке «Дяди Вани» Жуана Олье, одной из самых запомнившихся интерпретаций этой пьесы в Каталонии, с целью проследить за ее рецепцией посредством анализа периодических изданий. На основе подхода Х.-Р. Яусса к литературе как к постоянному взаимодействию между произведением, публикой и автором, проливается свет на рецепцию театра Чехова в Каталонии и ее эволюцию начиная с первого прямого перевода пьесы до постановки Олье, которая, в свою очередь, стала эталонной для последующих поколений режиссеров. Анализ позволяет сделать вывод, что столетие со дня смерти Чехова можно считать точкой перелома в истории его рецепции в Каталонии. Благодаря созданию первой канонической постановки «Дяди Вани» на каталанском языке имя Чехова перестало ассоциироваться исключительно с популярными спектаклями, поставленными иностранными компаниями.

Ключевые слова: театр Чехова, Каталония, Дядя Ваня, каталанский, версия Жуана Олье, перевод как диалог, литература как межкультурная коммуникация, драматический перевод, эволюция рецепции

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Introduction

The interest towards Chekhov's works entered a new phase all over Spain after Franco's death when the public was quite ready for social, political and cultural changes. As stipulated in Jauss's theory, the historicity of literature does not rest on an organization of "literary facts" established *post festum* or on an anonymous tradition of "masterpieces" but on the preceding experience by readers gathered through a constant interaction between the work, the recipients, and the author (Jauss, 2000, p. 160). In Catalonia the high frequency of productions based on Chekhov's plays at the beginning of the 21st century was rooted in 1979, "*año Chejov para el teatro independiente catalán*" ["*a Chekhov year for the independent Catalan theatre*"] (Corbert, 1979). Four major plays by Chekhov were presented in Barcelona within the same year. *La gavina* [*The Seagull*], staged at the Institute of Theatre by Herman Bonnín, was produced with the Catalan translation by Joan Oliver. *L'oncle Vania* [*Uncle Vanya*], translated by Feliu Formosa, was premiered by El Globus, a company from Terrassa, under the direction of Pau Monterde, and was performed three times at the Teatre Romea of Barcelona. In May of the same year, the amateur company L'Ou Nou staged *L'hort dels cirerers* [*The Cherry Orchard*] under the direction of Joan Bas and Jaume Codinachs. Finally, the Teatre Lliure opted for another translation by J. Oliver to create a highly acclaimed version of *Les tres germanes* [*The Three Sisters*] by Lluís Pasqual. This multiple presence of Chekhov's works on Catalan stages re-

turned around three decades later, in 2004, when the Teatre Lliure and the National Theatre of Catalonia (TNC) paid tribute to Chekhov's memory by commemorating the 100th anniversary of his death with two performances, *L'oncle V`ania* and *Les tres germanes* (2005), respectively. These two productions in a row were crucial for the consecutive popularization of Chekhov's theatre in Catalonia. In order to evaluate the evolution of his reception in Barcelona at the hinge of centuries, the present paper sheds light on the main events of the commemoration year, focusing on the staging of *L'oncle V`ania* by Joan Oll`e at the Teatre Lliure.

Discussion

The commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Chekhov's death

On the eve of the new millenium, co-translators Nina Avrova and Joan Casas published two volumes of Chekhov's complete theatre plays in Catalan with comments and revised translations (Tx`ekhov, 1998–1999). This publication emerged from the idea of providing Catalan versions of Chekhov's previously untranslated plays, starting with *Ivanov* and *Plat`onov*. This plan coincided with an offer received from the Barcelona Institute of Theatre to publish Chekhov's *Complete Theatre* in two volumes. The Institute was trying to fill the gap resulting from the cultural crisis suffered under the dictatorship by introducing some works of the most recognized authors of the world into the national cultural system. In fact, throughout the history of the reception of Chekhov's theatre in Catalonia initiated a century ago, the version by Avrova and Casas from 1999 was the very first direct translation from Russian into Catalan.

L'oncle V`ania was included in the second volume of the book. The text was mostly based on the revised version of Feliu Formosa's indirect translation created in 1979 using sources in French (*L'oncle Vania*, translator Arthur Adamov), German (*Onkel Wanja*, translator Peter Urban), and Spanish (*El tío Vania*, translator August Vidal). The revisers attempted, “d'una banda, a confrontar la versió de Feliu Formosa amb l'original rus i, d'una altra, a restablir la literalitat de la gran quantitat de manlleus que hi ha a *L'oncle V`ania* provinents d'*El bruixot dels boscos*” [“on the one hand, to confront Feliu Formosa's version with the Russian original and, on the other hand, to re-establish the large quantity of literal loanwords that appear in *Uncle Vanya* from *The Wood Demon*”] (Casas in: Tx`ekhov, 1999, p. 505). The result of this cooperation was used as the main source for the later adaptations of the play.

