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Sarah Bernhardt in Brazil (1886-1893)

Abstract

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Sarah Bernhardt helped to establish theatrical connections between Europe and the Americas as a result of her international travels. Her tours in Brazil intensified the exchanges between this country's theatrical scene and the French theatre, and the presence of this famous actress indicated the inclusion of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the "global" theatrical circuit of great stars that was then being formed. While revisiting this process, this article investigates its symbolic meaning and its impacts on a local level (Brazil): how these tours connected Sarah Bernhardt to foreign audiences (thereby helping to shape a global cultural space), and to what extent foreign audiences' expectations had an impact on the aesthetic features of these productions. From a broader perspective, in this sense, cultural globalization and translocal audiences are essential to assessing the production of French theatre in the nineteenth century.

Author

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During the second half of the nineteenth century, Sarah Bernhardt helped to establish theatrical connections between Europe and the Americas as a result of her travels through several countries. Having visited Brazil on three occasions – 1886, 1893 and 1905 –, her tours definitely intensified the exchanges between Brazil and the French theatre. Moreover, the presence of this famous actress in the country indicated the inclusion of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the "global" theatrical circuit of great stars that was being formed. In this article, I would like to revisit this process, while questioning its symbolic meaning and its impacts on a local level, specifically in Brazil, as well as how it affected this artist's career. Regarded as one of the greatest theatrical stars of the nineteenth century and as an important representative of the illustrious French traditions of dramatic repertoire, Sarah Bernhardt and her career are great examples of

the process of internationalization of French drama, which was only made possible by the emergence of urban culture and the creation of “theatrical markets” in different cities around the world, and also due to the remarkable Francophile sentiment of that period. In other words, beyond analyzing the *impact* caused by the dissemination of French theatre in the Brazilian context of the nineteenth century, this article also seeks to question, through the case of Sarah Bernhardt, to what extent the process of cultural globalization developed at that time also affected the theatrical economy in France, thus *structuring* scenic creation and Parisian dramaturgical literature itself during that period. How did these tours connect Sarah Bernhardt to foreign audiences by bridging the gap between Brazilian viewers and audiences from different locations, thereby helping to shape a global cultural space?

In order to investigate these questions, this article is divided into three parts. In the first section, we briefly examine how Sarah Bernhardt’s career underwent a process of internationalization after her departure from the *Comédie-Française* in 1880. Next, we will recall this artist’s first Brazilian tour, in 1886, and, finally, we address the circumstances related to the acting and the reception of the great spectacles written by Victorien Sardou and starred in by Sarah Bernhardt during her second tour of Rio de Janeiro, in 1893. As mentioned before, the examination of these matters must take a broader process into consideration, the age of an emerging globalization¹ that is linked to the creation of theatrical exchange routes and translocal audiences. The main sources consulted regarding these travels are the narratives published by the Brazilian and French presses of that time.

1. Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923), international star: "The Great French Theatre" on tour

As a child of the great institutions of Parisian theatre, the epithet "an actress of the people" would certainly not characterize Sarah Bernhardt, despite the fact that fame made her popular in many countries. After starting her career in the Conservatoire de Paris² in 1860, and then working in prestigious national theatres such as the *Odéon*³ (1866-1872) and the *Comédie-Française*⁴ (1872-1880), where she emerged as a big star, the actress had her image linked to the great theatre of the French repertoire. In charge of preserving France’s illustrious dramatic repertoire of literary theatre, both the *Odéon* and the *Comédie-Française* offered important roles to Sarah, which made her a favourite among the critics. It was also as a member of the *Comédie* troupe that Sarah first toured London, where she was hailed as a brilliant *vedette* of the *Théâtre-Français*.⁵

When Sarah Bernhardt became one of the leading figures in the most important national theatre of her time and country, she could finally contemplate an independent career for herself, as this gave her more leeway for creating art according to her own ideas. In 1880, after several disagreements with the administration of the *Comédie-Française*, the actress sent in her resignation, choosing instead to develop an autonomous career, which began with presentations in Europe (London, Brussels and

Copenhagen), followed by her first tour in North America. Later, back in France, the artist would own her own theatres⁶ and also become the leader of a theatre company.

Despite her prominence as the main actress in the most important French official theatre, the new directions that Sarah Bernhardt set for herself were not immediately supported by theatrical critics. Many of them thought that an independent career would interfere negatively with her performance as an actress – that by living on her own acting paychecks, without the stability provided by the *Comédie-Française*, she would be forced to seek new audiences outside France, thus giving up art in exchange for profits:

[...] she should make no mistake; her success will not be long-lasting. [...]. Those artists, who, relying on the buzz of their fame, abandon the *Comédie-Française* to travel the world in search of adventure, see their reputations weaken little by little and their gains diminish. They have nothing else to hang on to. They exploit their acquired success and cannot renovate it [...] One should not compare dramatic or comedic artists to male and female singers. Singing is a cosmopolitan art. Mlle. Patti and Mlle. Nilsson⁷ can tour Europe with half a dozen operas. They will find in every capital an audience ready to applaud them and pay for them – even enthusiastically. But French tragedy is an eminently national plant, one that can only find in Europe and the New World the rare greenhouses where it can acclimatize to the environment and flourish. Our comedy, even more so: despite being more intelligible to other audiences, it would not know how to put down lasting and multiple roots. We have to admit it: in foreign countries, our great actors are no more than brilliant eccentricities or, if I dare say it myself, picturesque animals. There are exceptions to this, I know. London, Amsterdam, St. Petersburg; but, anyway, even in big cities, the international audience that understands our language and is interested in the products of our literature is rare and handpicked, and its curiosity will run out quickly. [...] **Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.** This is, therefore, a very dangerous game that Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt is playing in a moment of anger. Unfavourably dangerous to her, one might say, because she will only hurt herself. She is not, in any way, one of those actresses that can carry the weight of an entire play on their shoulders, neither one that does not need to be surrounded to enthrall the audience. [...] One after another, look at all the roles of Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt and notice how they cannot be separated harmlessly from the rest of the ensemble they embody. [...] Plays were written for Déjazet, Bouffet, Lafont and Arnal.⁸ Nobody writes for the associates of the *Comédie-Française*. Those who try to make it in the provinces are forced to look, outside the repertoire, for fantasies, monologues, *saynètes* [comedy sketches] for two or three characters, a handful of little plays whose success is always ephemeral and questionable. Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt is, therefore, assuming the great risk of not finding the benefits promised to her in that place where her hard head takes her.⁹

While recalling the importance of the *Comédie-Française* to French theatre, the renowned critic Francisque Sarcey sought to demonstrate that Sarah Bernhardt had made a bad decision when she decided to leave the *Maison de Molière*. Accordingly, he stressed the difficulties of launching an independent career, especially pointing out the characteristic composition of theatre companies outside the *Théâtre-Français* and, in the case of touring, how difficult it was to perform before foreign audiences. The chronicler already knew that Sarah Bernhardt was leaving for London in the coming months and, perhaps even that she had signed a contract that would take her to North America that same year. A keen observer of his time, Sarcey was not far from the truth. In fact, the possibility of touring outside of France seemed promising (Americans, for example, were known for their big acting paychecks).¹⁰ However, the star-crossed travel narratives of other French artists, such as Rachel's,¹¹ also made it clear that conquering foreign spectators and succeeding triumphantly outside Paris were hard endeavours.

Even if the texts produced in France – "intelligible to other audiences" – had become well known in many countries around the world through translations and adaptations, it was still very difficult, according to Sarcey, to adapt the French dramatic repertoire to conditions outside of France. Indeed, how could one expect that foreign audiences would *understand* all the works, or that they would know how to appreciate the refinement and subtlety of the texts without fluently speaking the French language? Of course, despite all his pretentious jingoism, Sarcey exposed real and inherent difficulties of touring abroad. It was clear that, in order to conquer foreign audiences, Sarah Bernhardt would need, first of all, to redefine her repertoire.

As the critic explained, the difficulty in putting together a travelling troupe implied, for the stars on the road, the composition of a distinguished repertoire. In other words, it was convenient to prioritize plays that were dependent on the great *vedette*, instead of relying on the theatre company. According to Sarcey, until that moment, Sarah Bernhardt's success had been earned performing roles that could not be "separated harmlessly from the rest of the ensemble they embody". Thus, throughout her independent career, the actress would need to constantly renew her repertoire, turning to roles that had already been made famous by other actresses and roles written specifically for her.¹² Furthermore, touring itself would play a crucial role in the way the artist would come to use her own image as part of an advertising strategy.¹³ Finally, in order to succeed in her international venture and still keep her Parisian audience, Sarah Bernhardt would need to rethink her acting career.

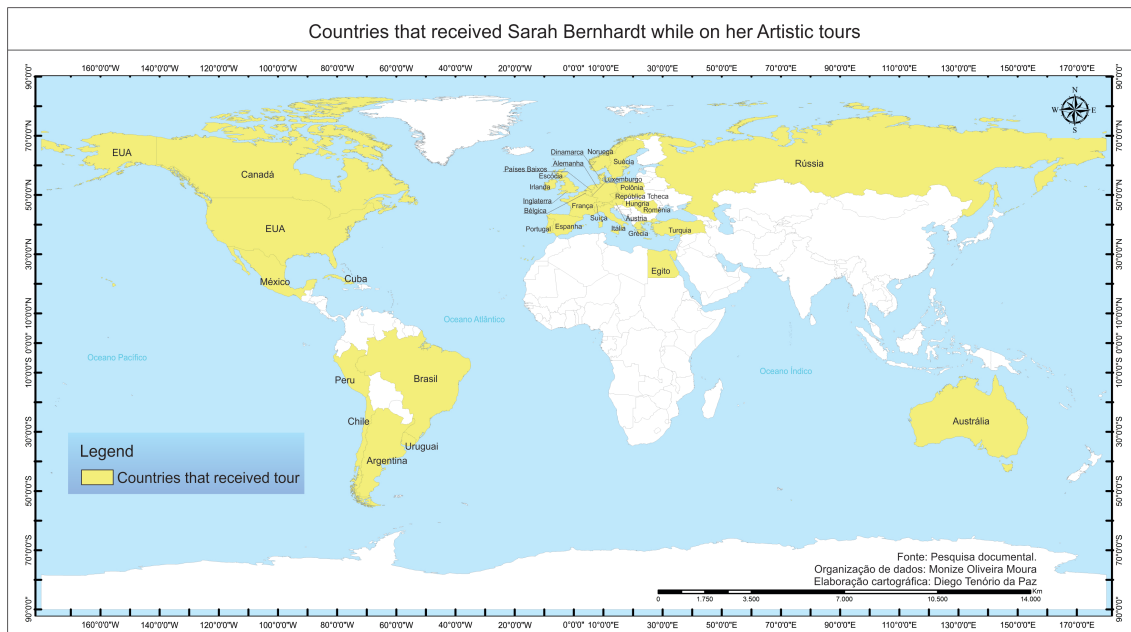
From the point she became solely dependent on her acting paychecks, Sarah approached other authors, putting aside notions of a purely literary theatre. All these circumstances made an impact on her stage performance. In this sense, her collaboration with Victorien Sardou was decisive. Beloved by the public, he wrote many roles that were tailor-made for the actress, in grandiose and spectacular stagings. Sometimes, their shows were criticized and accused of being "*à effets*", meaning too easy or feeble, from a "literary" standpoint. Six years after Sarah Bernhardt's departure from the *Comédie-Française*, Sarcey reaffirmed his disappointment:

