


love unreturned, to more malevolent feelings of anger and sheer hatred. Her work shows that such fears in the pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing

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mond reveals that intensive psychotherapy can help most women identify the causes of such fears and go on to live successful, contented lives. Yet, her analysis also shows that unfortunately for some women, if left unexamined, problems can reap horrific endings, as in the infamous case of Andrea Yates who drowned her five children in a bathtub. By initiating an examination of maternal ambivalence, the author hopes to prevent more tragic murders of children by their mothers.

This book is an important contribution to the field of psychiatry and women's studies. Since Almond's clinical data is derived from middle and upper-middle class white women, however, one wonders how less affluent or racial minority women and fathers (whom she mentions briefly) struggle with feelings of ambivalence. *The Monster Within* should be read by academics, therapists, and mothers alike, and Almond should be encouraged to write a follow-up book that will deepen our understanding of this important but neglected subject.

## **M(O)thering the Nation: Constructing and Resisting National Allegories through the Maternal Body**

Lisa Bernstein, ed.  
Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.

### **Reviewed by Abigail L. Palko**

*M(O)thering the Nation: Constructing and Resisting National Allegories through the Maternal Body* offers innovative and persuasive readings of canonical authors, propagandistic media, and important (but unknown in Anglophone traditions) minority writers, demonstrating ubiquitous global interest in motherhood as a literary trope. The wide range of traditions analyzed further testifies to the importance of the trope in national allegories. Editor Lisa Bernstein argues that maternal scholars must question the trope of “the mother” as a construct, following the example of those who have challenged the concept of “the nation”; this will lead us to “ask for and to tell the missing mothers’ stories that re-imagine alternative maternal roles beyond the model of the patriarchal nuclear family” (217). The sixteen essays gathered

here respond to this challenge and corroborate the argument presented in Bernstein's introduction: that cultural constructions of maternity are used to create, reinforce, and challenge concepts of the nation.

Part I, "Authentic Mothers," looks at the creation of the mother figure in writings from the late 1500s to 1989 (representing six different countries), to demystify a maternal figure rendered powerless and dehumanized by idealization. Analysis of literary responses to British and Spanish colonization of Ireland and Galicia (by Kent R. Lehnhof and Eva Roa White) and social movements like bird conservation (by Alyssa S. Chen) demonstrates ways that the Authentic Mother is a literary construction used for political ends. Political use of the Authentic Mother as government propagandistic rhetoric in Soviet Romania and McCarthy-era America is also addressed (by Lorena Anton and Veronica A. Wilson).

Part II, "Transforming Mothers," looks at twentieth- and twenty-first-century texts that range over a wide geography. Where the texts examined in Part I depict maternal figures deployed in service of a particular political end, those in Part II grapple with more ambiguous representations. These essays consider racial imperatives (by Andrea Bobotis and Laura Strong Davis) and trace the evolution of maternal representation (by María Teresa Martínez-Ortiz and Lynn Makau). The trope of the "Good Mother" is questioned (by Nicole Weickgenannt and Georgia Axiotou), and this section concludes by introducing the mother-daughter relationship into the conversation (by Catherine Bourland Ross).

Part III, "Transgressing Mothers," consists of four essays (again, multi-continental in focus) and Bernstein's concluding chapter. These essays document the Mother's "reconstitution as a dangerous national threat" (to cite Emily Clark); as a failed or monstrous figure (by Clare Bielby and Ana Kothe); or erased altogether (by Jacob Emery and Emily Clark). Bernstein's concluding essay maps a possible trajectory to continue scholarly engagement with maternal literary representations.

This is an important collection for maternal scholars interested in the global development of literary and cultural tropes of motherhood. Overall, the essays in *(M)Othering the Nation* are very strong, collectively depicting a rich understanding of the ways that the concept of mother-as-nation has spanned history and cultures and been put to very particular usage in times of imperialist expansion and during independence movements, often to serve post-colonial ends. The collection also highlights important ways that the inscription of the mother-as-national allegory has been used to envisage counter-cultural concepts of community. The volume is an important contribution to the growing body of scholarship that analyzes the pervasive trope of "Mother-as/of-Nation"; it gives voice to a multitude of mothers in a rich multicultural, global survey.