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	Sommario/riassunto	This beautifully written work sheds new light on the origins and nature of Mahayana Buddhism with close readings of four well-known texts- the Lotus Sutra, Diamond Sutra, Tathagatagarbha Sutra, and Vimalakirtinirdesa. Treating these sutras as literary works rather than as straightforward philosophic or doctrinal treatises, Alan Cole argues that these writings were carefully sculpted to undermine traditional monastic Buddhism and to gain legitimacy and authority for Mahayana Buddhism as it was veering away from Buddhism's older oral and institutional forms. His sophisticated and sustained analysis of the narrative structures and seductive literary strategies used in these

sutras suggests that they were specifically written to encourage devotion to the written word instead of other forms of authority, be they human, institutional, or iconic.