Not long after the publication of the *Complete Theatre*, in 2004, the 100th anniversary of Chekhov's death was commemorated in different countries of the world. The culmination of special events and conferences dedicated to the writer's memory was celebrated in Badenweiler, Germany, at the Third International Symposium devoted to Anton P. Chekhov as a Playwright from 14th to 18th of October. Several theatres in Spain joined the commemoration with a the number of productions based on Chekhov's works. Vaivén Producciones presented in various cities of Spain *¡Nasdrovia Chejov!*, a comedy based on some short stories by Chekhov. The comedy directed by Fernando Bernues was awarded with several prizes. A few months later, the editors of ADE Teatro theatrical magazine prepared a special issue titled “CHEJOV a la vuelta de cien años” [“CHEKHOV at the Turn of the Century”] (ADE Teatro, No. 104, January – March 2005). As the editors mentioned in the introduction, “El pasado 2004 se celebró el centenario de la muerte de quien es

sin duda uno de los autores fundamentales del teatro universal, Anton P. Chéjov” [“Last year, 2004, we commemorated the 100th anniversary the of death of an author who, without a doubt, is one of the most fundamental authors of the world of theatre, Anton P. Chekhov”] (2005, p. 34). For this occasion, the editors gathered a series of articles devoted to diverse aspects of Chekhov’s life and work, as well as analyses of the staging of some of his plays. For the first time in Spain, the issue systemized the writer’s biography and the history of his reception in Spain.

The 100th anniversary of Chekhov’s death marked a new key phase in the reception of his work in Catalonia as well. Àlex Rigola, then director of the Teatre Lliure, and Domènec Reixach, director of the TNC, announced the planning of a number of events organized by the two greatest Catalan public theatres to pay tribute to the memory of the Russian writer. Alongside the screening of some world-renowned performances, exhibitions, talks and conferences, the events included two plays: *Oncle Vania* directed by Joan Ollé, presented at Sala Fabià Puigserver of the Teatre Lliure in Montjuïc (from the 4th of November to the 12th of December 2004), and *Les tres germanes*, directed by Ariel García Valdés at the TNC at the beginning of 2005, which used a new text adapted by Narcís Comadira. As the editors of *La Vanguardia* magazine informed, “Para acercarse directamente a algunas de estas producciones que han marcado, al decir de los expertos, el Teatro de nuestro tiempo, el TNC ofrecerá los sábados, desde el 29 de enero y hasta el 26 de febrero, proyecciones íntegras de las puestas en escena realizadas por Giorgio Strehler (1977), Peter Brook (1981) y Georges Lavaudant (2004) de *L’hort dels cirerers* y las de Peter Stein (1984) y Eimuntas Nekrosius (1995) de *Les tres germanes*” [“In order to bring closer some of these productions that have marked, according to experts, the theatre of our time, TNC will screen complete versions of *The Cherry Orchard* by Giorgio Strehler (1977), Peter Brook (1981) and Georges Lavaudant (2004) and of *The Three Sisters* by Peter Stein (1984) and Eimuntas Nekrosius (1995) every Saturday from the 29th of January to the 26th of February”] (06/11/2004). Besides, the French Institute of Barcelona organized the screening of Louis Malle’s movie *Vanya on 42th Street* (1994), probably one of the most popular versions of this piece that had a greater impact than any other staging: “La pieza es una de las cuatro grandes obras dramáticas del autor <...>, pero es principalmente conocida por la versión cinematográfica dirigida por Louis Malle, *Vania en la calle 42*” [“This play is one of four major dramatic works by the author <...>, but it is mainly known thanks to the movie version directed by Louis Malle, *Vanya on 42th Street*”] (Belén Ginart, *El País*, 29/10/2004).

When referring to both stage and historical implications that exist between literature and readers, Hans-Robert Jauss points out: “The obvious historical implication of this is that the understanding of the first reader will be sustained and enriched in a chain of receptions from generation to generation; in this way the historical significance of a work will be decided and its aesthetic value made evident” (2005: 20).

