

Shakespeare across Cultures

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This section of the Platform “Dislocazioni transnazionali/ Transnational Dislocation” is devoted to collecting data about the construction of Shakespeare as a cultural phenomenon in different geographical contexts and historical periods.

As a disciplinary field, “Shakespeare” has long ago ceased to be limited to the study of Renaissance England or to scholarship focused on the U.K. and the English speaking countries; by all accounts, it is now a worldwide cultural phenomenon, multifarious, multilingual, and multilayered in its meanings. The geographical dimension of Shakespeare’s dissemination inevitably entails a cultural dimension resulting from the interaction of different spaces and agents of creativity.

In each individual country where this process has been observed, critics have tended to identify a series of successive stages. The first concerns the encounter with the ‘original’ Shakespearean texts, be they authoritative printed texts, promptbooks, or acting versions. This stage ultimately defines the way in which each culture has been exposed to “Shakespeare” as a foreign, complex, cultural sign. [see e.g. the hypertext *Nineteenth-century Promptbooks of Shakespeare’s HAMLET*, edited by Edoardo Giovanni Carlotti, Elisabetta Cori and Carla Dente, and *Shakespeare in print, Shakespeare re-written* (Carla Dente)].

At a second stage, the interaction between ‘Shakespeare’ and local cultures happens at the level, for example, of performances, translations and critical studies. Such works have marked the penetration and the consequent contamination of the past with the different local cultures [see in particular the relevant sections in the databases *Traduzioni e mediazioni* (Enrico Di Pastena) and they are mainly made and directed to selected groups of scholars or audiences.

Finally, critics have pointed to the stage in which ‘Shakespeare’ becomes integral to a given local culture, whether through theatre practice, critical studies and/or the activities of public institutions. The institutionalization of the cultural traffic with Shakespeare’s texts, that is, the incorporation of texts and practical theatre experiences into school and university curricula, but also, more unexpectedly, the exploitation of the social as well as creative “uses” of Shakespeare as in the context of prison theatre, for example, mark a further development [see the database *Shakespeare sulle scene italiane* (Beatrice Montorfano) on this digital platform].

When put together, the mass of creative interventions, traditional literary scholarship (World Literary Criticism, Philology, Translation Studies), theatre productions and media reproductions convey a compelling image of Shakespeare’s veritable “deflagration” in our time. This unique cultural phenomenon can only be accounted for through an integrated analysis of the extreme variety of processes and practices whereby Shakespeare’s texts – in the widest possible meaning of the word – have become

dislocated in space and time, turning Shakespeare into an ideal case study to investigate and illuminate the workings of transnational cultural production.