

Mediating Italy in Global Culture
Summer School

Dipartimento delle Arti, Università di Bologna
First edition, 18th-23rd June 2018

Annotated Bibliography

Group 1: Methodologies of circulation, reception, and representation (old and new)

Ferrari, Chiara and Michela Ardizzoni. "Introduction. Italian Media between the Local and the Global," in *Beyond Monopoly: Globalization and Contemporary Italian Media*, edited by Michela Ardizzoni and Chiara Ferrari. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010.

While Italian ruling political parties have generally used public media as propaganda tools, Berlusconi's use of media and political power represents an unmatched case on its kind. By reaching an unparalleled level of control over information flows during the 1990s and 2000s, Berlusconi has not only shaped the Italian media context, but also triggered the reaction of both supranational and subnational entities. As the authors argue, Berlusconi's mediatic monopoly remains key for any understanding of contemporary Italian media landscape and is also a unique case study to discuss the negotiation processes happening between national media industries and the globalised, interconnected world. Finally, the article highlights how private media ownership has inflected the Italian media landscape, and allowed the circulation of a diversified and international cultural offering (Andrea Gelardi).

Brennan, N. (2011), 'Marketing Meaning, Branding Neorealism. Advertising and Promoting Italian Cinema in Postwar America', in S. Giovacchini and R. Sklar (Eds), *Global Neorealism: The Transnational History of a Film Style*, University Press of Mississippi.

Brennan focuses on the US mainstreaming of Italian neorealism, looking at American distributors Burstyn and Mayer's marketing of *Open City* and other films. The advertisers' emphasis on marketing realism and engineering sexually titillating promotion straddled the films' consumption between arthouse and grindhouse consumption. Discussing agencies Unitalia and Italian Film Export and their distinct strategies of promotion of Italian film through art/history and 'cosmopolitan chic' branding, Brennan highlights the emphasis of early historiographies on neorealism as the purported peak and true expression of Italian culture at large, and the ensuing, partial obfuscation of processes of primitivisation, sexualisation, and 'auteurism' (Marco B. Carbone).

Dom Holdaway, "Ghost, Scars and Gods": *Bringing the Italian Spectator into View*, "The Italianist", 34, 2, 265-267, 2014.

Starting from the articles published by Roland Barthes and Pier Paolo Pasolini, Dom Holdaway connects the act of "construire de sens" and "sospendere il senso", with the "cinema d'impegno" and with the political engagement tout court. Moving from the recent work edited by Pierpaolo Antonello and Florian Mussgnug, which recalls the need to shift the functioning of impegno «from an author-centric towards a reader-centric paradigm», the author proposes to give a larger authority to the reader and to the spectator, going beyond the author-centric paradigm. The aim of the author is «to bring the spectator into view», examining the plurality of the spectatorship and analyzing it even in its non-rational forms, that is as «ghosts, scars, gods» (Giulia Muggeo).

Bertellini, Giorgio, *Italy in Early American Cinema: Race, Landscape and the Picturesque*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 2010 (Introduction and Chapter 7).

Two conflicting geographies made complementary in the name of a common aesthetic: in turn-of-the-century New York, ethnic forms of Italo-American entertainments regularly displayed a visual (and dramatic) combination of an idealized Neapolitan archaism in the context of U.S. modern civilization. Bertellini's contribution on picturesque imagery demonstrates how those iconic representations ended up mediating a typified cinematic portrayal of Italy, vehicle of Southernist distinctiveness within a diasporic mitigating culture. The codification of immigrants' theatrical amusements in national *enclave* overseas indicates how until the 1930s a whole spectrum of artistic genres flourished despite the Americanization underlying Stars and Stripes early cinema: not only led this to an original and geopolitically connotated inter-media *pastiche*, but it also somehow enriched the germinal American motion picture exhibition scenes. To what extent may "fakelore" - i.e. manneristic exemplars of *couleur locale* - constitute a watermark by which re-reading the circulation and franchise of the most diverse texts? Notwithstanding an excessive inner optimism with respect to the mutuality between Italian and US cultural contaminations, the proposed extracts undoubtedly pave the path within the studies on the assimilation of popular *loisir* practices out of their national boundaries, indicating how the adaptation of former local identities in the frame of wider (multi)national settings is often unavoidable (Emiliano Rossi).

