



Deep Talk

A Conversation with María Reyes Ferrer

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Motherhood, both as lived experience and as symbolic construct, cuts across contemporary literary texts, often in tension with the normative models imposed by patriarchal discourse. In recent decades, the maternal has re-emerged as a site of critical inquiry in feminist theory, literary criticism, and cultural studies, interrogated not only for its ideological weight, but also for its potential to articulate alternative forms of subjectivity, embodiment, and relationality. Contemporary literature offers a privileged space in which to explore these complexities: it stages motherhood in its contradictions, ambivalences, and political charge, shedding light on how it is shaped by intersecting forces such as gender,

class, race, sexuality, and migration. After all, as Olivia Heal observes (2019) “maternal writing is fundamentally a political act” (p. 120).

In this conversation, we explore some of the central issues currently shaping the debate on the representation of the maternal in Italian literature. We speak with **María Reyes Ferrer**, professor at the Universidad de Murcia and a scholar of contemporary Italian literature and gender studies, who has long investigated the intersections between writing, subjectivity, and motherhood. Her work contributes to a growing body of research that reclaims the maternal not only as a thematic presence, but as a mode of thinking, narrating, and resisting –offering new tools to rethink the literary canon, feminist genealogies, and the politics of care and reproduction.

More information: <https://portalinvestigacion.um.es/investigadores/331319/detalle?lang=en>

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1. Representations and (In)visibility of the Maternal

VF: Let's begin with a broad question: how are representations of motherhood currently configured in contemporary Italian literature, in light of the social, cultural, and political transformations that have affected the maternal? In what ways does literary writing become a space for negotiating – or contesting – gender norms? And further, which images of the mother dominate today's Italian literary landscape, and which ones remain absent or have been erased? What do these representations (or omissions) tell us about the regimes of (in)visibility that govern the maternal body in Italian culture?

MR: From my point of view, motherhood, understood as a dynamic experience shaped by social, economic, and cultural contexts, is portrayed in contemporary Italian literature from a critical perspective that challenges the traditional archetype of the devoted and perfect mother. This figure, still dominant in the Italian cultural imagination, is confronted by current narratives that reveal the ambivalence and inner conflict many women experience in relation to the maternal role and the institution of motherhood, as well as the difficulties increasingly faced by women in conceiving. Rather than idealizing motherhood or positioning the mother as a passive object of narration, contemporary literature – and I would argue, contemporary cinema as well – gives voice to numerous silenced subjectivities. These voices demystify the idea of a natural maternal instinct in women and show how maternal identity is constructed through a tension between individual desire, social expectations, and the lack of structural support.

This new configuration, which began to take shape especially from the second half of the 20th century thanks to feminist thought, allows for the visibility of a plural, imperfect, and ultimately deeply human experience of motherhood. These new representations of motherhood entail significant transformations in literary production, which becomes a critical tool capable of exploring the light and shadow surrounding the maternal experience through subjective, first-person narratives. This paradigm shift encourages the adoption of particularly meaningful literary forms, such as autofiction or the confessional genre, which allow for the narration of personal, sometimes painful or traumatic experiences, while also reclaiming motherhood – traditionally relegated to the domestic and private sphere – as a political issue.

By sharing common experiences, often hidden or silenced, this literature not only makes visible the complexity of maternal experience, but also actively contributes to its redefinition from a critical and collective perspective. For this reason, in my opinion, depictions of devoted mothers, aligned with the traditional "good mother" prototype, no longer predominate in Italian literature. In contemporary literature, maternal figures have been humanized: they are portrayed with their contradictions, their own agency, and, above all, the real difficulties they face. In fact, experiences that were long rendered invisible, as they threatened the idealized image of motherhood, are increasingly being brought to light: the struggle to conceive, maternal ambivalence, and the experience of abortion are now themes openly addressed by many Italian women writers in their novels.

However, from my perspective, a certain silence still persists in Italian literature around stories of mothers who express regret following motherhood. Such narratives would directly challenge the idealization of unconditional maternal love. There is also a noticeable lack of explicit

representation of the physiological processes related to motherhood. In this regard, the representations – or, in many cases, the striking absences – of the maternal body in contemporary Italian literature reveal the persistence of a visibility regime strongly influenced by what I would dare to call a “sacralization” of motherhood. Although the maternal body has historically been established as a central cultural symbol, associated with ideals of purity, self-sacrifice, and fertility, its more concrete, physical, and sensory dimensions continue to be relegated to the domain of the unspoken or the marginal.