I quietly lament over the time when she was a living harmony, when everything in her – the gestures, the voice, the performance – was fused into a gracious ensemble, when she was modern, while remaining classical; but what is the point of complaining? We must accept Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt as did the tours in the provinces, the travels abroad and Sardou, this great enchanter, who is the first culprit.¹⁴

The actress, however, seeking to overcome such criticisms, alternated her theatrical performances between spectacular presentations and renowned literary plays. Alongside the heroines of Sardou and reruns of big hits, she also performed plays written in dramatic verse, as those would always be complimented from the artistic point of view.

Within the context of an independent career, touring was a decisive factor. Sarah's many trips abroad demonstrate not only a willingness to conquer new audiences, but also the need to ensure the necessary income to maintain her expensive life in Paris. Examine all the years of her career, and it will become clear that touring turned into a structural element in her work, as the performances encompassed an increasingly larger number of

destinations, especially during its first period (1880-1893). Beyond that, it is fair to say that, despite the management of her own theatre, Sarah Bernhardt never ceased touring abroad in favour of devoting herself exclusively to the Parisian audience. Indeed, her independent career was characterized by her many tours, especially in European countries. Even if those trips were short, their almost annual regularity seems to show that Sarah Bernhardt built her sphere of influence and work relations beyond Parisian frontiers.



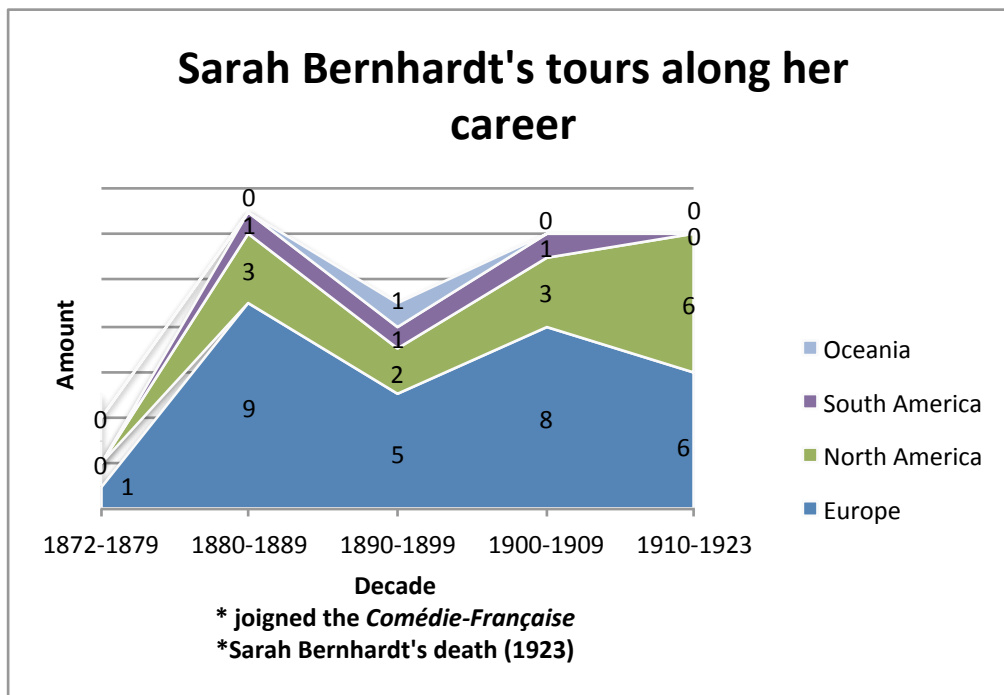
Map showing the countries in which Sarah Bernhardt toured.

Likewise, the frequency of her visits to North America seems to indicate her "internationalization" as an actress. Sarah stayed for long periods in the United States, particularly at the end of her career, where she performed not only in theatres but also in improvised spaces.¹⁵

In addition to anglophone spectators, other audiences were also essential to the strategy of her international career as a *vedette*. Indeed, her tours encompassed a large number of countries whose importance was not negligible. In this context, Latin America emerged as an attractive space for artists of the nineteenth century, despite the long travel time from Europe and even the risk of contracting diseases.¹⁶ From the 1850s onward, despite lacking the touring infrastructure available in the United States, countries like Brazil started to seem interesting to foreign managers and tour producers. Due to its recent economic development and to urban and technological transformations, Brazil's main cities, especially its capital at that time, not only had theatres for welcoming big artists, but also offered a potential audience.¹⁷

Indeed, similarly to what happened in some European capitals (although to a lesser degree), Rio de Janeiro had also witnessed a transformation of its urban and cultural space. Clearly, in the course of the nineteenth century, a kind of entertainment industry assembled itself specifically in the country's capital. With the opening of entertainment venues and new forms of recreation, in addition to the influx of foreign companies and

plays, theatre, as a business, also imposed itself in Rio de Janeiro – and, to a lesser extent, also in other urban centres of Brazil.



French artists, in particular, found in the Brazilian capital a very fertile and welcoming ground, and this was mostly due to the accentuated Francophilia that characterized the local intellectual and economic elites. Indeed, to Brazilian artists and theatre critics, France and the French theatre represented some sort of model to be followed for the construction of Brazilian national theatre.¹⁸ More than its theatre, French culture itself fascinated the Brazilian elite,¹⁹ dazzled by the modernity that Paris symbolized – "the theatrical capital of the nineteenth century", as Christophe Charle²⁰ called it.

2. "She comes to us as Sarah Bernhardt and comes to us as France". The 1886 tour

By the time she held her first tour in Brazil, Sarah Bernhardt had already travelled to many other countries, including the United States and Canada, between 1880 and 1881. First of all, it is necessary to note that Sarah Bernhardt was not the first *vedette* to visit Rio de Janeiro, then capital of the country, and São Paulo, a city undergoing economic development at the time (thanks, mainly, to the thriving coffee industry of the late nineteenth century). It is true that, by the time the French actress's tour arrived in Brazil, these cities already figured in the itinerary of other greatly renowned artists, such as Adelaide Ristori and Eleonora Duse.²¹ However, regarding the French theatrical presence in the country, the *Divine's* tour may be considered a landmark event, for Sarah Bernhardt's theatrical company was considered to be the most important and respected act to have ever visited the nation. So, on the one hand, her visit contributed significantly to the consolidation of the principles of the *star system*,²² namely the cult of celebrity,

given that, by this point in time, Sarah was one of the most important media stars of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the 1886 tour constituted the first direct encounter between the local public and the great French theatrical repertoire.²³

Furthermore, as mentioned above, in addition to the Francophile culture that was being intensely nurtured by the Brazilian elite of that period, the theatre performed by Sarah Bernhardt, the "daughter" of *Comédie-Française*, the most important French theatre, was perceived as a kind of model for artists and local authors. Because of that, Sarah Bernhardt's tour acquired a unique importance. On May 27, 1886, the important politician and journalist Joaquim Nabuco published in one of the most distinguished newspapers of the time a long welcoming article addressed to the French actress, notably evoking the importance of the occasion for the country.

We, however, will praise her twice: because she comes to us as Sarah Bernhardt and comes to us as France. For the first time in our history, we have the honour to welcome French glory in our country. The actress [...] is the ambassador of the French spirit in its most elevated character. She represents the pinnacle of that nation's theatre, [France] being the only nation in our time to have a theatre, and the only nation to have in its theatre a tradition, a school, an education.

This is the art that Sarah Bernhardt comes to present us with its most perfect model, and we owe her a debt of gratitude, for thus allowing our people to see the original of the great French creations, of which they had only seen pale copies.²⁴

Already familiar to hearing stories about the *vedette*, of both her talent and personal life, the Brazilian elite would finally see the greatest French star *with their own eyes*. Indeed, if Sarah's first tour in Brazil was a landmark, it was not unprecedented at all. The repertoire staged by the artist was already, to a great extent, widely known to the audience, thanks to translations, adaptations, and also tours by other companies performing the same plays.

Besides, the press, in general, had long been helping to publicize the artist's fame in Brazil, spreading rumours regarding her personal life or her work while still a member in the *Comédie-Française*, and even publishing lithographs featuring the artist.

The supposed lack of originality, far from driving away the French actress's audience, was not a deterrent factor to the success of her first tour. On the contrary, by announcing the coming of Sarah Bernhardt years before, the press created a favourable environment to welcome the actress in Rio de Janeiro.

The internationally publicized image of the woman and the artist, printed in postcards and newspapers, helped to create a place for Sarah Bernhardt in the imagination of her potential Brazilian audience. These mediatic and artistic flows, regarding both Sarah Bernhardt and her repertoire, acted, therefore, in the sense defined by Arjun Appadurai for the concept of mediascapes: "providing a large and complex repertoire of images and narratives to viewers throughout the world."²⁵ In fact, the circulation of newspapers was crucial for the success of the tours undertaken by the French celebrity, also because they helped to form an audience capable of understanding her performances.

