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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What's Next? Il lavoro dell'insegnante e le sue scelte nell'età dell'elettronica. Proceedings of a St. Michael's College—Department of Italian Studies International Conference in the University of Toronto (October 21-24, 2008). Ed. Francesco Guardiani. Ottawa: Legas, 2009. Pp. 502. ISBN 978-1-897493-13-7. \$ 29.95.

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

and Gibson uses Plato's dialogues to explain this change. The Gutenberg Revolution marked subsequently the transition from script to print and Gibson illustrates this change using the Gutenberg Bible and Ficino's translation of Plato's dialogues as examples. Neither of these revolutions marked a "Great Divide" (101) but a "break-boundary" (101) between the new and old technologies, in other words both revolutions involved hybridity and mediation and ultimately change. The current "Information Revolution" is similar in this sense. Gibson essentially says, with regard to the academic world, that many university scholars have moved outside of their original disciplinary boundaries and experienced reconfigurations in their field of research. This phenomenon, coupled with pressure from government and funding agencies to study digital media guarantee that areas such as media, communication, and culture will become mainstream. McLuhan's prediction that many scholars would become *specialized generalists* has already come true.

John Picchione ("Letteratura ai margini? Considerazioni teoriche e didattiche") examines the effects of visual media on users and describes how spatial and temporal coordinates have contracted such that users/viewers perceive everything to be simultaneous and ubiquitous. He notes that there exists the danger that the perception of simultaneity may hamper the ability to make order of current events. Particularly notable are his observations based on readings in neuroscience and in particular on the plasticity of the brain. Indeed, our current digital culture is actually effecting a reconfiguration of parts of the brain. (And here we have an example of McLuhan's *specialized generalist* as Picchione went beyond the boundary of literary research to that of scientific research). Picchione is no Luddite and he understands the progress that the digital revolution has made possible but he pinpoints some of its downside, particularly in the university environment. One of his main concerns is that of passivity, typified by a frequent question students pose when assigned a novel: "Is there a movie version of the book?" He understands what literature can offer: "La lettura è un incontro straordinario con menti che ci invitano a tenere un rapporto energico con un universo fisico e umano problematico, mai del tutto senza minacce. I giovani, più di tutti, necessitano questi incontri. È nostro compito facilitarglieli" (406). Indeed.

This volume contains numerous articles of interest and only a few can be described in this space. (Gibson notes that there are no such restrictions with electronic publications.) Antonio Saccone ("Life is now: Il futurismo e l'infinita dilatazione del presente") brings to light how il futurismo foresaw many current ideas on modernity, speed, simultaneity and was a precursor of the Internet era. Francesco Guardiani ("*Sicut oves in medio lupo*": La modernità e il sangue dei suoi apostoli nella Breve relatione di Francesco Giuseppe Bressani, S.J. (1612-1672)") states candidly that he finds "...noiosissima la letteratura contemporanea e quella italiana in particolare" (332). He explains why postmodern novels make him yawn by citing McLuhan: "...the business of art is no longer the communication of thoughts or feelings which are to be conceptually ordered, but a direct participation in a process, rather than apprehension of concepts" (333). Luca Somigli ("Bologna in the Detective Fiction of Lorian Macchiavelli") discusses how the *giallo*, in reaction to feelings such as Guardiani's, seems "...to return nar-

rative... to engage with social reality” (260). Not all of the essays focus strictly on interactions with the digital world but rather offer considerations on future teaching of and research on Dante (Enrico Malato and Mariapia Lamberti) on mass culture (Luca Pucci, Paolo Chirumbolo, Rocco Capozzi), on cinema (Carlo Coen), on the epistolary novel (Matteo Palumbo).

Two fundamental issues remain unclear: copyright and how the Internet will develop. The first is alluded to in an essay by Roberta Barni (“Ipermedia e traduzione letteraria. Percorso e bilancio di un esperimento”) who invites readers to a web site on the *Commedia dell’arte* that is “closed”, meaning it does not appear in any search engine for copyright reasons. Decisions on copyright will determine the quality of any artistic expressions to be found on the web. We know that the Internet is a work in progress which will be transformed in ways we cannot foresee. So while we cannot know what’s next, the important thing is to keep asking.

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