The relation between different readings of Chekhov and its impact on the reception of his work are clearly visible in the programme of this 100th anniversary of his death. The playwright, director, founder of the company Dagoll-Dagom, Joan Ollé, felt more inclined towards *L’hort dels cirerers* [*The Cherry Orchard*]. Nevertheless, he thought on the one hand that this play had been already used in more than one iconic staging by great European directors like Strehler and Brook

and on the other hand that, not so long ago, the former artistic director and founder of the Teatre Lliure Lluís Pasquall had directed this play as a farewell to the theatre in Gràcia quarter. The choice of *Oncle Vânia* was aimed at avoiding any possible prejudicial reception that the recent representations of the other play could have meant. As explained by Ollé (*El Mundo*, 29/10/2004; *Avui*, 29/10/2004), *Oncle Vânia* had not been considered in any staging of such magnitude in the theatre of the last generations although, according to the Catalan director, Louis Malle had, in fact, achieved an analogue in cinema. Ollé intended to provide the staging with a naturalism typical to Chekhov, as presented in Maille's movie, without getting stuck in its trap at the same time: "El naturalismo puede ser una trampa y Chejov no puede ser leído únicamente en esa clave; hay fragmentos, por ejemplo, tremendamente cercanos a Beckett" ["Naturalism may be a trap and Chekhov cannot be read solely from this point of view: for example, he has fragments that are extremely close to Beckett"] (*La Vanguardia*, 19/10/2004), the stage director underlined, meaning above all the concept of the suspended time, so crucial for both the Russian dramatist and the author of *En attendant Godot*. As a result, the production at the Teatre Lliure chose an approach defined by Ollé as a *fruit salad of different theatres*. The stage design by Jon Berrondo was supposed to recreate the impression of a half-left decoration in the middle of a rehearsal. This might have been inspired by Maille's film but also by the concept of the suspended time implied in the play. The props matched this purpose: there was a bit more than a couple of chairs, banks, tables with a samovar, and a huge illuminated pile of straw.

An important innovation of the version was the inclusion of the author's remarks read by a voice off, which gave a unique presence of the author's voice and encouraged the spectators to use their imagination.

The actors Enric Arredondo (a "correctísimo" ["very correct"] professor, according to the critic M. José Ragué, *El Cultural*, 18/11/2004), Mònica López (Ielena), Maria Molins (Sonia), Xicu Masó (Vania), Andreu Benito (Àstrov), Josep Maria Domènech (Teleguin), Àngels Poch (Marina), and Georgina Cardona (Màrya Vassílievna) shared the stage with the musician Toti Soler who also performed the role of the Worker. According to the reviews, the musician played live "una partitura que pretende ser parte del paisaje de ese verano que retrató Chéjov" ["a score which aims to be part of this summer landscape portrayed by Chekhov"] (Núria Cuadrado, *El Mundo*, 29/10/2004). The critics unanimously recognized Soler's melancholic guitar as one of the unforgettable contributions of this staging. The hand programme read that the actress Georgina Cardona had not only performed Voinítskaia but had also supported the company as an advisor with a "slavic soul": she spoke Russian on stage. The Russian motifs were supplemented with a giant samovar and the popular song "Tónkaia Ribina" [*Thin Mountain Ash*]).

For the critic Marcos Ordóñez (*El País*, 04/12/2004), the central position of the stage with the public surrounding it from three sides was not convenient: "El teatro de Chéjov pide proximidad, de acuerdo, pero Ollé hace que los actores envíen una y otra vez el texto hacia el público, como si se tratara de monólogos interiores o narraciones épicas, casi brechtianas: resulta muy artificioso, rompe la claustrofobia esencial de la pieza y, sobre todo, el tono, ese continuo diálogo de sordos que buscan con avidez la mirada del otro" ["Chekhov's theatre seeks

for proximity, alright, but Ollé makes the actors send the text towards the public over and over as if it was about interior monologs or epic narrations, almost in Brecht's style: it results very artificial, breaks the essential claustrophobia of the play and especially its tone, this continuous dialogue of deafs that avidly look for one another's look”].