Saverio Giovacchini and Robert Sklar, "Introduction: The Geography and History of Global Neorealism," in *Global Neorealism: The Transnational History of a Film Style* (University Press of Mississippi, 2012).

In the introduction to *Global Neorealism*, editors Giovacchini and Sklar trace the historical and geographical genealogies of the style. Rather than focusing on cinematic features, they explore the development of neorealism from its Italian origins to its global expansion to other national cinemas. In addition to outlining the book's sections and individual essays, the editors point out the three "historiographic clusters" with which the book engages – the international nature of Italian neorealism within the renewed interest in realism and engaged cinema during the 1930s and 1940s; the exportation and adaptation of Italian neorealism's style to other national cinemas and its contingent specificities; and the myth of Italian neorealism's "clean break" with the Fascist period (Alfo G. Aguado).

Higbee, Will and Song Hwee Lim. "Concepts of transnational cinema: towards a critical transnationalism in film studies" *Transnational Cinemas*, 1, 1 (2010): 7–21.

Discussing film transnationalism in interdisciplinary perspective, Higbee and Hwee Lim address its emergence across three main formulations (the national/transnational binary; the regional/supra-local approach; the postcolonial/diasporic/exilic turn) and its uses as both a useful operator and empty signifier. Focusing on North African and Chinese filmmakers as case studies, they suggest a critical, self-reflexive, non-European-centric shift in addressing the concept. Simultaneously, they warn about conceptual and methodological issues, such as the possible erasure of the sociocultural complexities of specific contexts and the risk of overlooking the cultural constructions and political assumptions that operate across different academic niches (collective reading).

Group questions

- 1) Although its different perspectives, politics seems to be a leitmotiv of our group bibliography. From the theoretical paradigms and the case studies proposed by Higbee and Hwee Lim to the intricate bonds between the Italian private media landscape and earlier representatives of the government, not to mention the circulation and the promotion of post-1945 National cinema (culminating in Andreotti's cold war to neorealism), audiovisual border-crossing and trans-geographical interfaces have inevitably raised political implications. In the turn-of-the-century New York the American (re-)reading of Mediterranean popular

culture even came to amplify the sense of otherness and racial inferiority attributed to Italian emigrants. In the light of this, could we possibly trace any common tendency or any other shared reflection?

- 2) In the contemporary global era we are used to dealing with the idea of a 'crossover audience'. Is it possible to extend the issue proposed by Higbee and Wee Lin and connect it with the contemporary reception studies and the new perspectives evoked by Dom Holdaway in his essay? What is your opinion on the so called 'transnational audience'?
- 3) As these readings unravel the "generative forces in the institutionalization" of Italian film productions, they investigate the discursive formation and transnational circulation of film realism and how it came to represent a main "branding" characteristic of Italian cinema. With regard to contemporary Italian film and media productions, is realism a distinctive tendency? What are the purposes and necessities of realist contemporary Italian filmmakers? Can we envisage a transformation from the neorealist paradigm? How does Italian realist filmmaking represent local identities to national and/or transnational audiences? [See for example: Roberto Minervini, Michelangelo Frammartino, Jonas Carpignano]
- 4) Following up on the previous comment, I wonder about how obsolete the notion of realism is, as well as the two other institutions addressed by the texts — the auteur and the nation. It is indeed compelling to follow Dom Holdaway's suggestion of imagining a "postmodern impegno" in which audiences have unexpected agency over the "senso" of contemporary audiovisual products. Yet, as Giovacchini and Sklar point out, politically engaged forms of media (especially film) seem to repeatedly return to the style of realism, in which "authorized" filmmakers intervene in conversations that are often circumscribed to their national reality. Regarding a bibliography that has politics as its leitmotiv, how should we grapple with the notions of realism, auterism, and nation? Are these notions obsolete or useless?

Group 2: The Mediterranean "Question": Crime, Death, Im/migration, Voices from the South

Ponzanesi, Sandra. "Of shipwrecks and weddings: borders and mobilities in Europe." *Transnational Cinemas* (2016): 1-17.