After all, the transatlantic circulation of theatre reviews in France favoured the assimilation, by the Brazilian intellectual elite, of the principal theatrical ideas trending in Paris. That being the case, Joaquim Nabuco declared, in his welcoming article for Sarah Bernhardt, a response to the Parisian critic Jules Lemaître:



Announcement published in the newspaper A Gazeta de Notícias about the performance of Fédora, by Victorien Sardou, in Rio de Janeiro, by the company of the Portuguese playwright Furtado Coelho, on July 10, 1884, two years prior to the first performance of the same show by Sarah Bernhardt in Brazil.

[...] A French critic reminded her that she left for countries lacking art and literature, where the audience appreciates the talent according to the price of the seats, and demanded – prescribing, in other words – that, upon her return to Paris, she should not leave behind anything of hers to these barbarians. Venerators of French talent admire it enough to forgive this weakness in some writers, that is, believing Paris is the world's entire thinking matter. [...] In Brazil, the great artist will certainly not meet the critics of her "premières", but will meet the type of audience that makes great actors: the audience that understands them.

During her tour, she will see more wealth in the audiences of Buenos Aires, more aristocracy in those of Santiago, more Parisian imitation in those of Havana; therefore, nowhere will she find, besides an audience so passionate about theatre, a minority that holds so much of the French talent. She may debut as such, certain that in this country she is still in her own country's intellectual territory. Nowhere else will she better attest to the accuracy of the verse so often heard on stage – *Tout homme a deux pays: le sien et puis la France*.²⁶

As noted by Joaquim Nabuco, Sarah Bernhardt's passage through Brazil was actually part of a broader itinerary, which included several cities of South and Central America, besides the United States and Canada, according to the following map.

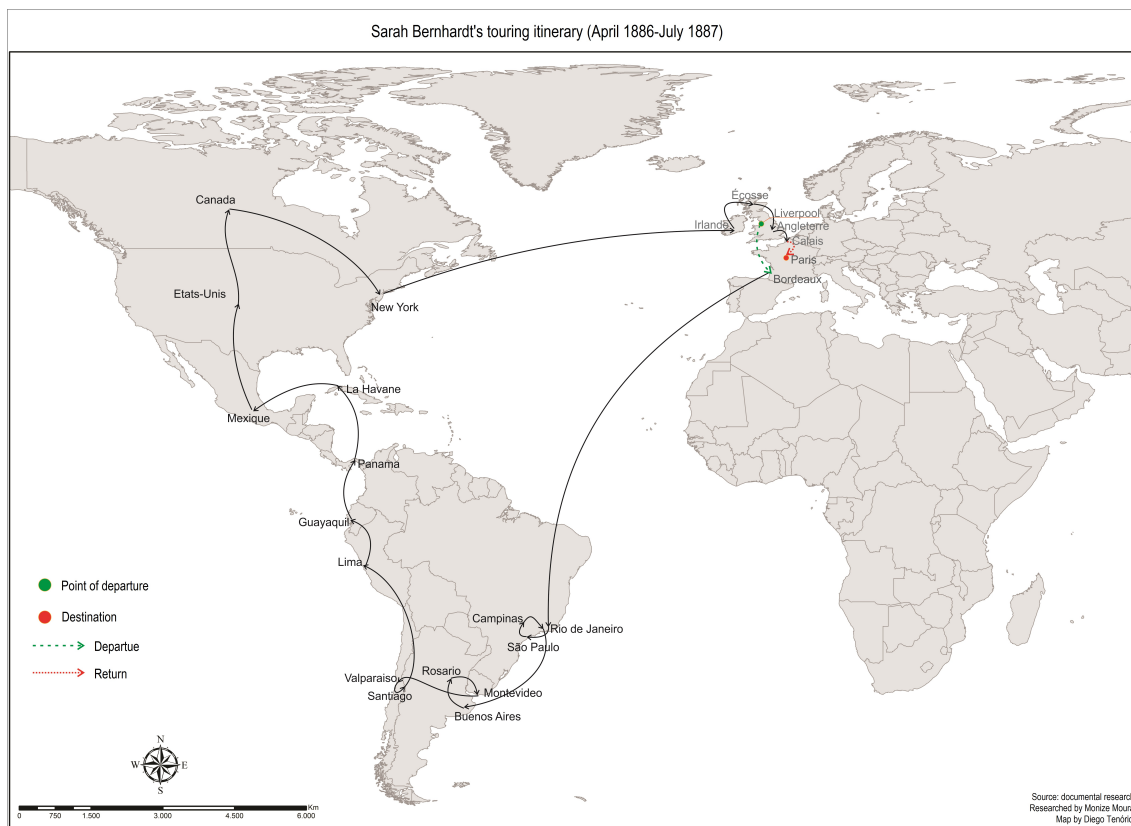
In this sense, integrating the route travelled by the celebrated artist was, for the Brazilian intellectual, something to feel proud about. The occasion also served as an important confirmation: the identification of the elite with French culture and their

desire to definitively integrate the *space* through which the main world stars would transit. On account of this, for Joaquim Nabuco, Sarah Bernhardt's performance in Brazil was just as important as the positive reception that should be offered to her. After all, to the Brazilian Francophile elite, the 1886 tour was a matter of showing to the "*centre of the world*", Paris, that Rio de Janeiro was not the capital of a country of barbarians or enriched savages. On the contrary, in this city, Sarah Bernhardt would feel comfortable, almost as if she was in France, at least on an intellectual level, given that the Brazilian people – at least its elite, having been educated in French – had incorporated the values and the literature of their guest's country. Therefore, far from the exotic or wild imaginary, the Brazilian elite had a double identity, according to Nabuco: it belonged to Brazil, due to a geographical circumstance, but equally to France, due to its intellectual foundation. This was the reason why, the author ensured, the Brazilian audience *would understand* Sarah Bernhardt, and, through her, the French spirit itself.



Lithograph with the image of Sarah Bernhardt, published in Brazil in 1882.²⁷

For a young country²⁸ far from the centre of western culture epitomized by London and Paris, Sarah Bernhardt's visit was just like the great sports competitions of today, if I may dare to make this comparison:²⁹



Map of Sarah Bernhardt's touring itinerary between 1886 and 1887.

the echoes of events being broadcast all over the international media and putting the country that is hosting the competitions under the spotlight. It was, and that is what Nabuco's words single out, a moment when the *World's Eye*, or the *centre of the world*, would turn to the periphery, to Brazil. And this was not all. For him, the occasion of the tour turned Rio de Janeiro into the very centre of the world: In this moment, the first of 'French theatres' is not *House of Molière*, it is *São Pedro de Alcântara theatre*".

Thus, the presence of Sarah Bernhardt in Brazil acquired a symbolic meaning that exceeded the individual dimension of the artist's success. The honourable artist, according to Nabuco, was coming to Brazil as Sarah Bernhardt, but also representing France. This way, going to the theatre to watch her plays was having the possibility to go to Paris, or as if France itself came to Brazil, incarnated by the actress.

The honourable actress would have the power, through her presence, of elevating the country to the same status as the great *civilized* nations:

[...] Paris, London, Saint Petersburg, New York, all these great capitals tried to exceed each other in the admiration that was given to them. [...] In Brazil, as in all places, Sarah Bernhardt finds the uniformity of her celebrity. Nature has changed; the buffered sun of the north was succeeded by the burning sun of the tropics, but the meridian of glory is always over her head, the road she walks is the same in Rio de Janeiro and in Moscow: it is the triumphal road that the

artistic royalties of our century find anywhere fantasy takes them, embroidered by the eternal human crowd, which seems to be another, but is always the same.³⁰

According to Nabuco's logic, Sarah Bernhardt's visit would be a decisive event because it would somehow mark the entrance of the country into the circle of nations used to receiving great artistic personalities. It is interesting to see the same reasoning in Australia, on the occasion of the actress's first tour of the country. According to Fraser:

Australians, in the lead-up to Federation, were desperately seeking recognition as a unique and significant nation and Sarah's visit was seen as an element of this; to the *Age* it was 'a compliment paid by her to the taste and judgement of Australian audiences; her coming marks the progress we have made in wealth, and perhaps in culture... the favourites of our kinsfolk in the northern hemisphere are beginning to reckon Australia amongst the countries which count'. The *Argus* agreed that 'her advent marks an epoch in the dramatic annals of Australia' and that it 'is precisely by our appreciation in such matters that we proclaim our intellectual fellowship or otherwise with the rest of thinking world... for while we have had several who rank in the front rank, this is the first opportunity of welcoming one who is incomparably the greatest in her own branch of art, whose sole supremacy is unquestioned by followers of her own calling, and whose queenship is universally acknowledged.³¹

Joaquim Nabuco, similarly to the Australian newspaper, thought that Sarah Bernhardt's visit would include Rio de Janeiro in the ranks of other important capitals, such as Paris, London, Saint Petersburg, New York and Moscow – that is, inside a "*Civilization*" network: "the triumphal road that the artistic royalties of our century find anywhere fantasy takes them".

The image of the *road* employed by Nabuco evokes quite convincingly the process of building a global space in the nineteenth century, more precisely in relation to the role played by theatre in this phenomenon. In other words, the path taken by great artists would inevitably outline a sketch of a common space, *Civilization*. Built through a selective process, this *Civilization* constituted then a kind of community that shared western values. This explains the observation made by Nabuco: "all the great capitals tried to outdo each other in the admiration that was given to them". Well, if Sarah was praised everywhere she went, this did not happen only because the audiences yielded to her stage presence or even because they deeply understood the roles performed by her, but because applauding Sarah Bernhardt (even without understanding a single word in French) had become a kind of commonplace. So, glorifying the artist already anointed by the French and English press was also to state a belonging to a community of readers and viewers: to be part of the "eternal human crowd, which seems to be another, but is always the same". In other words, more than understanding the language, or the *génie français*, what these viewers and readers had in common was the culture of a manner of theatrical production where the *star system* was one of the main ingredients.

In this sense, the international enthusiasm for Sarah Bernhardt is also explained by common social, economic, and urban changes, albeit at different levels, occurring in the different countries visited by her. In order to admire the actress, it was necessary to know the basic vocabulary that would allow an understanding of her: the culture of *stars*, the *star system*, this being the result of an increasingly consolidated urban culture, notably in major European cities. Therefore, admiring Sarah Bernhardt also meant sharing the

values of an urban culture associated with progress that transcended the limits of Francophilia. In summary: it was a question of being modern in the sense observed by Portuguese writer Eça de Queiroz, in 1880.