Besides, the reviewer criticized some clichés of the staging: too much apathy, too languishing characters, while, in Ordóñez's opinion, “Lo tedioso en Chéjov es el entorno, nunca sus habitantes” [“What is languishing in Chekhov is the environment, never its inhabitants”]. He also complains of some clichés in characterization, for instance, a Sonia turned into a hysterical teenager with a secret passion, a Ielena locked within the first two acts in the body of an enigmatic porcelaine statue; a professor Serebriakov condemned to act *continuously* as the bad guy of the performance; Teleguin and Marina represented as figures in a Nativity scene. However, the critic's opinion was more favorable with respect to the second part of the staging, especially pointing out the superb quartet of lead actors. As a conclusion, Ordóñez admitted that the staging in the Teatre Lliure was mesmerising and convincing in spite of all distortions.

In contrast to this partially sceptic evaluation, Gabriel Almazan described in his review “L'oncle Txèkhov” [“Uncle Chekhov”]: “L'excel·lència de la literatura naturalista del rus, que fa de cadascun dels seus contes un observatori privilegiat sobre un món i una època, ha trobat en Ollé la sensibilitat i la gràcia necessàries per donar el to just a les tristesses i passions del personatges” [“The excellence of the Russian naturalist literature which turns any of its short stories into a privileged observatory of the world and a whole era has found in Ollé the necessary sensitiveness and grace to give the right tone to the pains and passions of the characters”] (*El Triangle*, 15/11/2004).

According to the critic, Ollé had managed to present an agile sequence of different states of mind, from euphoria to despair. Another review that recognizes the success of Ollé's version was created by Joan-Anton Benach. The latter concluded that the staging had been the most important and interesting show of the season (*La Vanguardia*, 08/11/2004). Benach considered the staging in the Teatre Lliure to be within the framework of the modern chekhovian tradition that had been developed in Catalonia since the end of the seventies. The critic recognized Joan Ollé's merit in having faced “el desafío de quebrantar las sacrosantas, férreas, reglas del naturalismo” [“the challenge of breaking sacrosanct, iron rules of naturalism”], committing light transgressions and reaching a youth spirit that would shock the Art Theatre. Benach concluded: “allí donde existan personajes de carne y hueso las convenciones teatrales más rigurosas pueden vulnerarse sin que sufran las emociones y conmociones del drama” [“wherever characters with flesh and bones exist, even the most rigorous theatre conventions may be altered without affecting the emotions and commotions of the drama”].

Josep Maria Fonalleras also writes about the Chekhovian tradition in Catalonia, in particular, he compares the centenary of Chekhov's death, in which two commemorative stagings were performed, with 1979 when other two memorable versions stood out: *Les tres germanes* [*The Three Sisters*] by Lluís Pasqual at the Teatre Lliure and *La gavina* [*The Seagull*] by Herman Bonnín. “¡Aleluya! Chejov vuelve a estar con nosotros, el Chejov alegre y cruel de Vitez” [“Hallelu-

jah! Chekhov is with us again, the cheerful and cruel Chekhov as portrayed by Vitez”], the reviewer exclaims (*La Vanguardia*, 05/11/2004). Fonalleras interprets the duality of joy and cruelty in the play as a key to understand this work, which, with its scenes of rural life, is neither a comedy nor a tragedy. Notwithstanding, the image on the poster of the show representing the back and neck of a man in an overcoat, with a misty sky on the horizon, suggested rather the idea of a character “con un pasado en negro y un futuro sin sol” [“with a dark past and no bright future”].

It is worth mentioning that Ollé’s staging, on the one hand, wanted to resist the cliché of boredom that Chekhov’s work had been associated with in the West before: “La vida és un 99 per cent avorrida i anodina, mentre que el que busca Txèkhov en les seves obres és la concentració, la densitat” [“Life is ninety-nine percent boring and dull, while what Chekhov is looking for in his works is the concentration, the density”] (Ollé, *Avui*, 29/10/2004). On the other hand, though, both the hand programme and the press conference before the premiere provoked another cliché: pathological characters, mysteries lacking any psychological explanations. Thus, the literary advisor Julie Sermon mentioned in the hand programme: “Dius “Txèkhov” i d’immediat desfila tota la imatgeria naturalista: la subtilitat dels sentiments, la justesa dels ambients, escenes de vida, escenes de família, escenes del camp, ah! els turments, ah! la nostàlgia, ah!, també, les embranzides apassionades, els atacs de bogeria” [“You say Chekhov and a whole naturalist imagery lines up immediately: the subtlety of feelings, the correctness of the props, life scenes, family scenes, countryside scenes, ah! torments, ah! the nostalgia, ah! Also, the passionate impulses, the acts of madness”].