In this sense, the physiological traces of motherhood – the bodily changes a woman undergoes, their effects on sexual pleasure, childbirth and its consequences, or even breastfeeding – rarely find a space for explicit representation in literature. Breastfeeding, for instance, though socially accepted in abstract terms as an act of care and nourishment, continues to be subject to symbolic and normative repression when practiced in public spaces, where it is expected to occur discreetly, almost clandestinely. Furthermore, there is an expectation projected onto breastfeeding that it should bring satisfaction and fulfillment to the mother, ignoring the fact that, in many cases, it can also be experienced as traumatic, laden with pain, exhaustion, and in conflict with normative ideals of happy motherhood.

These omissions reveal a cultural apparatus that continues to shape the boundaries of what can be represented when it comes to the maternal body. But they also reveal the limits of what a woman dares to tell – for modesty, fear of misunderstanding, or social judgment – and the impact such a narrative may have on its readers. The expectation of how a narrative will be received, shaped by a culture that still considers certain experiences inappropriate or excessive, can act as an additional filter, restricting not only public discourse but also intimate writing itself. I believe there is, in general, a resistance to represent the maternal body in its materiality, and this is something that, as Andrea O'Reilly (2024) argues, academic feminism – and I would add, literature – must confront when addressing the subject of motherhood.

2. The Maternal and Intersectionality

VF: In recent theoretical debates, it has been emphasized that “in literature as in life, motherhood is constructed intersectionally: gender, class, race, nationality, sexuality, and age all impact upon how motherhood can be done, as do migrant experiences” (Henriksson, Williams, & Fahlgren, 2023, p. 2). In light of this perspective, how does contemporary Italian literature engage with an intersectional understanding of the maternal? Do current narratives succeed in portraying the plurality of maternal experiences beyond the white, bourgeois, heteronormative model? And how do they interact with new configurations of motherhood – queer, non-biological, surrogate, migrant – as well as with contemporary feminist struggles for reproductive justice? Would you consider literature a privileged space for thinking through the polymorphic politics of the maternal?

MR: I'll begin with the last question: yes, absolutely. Literature, particularly matrifocal literature (Daly and Reddy, 1991), constitutes a privileged space for politicizing motherhood, as it enables the reclamation of narrative and restores, through the text, the maternal to its plural and political dimension. As Elizabeth Podnieks observes, literature is a space of “textual liberation” (2020, p.

176) in which Italian women writers explore, question, and openly engage with motherhood and how it is shaped by power structures, norms, and cultural discourses. Unlike more normative discourses, literature offers a flexible framework in which authors can problematize motherhood not merely as a biological fact, but as a social construction traversed by multiple intersectional axes.

In my view, contemporary Italian literature articulates, starting from subjectivity and lived experience, a critique of the social, cultural, and symbolic structures that have historically defined the maternal, unmasking myths and idealizations surrounding the figure of the mother. I think of novels such as *Cose che non si raccontano* (*Things That Are Not Told*) by Antonella Lattanzi, *Cattiva* (*Bad*) by Rossella Milone, *La figlia sbagliata* by Raffaella Romagnolo (*The Wrong Daughter*), *I giorni dell'abbandono* (*The Days of Abandonment*) by Elena Ferrante, *La scordanza* (*The Forgetfulness*) by Dora Albanese, to name a few, and I see how all these texts demystify motherhood, revealing ambivalences, inner conflicts, and structural tensions that permeate maternal experience and that have traditionally been silenced by normative discourse.

However, although these authors do incorporate issues of, especially, class and age, and also race and gender in narrating maternal experience, the opposite is not always true: many works centered on these other dimensions do not necessarily address motherhood. In other words, literature focused on the maternal has always tended to explore intersectionality, precisely because the experience of motherhood inevitably exposes the tensions and inequalities that women face in their multiple social identities. In this sense, I believe contemporary Italian literature includes a rich and valuable corpus of migrant women writers. Now, although I do not consider myself a specialist in this field, my perception is that this literature tends to focus more on issues such as identity, exile, memory, or uprooting, rather than on the maternal experience as a central axis. I would say that, although motherhood is present in these works, it appears tangentially and rarely occupies the center of the text – or at least it has not yet been read from this perspective – and perhaps this is precisely where the most interesting aspect lies: in how we (do not) see and (do not) read other forms of motherhood. It would certainly be enriching to integrate this perspective into the analysis, as it would allow us to expand our understanding of the multiple forms of maternity. But I insist: matrifocal literature, precisely due to the intersectional nature of motherhood, embraces numerous social and political dimensions.