Little by little, the word becomes a falsification of the Boulevard and Regent Street. And the model of both cities is so invasive that, the more a race loses its originality and gets lost under the French or British standards, the more it considers itself civilized and worthy of applause by the *Times*.³²

Note that, when I speak of Sarah Bernhardt's potential Brazilian spectators, I refer to a very small portion of the local sphere, which was the intellectual and economic elite, mainly located in major Brazilian cities. The international theatrical routes were selective, for select translocal audiences. The desire, by a portion of the Brazilian elite, to be modern and also part of the global imaginary, also responded to the interest of breaking away from the rest of the population, mestizo or black, referring to the old colonial past. Certainly, the theatre of Sarah Bernhardt travelled and was propagated, spreading reception and production codes that became internationalized, but this does not mean that it was a democratic process. Quite the opposite, by the way, as these global and local cross-overs resulted from a series of disputes, true cultural battles, reminding us of the writings of Edward W. Said³³ about centre-suburb clashes, from which the "Brazilian national identity" was forged.

3. The reception of Sarah Bernhardt's great performances in Brazil during the 1893 tour

The development of an urban culture, technological processes, and the press *boom*, through the circulation of newspapers, were some of the main factors that enabled the multiplication of artistic tours. This new reality, developed throughout the nineteenth century, which concerned the construction of a global imaginary space, has, without a doubt, strongly influenced the artistic creation of the time – be it with regard to the performance of travelling actors, or the exhibition of the spectacles, or even concerning the very dramaturgical writings of certain authors, who saw their plays travelling the world through tours or adaptations and translations to other languages. The example of Victorien Sardou, author of great success in Paris during the late nineteenth century, is, in this sense, emblematic. When Sarah left the *Comédie-Française* to pursue an independent career, he became one of Sarah Bernhardt's most important contributors, having written plays tailored specially for her,³⁴ which ensured several triumphs in the French capital.³⁵

It is curious to notice that, although he was a revered author, who frequented the French dramaturgical elite and had his plays performed in renowned theatres of Paris, Sardou was, as mentioned above, repeatedly targeted with harsh criticism for the dramaturgical quality of his plays, some of them accused of being "export commodities". For example, Francisque Sarcey has made the following comment with regard to *La Tosca*, which premiered in 1887, in Paris:

[...] International audiences are crazy about beautiful spectacles. It was necessary that the action of the play, being fast and brutal, served as a pretext for luxurious performances; and that these actions were not to be essential to the drama, so it was not impossible, if necessary, to suppress, reduce, or modify them. (...) It was, in fact, necessary that *La Tosca* achieved success in Paris, if we wanted it to triumph in New York or Valparaiso. It was necessary then, when writing simultaneously for spectators from both worlds, to appear to think only about the Parisians, in order to avoid irritating the crowds ³⁶.

Reacting to the marketization of Parisian theatre, Sarcey largely attributed to the tours the cause of the dramaturgical choices made by Sardou, who, according to him, transformed his dramas into fragile plays, made more for the eyes than for the ears. Consequently, this would have influenced the very form of acting of Sarah Bernhardt: the attention of non-Francophone audiences demanded, to Sarcey, not only an agile theatre (full of action), but also a visual theatre (where pantomime was fundamental).

I mean, besides her qualities in declamation, for which she was duly recognized, it was necessary for Sarah Bernhardt, who was known for her "golden voice", to attribute a preponderant role to gesture in her way of acting. In summary, moving between several cities, the actress had to shape her work for a multiple, more heterogeneous and transnational audience.

In 1890, the reception to *Cléopâtre*, by V. Sardou and Emile Moreau, in Paris, was no different. The play, which had been long awaited by the press, was greatly celebrated for the beauty of its scenarios and costumes, but heavily criticized from a dramaturgical standpoint.

Noël and Stoullig refrained from commenting on the subject: "Not much, in fact, it is best to say nothing: this is the drama devoid of action which was exhibited in Porte-Saint-Martin."³⁷ Sarcey, in an even harsher tone, compared the play to a pseudo-historical magic show, strongly criticizing the Sarah-Sardou partnership:

And *Cléopâtre* is nothing but a pseudo-historic magic show, with a pinch of bravado in each sketch for the prima donna. When Victorien Sardou works for Sarah Bernhardt, he reduces his ambitions. He resigns himself to simply be the one to put his talent at one's disposal. He sculpts scenes for her, taken from a certain theme, in which she can perform alone or with the assistance of some insignificant colleague. When she is abroad on a tour, she puts these scenes in her luggage, this is possible, along with her costumes and the ones used by the extras; then, she adds whatever can be carried from the scenarios by train or ship, and advances above the waters.³⁸

To Sarcey, therefore, the association between Sarah Bernhardt and Sardou did not provide good results, *Cléopâtre* being a play with no great literary merit, written especially for the actress's tours (scenes that did not demand other extremely talented supporting actors, and that were also easy to adapt on tours). Likewise, Gilbert Augustin-Thierry considered the play an "export commodity" and its performances in Paris to be nothing but an advertising strategy on a global scale:

Oh, I know, the new play belongs to this special genre that the Parisian trade calls "export commodity". In no less than two months, this *Cléopâtre* will have emigrated (it has already been sold for *a great deal of money*), it will exhibit its beauties, which are still a secret to us, to the eyes of the most gullible citizens of Chicago [...] Without a doubt, in Paris, the authors just

wanted to perform a preview, and perhaps ask us to help them by advertising the play. Imagine how guaranteed the triumph for *Cléopâtre's* *barnum* would be if, from New York to San Francisco, if, in every corner of the "young nation", an advertisement would be seen: "The extraordinary French hit! The wonder of wonders of the ancient world! CLEOPATRA!!!... SERPENT VIVANT!!!..." Yes, it has to be said, I am afraid that our audience will lend itself to this combination.³⁹ In fact, to the eyes of most Parisian critics, the magnificence of the scenarios and costumes, the presence of music, of a *corps de ballet* and extras did not ensure the quality of the recent production of the Sarah-Sardou partnership back then. From their perspective, the elements that made *Cléopâtre* a drama à *grand spectacle*, in addition to experimenting with peculiarities borrowed from variety shows (e.g. the presence of a live serpent on stage), had the main purpose of capturing the admiration of the foreign audience, as the play would soon tour outside of France. In fact, in early 1890, after performing several tours in Europe, two tours in North America and one in South America, Sarah Bernhardt prepared for another long enterprise. In her first world tour, between 1891 and 1893, the actress visited numerous locations and clearly exhibited a repertoire that was broader than the one staged in the previous decade.⁴⁰

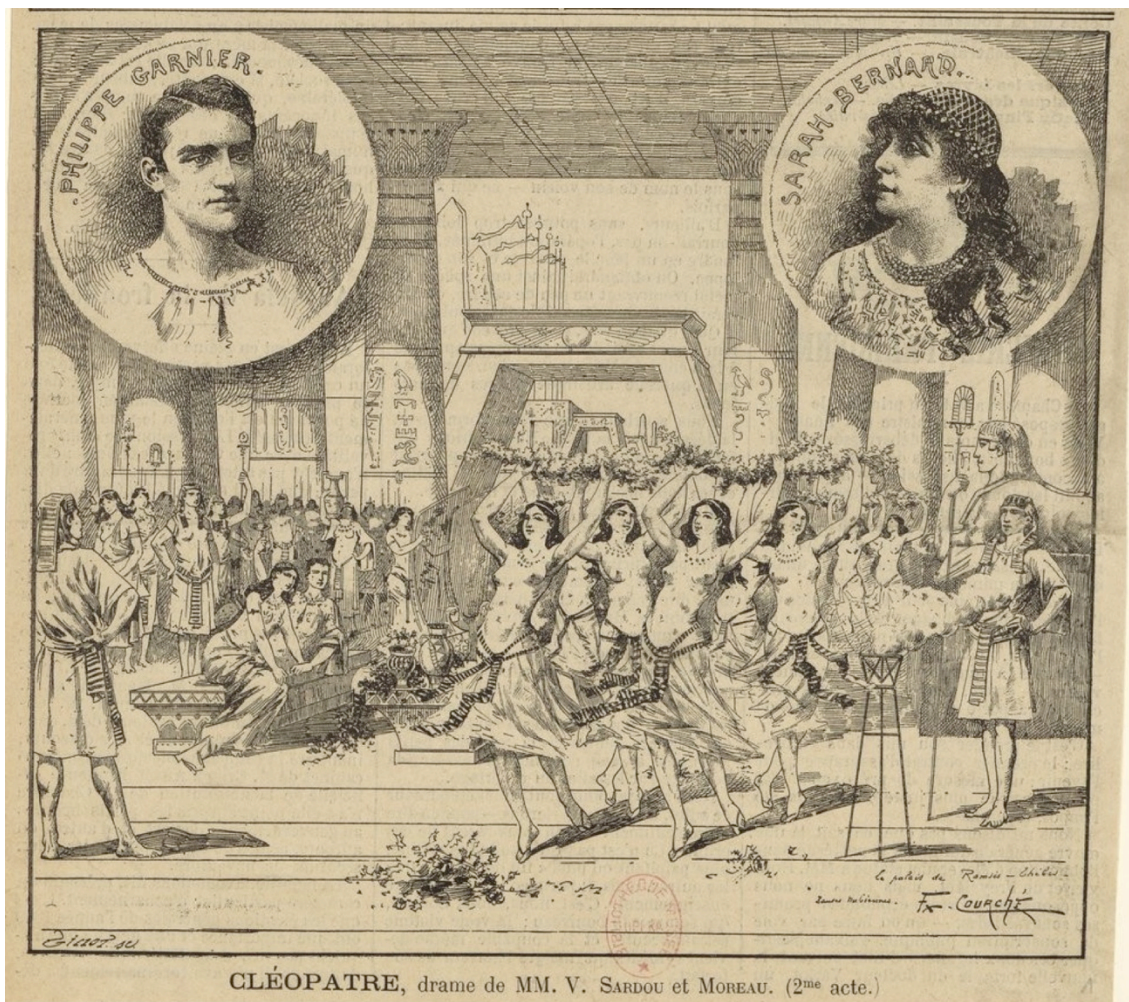
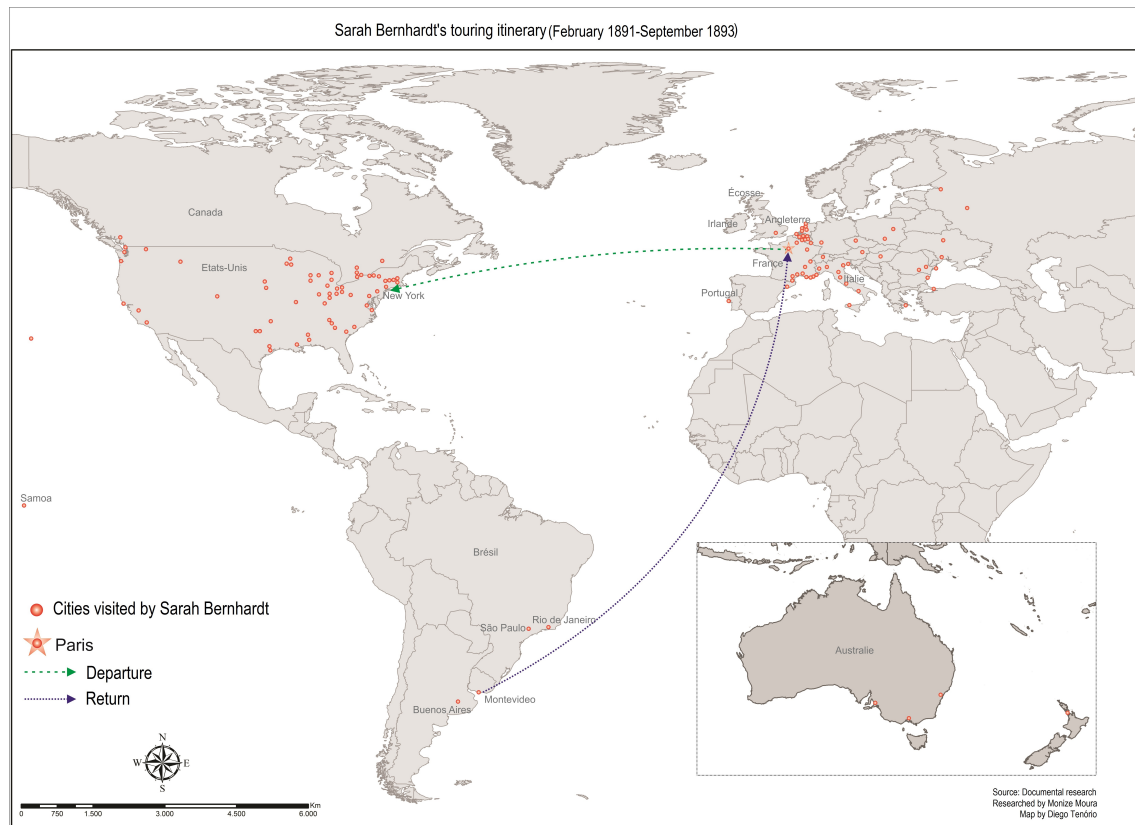