Several magazines shared Joan Ollé’s summary: “Chéjov es un patio de manicomio lírico en el que cada cual pasea su enfermedad del alma” [“Chekhov is a lyrical asylum where people walk their soul diseases”] (*El País*, 29/10/2004; *La Vanguardia*, 19/10/2004). These “soul diseases” were emphasized by the stage director as the reason for which the play remained so topical through so many years.

The names of the translators of the text used for the staging vary throughout the press. The hand programme introduced Feliu Formosa and Nina Avrova (*sic*) as the translators. The misprint was reflected in the review in *La Vanguardia* (19/10/2004), while newspapers and magazines such as *El País* (29/10/2004), *Avui* (29/10/2004), *El Triangle* (15/11/2004) and *El Cultural* (18/11/2004) do not mention any other names but Feliu Formosa. The text might be based on both Formosa’s version (1979) and the direct translation by Avrova and Casas (1999). Formosa’s name might also have been included due to the fact that some fragments of his version had been incorporated by Avrova and Casas in their new translation. In any case, the text received high distinctions in the press. Gabriel Almazan (*El Triangle*) calls it “melodia dels mots escollits pel poeta Feliu Formosa, traductor de l’obra al català” [“a melody of words chosen by poet Feliu Formosa, translator of the work into Catalan”]; according to M. José Ragué (*El Cultural*), “es un texto excelentemente traducido por Feliu Formosa” [“this is an excellent translation by Feliu Formosa”]. Joan-Anton Benach (*La Vanguardia*, 08/11/2004) mentions both translators, Feliu Formosa and Nina Avrova, praising their work as “una traducción estupenda”

[“a wonderful translation”], an opinion shared by Marcos Ordóñez this time (*El País*, 04/12/2004).

Within the context of the activities dedicated to the centenary of Chekhov’s death, the theatre world in Barcelona had planned another creation referring to the Russian author’s work and personality. This version was directed by Pau Miró as a part of Assaig Obert, a cycle organized by the Teatre Lliure meant to give young creators the possibility to promote their projects and present their own vision of an ongoing play from the theatre’s repertoire to the audience. Nevertheless, the open rehearsal initiated by Miró and his company gave birth to a new, extremely free and contemporary version of *Uncle Vanya*, which premiered in January 2005 under the title *Happy hour*. At the same time, Helena Munné directed *Les tres germanes* [*The Tree Sisters*] in Sant Andreu Teatre, based this time on the translation by Avrova and Casas. Both versions became quite popular: after three performances in Fabià Puigserver hall of the Teatre Lliure, the staging of *Happy hour* continued the season in the Teatro Borràs, “avalado por la buena acogida que tuvo entonces” [“supported by the great reception back then”] (*El País* (Catalunya), 18/01/2005). This version strayed more from the original. Created with the intention to contrast the rather canonical version by Joan Ollé, Pau Miró’s project can perhaps be considered the first free dialogue with Chekhov in Catalonia. The Chekhovian characters got new life and turned into protagonists of a new drama in Catalan.

Thanks to this series of plays initiated by the new tradition of direct translations from Russian into Catalan, promoted by the events of the centenary of the writer’s death, Chekhov started occupying a solid place among the most presented theatre authors in Barcelona to this date. As Santiago Fondevila commented on Chekhov’s presence in the calendars of the TNC and the Teatre Lliure in 2004/2005, the playwright is considered now, “sin lugar a dudas uno de los autores teatrales más importantes de la historia del teatro” [“with no doubt, one of the most important authors in the history of theatre”] (*La Vanguardia*, 08/07/2004).

Conclusion

The analysis of articles in the Catalan press shows that, starting from the centenary of the writer’s death, the mere descriptions of the plot, rather common in the reviews of previous stagings, gave way to another approach more focused on the perspective of every staging. Whereas, in the case of the first version in 2004, there were no references in Catalan to compare *Uncle Vanya* with – therefore the staging was presented through the prism of other famous versions of Chekhov’s works, often foreign ones –, *Oncle Vania* by Joan Ollé in 2004 turned into a reference for later plays in Barcelona. Thus, on the one hand, the publication of the first direct translation of Chekhov’s theatre plays in Catalan by N. Avrova and J. Casas and, on the other hand, the events dedicated to the centenary of his death largely contributed to the production of the first successful canonic versions of Chekhov’s plays in Catalan and meant a turning point in the history of the reception of his theatre. The press stopped associating his name solely with renowned foreign productions and his dramaturgy was recognized as a great asset in the repertoire of any Catalan theatre.

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