

writer' (p. xix) the book was born from a genuine impulse to influence urban policies and public discussions about the future of Rome through progressive and innovative scholarship. The immediate success and impact of the book was certainly a sign of hope. Yet, over the following decades and through its many editions, the book has gradually come to critically address in detail the substantial failure of most attempts to regulate the growth of Rome (and one might say of Italy itself) through rational, organic, democratic and progressive means. Interestingly, this criticism becomes particularly apparent when Insolera and Berdini consider the plans, achievements and failures of the *giunte rosse* in the 1970s and 1980s, the centre-left *giunte* in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and even the very recent 'attack on the *soprintendenze*' (p. 407) by the centre-left national governments. The evolution of the book itself provides powerful evidence of the involution of Italy, and illuminates some of the core reasons for Italy's persisting crisis, including the responsibilities of those centre-left parties and local and national governments that, despite many promises, largely failed to promote the modernisation of Rome, and of the whole country.

One of the editors of this edition (Roberto Einaudi, p. xxi) suggests that Insolera himself, before dying, thought the book could be retitled with the addition of a question mark. And 'Modern Rome?' is in fact the title of De Lucia's second last chapter in this volume. The reader will be left wondering what Rome could have been, had its promise of modernity not been so remarkably neglected. Yet what makes Rome unique and beautiful is also its palimpsestic, chaotic, fragmented, cynical, contradictory and iconic character. The book provides an idealistic, detailed and critical analysis of a capital city that failed to embrace not just modern, rational and progressive urban planning, but perhaps modernity itself.

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The Pathologisation of Homosexuality in Fascist Italy: The Case of 'G' by GABRIELLA ROMANO, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, €51.99 (hardback), ISBN 978-3-030-00993-9

The aim of this book is to fill a research 'gap', by providing a 'systematic study' of Italian Fascism's use of 'internment in an asylum as a tool of repression for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) people, as an alternative to confinement on an island, prison or home arrests' (p. 1). Moving from a 'micro-history' – the internment in 1928 of G., a 45-year-old homosexual man born in a small village in Piedmont – the volume highlights, through different kinds of sources but especially medical files, the practice of expulsion from the allegedly 'sane' national 'body' through sanitary detention, of individuals attributed with a homosexual orientation or behaviour.

According to the author, the research gap to which she refers is part of a larger one in the general literature 'on the history of homosexuality in [Fascist] Italy'. Romano identifies 'one of the main reasons' (p. 5) as the fact that 'the Italian legislation' 'reinforces an outdated mentality, rooted in prejudice, that imposes serious limitations to historical research in this and related fields'. She mentions in particular the 'directives contained in two Italian decrees, no. 281 of 1999 ... and no. 196 of 2003' (p. 4). The 'research gap' seems to depend mostly on a lack of interest about the topic by Italian academic institutions and mainstream researchers. In fact, in my opinion these legislative restrictions are likely to be a minor factor that did not prevent access to sources including personal

records such as private letters. Moreover, the scarcity of studies about LGBT people in Italy seems to be more significant with regard to the postwar than the Fascist period. In fact, important studies on the latter have been available for more than a decade. Romano's study sometimes draws on questionable assumptions or interpretations. For example, she claims that Italian 'traditional family values were crumbling under the pressure' of Fascism, without providing evidence for such a strong statement (p. 2). Similarly, she argues that with the 'Nuremberg Trials ... [Germany] condemned its past, drew a line in the sand and admitted its terrible mistakes' (p. 5), not considering that the trials were organised by the Allied occupation authority in Germany, while in the same period, and even in the following years, German public opinion in general reacted in a very ambiguous way to the question of punishment of Nazi crimes.

Romano has investigated medical files from the period 1922–31 in the Collegno mental health hospital archives, in particular those from hospitals in the Turin area. She consulted all admission files for the years 1922 (the year of Fascism's rise to power in Italy) and 1926 (a year 'generally considered a turning point, as the dictatorship starting implementing its most fierce repression', p. 3). She also looked at all the files from the beginning of G.'s internment in Collegno (November 1928) to the day when he was sent to the Racconigi psychiatric hospital (September 1930). The author argues that 'homosexuality does not appear to have been a specific concern among Collegno and Turin practitioners at the time ...' and that 'it was presented as a relevant factor when tackling mental and moral degeneracy, but there is no indication that it drew specific attention or cures' (p. 87). Given the subject of the research, some further reflections about this lack of medical concern about homosexuality *per se* could have been profitable. A discussion of the history of emotions and its methodology would have also been appropriate.