Following the reasoning around the openness to multiple dimensions of analysis, it is undeniable that contemporary literary narratives have made significant progress in representing a plurality of maternal experiences that depart from the traditional white, bourgeois, and heteronormative model. We are now witnessing the emergence of stories about non-biological motherhood *La memoria impossibile* (*The Impossible Memory*) by Emilia Marasco, *Io mi fido di te. Storia dei miei figli nati dal cuore* (*I Trust You. The Story of My Children Born from the Heart*) by Luciana Littizzetto, *Bambini di ferro* (*Iron Children*) by Viola Di Grado, to name a few – of biological but non-genetic motherhood – as in the generative journeys described by Maria Rosa Cutrufelli in *L'isola delle madri* (*The Island of Mothers*) or by Chiara Laudani in *Per non scomparire* (*To Not Disappear*) – alongside all the recent narratives about medically assisted procreation. These texts not only broaden the maternal imaginary but also make it more complex and politicize it in new directions, showing alternative ways of being mothers. Nevertheless, within this increasingly broad

spectrum of narratives about motherhood, I believe there are still missing voices, stories that, for example, recount the experience of homosexual motherhood or, as already mentioned, racialized motherhood. Reflecting on this question, however, led me to ask myself two things:

1) In relation to what Andrea O'Reilly defines as "queering motherhood," it is common to present queer motherhood as an innovative, contemporary practice, or as something foreign to Western cultural frameworks. However, if we look toward the Mediterranean tradition – and particularly the Italian context – we can observe that certain forms of motherhood now identified as queer were already present in the past. Literature, in particular, bears witness to models of collective motherhood, especially in Southern Italy, where women wove networks of care with neighbors, the figure of the *comare* (godmother), grandmothers, and other female figures who shared the responsibility of raising children in a kind of communal and shared motherhood. In these contexts, motherhood did not end with the mother–child relationship, but unfolded in a plural and intergenerational dimension rooted in forms of daily solidarity.

It was within these "extended families" that not only caregiving practices were transmitted, but also material and symbolic knowledge: knowledge of childbirth and the body, natural remedies, emotional languages, relational codes, and forms of female authority that escaped institutional control. The *comare*, the grandmother, the neighbor are not merely auxiliary figures, but vital nodes in a network that redefines motherhood as a relational and political practice, removing it from isolation and idealization. Moreover, there were maternal experiences that defied normative age boundaries: women became mothers both at 18 and at 40, perhaps for different reasons, but without being penalized by ageist logics. Perhaps, instead of projecting alternative maternal forms solely into the future, we should critically question the historical process that led to the erasure or delegitimization of these communal and plural practices from our past.

2) Regarding the expression "going beyond the white, bourgeois, and heteronormative model," while it is essential for deconstructing the notion of a singular maternal experience, I worry that it may create the mistaken impression that structural difficulties have already been overcome and can thus be left behind. This is not to deny the importance of giving visibility to non-normative forms of motherhood, on the contrary, this is a necessary and vital step. But I believe that these representations must coexist with the need to make visible the trap of normative motherhood: the one presented as a choice, as desirable, but which in fact merely reproduces patriarchal logics that assign women a role of subordination. A trap which, under the guise of free choice, conceals a structural imposition deeply rooted in the patriarchal symbolic order. Because even when motherhood is lived with desire, awareness, and outside of the heterosexual framework, the gender mandate that defines women based on their reproductive capacity and caregiving availability continues to operate. We must not forget that women – all women – are still today subject to structural violence simply for being women, and that such violence reproduces itself even in contexts where greater autonomy appears to have been achieved.

