ic discourses about culture, and foster the process of transcultural understanding that naturally takes place when, as we read in the novel's conclusion, “Many stay and meet Italian girls. They fall in love. There are weddings and then separations and divorces, and still more marriages. Babies are born” (138).

As Khouma contends in I was an Elephant Salesman, telling his story brought him luck. After the first bestseller written with the journalist Oreste Pivetta, Khouma became a professional writer and journalist himself, and founded the journal of migrant literature “El Ghibli”. Khouma's novel, however, seeks to bring luck also to the many others who have been unable to make their voice heard.

Since the 90's, migration literature has managed to impose itself on the Italian literary landscape and is now in its second phase, as authors moved away from personal testimonies on the experience of migration, to write fiction dealing with cultural hybridity and the creation of identities that transgress national and cultural boundaries. However, as Graziella Parati argues in the novel's introduction, this would not have been possible without foundational texts such as Pap Khouma's autobiographical novel *I was an Elephant Salesmen*. Hence, as Parati also contends, Khouma's first novel is still a “mandatory point of reference” both to understand who the modern migrant is, and to gain a new perspective on the destination culture, one that brings to light Italy's inner contradictions instead of reinforcing artificial myths of cultural and moral superiority. Thanks to Rebecca Hopkins's translation, which preserves the work's ethical intentions without neglecting its ironic tone, *I was an Elephant Salesman* is also an enjoyable reading and easily captures the readers' attention, while prompting them to reflect on uncomfortable issues related to today's globalized world.

LOREDANA DI MARTINO

*University of San Diego*


In the last several years, the mafia phenomenon has become a more visible presence not only in the media (with Roberto Saviano's case as the most evident example) but also as the subject of books (novels, docu-fiction, criticism) and films, and as a topic of sustained discussion in schools and university courses, both in Italy and in the United States. For the growing number of students and scholars dealing with mafia issues, the collection edited by Dana Renga is an excellent new resource.

Centered on the representation of mafia on screen in Italy and the United States, *Mafia Movies* includes forty essays on both classic and more recent films and TV series addressing mafia's complex and ambivalent manifestations, perceived at once as a social and political plague and as a captivating legend.

Divided into two sections, covering respectively American and Italian mafia movies, the volume opens with two introductory essays that provide cohesion
across the continental divide. The first, by Dana Renga, shows how cinema negotiates between the reality and the myth of mafia, and synthesizes the main themes running through the collection. The second, by Peter and Jane Schneider, focuses on gender relations in the mafia world and highlights in particular the central yet mostly subdued role of women in the mafia organization, with attention to inter-marriage, family violence, and *omertà*.

The wealth of contributions in the volume, written by leading American and European scholars, effectively bring to the foreground the synchronic and diachronic variety of manifestations and representations of mafia. The American movie scenario inspires compelling examinations of such issues as gangsterism, fratricide, ethnicity, gender, political corruption, ranging from the three parts of Coppola’s *Godfather* (in essays by Tamburri and Russo) to Scorsese’s many titles like *Mean Streets, The Departed* and *GoodFellas* (D’Acierno, Orsitto, and Heyer-Caput), from Huston’s *Prizzi’s Honor* (Bauman) to De Palma’s *The Untouchables* (Bouchard) down to television series like ABC’s *The Untouchables* and HBO’s *The Sopranos* (Ricci and Lombardi).

Vincenzo Maggitti and Joanne Ruvoli open the section with a focus on early productions that launched the mafia movie genre, such as McCutchen’s *The Black Hand*, presented as a documentary narrative of the criminal dramas that plague Sicilian immigrants’ lives in New York, and the stereotype of the violently emotional and vengeful Sicilians featuring in many of Griffith’s films. More recent topics are tackled, among others, by Anthony Tamburri, who underscores the semiotic complexity of visual signs in *The Godfather* to reinterpret the movie as a condemnation rather than a glorification of the mafioso protagonist, or by Margherita Heyer-Caput, with her reconceptualization of the multiple ethnic identities in Scorsese’s *The Departed* as simulacra which decree the end of univocal subjectivity in the context of late capitalism. Franco Ricci and Giancarlo Lombardi conclude the American overview with an examination of *The Sopranos*, in which they emphasize, respectively, the subversion of codes as a strategy to question the aura of the mobster, and the genre experimentation leading to a structural unpredictability that signals an interpretive openness.

