

Oriana Fallaci

Oriana Fallaci was born on June 29th 1929 in Florence. She joined very young the Italian Resistance during the Second World War. Over her life she worked as a journalist, in particular as a war correspondent. In the 1960s-70s she followed conflicts in Middle East, India, South America and Vietnam. In 1968 she was almost killed in Mexico City by the police during a student protest she was covering. She interviewed many important personalities, like the ayatollah Khomeini. She covered the First Gulf War and then retired to New York, where she witnessed the 9/11 attacks. She died on September 15th 2006 in Florence.





Oriana Fallaci was harshly criticized during her last years due to her fierce anti-Islamists positions, by many labelled as racism. That aside, in her life she wrote many books, among which we can find "*Lettera ad un bambino mai nato*" ("*Letter to neverborn child*"). This is her most famous book and would prove to be an important milestone in the debate about abortion. In fact it was illegal at that time and it would become legal 3 years later.



Letter to neverborn child

The book was published in 1975, when Oriana had a natural abortion of a child from a relation with Alexandros Panagulis. The book, however, is not autobiographical but talks about a woman who can or cannot be identified as Fallaci herself, as the authoress said: “It’s not me in the book. I look like her, just as any other alone, working and thinking woman of our times. This is why I didn’t give her a name, a face or an age, so that any woman could identify in her”.





The book is a dramatic monologue in which the woman lives maternity not as a duty but as an act of responsibility. She asks if it is right to give birth to a child in such a violent, dishonest and hostile world. At first she decides to keep him because, she claims, his life is nobody's business but the child himself. Then doubts start to crowd her mind and she decides not to abort but to keep going with her busy life even though she was suggested not to. Thus she loses the kid. Whilst she is in a hospital she has a vision of a process, where some people (her parents, the father of the child, her gynecologist, a friend and another doctor) were debating about a possible premeditated murder accuse for her. At the end her child intervenes, claiming that she was guilty of "killing without killing" him because of her behaviours and her doubts.



This book gets women to identify in it. It also fights prejudices about working and alone women who decide to carry on a pregnancy. In 1975 in fact a pregnant woman was heavily judged if she got pregnant without a husband. Oriana Fallaci fights this, claiming that a working woman can also be a mom even though many suggest her to illegally (for that time) abort.