Illustration of the show *Cléopâtre* published in the newspaper *Le Petit Messager parisien* on November 4th, 1890.



Map of Sarah Bernhardt's touring itinerary between 1891 and 1893.

Considering the length of travel and the vast itinerary mapped out for the tour, it was natural that Sarah Bernhardt tried to offer a varied repertoire that was capable of conquering non-Francophone audiences. It is curious, in this sense, to notice that plays written by Sardou, indeed, occupied an important place in the 1893 Brazilian tour. In fact, Sarah Bernhardt premiered both in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo playing the role of Floria Tosca, in *La Tosca*. It seems evident that, for Brazilian audiences, the awe of spectacle was a major attraction and that a triumph in Paris would guarantee, at the least, international interest in the play. This way, the analysis made by Parisian critics, who were very skeptical about the artistic quality of the tours, seemed to be correct in the sense of realizing that the internationalization of Sarah Bernhardt's career had started to influence her new creations, Sardou's writing, and even the performance of the actress.

However, a closer examination of the response to the performances abroad raises questions that could complicate, if not contradict, the assessment made by Parisian critics of the influence of the opinion of foreign audiences over Sarah Bernhardt's work. To begin with, a very basic question about the play *Cleopâtre* attracts my attention. How much of this majestic show – composed of dance routines, numerous extras moving on stage, rich costumes, and panoramic scenarios that required efficient theatrical machinery – was actually performed during the 1891-1893 world tour?

The examination of the *Cleopâtre* poster, produced for the Rio de Janeiro tour in 1893, raises important questions in this sense.⁴¹ Notice that the poster tries to list the six sketches that compose the show: *La barque de Cleopâtre*, *Une salle du palais à Memphis*, *Le messenger*, *Actium*, *Marc Antoine et Cleopâtre* and *La mort de Cleopâtre*.

Besides providing a sort of libretto of the play for the uninformed viewer, the featured pictures clearly show the extent to which they were supposed to seduce the Brazilian audience, just as they had seduced the Parisians.⁴² It is also interesting to notice that the advertisement for *Cléopâtre* sought to make it clear that the spectacle would be exhibited with the same costumes and accessories used at the *Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin*, where the play had premiered. Furthermore, according to the poster, the spectacle would present new scenarios, this time designed by the Italian Rovescalli, from Milan.⁴³ The change to the original scenario, should not, in principle, have harmed the quality of the show, given that Rovescalli was, then, well known for his work in the *Scala* theatre, in Milan. Thus, his name's presence on the poster implied that the *mise-en-scène* showcased in Brazil would be well taken care of, including new scenarios, instead of pieces that had been worn out by the coming and going of the numerous tours performed by Sarah Bernhardt between 1891 and 1893. However, according to the critics below, this does not seem to have been the case.

With regard to *Cléopâtre* in Rio de Janeiro, *Jornal do Brazil* observed, for example, the richness of the costumes, while stating the mediocrity of the scenarios:

Sarah Bernhardt, admirably seconded by her aesthetic identity [...] dazzled the audience with her *toilettes*, in which precious stones and golden gem necklaces sparkled [...] Even if the scenarios were not sufficiently sumptuous as they should be, in order to somehow portray the land of pharaohs, they had a local appearance just the same.⁴⁴

The critic Chrispiniano da Fonseca was even more severe when considering that *Cléopâtre's* *mise-en-scène* in Brazil was below the level of the spectacle created by Sardou and Moreau, performed in Paris.

The *mise-en-scène* of *Cleopatra* in Rio de Janeiro is, as said before, not enough; scenarios are not as they should be, the furniture is often apologizing to the audience for appearing on stage like this – what a bizarre irony of destiny! –, creating the setting for a time when this furniture had not yet been invented. It happens, for example, with the bed where Cleopatra hides, which was used in the *Dama das Camélias* the day before yesterday, and even the drapery was the same.⁴⁵

Considering the opinion of Chrispiniano regarding the visual aspects of the rendition of Sardou and Moreau's drama in Brazil, it is appropriate to question whether the information announced on the poster of *Cléopâtre* concerning new scenarios, created by the Italian Rovescalli, was really plausible or if, on the contrary, it was simply false publicity created by Sarah Bernhardt's entrepreneurs.⁴⁶ It is also interesting that Chrispiniano da Fonseca's article has more mentions regarding, for instance, the beauty of the music that was composed for the production by Xavier Leroux – without, however, evoking the way it had been performed in Rio de Janeiro: "To the sound of zithers, gong-tubas, and tambourines that played a very typical and cut-up composition by Leroux, Clopatra arrives deliciously in her faded blue robes".⁴⁷ Whether Leroux's music was actually performed by anyone or not is, as yet, unknown. Were there musicians especially hired for the tour, just like the actors? Or was it a Brazilian orchestra, recruited for the occasion, that played the music for the production, or even one that belonged to the local

theatre (and that being, perhaps, such a common practice in those days that journalists such as Chrispiniano did not consider mentioning this in their critiques)?⁴⁸

It is, therefore, curious that the shows that had been, according to the Parisian verdict, created *for the foreigners*, disappointed so many Brazilian journalists, especially with regard to aesthetic essence of the enactment. Instead of being captured by the beauty of the scenarios, the attention of Brazilian critics had been focused mainly on Sarah Bernhardt's performance, her delivery of the text, using her vocal attributes, as well as her dramatic pauses.⁴⁹

Ultimately, much more than the sumptuousness of the scenery adapted to her tours, it was Sarah Bernhardt's stage presence – beautifully wrapped in dazzling costumes – that brought in Brazilian audiences and favoured the good reception of Sardou's plays as performed by the actress in Brazil. Of course, it is difficult to find out exactly to what extent these critical reviews expressed the opinion of Brazilian spectators of that time.

However – considering that newspapers did not mention the *mise-en-scène* and, in fact, that there were numerous negative allusions to the mediocrity of the scenery –, it seems very unlikely that the visual aspects of the 1893 performances appealed to Brazilian audiences, except for the costumes donned by the *vedette* (which were widely discussed in the newspapers).

Thus, one must question whether it was indeed appropriate to designate such plays as "export commodities"; due to the importance they would have given to the aesthetic nature of the performance or the rhythm of the action, seeking to seduce the foreign spectator. Regarding these elements of the production, it seems fair to say that such plays pleased the Parisians more than the Brazilians. The French could watch the imposing original performances, while non-Francophone audiences proved to be disappointed by the mediocrity of scenarios and the scene accessories adapted for tours.