Making visible racialized, queer, or homosexual motherhood is fundamental, but it is not enough unless we radically question the hegemonic model of motherhood: the one that still functions as a universal measure, albeit masked by seemingly more inclusive forms. To think that expanding the representational spectrum equals solving the problem is to ignore that many structures of oppression remain intact, and that the apparent freedom of a few women does not equate to real

collective liberation. Motherhood, as an institution regulated by patriarchy, cannot be liberating until the material, symbolic, and emotional conditions that uphold it are overturned. This is why I consider literature, an exemplary space for narrating the complexity of experience, an indispensable tool for reflecting on the political nature of the maternal. I welcome the fact that it opens the field to new forms of motherhood, but politicizing motherhood today cannot be reduced merely to amplifying voices: we must interrogate the structures that determine who can be a mother, how discourses on motherhood are transformed, and at what cost. Expanding the imaginary without questioning the patriarchal framework that sustains it risks generating a false perception of progress, while many women continue to suffer violence simply because they are women. Literature must not only represent, but also disrupt, question, and denaturalize the conditions that continue to subordinate women through motherhood.

3. Genealogies and Counter-Narratives: Matrilinearity and the Maternal Voice

VF: From a feminist genealogical perspective, can we trace connections between maternal narratives written by Italian women in the twentieth century and those emerging today? In your view, is there a “subterranean tradition” or counter-narrative of motherhood that crosses generations and resists dominant paradigms? In their 2010 collection *Textual Mothers/Maternal Texts*, Elizabeth Podnieks and Andrea O’Reilly describe a shift from “daughter-centric” narratives to “matrilineal” and “matrifocal” texts, highlighting the increasing centrality of the maternal voice in post-1990s literature. Do you see a similar development in the Italian context? How are contemporary Italian women writers working to re-inscribe the mother as a speaking subject, and motherhood as a personal, political, and creative narrative?

MR: I believe it is indeed possible to trace lines of continuity between the maternal narratives of 20th-century Italian women writers and those of today. There undoubtedly exists a dissident and submerged narrative that has crossed generations and managed to resist, in various forms, the dominant canon. Although 20th-century writings more frequently focused on the maternal figure from the daughters’ perspective, even then an impulse to break away from familial and social impositions could be glimpsed. Those writers – writing as daughters –began to question motherhood, the maternal figure, and to confront their own subjective fractures in relation to that legacy.

I’m thinking of those authors who, as early as the beginning of the 20th century, approached motherhood without embellishment, such as Sibilla Aleramo – “an isolated and revolutionary voice” (Sambuco, 2014, p. 45) –or Annie Vivanti, and of those who followed, like Fausta Cialente, Elsa Morante, Natalia Ginzburg, Fabrizia Ramondino, or Anna Maria Ortese, among others, who – drawing on their experience as mothers or daughters –understood that motherhood is a central aspect of women’s lives and must be addressed beyond the domestic sphere. These 20th-century writers challenged, from their respective positions, family structures, the obligation of marital destiny, or domestic confinement, and in doing so, they became points of reference for the future. Their writing, though not always explicitly feminist, already operated as a form of symbolic insubordination. Because the very fact that a woman wrote – and wrote about herself, her world,

and other women – was enough to inaugurate a genealogy. In that inaugural disobedience, I see the seed of today's matrifocal writings.

Many contemporary writers have had to seek out those predecessors – marginalized or made invisible – in order to restore them to their rightful place in literary history. In them, they have found a symbolic and vital point of reference, from which a literary genealogy has emerged that recognizes those authors as intellectual "mothers," bearers of a legacy. This act of rediscovery has highlighted the urgent need to reclaim the maternal figure, both in its real dimension and in its symbolic power, as a foundation for the transmission of women's lives. By recovering the legacy of their foremothers and speaking from their own maternal experiences, these writers are, in a sense, the "Icaruses of the 20th century": women who, thanks to the wings inherited from those who came before them, have been able to take flight, to leave behind the gravitational pull of the private sphere as the only possible space, and to occupy the public space from which they now write their maternity.

That flight was neither solitary nor spontaneous: it was made possible because others, before them, had shown that there was a life beyond submission, that it was possible to speak in one's own voice. These writers continue that thread of dissidence, amplify it, and bring it into the present. The critique, in the 20th century, of the maternal model through the daughter's gaze paved the way, in the 21st century, for writings that, from within the maternal experience, seek to redefine it without idealization; this trajectory, both emotional and political, solidifies a literary genealogy capable of sustaining a continuous critique of the institution of motherhood and of imagining ways of being mothers beyond traditional models.