The range of themes and approaches is equally wide on the Italian side. Several essays on cinematographic adaptations of literary works associating Sicily with mafia revolve around Sciascia and Tomasi di Lampedusa. Elio Petri’s rendition of *A ciascuno il suo* according to Daniela Bini endows Sciascia’s philosophical novel with a stronger sense of justice and with greater political and social commitment. Transposed on screen by Damiano Damiani, *Il giorno della civetta* blends a mafia story with the classic Western, generating a hybrid which, Piero Garofalo claims, defamiliarizes the audience to promote awareness of organized crime in Sicily and Italy at large. Examining the transition from Lampedusa to Luchino Visconti, Elizabeth Leake calls attention to the prototypical value that representations of Sicily in *Il Gattopardo* acquire as unproblematic equivalent of mafia culture. The codes and rituals of Sicilian mafia also work as an implicit backdrop against which Alison Cooper discusses the predatory violence and exploitation of minors by Neapolitan camorra in Antonio and Andrea Frazzi’s recent adaptation
of Diego DeSilva’s Certi bambini.

Several articles are devoted to Francesco Rosi, among them Gaetana Marrone Puglia’s analysis of the intricate and enigmatic structure of Lucky Luciano as a strategy to convey an elusive truth showing the inadequacy of simplistic solutions to complex problems like mafia’s collusion with politics. The discussion of the production of other leading directors like Lattuada, Wertmüller, Scimica, Giordana, and Salvatores, allows readers to appreciate different approaches and forms of fictionalization of mafia before shifting to the use of verisimilitude and credibility in Bianchi and Nerazzini’s documentary investigation. Indeed, as Robin Pickering Iazzi observes, the evidence that La mafia è bianca provides of the political and financial activities of an allegedly invisible mafia creates a visible testimony that turns readers into responsible witnesses. The hyperrealistic exploration of Mario Garrone’s camera in Gomorrah concludes the volume in an essay by Pierpaolo Antonello on the effects of docu-fiction in the film and in Saviano’s controversial book.

Highly informative at the level of plots, social and political background, contextual, intertextual and interfilmic evidence, Mafia Movies offers innovative, concise, and accessible critical material to a wide academic audience. Precisely because of the vast array of contributions and the open-endedness of their overall message, the volume might have benefited from some concluding remarks addressing underdeveloped issues, such as the representation of pentiti on screen, or analyzing more systematically the role of comedy and irony in the cinematographic depiction of mafia, or even identifying some key theoretical principles able to conceptualize the notion of “mafia movie” itself.

To be sure, however, any volume trying to pin down an elusive and evolving phenomenon like mafia through aesthetic representation across two continents cannot but aim at selectivity rather than at comprehensiveness, and Mafia Movies does so in a competent and engaging way. It demystifies clichés, it consolidates the genre status of the mafia film, and proves itself to be an unavoidable reference for future studies in this intriguing field.

Nicoletta Pireddu
Georgetown University


This book is a collection of ten essays on Umberto Eco’s works. It is prefaced by Bondanella who anticipates the major themes of the essays and it is closed by a selected bibliography which will help scholars find or add material for further study of Eco’s oeuvre. Inspired by and often in reference to Eco’s Opera Aperta (Open Work) (1962)—in which he argued that literary texts are fields of meaning—each contribution of this collection is intended to provide a deeper understanding of Eco’s works from his fiction to his semiotic theory. Eco’s well known