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, Scimeca, 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 undeveloped 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.

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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
use of language and symbols in his fiction and his reflective study of how we should interpret literature has been a source of inspiration for many scholars whose aim is to read between the lines of his wide assortment of references and hints and his remarkable use of narrative creations.

Norma Bouchard, for instance, discusses Eco's interest in popular culture, presenting two major categories of works studied by Eco: 19th and 20th century novels and mass communication genres like cartoons, songs, television and films. To her point of view Eco's understanding of culture, in its evolution, suggests an intellectual development growing out of his initial intuitions about the arbitrary nature of various kinds of culture (15).

Cinzia Bianchi and Manuela Gieri's essay analyses Eco's semiotic theory emphasizing his new phase of reflection on semiotics. According to Bianchi and Gieri, a crucial part of Eco's thinking dwells in the notion and role of cultural and social community (21) making it therefore possible, once we have placed a text in a cultural context, to understand it better.

"Eco's scientific imagination" is the topic discussed by Guy Raffa who believes science plays an important role in Eco's fiction. He employs examples from The Name of the Rose, Foucault's Pendulum and The Island of the Day Before to demonstrate the tendencies of Eco's characters to use scientific methods in solving their problems.

Cristina Ferronato discusses "Eco's theory and fiction between the Middle Ages and post modernity" and highlights the importance of signs, as the only way for humans to understand the world (57). All Eco's novels, according to Ferronato, offer the reader the opportunity to search for more meaning and interpretations.

Theresa Coletti, following Ferronato's approach to Eco's interest in the middle Ages, stresses Eco's challenging attitude towards writing history and thinking historically. She argues that discussing medieval history and culture allows Eco to articulate his theoretical and philosophical interests (74).

The detective story is the topic explored by Peter Bondanella who points out Eco's ability to raise the level of this genre, especially in Italy, where detective fiction was neglected throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Bondanella recognizes Eco's important role for this genre, thanks to his aptitude in fusing together philosophy, semiotics and detective style.

Patrizia Violi's contribution is on Eco's most recent semiotic studies regarding the role of the subject. As the subject is a "collectivity of subjects" we must focus more on the collective subject than the individual one and we must "interrogate" texts for deeper appreciation of a full unfolding of their meaning (120).

Rocco Capozzi concentrates his discussion on "memorabilia" in The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana and how this novel is an "open work" that deals with semiotic strategies, intended to help the reader identify images and words. Eco's use of images in the novel documents the history of Italy during the Fascist regime and brings authenticity to the plot.

The connection between Eco and Joyce is the topic presented by Michael Caesar. The well-known interest in Joyce's works is also demonstrated by Eco's continuous engagement in the study of this author and his constant dialogue with history.
Torunn Haaland concludes this collection with a study on Eco and films. According to Haaland, Eco recognizes in Fellini the authority in being able to transform reality into fantasy because he believes the recreation of illusionary reality is necessary in order to narrate in cinema.

This instructive collection of essays is a further input in the open debate on Eco’s wide range of works. It provides an interesting critical commentary on a variety of topics and it will generate supplementary attention and new perspectives on Eco’s chameleon nature as a writer, historian, philosopher and linguist. Eco’s intriguing works offer continuous opportunities for further analysis and elucidation and this collection may facilitate this undertaking.

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Virtually every aspect of our life today is either connected to technology or soon will be. It’s only natural, then, that those of us in the academic profession ask, as did Francesco Guardiani, What’s Next?, and to this end he organized a conference in October 2008 in which teachers and researchers could tackle the question of the “… future as it reveals to us in our daily work, in our fields of interest and research in literature, in the visual arts, in the academic world surrounding us with increasingly less relevant interdisciplinary borders” (6).

This is a dense book and it begins with six essays that have as a common starting point Marshall McLuhan’s theories on media and communication and that provide a theoretical background from various points of view: artistic (Renato Barilli), existential (Remo Bodei), and communication (Eric McLuhan, Derrick de Kerckhove, Marco Santoro, Twyla Gibson).

One essay that focuses particularly on how technology impinges and will continue to impinge on academia is “On Translation and Transformation: Media, Education, and the Continuity of Culture” by Twyla Gibson, who examines “…the effects of new media on learning, teaching, on knowledge production, and on the storage, transmission, and dissemination of information” (89) and proposes to “…identify some of the patterns of effects that accompanied previous innovations in communication and then to employ them as evidence for investigation patterns and uncovering evidence in the Revolution in communication we are experiencing today” (93). This essay is useful because it traces methods of communication from ancient times to today, explaining how these transitions occurred and the impacts of new modes of communication. The Literate Revolution of the ancient Greeks marked the transfer from the oral mode of speech to the written