As we have seen, it is evident that Sarah Bernhardt's tours influenced the writing of an author like Sardou and that he probably conceived some of his plays with a view to them being "exported" from France. However, this was a much subtler process. For example, the aforementioned *La Tosca*: a captivating play of intrigue that should be performed as a dynamic show, able to lead the average spectator – who is not necessarily attentive to the complexities of the text or to its literary aspects – by the hand. However, perhaps plot comprehension was not that essential when trying to grab the attention of non-Francophone audiences, especially because there were no handouts or booklets with the translated text.⁵⁰

Evidently, the plot summaries published by newspapers were very important in this regard, as they unravelled each drama's intrigue. However, everything indicates that Brazilian spectators cared less for the rhythm of the show, driven by its chain of actions, than for Sarah Bernhardt's performance in key moments of the play – these were, in fact, already highly anticipated by the audience. Notably, in this sense, the *Diário de Notícias* newspaper published that, during the tour of 1886, most spectators had attended the theatre just for a few moments of the show (those when the great star was onstage), leaving the room at several points of the presentation:

Confident as it is that one only attends the S. Pedro [theatre] to admire the talent and art of Sarah Bernhardt, the audience is not bothered by any missing part of the drama or the comedy; it waits until the last moment and watches only what is deemed worthy; that is, the main scenes, usually the endings of final acts.⁵¹

THEATRO NICO
(TEMPORARIA 1893)
Empreza LUIZ DUCCI
TOURNÉE
SARAH BERNHARDT
Direction M.^{rs} E. Abbey et Maurice Grau
ADMINISTRATEUR GÉNÉRAL: MR. VICTOR ULLMANN

Segunda-feira 19 de Junho de 1893
Terceira recita de assignatura
Primeira e unica representação do afamado drama em 5 actos e 6 quadros de Mrs. Victorien Sardou e Emile Moreau, musica de scene de Mr. Xavier Lerout.

O ultimo grande successo de Pariz
CLEOPATRA
Protogonista **Sarah Bernhardt**

PERSONAGENS

Cleopâtre	Mme. SARAH BERNHARDT.	Marc Antoine	MM. ALBERT DARMONT
Octavie	» Jane Méa.	Kephren	» Rebel.
Charmiane	» Valdey	Demetrius	» Piron.
Iras	» Seylor.	Dellius	» Deneubourg.
Un Esclave	» Durand.	Un Esclave	» Munié.
Olympus	MM. Hems.	Derctas	» Angelo.
Juba	» Cartercau.	Thyrseus	» Decor.
Le Secretaire	» Movel.	Le Gouverneur	» Lemer.
Strepsiade	» Duberry.	Octave	» Deval.
Un officier	» Dinard.	L'intendant	» Libert.
		Le Notable	» Albouy.

Costumes et accessoires du theatre de la porte
Decors nouveaux de Mr. Rovescalli de Milan.

1. ^o Tableau: La barque de Cléopâtre	4. ^o Tableau: A Actium
2. ^o Tableau: Une salle du Palais à Memphis	5. ^o Tableau: Marc Antoine et Cléopâtre
3. ^o Tableau: Le messenger	6. ^o Tableau: La mort de Cléopâtre

PREÇOS AVULSOS

Camarotes de 1.^o ordem com 5 entradas	60000	Cadeiras de 2.^a classe	7000
Camarotes de 2.^o ordem com 5 entradas	50000	Galeria numerada de 1.^a fila	4000
Cadeiras de 1.^a classe	14000	Bita de 2.^a e 3.^a fila	3000
Varandas	14000	Entrada de camarote s.	4000

Os bilhetes a venda no escriptorio da empresa na Rua do Ouvidor n. 107 e na bilheteria do theatre depois das cinco horas da tarde.
Principia ás 8 1/4.

Typ., rua Sete de Setembro 171

Poster of Cléopâtre, Sarah's tour in Brazil in 1893.
Source: Museu dos Teatros, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

OL O.R.V. PR. 5. 4990

PACIFIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

LIVERPOOL AND VALPARAISO LINE.

2

R.M.S. Potosi

Arrived at Rio de Janeiro on 14th June 1893.

LIST OF PASSENGERS.

No.			Name.	From.	For.
1st.	2nd.	3rd.			
1			Mrs. Sarah Bernhardt	Bordeaux	Rio
2			Mrs. Gaudet & Child		
2			M. Ullac Rebel		
2			Deval		
2			Munie		
2			Mulle		
2			Muns		
3			Ullman & Child		
2			Thomas		
1			M. Angelo		
1			Deschamps		
1			Ducor		
1			Dumont		
1			Albony		
1			Quibery		
1			Pion		
1			Carteau		
1			Dumont		
1			Pesse		
1			Louis		
1			Punde		
1			Javelle		
1			Fernand		
1			Mrs. Lecore		
1			M. J. Bayen	Liverpool	
1			M. P. Magalhães	Paullac	
1			M. H. Leas		
1			M. A. Lasa		
1			M. Fauguet		
30	0		Forward		

List of passengers aboard the Potosi, the ship that brought Sarah Bernhardt's company to Brazil in 1893 (Source: National Archives, Brazil)

Therefore, perhaps these key moments (usually culminating in scenes of death and excitement) better represent the main concessions to the tastes of foreign audiences made by Sardou in his writing, emphasizing the great *vedette*, eager to make her display her greatest dramatic qualities. However, there is no doubt that this feature also appealed to the taste of average viewers in Paris, which was also undeniably determined by the *star system*.

By classifying these plays as "export commodities", critics such as Francisque Sarcey tried to solely blame foreign viewers for the supposed crisis in French drama, which had become more and more commercial and directed towards excessive spectacularization. However, the matter needs to be reassessed, because theatre commodification

constituted a global process, linked to the growth of cities and the development of capitalism. In other words, the phenomenon of these tours in the nineteenth century is, logically, intrinsic to the commodification of dramatic art, which does not necessarily mean that this event was its cause.

Conclusion

First, by suggesting that the work of Sarah Bernhardt had to adapt to the desires of a transnational audience, and second, by highlighting some aspects of the reception of the actress in Brazil, my argument is that theatrical tours in the nineteenth century produced, or helped to produce, new ways of understanding and perceiving the global space. Seeking to analyze the travels of Sarah Bernhardt in Brazil as part of a broader process of cultural globalization, I sought to emphasize how her reception in Brazil was conducted and prepared by both artistic and mediatic flows.



Sarah Bernhardt in the role of Cléopâtre. Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

These crucially influenced the way Brazilian audiences were able to assimilate the artist's presence. Furthermore, by suggesting that Sarah Bernhardt's career passed through a process of internationalization, I wanted to point out that her tours, in addition to connecting Brazilian audiences to Paris, also acted as a bridge connecting Brazil to another space, a global space. Like Benedict Anderson (1993), who refers to the importance of published periodicals to the possibility of conceiving an idea of a nation,

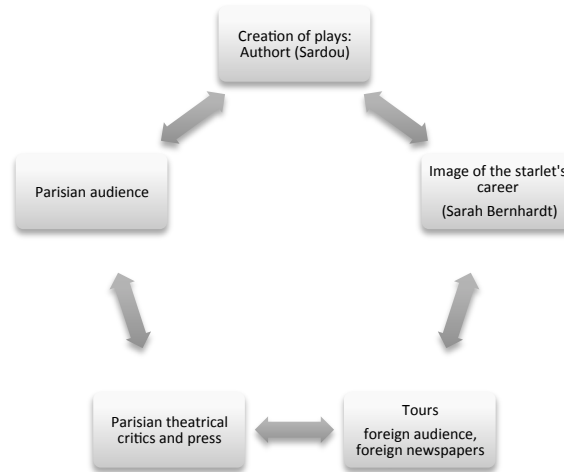
we can assert that the tours were decisive to the conception of a global sphere, where many nation-states and their people would be connected. If the theatre that was brought by Sarah Bernhardt in her luggage ended up creating a certain community of viewers at every place she visited – "an eternal human crowd", according to Joaquim Nabuco –, such a community, on the other hand, created an imagined space for itself.

Yet, once again, it is necessary to nuance this assessment more critically regarding the connections established by her world tours. Which cities integrated the theatre routes, and, after all, who was it that constituted the "human crowd", that was able to see Sarah Bernhardt, if not the main urban centres and their elites? What other routes formed by less developed urban centres – travel itineraries of less prestigious artists, perhaps – have helped build other imaginary bridges that connected different locations?⁵² Such questions may reveal the selectivity of the nineteenth century globalization process, by investigating the relations of the inner city and the periphery or the socioeconomic profile of Sarah's audience members. This aspect would allow us to have a deeper understanding of the multiple (re)appropriations and updates on Sarah Bernhardt in Brazil and in different parts of the world.

In addition to this, as I tried to point out, if cultural globalization caused Brazilian theatre to be strongly influenced by the French theatre, then, inversely, French drama and the work of its artists, following the example of Sarah Bernhardt, were certainly transformed by theatrical circulation. In this sense, it is pertinent to ask whether it would be more appropriate to speak in terms of internationalization, instead of the diffusion of Parisian theatre in the nineteenth century. The word *diffusion* gives the idea of propagation or distribution abroad of finished products (the plays). It refers to a one-sided view of the cultural exchange process, considering spectators outside of Paris as simple receivers of French dramatic works. On the contrary, the word *internationalization* presupposes a bilateral or reciprocal process, where theatre, while on tour, was transformed by the attention of this other audience, to which it presented itself.

As a matter of fact, the example of Sarah Bernhardt seems to show that the theatrical production system of the nineteenth century in Paris was created in a kind of multilateral relationship between the authors, *vedettes*, and audiences from several countries, including France, besides the theatrical press of the main urban centres.

If, on the one hand, Sardou certainly considered the foreign audience when creating the texts written for Sarah Bernhardt, on the other hand, it was fundamental that his shows were successful in Paris, in order to triumph outside of France. After being scrutinized by the Parisian audience, the success of the great spectacles and *pièce à effets* in the artistic capital of Europe ensured the curiosity of the foreign audience – even if the expectations of the latter regarding the staging of plays ended up being, in reality, frustrated by the performance conditions of tours, which, in Brazil's case, were often very poor.



Press circulation performed an essential role in building up the expectations of the Brazilian audience. Intellectuals from the tropics not only commented on Parisian theatrical life, but also largely followed recurring discussions in Paris, including those on the commodification of Sarah Bernhardt, who had chosen to perform export-article plays, at the expense of a more literary theatre. The production of shows in Paris seemed, therefore, to be submitted to a complex game between the Parisian audience's aesthetic sense of taste and the expectations of foreign audiences, this being greatly determined by critics and its echoes published by local newspapers – which, in turn, were constantly in a dialogue with the French capital's dramatic criticism. This chain of relations seems fundamental, in order to understand the internationalization process of the audience's sense of taste in the context of the configuration of mass culture during the nineteenth century.