4. Poetics of the Maternal

VF: From a formal perspective, what stylistic, structural, or linguistic choices characterize today's writing of the maternal? Can we identify a "poetics of the maternal" that subverts patriarchal narrative codes or proposes a reworking of maternal experience in embodied, affective, or relational terms?

MR: Yes, I do believe it is possible to speak of a poetics of the maternal, insofar as motherhood – and, more generally, the maternal as a critical category – activates new forms of writing, new ways of representing subjectivity, the body and female experience, destabilizing traditional narrative codes. Motherhood, as suggested by Lisa Baraitser (2018), is not only written as content, but is assumed as an epistemological and literary framework, as a critical lens through which to rethink the very possibilities of writing and authorship. The maternal, when written, is not configured solely as a theme, but as a practice that overflows and subverts inherited genres, that places the body and the bond with the other at the center of discourse, and that requires new linguistic and structural forms to be narrated.

Italian women authors who write about the maternal tend to use hybrid genres – diaries, autofiction, narrative essays, letters – that allow for exploration of the intersection between the intimate and the public, between personal experience and aesthetic elaboration. This responds to the need to find narrative forms adequate to narrate an experience that is neither closed nor obeys a causal progression more typical of the literary canon. Motherhood, by its very nature, tends to

express itself through fragmentary, porous and open narrative forms. Fragmentariness responds to the impossibility of sustained temporal continuity: I think of the rhythms of care and the needs of the other – in particular the child – or also of the experience of those narrating the paths of medically assisted procreation, which seem to shatter any attempt at unitary narration. The porous refers to the dissolution of boundaries between self and other, since motherhood is constituted as an intersubjective experience in which maternal identity is built in constant negotiation with the body, desire, the presence/absence of the child and the context. Openness, finally, signals the impossibility of closure of the maternal experience, which does not find a clear ending, but remains a practice in continuous transformation, with effects that extend over time. These characteristics impose modes of writing that move away from causal logic and the linear narrative model and instead orient toward more flexible formats, capable of opening up to other structures, other temporalities and other voices.

In this perspective, Italian matrifocal literature is fully inscribed within this poetics of the maternal. Contemporary Italian women authors propose a radical exploration of the maternal as experience, as dissidence and as a form of knowledge. Writers such as Giorgia Surina, Anna Giurickovic Dato, Michela Marzano, Simona Sparaco, Gaia Manzini, among many others, work on the formal possibilities of this poetics: they narrate from exhausted bodies, from ambivalent bonds, from that uncomfortable position that is the maternal without myths and without veils, breaking the taboos tied to motherhood. The maternity they describe does not appear as consecration, but as conflict, as a place from which to observe the world with a lucidity born of fragility, of desire, of care and of loss. Writing from the maternal implies assuming a subjectivity that is never unitary, because it is always given in relation to the other – to the child or even to society – and to one's lived experience. This narrative decentering generates a writing that unsettles, interrogates and claims a legitimate space from which to think not only the self, but also the shared experience of motherhood, since motherhood, as a cultural construction, crosses all women, mothers and non-mothers alike, and deeply questions society.

Moreover, and in connection with the genealogy of women writers, this poetics is not an exclusively contemporary phenomenon. Already in twentieth-century Italian literature we find significant precedents that started from the concrete experience of women. Writers such as Elsa Morante, Natalia Ginzburg, Alba De Céspedes, Francesca Sanvitale or Laudomia Bonanni, to name a few, addressed in their works, with intimate language, an introspective, sensorial and affective style, themes such as motherhood, marriage, infidelity or domestic oppression, disarticulating the classical forms of narrative starting from subjectivity. Although many of these twentieth-century authors did not center their works exclusively on motherhood, it appeared intertwined with other dimensions of female experience, addressed as an experience situated within power structures. That form of writing already pointed to a poetics of the maternal understood as resistance, as a place of questioning and as a possibility for transformation. In this tradition, language plays a central role: far from being sentimental or minor – as has often been claimed from a patriarchal perspective – the prose of these authors was, and still is, alive, affective, at times experimental, endowed with a lexicon capable of anticipating the times and that allows for thinking of a maternal aesthetics not bound to inherited forms.

5. Maternal Writing and Feminisms

VF: To what extent do contemporary literary representations of motherhood engage with the agendas of Italian and international feminisms? What convergences, tensions, or divergences emerge between maternal writing and feminist practices – particularly with regard to the body, desire, reproductive labor, and subjectivity?