In the attempt to find new spaces of solidarity and cosmopolitanism, as well as establish a new aesthetic of the borders, in what has become "Fortress Europe," Ponzanesi analyzes several documentary films that, from different perspectives, deal with the migrants' traumatic journeys in Europe. In particular, she focuses on *On the Bride's Side* (2014) and *Fire at Sea* (2016) and shows how, by using a new visual language, these unconventional docu-films try to offer alternative, and more positive, scenarios for mobility in Europe, as well as trigger "the lazy eye of Europe" (11) on migrants' tragic, and often neglected, situation. Thinking about our broader topic "The Mediterranean 'Question'," in her article Ponzanesi is successful in showing how new alternative narratives on and from the Mediterranean are possible; these cinematic products are finally able to problematize the representation of the 'Other(s)' so to rethink the Italian Mediterranean Identity as a hybrid and fluid construction (Sabrina Righi).

Pescatore, Guglielmo. "Season 1. Episode 12: Realism, Archaism, and Seriality ('Gli immortali', Stefano Sollima)", *The Italianist*, 36: 2, (issue dedicated to *Gomorra*), 2016, pp. 349–54.

By taking the title of the final episode of season one of *Gomorra* – "Gli immortali" – as his starting point, Pescatore addresses the ways in which 'immortality' marks an increasing number of the series' anti-heroes. He insists that as 'immortality' thwarts the narrative progression towards an ultimate resolution, it complicates the series' relationship to both the epic and the classic gangster film as models in genre. In his analysis, 'immortality' connects those characters it marks to the mythology of an "archaic force of evil" (353); ultimately, it also reveals the seriality and consumerism at the TV show's core. The central question in this review might be phrased thusly: how does *Gomorra: the series* fit into genre categories and how does it negotiate archetypal characters and contemporary 'reality'? In providing a few brief answers, Pescatore's review fits nicely into our ongoing discussion of Italian genre production - which Pescatore describes as having falsifying tendencies that differentiate it from "engaged filmmaking" (354). I would, however, push back against this article's tendency to generalize the production of the series under the work of the director (even including 'Stefano Sollima' in the

review title), thereby obscuring the importance of other collaborators, such as the writers. Furthermore, a series of characters in Gomorrah are subject to a harsh “mortality” and a strong analysis might be made of the ‘otherness’ (women, children, and LGBTQ characters) that seems to determine a character’s disposability (Maria Massucco).

Roberti, Bruno. “Napoli: Cinema come forma di vita.” *Fata Morgana Web*. 16 settembre 2017.

Roberti speaks to the qualities of Napoli as a *space*, that then manifests in film or other spectacles. His language is quite organic, suggesting a lack of artificiality, which he in turn uses to describe Napoli. The city bursts forth with energy; furthermore, the sparks erupting out from these vivacious cultural/historical/linguistic fonts are paradoxical. Roberti notes a coexistence of *vecchiezza* and *verginità*, both a birth and death, especially in comparison to Rome, which colors film about Napoli and by Neapolitans. How do films *from* Napoli, or any place, differently portray-- and ultimately sell-- a reality of Italy in comparison to films simply *on* that same place? Are certain images of Italy (i.e. from specific Italian locales) more easily mediated because of inherent qualities in those images? (Emily Meneghin).

Bouchard, Norma and Valerio Ferme. “Screening the Souths through Southern Eyes. Revisiting Italy and the Mediterranean through the Lenses of Globalization,” in *Italy and the Mediterranean. Words, Sounds, and Images of the Post-cold War Era*. New York: Palgrave, 2013, 122-154.

In this chapter, Bouchard and Ferme map the cinema representations of Italian South between Mediterranean and Western collective imagining. Acknowledging the influence of Neorealism, they focus on the works of the most important contemporary directors (Amelio, Garrone, Winspeare, Cipri e Maresco, Crialeso) about the representation of South within the tensions between innocence and apocalyptic images, gender stereotypes, and millenary traditions. Engaging the geophilosophical tensions of this representations, Bouchard and Ferme add a significant contribution to read the real/imagining relations in Italian cinema. With the merit to extend their research including some documentaries and television shows, this chapter analyzes major Italian works about and from the South which are shaping Italy’s Mediterranean identity. Tradition and modernity tensions, genre crossing, and horrors of modernization are identified in specific images and scenes of films (Erik Scaltriti).

Bouchard, Norma and Valerio Ferme. “Introduction,” in *Italy and the Mediterranean. Words, Sounds, and Images of the Post-cold War Era*. New York: Palgrave, 2013, 1-12.

