



Textual Mothers/Maternal Texts: Motherhood in Contemporary Women's Literatures

Elizabeth Podnieks, Andrea O'Reilly

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Textual Mothers/Maternal Texts focuses on mothers as subjects and as writers who produce auto/biography, fiction, and poetry about maternity. International contributors examine the mother without child, with child, and in her multiple identities as grandmother, mother, and daughter.

The collection examines how authors use textual spaces to accept, negotiate, resist, or challenge traditional conceptions of mothering and maternal roles, and how these texts offer alternative practices and visions for mothers. Further, it illuminates how textual representations both reflect and help to define or (re)shape the realities of women and families by examining how mothering and being a mother are political, personal, and creative narratives unfolding within both the pages of a book and the spaces of a life. The range of chapters maps a shift from the daughter-centric stories that have dominated the maternal tradition to the matrilineal and matrifocal perspectives that have emerged over the last few decades as the mother's voice moved from silence to speech.

Contributors make aesthetic, cultural, and political claims and critiques about mothering and motherhood, illuminating in new and diverse ways how authors and the protagonists of the texts "read" their own maternal identities as well as the maternal scripts of their families, cultures, and nations in their quest for self-knowledge, agency, and artistic expression.

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