MR: Literary narratives of motherhood maintain a rich and complex relationship with the various currents of feminism. In many cases, these narratives function as textual forms through which to engage with – but also to question – the theoretical frameworks of feminism, especially concerning the subject, the body, practices of care, and new forms of reproduction. On the one hand, I believe there is a clear convergence in the shared effort to depatriarchalize the maternal experience, that is, to free it from the traditional imaginary that associates it with sacrifice, renunciation, and unconditional love. Contemporary women writers portray the maternal as a situated, corporeal, ambivalent experience, marked by the tension between desire and duty, between self and other. In line with Adrienne Rich's (1984) reflections and her theory of the "politics of location," Italian writers speak of motherhood and locate themselves in their own bodies, as material reality, also describing where that experience has led them and how it has been codified in the context in which they live, often very distant from their actual experience.

However, some strands of feminism have shown a certain reluctance to place motherhood at the center of reflection, associating it with a reproduction of the traditional order to be overcome. In contrast, many Italian authors have chosen to critically reclaim the maternal experience, asserting its epistemological and narrative value. In their texts, motherhood does not appear as a mere biological function nor as an essentialist trap, but as a complex, plural, and contradictory experience. In a time dominated by liberal and neoliberal models based on individualism, abstract rationality, and the independence of the subject, these authors write from the body and propose an ethics of care and a politics of interdependence that are profoundly countercultural and feminist. The maternal paradigm that emerges from matrifocal literature can be read as an emblem of a new humanism based on interdependence, reciprocity, and the recognition of vulnerability and human strength. This paradigm challenges both the Western philosophical tradition, which has historically denied the body and the feminine, and certain currents of feminism that have marginalized the maternal experience in the name of an emancipation understood exclusively as individual autonomy.

These voices call for a critical rereading that assumes motherhood as a place of knowledge, agency, and resistance. Reappropriating motherhood, as these writers do, does not mean re-naturalizing its forms nor uncritically accepting the gender mandates that have historically accompanied it, but rather freeing its processes from the symbolic and practical colonization to which they have been subjected. This entails rejecting the imposition of educational models disconnected from the maternal body and desire, and the systematic denial of care in the name of progress or a misunderstood idea of equality. In opposition to some feminist currents that promote absolute autonomy of women as an emancipatory ideal, these authors remind us that human life, of both women and men, is woven with ties, mutual needs, and dependencies that should not be hidden but politically recognized and valued. Ultimately, the texts suggest that the

problem is not motherhood itself, but a socioeconomic and cultural system that turns its back on the education and care of children.

6. The Maternal Between Local and Global

VF: Finally, turning to a transnational perspective: how would you position Italian maternal writing in relation to literature from other cultural or geographic contexts, whether European or beyond? Are there specific traits, genealogies, or urgencies that distinguish the Italian approach?

MR: From a transnational perspective, Italian maternal writing displays distinctive traits that, in my opinion, place it in a unique position within the contemporary literary landscape. Unlike other contexts, in Italy – where the cultural and religious weight placed on the maternal figure must be considered – there is a particularly intense and lucid literary production surrounding themes such as infertility and medically assisted reproduction techniques. This is, without a doubt, one of the aspects that has most captured my attention as a researcher and clearly distinguishes Italian literature from others, such as Spanish literature. As a Spaniard, I live in a country with one of the most permissive laws in Europe regarding assisted reproduction, and one of the leaders in these practices, with a high number of women undergoing procedures that involve numerous physical and psychological difficulties due to the constraints inherent in such processes. However, there are very few literary accounts that deeply and critically explore this experience.

And this is precisely what surprises and moves me in contemporary Italian literature: the way in which many women writers have broken the taboo of infertility and share with readers not only their personal experience, but also their critiques of the difficulties arising from the implementation of the well-known Law 40. They do so through an honest and often searing writing style that is unafraid to show the physical, emotional, and existential impact of treatments, as well as the contradictions that the desire for motherhood can generate in a country where the maternal figure has historically been exalted as an ideal of femininity. The rawness of these testimonies, as well as the openness toward what is unprecedented, failed, or unfinished, make Italian literature a particularly fertile laboratory for thinking about motherhood in its full contemporary complexity and for reflecting on the key issues in the current debate regarding assisted reproduction and its limits.

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