In their rich introduction, Bouchard and Ferme address the Mediterranean Sea as a space of plurality, hybridity, and exchange among the diverse cultures of the region. While the volume’s subtitle announces its focus on the “Post-Cold War Era”, the introduction provides a fuller outline of the region’s history, addresses the critical and artistic voices influencing their study, and situates the volume’s concentration on Italy in both a multimillenary web of interaction and in a contemporary setting of migration and modernity, charged with growing tensions and unstable relations. The postface criticizes Italy’s current actions as in line with the lean towards a “Euro-Atlantic belonging” (226) and claims a more inclusive, historically informed perspective for the volume at hand. The Introduction also presents an important pair of descriptive prepositions: *on* and *from*. The authors will return to and complicate the determination of works made “on” the Mediterranean and those made “from” the Mediterranean throughout the volume. This introduction dives into the ‘roots’ of what can be said to provoke the very phrase “Mediterranean Question” by prioritizing historical, cultural, and geographical context; remembering such contextualization is essential in our work on mediating Italy. However, Bouchard and Ferme’s work purports to ‘do it all’, embracing ‘words, sounds, and images’ ‘on and from’ the Mediterranean and Italy. While the introduction is therefore attractive and compelling, it suggests an eventual overreaching at the chapter-level of the close analysis (collective reading).

Group questions

- 1) To what extent have present cinematic and television productions succeeded in representing the hybridity that is inscribed in the Mediterranean area without falling into simplified, and simplistic, representations? How does the perspective “witnessing from the Mediterranean” allow them to explore and problematize a different understanding of the Mediterranean identity, one that forces to reflect on the idea of “belonging” and rethink the boundaries between Self and Other?
- 2) Several of the readings allude to a porousness or fluidity characteristic of the Italian south -- can we identify what about the geographical areas and socio-cultural settings inspires this description? What function does such a characterization have in influencing the films and film analyses that address specific locations -- Sicily or Naples for example? How does the contrast of “*on* versus *from*” figure into perceptions of the permeability of boundaries implied by the above-mentioned terms?

Group 3: Made in Italy: “beauty,” city, fashion, food, and lifestyle in global circulation

Zucconi, Francesco. “Sensuosissima Italia. Guadagnino e l’Italia nel Global Cinema.” *Fata Morgana Web*, 5 marzo 2018

Guadagnino’s *Call Me by Your Name* is a global product presenting *Italianness* through a perspective which is neither internal nor external. The setting recreates a familiar atmosphere, which is mixed, however, with a sense of *unheimlich* deriving from a new dimension defined by Art. Everything surrounding the protagonists – including Nature – is endowed with a sensuality that generates from the sense of Beauty aroused by Art and Knowledge and becomes the origin and the symbol of the relationship developing between Elio and Oliver. The image of Italy in this combination of familiar and *unheimlich*, then, is that of a *sensuous* Country, where any kind of sensibility is intensified (Rossana D’Amico).

Miller, D.A., “Elio’s Education.” *Los Angeles Review of Book* , February 19 2018.
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/elios-education/#!>

The article opens by stating a connection between beauty and homosexuality in MGM films, where the emphasis on the aesthetics of settings hides the portrayal of gay sex scenes. In *Call Me By Your Name*, the desexualisation of the protagonists’ love story is also operated by Elio’s parents, who are eager to archive the son’s homosexual relation as a “beautiful” friendship, in order to preserve a hetero-patrilineal order. According to Miller, the end credits represent the most relevant shot of the whole film, because Elio’s inward looking at the fire shows his attempts to escape an identity imposed on him from the outside. The central question of the article relates to how homosexuality is displayed in contemporary mainstream movies. This topic also overlaps with a highly aestheticized representation of Italy, where sensual and sexual experiences seem to inevitably take place. Miller’s article shows a connection with the other readings in explicating a sense of nostalgia towards the Italian past. In fact, all the articles focus on the re-crafting of Italianness in the works under examination. Nevertheless, the readings do not really consider the fact that these artefacts were primarily intended for an audience outside of Italy or, that the artists’ gaze on the country is somewhat “foreigner”, since all the authors benefited from extended periods abroad. In conclusion, these works re-tailor the sense of Italianness from the outside, and this category could be considered a semiosphere in itself. How do the views from the “outside” generated by international productions coincide or contrast with Italian-based ones? How do these nostalgic representations of the country influence the Italian audience? Do they increase the sense for an idyllic past that actually never existed for the vast majority of the Italian population? (Chiara Degli Esposti).

