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Cultural Studies in Italy and the Influence of Gramsci, Catholic Culture and the Birmingham School (CCCS)

Emiliana De Blasio

University of Molise, Italy

Michele Sorice

University of Rome "la Sapienza", Italy

University of Lugano, Switzerland

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II ABSTRACT

Our paper will examine the rise in academic importance of Italian cultural studies in the 1990s. While the influence of British cultural studies and, in particular, translated works of the Birmingham School and other key theorists have played a crucial role in shaping the Italian academic subject, our paper will link the rise of Italian cultural studies to key theorists and schools of Italian thought. Early media and communication departments in Italy relied heavily on literary traditions (texts) often associated with Benedetto Croce's liberal-inspired theories as well as more sociological approaches usually derived from US-led functionalist communications research. Our paper will argue that Italian academics only grasped the importance of the Cultural Studies in the early 1990s, re-discovering the key role of Antonio Gramsci's thought in the theoretical and research traditions espoused by Stuart Hall, the CCCS and other key academics. In Italy, cultural studies has often been associated with those media studies departments examining "audience studies". These departments have tended to be situated within Catholic institutions or universities influenced by church teachings. Our paper will therefore argue that cultural studies in Italy has been shaped by its British counterpart, allowing Italian academics, predominantly within Catholic institutions, to reintroduce ideas associated with the key Italian Communist theorist of the 20th Century. In this paper, we will explain this Italian peculiarity considering also the most recent directions in audience research in Italy.

Biographical Notes

Emiliana De Blasio is lecturer at the University of Molise, Campobasso, where she teaches Media Sociology, and at the Università Salesiana, Rome, where she has a chair of New Technologies and Communication. She teaches also at Link University of Malta. She is author of several books published in Italy about audience research and cinema.

Michele Sorice is Professor of Media Research at the University of Rome "la Sapienza" and of Media Studies at the University of Lugano, Switzerland. Visiting Professor at Pontifical Gregorian University, he has also held lectureships in some European universities. Director of Centre for Media and Cultural Studies (Crisc-Cmcs) of the University of Rome, he is author/editor of several books published in Italy and abroad.

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