

daughter, including the anticipated loss of long illnesses (which may involve “anticipatory grieving” and attendant guilt (71), sudden death, parental suicide which can be experienced, especially by children, as parental rejection, and abandonment (physical or emotional).

Edelman shows how the legacy of premature mother loss continues throughout life: the way the mother is mourned in childhood or early adulthood determines how future losses are dealt with and how “secure” a person the daughter becomes. Three chapters consider the impact on relationships: with the father, with siblings, and with intimate others. The final chapters explore the complexities of identification and differentiation in the mother-daughter relationship when the mother has died young. Despite this cataloguing of the difficult legacy of mother loss, Edelman’s book ends with the assertion that some positive legacies of loss can be identified, including the insights gained, the memories that are retained, and the reparative activities of creativity and intellectual achievement.

Maternal Impressions: Pregnancy and Childbirth in Literature and Theory

Cristina Mazzoni
Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002

Reviewed by Nephie Christodoulides

In *Maternal Impressions*, Cristina Mazzoni explores the multiple meanings of maternity (pregnancy, childbirth, post-partum, breastfeeding). Maternal impressions on the fetus, impressions of the fetus on the mother, the transformed maternal body in gestation, and parturition constitute Mazzoni’s main focus. Her bold reading of the continuities and discontinuities of maternity is informed by religion, literature, science, feminism, and psychoanalysis.

Mazzoni invokes the fairy tale of Rapunzel in her discussion of maternal cravings, for example, and she reads Luke’s Visitation scene of Mary and Elizabeth for its significance to feminist theology and not as an example of quickening. Turn-of-the-century Italian scientists such as Paolo Mantegazza and Cesare Lombroso, known for their treatises on the nature of women, are juxtaposed with contemporary Italian feminists Adriana Cavarero and Luisa Muraro. In tracing the “insoluble dilemmas, contradictory solutions” (6) of maternity, she considers the work of Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva, as well as nineteenth and early twentieth century Italian women novelists.

Maternal Impressions offers a wealth of information. Mazzoni transforms abstract, critical knowledge into a living text that is highly recommended to mothers, feminists, scholars, and scientists alike.