Andrea Minuz, “From Made in Italy to Ethno-Chic: Some Thoughts on Costume Design in Contemporary Italian Cinema (Class, Gender and National Identity),” *Film, Fashion & Consumption* 5, no. 1 (2016): 29–43.

Minuz discusses how costumes and clothing represent cultural traits of Italian contemporary cinema. Nostalgia pervades Sorrentino’s *La grande bellezza*, where Neapolitan sartorial suits embody the loss of elegance and Italy’s cultural decadence. Costumes in Guadagnino’s *Io sono l’amore*, nostalgic references to the 1960s, mourn the long-lost glamour of Italian cinema of that period. Tensions between feminine ideals of beauty are presented with Sabrina Ferilli’s looks, iconic for a middlebrow glamour, while the ethno-chic wardrobe of Margherita Buy’s characters embodies the snobbish, left-leaning bourgeois. The latter style is seen by Minuz in director Gianfranco Rosi’s sartorial preferences and interpreted as a reflection of the social commitment of his work. On the one hand, the semiotic charge that Minuz attributes to appearances are vehicles to interconnect different semiospheres. Specifically, appearance signifies traits associated with the Italian national character and thus helps to negotiate its representation to the international audiences of ‘other’ semiospheres. On the other hand, further research should look at how costume department practices differ, in the way Italianness is conveyed, in films developed for local or international markets (Chiara Faggella).

Newman, Michael Z. “Everyday Italian: Cultivating Taste,” in *How to Watch Television*, edited by Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell. New York: New York University Press, 2013, 330-337.

In this article, Newman argues that Giada De Laurentiis’ cooking show, *Everyday Italian*, functions as a site of promotion, not only of the products—knives, mixers, comestibles—that she uses, but also of a certain kind of lifestyle characterized by good taste. Combined with Laurentiis’ attractive and somewhat exotic body, the show represents a moment of escapism from “social realities” to “a fantasy realm of sensual pleasures” (332). And, while the show revels in various forms of pleasure (erotic, visual, gustatory, etc.), its goal is to return viewers to the “normal” life, found within the aisles of one’s local supermarket. While I agree with Newman’s point, particularly regarding the commodification of Giada de Laurentiis—as a person and as the embodiment of a certain lifestyle—I feel that his article is clearly gendered. Though I don’t know of any, it would be interesting to see an analysis of a male Italian-American chef to see if he could be read in a similar way. Also, I would be keen to see if an audience analysis could confirm Newman’s analysis. I think that this article contributes to the rationale of the summer school in terms of questions of Italian identity, how it is marketed through the body and consumed by a particular audience (in this case, likely an American, as well as female, one). In fact, I think each article that we read ultimately comes down to the following questions: what does it mean to ‘be’ Italian and how is Italian identity constructed—through beauty, fashion, food, lifestyle, or by some other means? Do national identity and Italianness coincide? That is, when we refer to national identity, are we implicitly speaking about Italianness or are these two similar, but different, constructs? (Dan Paul).

Tulante, Meriel. “High fashion in film: Italian identity and global anxiety in Valentino: The Last Emperor and Gomorrah.” *JICMS* 1, 3 (2013): 245–262.

Tulante addresses the relationship between the Made in Italy brand of high fashion, national identity and cinema through two 2008 films, *Valentino: The Last Emperor* (Tyrnauer), and *Gomorrah* (Garrone). Both respond to the decline of the Italian fashion industry while foregrounding “the performative creation of national symbols,” and “the illusory quality of narratives of national identity” (246). Although formally diverse, *Gomorrah* and *Valentino* contrast Italian fashion’s image with the realities of production (including such an image’s fabrication) such that either anxiety about the industry’s future or a critique of its practices are articulated together with apprehensions about Italy’s national identity. The article includes an analysis of the films’ meta-cinematic elements, for example the way in which

