Stories of women: gender and narrative in the postcolonial nation

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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.

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Elleke Boehmer. Why is the nation in a postcolonial world so often seen as a motherland? Stories of women is a pathbreaking study of the perenially fascinating relationship between foundational fictions of the nation and gendered images. The book focuses critically on postcolonial spaces ranging from West Africa to India. - Boehmer, E. (2005) Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation (Manchester: Manchester University Press). Chinweizu, J. and I. Madubuike (1980) Towards the Decolonization of African Literature (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Press). Coundouriotis, E. (1999) Claiming History: Colonialism, Ethnography, and the Novel (New York: Columbia University Press). (See Elleke Boehmer's Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation.) Of course, we know that authors are much more than their biographies and their fictions much more than postcolonial or borderland protein sequences; if it were not so, we would not have Raja Rao hailed as the great novelist of India, knowing of his taste for French wine and that he wrote most of his fictions in a thirteenth-century castle in the. In Crossing Borderlands Andrea A. Lunsford and Lahoucine Ouzgane declare in the introduction to their edited volume how