Why is the nation in a post-colonial world so often seen as a motherland? This study explores the relationship between gender icons and foundational fictions of the nation in different post-colonial spaces. The author’s work on the intersections between independence, nationalism and gender has already proved canonical in the field. This book combines her keynote essays on the mother figure and the post-colonial nation with new work on male autobiography, ‘daughter’ writers, the colonial body, the trauma of the post-colony and the nation in a transnational context. Focusing on Africa as well as South Asia, and sexuality as well as gender, the author offers close readings of writers ranging from Chinua Achebe, Ben Okri and Nelson Mandela to Arundhati Roy and Yvonne Vera, shaping these into a critical engagement with theorists of the nation such as Fredric Jameson and Partha Chatterjee. Moving beyond cynical deconstructions of the post-colony, the book mounts a reassessment of the post-colonial nation as a site of potential empowerment, as a ‘paradoxical refuge’ in a globalised world. It acts on its own impassioned argument that post-colonial and nation-state studies address substantively issues hitherto raised chiefly within international feminism.
Postcolonialism or postcolonial studies is the academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism, focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. The name postcolonialism is modeled on postmodernism, with which it shares certain concepts and methods, and may be thought of as a reaction to or departure from colonialism in the same way postmodernism is a reaction to modernism. The ambiguous term colonialism may refer either to