Gomorra represents its *camorristi* protagonists' identities as mediated through Hollywood's gangsters, and thus comments on the role of film in the construction of identities and stereotypes. However, such analyses are understood primarily in relation to a discourse on cinema's revelatory power - *Gomorra* and *Valentino* are said to reveal the inner workings of the fashion industry and, with it, nation branding. This approach perhaps lacks some reflectivity about the films' own participation in the fabrication of national identity, the ways in which they also reproduce stereotypical images of Italy [including that of Italian cinema as (neo)realist in some way]. Thus, while Tulante's piece offers an important contribution to the theme of Mediating Italy in its unpicking the threads of the Made in Italy brand, high fashion and the performativity of national brands, we might add a further consideration regarding the way films- even "revelatory" ones - are subject to, and participate in, the same processes of mediation (Rachel Johnson).

Lotman, Juri. "On the Semiosphere." *Sign Systems Studies*, 33, 1 (2005): 206-229

Lotman defines the semiosphere as an abstract space, the only semiotic space where the totality of semiotic acts coexist and language can exist and function. One of the main features of the semiospheres, according to Lotman, is the fact that it has a boundary, a semiotic border that is composed of multiple bilingual translatable filters that connect the semiospheres with the other ones that lie outside of its irregular structure. While the porosity of borders makes possible the filtering of meanings from a semiotic space to the other, the collision among heterogeneous nuclear structures within the semiosphere acts as a reserve of "new information". Isomorphism is another quality relating to this semiotic space. Each part of the semiosphere is in fact individual (a whole) but it is also an isomorphic fragment. As Lotman suggests, the semiotic concerns the transmission and translation of signs and symbols. Thus, the idea of Italianness is often dependent upon visual icons, including fashion, beauty, sensuality, exoticism, haute couture, good taste. One could argue that these are all subjective constructs (e.g. 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'). The stereotypical representations of Italianness outlined in the readings act as productive symbols, able to cross the border that separates different semiospheres and thus connecting two (or more) cultures (collective reading).

Group 4: New media platforms vs old "aesthetics"

Newman, Michael Z. "Everyday Italian: Cultivating Taste," in *How to Watch Television*, edited by Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell. New York: New York University Press, 2013, 330-337.

Among TV genres, cooking shows exemplify a growing trend in recent media where content configures strictly tied with commercial purposes. Newman's essay focuses on Food Network's *Everyday Italian with Giada De Laurentiis* and its capability to promote consumerism in its audiences. The author then reflects on the overlapping of the desire images of both sex and food. In fact, according to Newman, *Everyday Italian* is not just about consumption of food and other products "but also of Giada herself an image of sexualised desire and pleasure" (331). This kind of TV show fulfills the viewer's desire for fashioning a cultural identity, in terms of social class, gender, sexuality and taste of food and life (Nicola Stefani).

Jenkins, Henry. "Introduction: 'Worship at the Alter of Convergence: A New Paradigm for Understanding Media Change.'" *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2008. pp. 1-24.

Jenkins's critical question involves the relationship between three concepts: media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence (2). He challenges other scholarly work that deems convergence as a just a technological process that presents various media to a passive consumer (3). Instead, he proposes convergence as understood by individuals who actively participate in the circulation of media content (3). He claims that convergence reshapes American culture and explores

how popular culture is starting to change the ways religion, education, law, politics, advertisement, and the military operate (4, 12). Jenkins argues his point through case studies on multiple American media franchises. Though this article does not address Italy specifically, it does forward a global phenomenon, i.e. evolving circulation methods, within which Italian audiovisual and cultural content may be situated (Lauren De Camilla).

Ferrari, C. and Ardizzoni, M., 2010. Introduction: Italian media between the local and the global. *Beyond Monopoly: Globalization and Contemporary Italian Media*.

This introduction touches on several contemporary examples, such as the withdrawal of “Salva Rete 4” from the Italian legislative decree on digital broadcasting, in order to highlight some of the many challenges faced by Italy in balancing the opportunities presented by media globalisation with the desire to maintain control over the national media industry. The authors argue that the Italian mediascape is a complex and compelling example of the multiform shapes that media globalization can take in a Western context, which they explore through four main themes in the subsequent anthology: the impact of new technologies and extended borders upon the Italian television industry, the adaption of television formats, the emergence of non-traditional media, and the response by the media industry to cultural and demographic changes (Peter Westman).

