



Dr. Marco Pellitteri: "'Il drago e la Saetta': Japanese pop culture through manga and anime - an Italian perspective" (10. Juni 2009)

An important place in the transnational circulation of cultural industries' products is taken by the entrance of Japanese pop culture in the European contexts. Considering this «graft», the globalization dynamics of mass culture addressed to the young audiences have taken place in Europe during two phases. Figuratively speaking, Marco Pellitteri calls them the Dragon and the Dazzle. The first has taken place between 1975 and 1995, the second from 1995 to nowadays. What distinguishes them are the modalities of inlet and consumption/re-elaboration of Japanese themes and products in the most receptive countries: Italy, France, Spain, more recently Germany and, across the ocean, the USA. Both consumption and re-elaboration have been and are often very creative: cosplay, fanzines, websites, amateur subtitles (fansubs), fanfiction, etc. Especially in Italy, the now three generations of manga/anime fans always have begun and begin their «careers» of J-fans already during childhood. It happened for the first time with the first generation of anime fans, in the late 1970's: the first active practice derived from anime and manga was the change of the graphic styles in kids' artistic private activity, influenced by the following of the tv anime's design, whose first mediatic boom was in Italy and Spain between 1976 and 1978. During the Dragon and Dazzle phases, several cultural models have risen from Japan's social and mediatic apparatuses. The lecture enquires the three most distinguishing of these cultural models, seen from a European point of view. Pellitteri names them as machine, infant and mutation. Spread mostly through comics, animated cartoons and toys, they have been consumed by young people in Europe and in Italy, the country which, together with France, has had the most central role and position in the West regarding this dynamic, and where Japanese imagination has been received and acknowledged not only by the young audiences, but also by politicians, television programmers, public opinion, educators, and even comics and cartoons authors. Lastly, the growing cultural influence of Japan, linked in a certain measure to the vast agreement for its manga, anime and video games among worldwide audiences, prompts political and mediologic questions linked to the complex identity/ies of Japan and to the increasingly important role of this country in international relations. The lecture provides an overlook on this wide process of transcultural transit and re-elaboration.

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