

Ellen Nerenberg and Matteo Gilebbi's two essays on *Youth* and Nicoletta Marini-Maio's excellent account of Sorrentino's typically idiosyncratic treatment of Berlusconi, *Loro* (2018), each of which prompted me to rethink these films.

Overall, this is an extremely valuable contribution to Sorrentino scholarship that, especially when read in conjunction with Kilbourn's monograph, provides a provocative, wide-ranging and thought-provoking overview of Sorrentino's originality and significance. Moreover, it does not fail to engage with the more controversial and divisive aspects of his work, such as his treatment of gender (addressed in essays by Russell Kilbourn and Nicoletta Marini-Maio) and alleged privileging of style over content (addressed in essays by Lydia Tuan and Michela Barisonzi). The book should be of great interest to anyone concerned with Italian cinema, contemporary Italian culture, or the state of global film and television today. Sorrentino has finally achieved the recognition he deserves within academia and I am sure this exciting new collection will only serve as a spur to further scholarship.

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Storia sociale della televisione in Italia (1954–1969)

by Damiano Garofalo, Venezia, Marsilio Editori, 2018, 172 pp.,
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Emma Barron

University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia
E-Mail: ebar6783@uni.sydney.edu.au

Damiano Garofalo's *Storia sociale della televisione in Italia (1954–1969)* investigates the social and cultural history of Italian state television, from its official launch in 1954, through to mass uptake in the late 1960s. The book examines popular responses to television, and traces the role that programmes, advertisements, and the very act of watching television played in the economic transformation of Italy from 1958 to 1963, and its impact on people's daily lives. Garofalo follows the social shifts and new behaviours as television-viewing changes from a middle-class activity for tens of thousands of viewers, to become in the late 1950s a popular and communal pastime for millions of viewers watching television in public spaces, or at the homes of friends. By the mid-1960s, economic growth helps widespread television ownership, and by the end of the decade, Italy's mass audience of home viewers develops new domestic rituals and ways of experiencing free time. What differentiates the book from other histories of Italian television is Garofalo's focus on the viewers, addressing a significant gap in the field. Garofalo's social history examines the ways in which television entered and transformed family life, using audience data and diaries to investigate its impact.

The book opens with a quote from novelist and commentator Luciano Biancardi, writing in 1968. For Biancardi, television is always 'invited to dine' in Italian family homes, an ever-present and domineering guest. The guest does not eat: rather, it talks and sings, as it fills the family members' heads with ideas, shapes opinions and promotes consumer goods. Garofalo's social history of television studies the gradual arrival of this guest

into the homes of Italian families via public bars, social clubs and the houses of friends. In doing so, he offers an engaging and evidence-rich alternative to Biancardi's apocalyptic vision of television as a malevolent invader. *Storia sociale della televisione in Italia* has four themed chapters. The first, *Televisione pubblica e ritualità collettive* (Public television and collective ritual), explores the responses and behaviours that emerge as individuals and families go to watch television in public places. The second chapter, *Televisione e domesticità* (Television and domesticity) examines the social impact and memories of the arrival of television in the home, including personal accounts of pride, awe, and wonder at this modern marvel, or '*Roba del diavolo!*' (p. 62). The third chapter, *La televisione del 'miracolo'* (Television of the 'miracle') examines the ways that television shaped and was shaped by the economic 'miracle'. Garofalo uses the demographic research of the RAI's opinion service to explore the impact of the increase in family television ownership from 12 per cent in 1958 to 49 per cent in 1965 (p. 85). The fourth chapter, *Televisione e tempo libero* (Television and free time) integrates television into broader mass culture activity. Garofalo uses diaries and audience surveys to examine the changes and continuities brought by television ownership in relation to other cultural practices such as going to the cinema, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and magazines, and attending social clubs.

The book focuses on changes in society, following what the author terms a 'partial' chronological account. This approach allows Garofalo to explore his ideas and offers valuable new perspectives on the social role of television in public spaces, in homes, in consumer habits and as an increasingly important part of daily life. Given this structure, a subject index would have been helpful for readers to find relevant sections on specific personalities, programmes, and important social aspects, such as class or gender and television viewing.

Garofalo's focus on television viewers provides new and important insights into Italian television in the late 1950s and in the 1960s. For example, the chapter on collective viewing reflects not only the excitement of watching television with family and friends, in bars and social clubs, but also the potential for conflict and quarrels. The diaries of Vincenzo Rabito (a labourer from Ragusa who worked as a miner in Germany and returned to Sicily) show that he has nothing but unhappy memories of the ways that television transformed his social club from a convivial sanctuary into a nightmare, as families competed for the best seats, and the distress he felt at the ill-mannered behaviour of his wife as she argues with other families over perceived slights (pp. 43–7). Rabito buys an expensive television set for the home, to avoid the spats and neighbourhood friction created by his wife while watching television and to give her a sense of status and control.

Garofalo's approach is founded on Italy's strong media studies and sociology traditions, coupled with cultural history and evidence-based approaches. His methodology brings quantitative statistical audience data from the RAI's *servizio opinione* research unit together with qualitative personal accounts and reflections from diaries found in the *Archivio diaristico nazionale* (The National Diary Archive). The statistical data map out and explore the scale and times of socio-demographic changes, including breakdowns by class, region and gender, and the diary accounts highlight the memories, delights and disappointments of the social experience of television. With this approach, Garofalo makes an important contribution to media studies and Italian cultural history by examining audiences and social factors in a field dominated by top-down or institutional accounts of Italian television history. Through this methodology the book achieves its ambitious goal of creating an integrated and systematic history of Italian television.