The author rightly describes as 'exceptional' G.'s '31-page autobiographical statement'. Written before his internment, Romano retrieved it from G.'s medical file and describes it as 'clearly conceived to be a public document'. In this statement, G., who was educated as a lawyer, accused his brother, who had caused his arrest and subsequent forced hospitalisation for his 'homosexual tendencies'. While the intention of the statement is unclear, its content is very interesting: G. in fact admits being 'homosexual' but denies being a (passive) 'pederast' and at the same time, claims he is not a congenital homosexual, his homosexuality being just a 'deplorable sexual habit' (p. 38). In this regard, as Romano points out, G.'s 'argumentations on his homosexuality are ... crucial to understand a gay man's strategies for survival at the time. Whether he agreed or disagreed with psychiatric theories on homosexuality, he was ready and able to deploy them, in order to escape persecution, isolation, imprisonment or internment' (p. 44). Romano underlines G.'s 'considerable courage and pride', given that his statement contained 'a rather threatening underlying message instead of showing remorse'. As interesting as G.'s success in eventually being released from internment, is the fact that other, less culturally educated LGBT people, suffered very serious consequences from their internment in the same medical institutions and in the same period. Romano gives the example of an 'unmarried farmer' described as a 'delirious impulsive homosexual', interned in 1930 shortly after G., who was one of 100 patients who underwent lobotomy in 1937 (p. 100).

In conclusion, the material analysed is rich and challenging. Romano also depicts with accuracy the international context in which, between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, theories of eugenics and about 'inherited characteristics that would show if an individual had a congenital predisposition to degeneration and crime', such as those of Cesare Lombroso, circulated in Europe. However, the author does not include foreign internment procedures and practices regarding LGBT people and the general repression and persecution of homosexuality in other countries under similar totalitarian regimes. Such a discussion would

have been important to clarify if and why the ‘Italian way’ of pathologising homosexuality followed certain common patterns.

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Sicily on Screen: Essays on the Representation of the Island and its Culture, edited by GIOVANNA SUMMERFIELD, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2020, vii + 290 pp., \$65.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-4766-7648-7

Conceived and edited by Giovanna Summerfield, *Sicily on Screen* offers a range of diverse critical perspectives from international scholars whose contributions provide a timely and multifaceted reflection on how the island of Sicily and its culture have been represented in cinema and television. The volume aims to introduce less well-known material alongside works that have received international acclaim, providing insight into the different ways native and foreign directors have engaged with Sicily as more than a scenic backdrop but rather as an interlocutor of the complex human realities contained within its many narratives.

The essays are divided into two main thematic sections, the first of which explores a range of issues often stereotypically associated with the island through the genres of fiction, satire and documentary. In particular, this section invites us to consider Sicily as an allegorical space of embedded social and cultural conditions that are philosophically and politically transferable to contexts beyond the region. Works analysed and discussed here include Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Teorema* in relation to Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather*, Andrea Camilleri’s *Commissario Montalbano* series, Salvatore Ficarra and Valentino Picone’s comedy *L’Ora legale*, Daniele Ciprì and Franco Maresco’s *Cinico TV*, and De Seta’s canonical documentary studies of peasant life on the island during the 1950s. The second section presents an internationally relevant take on the theme of ‘othering’, juxtaposing the traditional north-versus-south cinematic paradigm with more recent explorations of immigrant, feminist and queer identities. The section opens with a further exploration of *The Godfather*, this time across the entire trilogy, interrogating Coppola’s inclusion of Mascagni’s *Cavalleria rusticana* in the musical score and its encoded essentialism. This is followed by a case study on Sicilian peripherality through the films *Stromboli*, *L’Avventura*, *Il commissario Lo Gatto*, *Panarea* and *A Bigger Splash*, all of which were shot on the Sicilian islands and archipelagos. The intertwining narratives of two women’s experiences of migration and belonging are then discussed through Emanuele Crialesi’s *Terraferma*, which sets the tone for two further essays that explore marginalised female identity and feminine subjectivity through Roberta Torre’s *I baci mai dati*, and the literary and political contributions of Maria Occhipinti and Giuliana Saladino in respectively: *Con quella faccia da straniera. Il viaggio di Maria Occhipinti*, and *Giuliana Saladino. Come scrivere una Donna*, before closing with a final essay on love and desire between women in Donatella Maiorca’s *Viola di mare*.

The essays in the two sections vary not only in theme and linguistic quality but also in the level of critical engagement and analysis. Most notably in the second section, the content seems overly descriptive, leaving less space for critical discussion or analysis, while in other instances the