Barra, Luca and Massimo Scaglioni. “TV Goes Social. Italian Broadcasting Strategies and the Challenges of Convergence.” *Journal of European Television History and Culture*, 3, 6, (2014): 110-124.

There are three keywords in order to develop an analysis about the concept of social television: extension, to clarify the transformation of TV-shows in transmedia narratives; access, for the new fruition methods; branding, to create a loyal audience. The Italian television started to uncertainly approach the internet building hype for single events through social strategies, but then, to encourage the affection of the audience (mainly for pay-per-view shows), it focused on the show coolness in order to obtain a passionate involvement along with a TV/Web convergence. The next goal for broadcasters is to monetize web-promotion (Lorenzo Costagliola).

Thompson, Ethan and Jason Mittell. “Introduction: An Owner’s Manual for Television,” in *How to Watch Television*, edited by Ethan Thompson, Jason Mittell. New York: New York University Press, 2013, 1-9.

In *Introduction: An Owner’s Manual for Television*, the authors, Thompson and Mittell, affirm the importance of *how* to watch television as a vital skill in our society. This does not mean simply providing a “good” or “bad” statement on a TV program, a process defined by the authors as the “thumbs up/down” model of criticism (2). It means instead making sense of television (1) by thinking critically about it and by expanding its various meanings in a criticism that takes into account the complexity of this medium. This process proves even more relevant as we find ourselves in an era of convergence in which the act of watching television encompasses new cultural forms and media platforms. Throughout the Summer School, but especially in the last two days, we have understood the meaning (and the complexity) of media convergence in a mediascape more and more influenced by digital delivery (Chuck Tryon). As a consequence, the necessity to learn “*how* to watch” envisioned by Thompson and Mittell proves to be of paramount importance (Demetrio Antolini).

Jenkins, Henry, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green. *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.

In *Spreadable Media*, the authors develop the concept of “spreadability”, that is the sharing of content for different purposes, which has been facilitated by the evolution of digital media. The Susan Boyle

“phenomenon” occurred because of active audiences circulating her fame via grassroots media (e.g. YouTube). Using the concept of “spreadable media” foregrounds the active role audiences play in producing and circulating content and avoids terminology, which can seemingly overestimate the power of media companies. Through the case of Mad Men twitter profiles the authors revise the concept of participatory culture, moving from a focus on fandom communities to a larger networked model of communication. The role of means of communication in participatory culture is analyzed through different theories and recent events like Iran protests (collective reading).

Group questions

- 1) In what ways do each of the articles engage in what Jenkins, Ford, and Green assert as “participatory” audiences, and what kinds of variations of this concept occur?
- 2) The mediascape depicted by each article is still-evolving, how the concept of convergence culture has been addressed since 2006’s definition by Jenkins?
- 3) According to the readings, does the “age of convergence” appear as an era of competition between different approaches to the mediascape or does it appear as an era where old “aesthetics” and new media platforms are learning how to “feed” each other?
- 4) How to build new models that align with the ways in which creators and audiences want to disseminate, engage with, and share content?

Group 5: Gender, postfeminism, girlhood, media

Hipkins, Danielle, “Performing ‘Girl’ Against Girlpower: The Case of *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* (Mainetti, 2015).” *The Italianist*, 37, 2 (2017): 268-272.

In her ‘Performing ‘Girl’ against girl power,’ Danielle Hipkins asserts the necessity for specific performance of girlhood against the backdrop of youth in Italian Cinema. She eventually demonstrates the failure of Italian Cinema to imagine and read girls and women. To support her claims, Hipkins gives the example of Alessia, the child-woman protagonist of *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* (Mainetti, 2015). Despite Pastorelli’s virtuoso performance of girlishness into adulthood, Alessia fails to represent girl-power in two respects: her characterization as the perpetual victim; and the sexualization operated on her body because of her being a girl-child-woman. Alessia’s girlishness role serves as the final sacrifice for the male protagonist realization, strengthening what Hipkins pinpoints as the inability for Italian Cinema to reach girlpower (Anna Chichi).

Hotz, Stephanie. “Rita Pavone’s *Musicarelli*: Rethinking Genre and (Young) Women’s Representation.” *gender/sexuality/italy*, 4 (2017).