Finally, this reflection reveals that it is necessary to be very cautious regarding the use of newspapers as a historical analysis tool for these tours. As a *constitutive dimension* of theatrical life in the nineteenth century, newspapers, beyond being informative historical sources, were also true producers of discourse, of a conversation about the tours that helped to forge the idea of a global space and, in the case of the French press, ideas about the French theatre practiced outside its borders. Far from being an impartial comment, it was a point of view that tended to glorify France as a producer of world-famous plays and artists – however, attributing to tours and the exportation of French theatre the status of being causes of a supposed deterioration of its artistic quality, due to their commercial conception of dramatic art. Would this partiality of the media be only a characteristic of a past age? As discourse producers, just like the intellectuals and critics of the nineteenth century that were mentioned, we should also contrast the examples that were studied with our own academic practice. As noted by Christopher Balme and Nic Leonhardt:

[...] the question is rather to know we can design research questions that go beyond just tracing movement (although this must also be done) and perhaps see circulation as a cultural form or structure *sui generis*.⁵³

Lastly, it is appropriate to ask this question: to what extent does the lack of study about the phenomenon of tours (and, more specifically, about theatrical spectacles and artists that have toured) also characterize a symptom of the same dichotomy of past days, that which segregated, on the one hand, a “pure” theatre – the one made in Paris “for the

Parisians", within France's national borders –, and, on the other, an export-theatre, a bastard-theatre.

Endnotes

- 1 Even though the English term "globalization" and the French "mondialisation" have been initially used to describe issues concerning the geopolitics of the twentieth century (wars and conflicts), the process they imply dates from before this period, as observed by Christian Grataloup in his book on the geohistory of "mondialisation". Furthermore, Serge Gruzinski identifies the process of "mondialisation" in a period that dates well before the twentieth century, noting the importance of the Great Discoveries of the sixteenth century; cf. Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde: histoire d'une mondialisation* (Paris: La Martinière, 2004). In relation to the history of globalization/ "mondialisation", several authors (François Chaubet among them) emphasize the importance of the nineteenth century to this process; cf. François Chaubet, *La mondialisation culturelle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2013). From the theatrical standpoint, Christopher Balme insists on the importance of the transformations of that period to the creation of theatrical trade routes; cf. Christopher Balme and Nic Leonhardt, "Introduction: Theatrical trade routes", *Journal of Global Theatre History* 1 (2016): 1-9, accessed July 30, 2016, <https://gthj.ub.uni-muenchen.de/issue/view/300>.
- 2 Associated with the most important theatre in Paris, the Comédie-Française, the Conservatoire offered its students a noble gateway to a theatrical career. Considered to be the best drama school in the world at the time of Sarah Bernhardt's admission, by 1860, the Conservatoire was certainly well known for its tradition. See Anne-Martin Fugier, *Comédiennes. Les actrices en France au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 2008), 29.
- 3 The Odéon, an official national theatre, had great prestige with the public and theatre critics. However, as noted by Jean-Claude Yon, this theatre was, throughout the nineteenth century, "unfrequented and mocked, because of its relatively distant geographical location" (the theatre was located on the left bank of the Seine, while most venues were on the other side of the river). Nonetheless, during the 1860s, the Odéon was still a distinguished theatre, just like the Comédie-Française, designed to spread the great French dramatic repertoire. According to the *Almanach de l'étranger à Paris* of 1867, the Odéon was a "theatre frequented particularly by students" and featured "plays of the old French theatre repertoire, comedies and tragedies in prose and verse." See *Almanach de l'étranger à Paris: guide pratique pour 1867* (Paris: Amyot Éditeur, 1867).
- 4 While vaudeville and operetta abounded in private theatres in Paris, the *Comédie-Française* (the capital's first theatre) projected itself as the last bastion of the great French repertoire. Existing since 1680, this official theatre was, indeed, a place of acclamation to authors and performers.
- 5 *Comédie-Française, Théâtre-Français* or *Maison de Molière*.
- 6 The *Porte Sain-Martin* (1883-1893), *Renaissance* (1893-1899) and *Sarah-Bernhardt* (1899-1923) theatres.
- 7 Adelina Patti (1843-1919), an Italian soprano, and Kristina Nilsson (1843-1921), a Swedish soprano.
- 8 Virginie Déjazet (1798-1875), a French actress, also owned a theatre named after her, between 1859 and 1870; Hugues Bouffé (1800-1888), a French actor; Pierre Chéri Lafont (1797-1873), a French actor; Etienne Arnal (1794-1872), a French actor.
- 9 Francisque Sarcey, "Chronique théâtrale", *Le Temps*, April 26, 1880.
- 10 In 1887, the businessman Maurice Strakosch observed: "If Europe eventually loses its appetite for the arts, we would certainly find it in America, where, year after year, art is making amazing progress. As evidence, we have the reception to artists who went searching for fortune in the New World [...] it is them (the Americans) that allow entrepreneurs to pay wages never seen before by stars in Europe." Maurice Strakosch, *Souvenirs d'un imprésario* (Paris: Paul Ollendorf Éditeur, 1887), 198.
- 11 Rachel Félix, better known as Mademoiselle Rachel (1821-1858), was the most important French actress of her time. At the age of 34, she toured the United States – but her trip, which had been expected to be hugely profitable, was a failure. The artist did not achieve financial success and contracted a disease that would lead to her death three years later. See Sylvie Chevalley, *Rachel en Amérique* (Paris: Société d'histoire du théâtre, 1957).
- 12 In this sense, it is important to note that, during her first trip to the United States, Sarah Bernhardt made her first performance of certain roles that would, thereafter, become part of her repertoire through her entire career. Adrienne Lecouvreur and Froufrou, characters in eponymous plays who had already been immortalized by the performances of Rachel and Aimé Desclée, were also interpreted by Sarah Bernhardt in London, May 1880, during her first tour as an independent actress. To further understand the evolution of Sarah Bernhardt's career in light of the characters she played, we recommend the work

- of Ernest Pronier on her career, which provides an exhaustive list of the creations she brought to life. See Ernest Pronier, *Sarah Bernhardt, une vie au théâtre* (Genève: Alex Jullien, 1942).
- 13 If we take into account the testimony of Marie Colombier, a member of Bernhardt's company, about their first US tour, we can imagine to what extent advertising (a fundamental requirement for the dynamics of the North American society of the spectacle) became an indispensable tool for Sarah's success in the United States: "The whole American way of life is based on advertising; so, in terms of ads and posters, this country is undoubtedly the greatest of all. [...] It is understandable that merchants have sought to use the buzz associated with Sarah's name for the sake of their small businesses. All of the time, the people around the diva were sought by traders of all kinds, who expected to associate their brands to her fame. Thanks to this, Jarrett [Sarah's manager in that tour] and some others made good business." Marie Colombier, *Les Voyages de Sarah Bernhardt en Amérique* (Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion Éditeurs, 1887).
 - 14 Francisque Sarcey, "La Chronique Théâtrale", *Le Temps*, April 5, 1886.
 - 15 During the tour of 1905, American businessmen had formed a kind of *trust* against foreign troupes, which in turn prevented Sarah Bernhardt from renting a theatre for her performances. That being the case, the artist and her manager then set up a circus tent to accommodate their presentations.
 - 16 Yellow fever, for instance, was very common in Brazil at that time.
 - 17 For more on the flourishing theatrical market in Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century, see Fernando Mencarelli, "A voz e a partitura: teatro musical, industria e diversidade cultural no Rio de Janeiro (1868-1908)" (PhD diss., University of Campinas, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, 2003).
 - 18 This question, however, must be investigated thoroughly. After all, those were also the times of a rising nationalist sentiment in Brazil. Despite the country's pronounced Francophilia, Brazilians – especially the educated elite – were not easily fascinated by any French play or theatre company. Overall, the classics of French drama were regarded as a model, in addition to theatre that was considered more literary. Spectacular manifestations were often criticized in the country. On this subject, see Monize Oliveira Moura, "Sarah Bernhardt vue du Brésil (1886-1905)" (PhD diss., University of Versailles Saint Quentin en Yvelines and University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, 2015).
 - 19 For more about Francophilia in Brazil, see Jeffrey D. Needell, *Belle époque tropical: sociedade e cultura de elite no Rio de Janeiro na virada do século*, trans. Celso Nogueira (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993).
 - 20 Christophe Charle, *Théâtres en capitales. Naissance de la société du spectacle à Paris, Berlin, Londres et Vienne* (Paris, Albin Michel, 2008), 309-358.
 - 21 Celebrated artists of the Italian dramatic repertoire, Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906) visited Brazil in 1869 and 1873, and Eleonora Duse (1858-1924) travelled to the country in 1885 and 1907.
 - 22 For more on this topic, see Catherine Authier, "La naissance de la star féminine sous le Second Empire", in *Les spectacles sous le Second Empire*, ed. Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010). The emergence of the star system is also the subject of Christophe Charle's work on the theatre in capital cities in the nineteenth century; cf. Christophe Charle, *Théâtre en capitales: naissance de la société du spectacle à Paris, Berlin, Londres et Vienne* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008).
 - 23 The term "theatrical repertoire" also denotes the French authors that enjoyed literary prestige at that time.
 - 24 Joaquim Nabuco, "Sarah Bernhardt", *O Paiz*, May 27, 1886.
 - 25 Arjun Appadurai, *Dimensões culturais da globalização: an modernidade sem peias*, trans. Telma Costa (Lisboa: Editorial Teorema, 2004), 299.
 - 26 Joaquim Nabuco, "Sarah Bernhardt", *O Paiz*, May 27, 1886.
 - 27 *Almanach Illustrado do Correio da Europa*, 1882.
 - 28 Brazil had just declared its independence from Portugal, in 1822.
 - 29 This comparison seems appropriate, given the recent Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. The rowdy booing of foreign athletes from some Brazilian spectators – which was highly controversial and occurred especially during untraditional sport events (to the Brazilian audience, at least) – was harshly criticized by the French press, and this brings to mind the debates on the tours of Sarah Bernhardt found in nineteenth-century French newspapers. See, for instance, this article on the French periodical *L'Équipe* ("Are Brazilian audiences disrespectful?"): "Jeux olympiques: le public brésilien est-il irrespectueux?", *L'Équipe*, August 16, 2016, accessed October 5, 2016, http://www.lequipe.fr/Tous_sports/Actualites/Jeux-olympiques-le-public-bresilien-est-il-irrespectueux/717787. The behavior of Brazilian spectators that watched the actress perform was often condemned by the French press, particularly because their reactions were considered exaggerated. Furthermore, the displays of disapproval toward the shows (especially during the tour of 1886) were discussed by Brazilian intellectuals, who wanted to "educate" the public to watch foreign artists. For more on Sarah Bernhardt's controversial reception in Brazil, see Monize Oliveira Moura, "Sarah Bernhardt vue du Brésil (1886-1905)" (PhD diss., University of Versailles Saint Quentin en Yvelines and University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, 2015).
 - 30 Joaquim Nabuco, "Sarah Bernhardt", *O Paiz*, May 27, 1886.