In her essay Hotz surveys Rita Pavone’s episodes of *Musicarelli*, a series of musical films which have been vehicle for representations of anxieties and conflicts within the historical and socio-cultural context between 1958 and 1971. The two episodes examined are perfect examples of Pavone’s unconventional depiction of femininity, unique in 1960s Italian cinema. The non-normative models of womanhood and alternative female empowerment narratives presented to its youth audience recall the emerging of the feminist movement in Italy during the 1960s and offer new perspectives on the woman’s film in terms of both gender studies and women’s representation in popular media (Carlotta Serretelle).

Cuter, Elisa. “*Non è la Rai*, or: On the Becoming-Girl of Late Capitalism.” *gender/sexuality/italy*, 4 (2017).

In her essay Elisa Cuter, through a close analysis of some of *Non è la Rai*’s features, reads the tv show as a paradigm of *Berlusconism* (which embodied the broader concept of neoliberalism) and as an example of

a postmodern aesthetic (i.e. for the idea of self-reflexivity). Cuter demonstrates that neoliberal strategies are strictly connected with a massive exploitation of the *girlhood*. According to the ideology of the self in neoliberalism, girls became entrepreneurs of their own bodies. Being an object of consumption means for women to empower themselves and for males it consequently coincides with a loss of power (Francesca Cantore).

Bonifazio, Paola, Nicoletta Marini-Maio, and Ellen Nerenberg. "Editorial," *gender/sexuality/italy*, 4 (2017).

In this editorial, the authors provide an introduction of the themes and objectives of the 2017 g/s/i journal edition, i.e. relating contemporary Italian perceptions and representations of "girlhood" with the international context, along with recreating the history of "girlhood" in Italy. These themes and objectives are introduced by Bonifazio's and Marini-Maio's personal accounts of their receptions of *La TV delle Ragazze* at the time in which it aired (1988), and by the following discussion on "girlhood" in the context of "Neo-feminism", and on the rise of the "single-girl" model in the Anglo-Saxon World, through Radner's work "Neo-Feminist Cinema" (Eleonora Carboni).

Andò, Romana. "Girls and the Media: Girlhood Studies Agenda and Prospects in Italy." *gender/sexuality/italy*, 4 (2017). **Pravadelli, Veronica. "Open Forum: Legitimacy/Change/Power: Is a New Course in Italian Gender Studies Possible? A Response to Chiara Saraceno."** *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 17, 1 (2010): 275-79. **Pravadelli, Veronica. "Women and Gender Studies, Italian Style."** *European Journal of Women's Studies*. 17, 1 (2010): 61-67.

In their essays Pravadelli and Andò try to give a picture of Italian gender studies (specifically girlhood studies in the case of Andò) by comparing our framework with that of other countries. This field of studies does not exist in Italy as an independent discipline, because it is not institutionalized. Historically it has been associated with other disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, history and lately media studies. For Pravadelli the most viable approach to gender studies is rely to cultural and historical perspectives; while Andò underlines the necessity to promote gender studies basing on a transnational approach (collective reading).

Group questions

- 1) Media often reflect the cultural context to which they belong, as we can also see in the case studies proposed in the essays (for example *La Tv delle ragazze* can be read in opposition to second-wave-feminism; *Non é la Rai* as a symptom of the new Berlusconi era; Pavone's musicarelli reflect young women's need for female empowerment during the '60s). Moreover, according to Veronica Pravadelli, who claims that cultural and historical perspectives are the most effective to understand the status of women and gender in different cultural contexts, I am wondering how and to what extent the delay in gender studies institutionalization depends on cultural and historical reasons.
- 2) Italian academic fields, as well as media, still appear reluctant to recognize the importance of gender studies: they still only exist as non-institutionalized disciplines and media mostly fail to present alternative gender roles depictions and narratives, perpetually strengthening stereotyped ones. I wonder which one of the two, the academic sphere (institutionalizing these studies) or media representation (promoting the debate around this topic through alternative gender-related narratives) is more likely to persuade the other of the need to stimulate discussions around this topic.
- 3) Within the debate concerning the relationship between discussions on gender in the media, and their institutionalization in academia, I am particularly interested in expanding our discussion to the role of social media in this process. Given the peculiar fluid nature with which users transition from being audience and producers of social media products, how can we place the tool of social media in the process of promoting discussions on gender outside of given contexts specifically dedicated to it?