- 31 Corille Fraser, *Come to dazzle: Sarah Bernhardt's Australian Tour* (Canberra: Currency Press/National Library of Australia, 1998), 54.
- 32 "Le monde devient peu à peu une contrefaçon universelle du Boulevard et de Regent Street. Et le modèle des deux villes est si envahissant que, plus une race perd son originalité et se perd sous la forme française ou britannique, plus elle se considère elle-même civilisée et méritant les applaudissements du *Times*". Eça de Queiroz, *Lettres de Paris*, French translation (Paris: Minos la Différence, 2006), 18-19 (original text from June 6th, 1880) – mentioned in Christophe Charle, *Théâtres en capitales. Naissance de la société du spectacle à Paris, Berlin, Londres et Vienne* (Paris, Albin Michel, 2008), 277.
- 33 In *Cultura e Imperialismo*, Said puts forward an elaborate argument for connecting geographic domination processes to cultural domination strategies. According to the author: "As none of us is outside or beyond geography, in this same manner, none of us is totally absent from the fight for geography. This fight is complex and interesting because it is not restricted to soldiers and artillery, it also includes ideas, shapes, images and representations"; cf. Edward W. Said, *Cultura e Imperialismo*, trans. Denise Bottmann (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2011), 39.
- 34 For instance, *Fédora* (1882), *Théodora* (1884), *La Tosca* (1887), or even *Cléopâtre* (1890).
- 35 The partnership with the playwright was, in fact, decisive to Sarah Bernhardt's trajectory. Thanks to Sardou's quill, the actress was able to perform big spectacular shows and historic dramas that defined her career. An heir of Eugène Scribe, who popularized the maxim "*pièce bien faite*", Sardou dominated Parisian theatres in the second half of the nineteenth century. He wrote comedies and historical plays, and his most successful works were clearly influenced by Romanticism and melodrama.
- 36 Francisque Sarcey, "Cronique théâtrale", *Le Temps*, November 28, 1887.
- 37 "On en a tant dit sur Cléopâtre, faisait-on spirituellement remarquer, que nous ne voyons guère ce qui restera à dire à MM. Sardou et Moreau. – Bien peu de chose, en effet, autant dire rien : voilà bien ce qu'est le drame sans action qu'on nous a donné à la Porte-Saint-Martin." Édouard Noël and Edmond Stoullig, *Annales du théâtre et de la musique* (Paris: Librairie Paul Olledorff, 1890), 295.
- 38 "Et *Cléopâtre* n'est à vrai dire qu'une féerie, pseudo-historique, avec un morceau de bravoure à chaque tableau pour la prima donna. Quand M. Victorien Sardou travaille pour Mme Sarah Bernhardt, il réduit ses ambitions. Il se résigne à n'être que le metteur en œuvre de son génie. Il lui taille, dans un sujet donné, des scènes qu'elle peut jouer toute seule ou aidée de quelques comparses insignifiants. Ces scènes, il lui est loisible, quand elle part pour une tournée à l'étranger, de les mettre dans sa malle avec ses toilettes les costumes des figurants ; elle y ajoute ce que peut emporter de décors en train ou en navire, et vogue galère." Francisque Sarcey, "Chronique théâtrale", *Le Temps*, October 27, 1890.
- 39 The term "*barnum*" most likely refers to the Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810-1891), an American businessman known for the commercial success of his circus and curiosities spectacles. Gilbert Augustin-Therry, unidentified newspaper. Newspaper clipping, part of a document available at Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Arts du Spectacle): "Sarah Bernhardt dans *Cléopâtre*", drame de Victorien Sardou, documents iconographiques". IFN-8438758.
- 40 During her visit to Brazil, in the last year of the tour, in addition to the nine works presented in 1886 – *Théodora* (Sardou), *Phèdre* (Racine), *Le Passant* (François Coppée), *Le Maître des forges* (Georges Ohnet), *Jean-Marie* (André Theuriet), *Froufrou* (Meilhac and Halévy), *Fédora* (Sardou), *La Dame aux Camélias* (Dumas fils), and *Adrienne Lecouvreur* (Scribe) –, Sarah Bernhardt's repertoire in 1893 included five new plays: *La Tosca* (Sardou), *Jeanne D'Arc* (Jules Barbier), *Francillon* (Dumas fils), *La Dame de Chaland* (Giacosa), and *Cléopâtre* (Sardou and Moreau).
- 41 I do not want to dwell too much on a poster element, even though it is quite revealing of the *star system* and offers a glimpse into the workings of touring productions: the emphasis given to the name of Sarah Bernhardt, which becomes more or just as important as the play title. Also, I will not discuss at length how the poster features the names of businessmen, an aspect that could be further investigated to cast some light on this venture, a nineteenth-century partnership between a company established in Brazil, another in France, and a third company, in the USA, responsible for the whole tour in the Americas. My interest here is to observe how information about the staging of *Cléopâtre* was handled in the poster for Brazilian audiences.
- 42 Indeed, the importance assigned to the aesthetic aspects of Sarah Bernhardt's shows could also be observed in her other trips. In the program for the European tour of 1888-1889, directed by J. Goudstikker, the same information is given about *La Tosca*, described as "a drama in five acts and six tableaux", whose titles were also numerically listed and placed before the name of the actors.
- 43 Antonio Rovescalli (1864-1936), a scenery designer for many Italian operas in the nineteenth century, in Teatro alla Scala; cf. Alain Duault, *Dictionnaire amoureux de l'Opéra* (Paris: Plon, 2012).
- 44 "Theatros e concertos", *Jornal do Brazil*, June 21, 1893.
- 45 Chrispiniano da Fonseca, "Artes e Artistas", *O Paiz*, June 20, 1893.
- 46 In this context, notice how businessman Marcel Karsenty described the tours organized by his uncle Raphael Karsenty in the late nineteenth century: "We would carry the costumes and accessories that were impossible to find on site. Our technicians would check-in the luggage containing the bulkier objects, but that was expensive. To avoid these costs, we would carry as many things as we could. One

can imagine how comfortable it is to get off the train with your arms loaded with packages, then rushing to reach the hotel, only to return to the theatre with all haste!" Marcel Karsenty, *Les promeneurs de rêves* (Paris: Editions Ramsay, 1985), 24.

- "Nous transportions costumes et accessoires introuvables sur place. Nos régisseurs faisaient enregistrer les objets les plus encombrants mais cela coûtait cher. Pour éviter des frais on prenait avec soi le maximum de choses. On imagine comme il pouvait être confortable de débarquer du train les bras chargés de paquets, de se précipiter à l'hôtel pour revenir en toute hâte au théâtre !" Given Sarah Bernhardt's worldwide itinerary, especially during the tour of 1891-1893, it must have been very difficult to transport all the costumes, sets and stage accessories to so many different countries. Her company probably had to select the most essential and transportable material. For this reason, the Brazilian theatrical criticism of the time praised the quality of the costumes worn by the actors, but complained that the scenery and accessories were rented locally, which impaired the verisimilitude of the enactments.
- 47 Chrispiniano da Fonseca, "Artes e Artistas", *O Paiz*, June 20, 1893.
- 48 It seems logical that, if there ever were musicians accompanying the performances staged in Brazil, they had not come from Paris along with Sarah Bernhardt's company. If we examine the list of passengers who embarked with her in Bordeaux aboard the Potosi ship heading to Rio de Janeiro, there are only thirty people listed – among them, twenty-three actors (most of them male, some accompanied by their wives), the rehearsal director (*régisseur général*) Victor Merle, and the entrepreneur Victor Ulmann, who travelled along his wife and son. On the topic of whether there were stage musicians accompanying the tours or not, author Corille Fraser, in her book about Sarah Bernhardt's tour in Australia in 1891, mentions a hand-written document discovered in the National Library of Australia. According to this document, very enlightening on some practical aspects of Bernhardt's travels, the Australian businessmen Williamson and Garner, in addition to renting the theatres, were also responsible for local costs such as hiring an orchestra: " [...] W&G to find theatres and local expenses including orchestra, printing and advertising, full working staff of carpenters, property men, limelight men, ushers, money and check takers, Bill posting and distributing, and all ordinary working expenses, together with all stock scenery and properties in theatres" (Fraser 1998, 61). This gives us reason to believe that, for the Brazilian tour, local musicians must have been hired in a similar manner.
- 49 For instance, see this positive review of *Theodora*, also written by Victorien Sardou in 1893, from the newspaper *A Gazeta de Notícias*: "Sardou was not trying to deliver a historical play. He was going for a dramatic theatrical work that could move the audiences and, at the same time, leave them dazzled by the wonders of an opulent *mise-en-scène*. These wonders were a little dim at the *Lyrice*, where the drama was performed two days ago; still, the scenery and the costumes give us some idea about what to expect from spectacles of such magnitude"; cf. "Theatros e...", *Gazeta de Notícias*, July 3, 1893.
- 50 It must be said that my research did not find many references to the use of these booklets during performances, although there were mentions of Brazilian bookstores selling translations of some foreign plays at the time.
- 51 "Foyer", *Diário de Notícias*, June 6, 1886.
- 52 In this sense, it is interesting to notice the emergence of other touring itineraries for local artists in the country. According to reports from that time, big international stars only visited Brazil's main urban centres, whereas many Brazilian theatrical companies from the capital were used to touring the smaller cities within the country. Therefore, it should be questioned, for instance, if this parallel movement could have helped the establishment of other theatrical trade routes, or whether it would be possible or not to identify, within this local process, the same issues about centre and periphery discussed in the chronic of Joaquim Nabuco.
- 53 Christopher Balme and Nic Leonhardt, "Introduction: Theatrical trade routes", *Journal of Global Theatre History*, 1 (2016): 5. Accessed July 30, 2016, <https://gthj.ub.uni-muenchen.de/issue/view/300>.

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