

Motherlands, mothers and nationalist sons: theorising the en-gendered nation

Woman is an infinite, untrodden territory of desire which at every stage of historical deterritorialisation, men in search of material for utopias have inundated with their desires. (Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*)¹

Among postcolonial and feminist critics it is now widely accepted that the nationalist ideologies which informed, in particular, the first wave of independence movements and of postcolonial literatures from 1947, are cast in a gendered mould. Nationalism, which has been so fundamental to the decolonisation process around the world, bears a clear mark for gender, and this gender marking, rather than being referred to a monolithic or transhistorical concept of patriarchy, can be explained as a specific historical development of power defined by sexual difference. To put it more plainly, this book submits that, without this marking for gender, it is well-nigh impossible to conceive of the modern nation. Whether we look at its iconography, its administrative structures or its policies, the new postcolonial nation is historically a male-constructed space, narrated into modern self-consciousness by male leaders, activists and writers, in which women are more often than not cast as symbols or totems, as the bearers of tradition.

Stories of women explores the intricate, often paradigmatic negotiations between gender, sexuality and the post-independence nation which have marked postcolonial narratives, including novels by women, from the independence period up to the present day. The central concept informing the book, therefore, which this chapter will theorise, and the following chapters will further exemplify and expand, is that gender forms *the* formative dimension for the construction of nationhood, if in relation to varying contextual determinants across different regions and countries. This is a point which, with remarkable unanimity, leading male theorists of the nation such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Anthony Smith have either ignored or failed to address, often choosing even so to define the nation,

whether overtly or covertly, as normatively a male terrain, a masculine enterprise.

By contrast, since the mid-1990s there has been a virtual boom in gender-and-nation studies by women critics, including Susan Andrade, Nelufer de Mel, Marjorie Howes, Deniz Kandyoti, Anne McClintock, Sangeeta Ray, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, Florence Stratton, Kumkum Sangari and myself. These critics have examined in close-up, if from different perspectives, and with respect to different constituencies (Africa, South Asia, Ireland, the Caribbean), 'the manipulation of gender politics in the exercise of national rule', the nation's 'sanctioned institutionalisation of gender difference' – the 'en-gendering' of the nation, in Ray's pithy phrase.² What, such critics ask, are the rationales and mechanisms through which the nation is almost invariably expressed as a male or male-led community in the Anglophone world, one which may, however, simultaneously be symbolised in the overarching figure of a woman: the woman-as-nation? How is it that, whether nationalism speaks the language of emptiness and desire, or of fulfilment and achievement of meaning, the codification of that meaning, of self and of those objects of desire, is gendered? Moreover, they contend that this gender weighting has historically tended to delimit nationalist identifications by women, although not universally so, and recently to a lesser extent, as my final chapters will suggest.

But first I want to epitomise these central ideas by considering two definitive novels, and relevant selected intertexts, in which the fortunes of embryonic nations are embodied in hero figures, comparable to how in Benedict Anderson or Ernest Gellner the nation is emblematised as a horizontal 'fraternity' or intellectual brotherhood.³ Peter Abrahams's *A Wreath for Udomo* (1956) remarkably presages the trade-offs and compromises of Ghana's achievement of independence, Africa's first nation to be decolonised from Britain. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) retrospectively allegorises India's birth as a nation, a process already symbolically mediated by the political discourse of the 'tryst with destiny'.⁴ Although they differ in multiple ways, the two novels have in common several paradigms of new nationality and the postcolonial nation founded on the imagery of national sons. To open the discussion with these two novels is in itself an anticipatory and symbolic gesture, in that Africa and India will comprise the two postcolonial 'constituencies' predominantly represented by this book.

Ranging across the wide terrain of African literature of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the nationalist hero, often exiled or alienated from home (mother and heart(h)land), is cast as resilient and courageous (the soldier, the leader); idealistic or visionary (the poet); or resourceful, even omnicompetent (where women are absent from the arena of action, men must learn to 'do' for themselves). Michael Udomo in Peter Abrahams's *A Wreath for Udomo* is a

representative case.⁵ *A Wreath for Udomo* is a tale of exile from and return to Africa embodied in the activist Udomo's efforts to claim self-government for his nation and identity for his people, initially from the base of London. As the chief liberator he stands in the dominant position in the text; its positive terms (reason, assertiveness, resourcefulness, conviction) are confirmed in his character and action. He is also, unsurprisingly, vigorously masculine: he is the leader of '[o]ur young men [who] must ceaselessly prepare themselves for the fight'.

Contrasted with Udomo and highlighting his status as the one true national leader, are two centres of rival power, each in some way a negation or aberration of those characteristics and qualities which Udomo incarnates. On the one side are the members of the exiled elite (all male) who are at first suitably rational and freedom-loving, but who eventually fall from grace, turning to 'tribalism' and subverting Udomo's plans. On the other are 'the women', all of them either inconsequential or deviant. The single positive female symbol is that of Africa. It is only in an idealised form, purged of her materiality and her other-than-spiritual sexuality, that the feminine can be strong and single-minded. As her single upright and constant devotee, Udomo wins the right to be the follower and consort of Mother Africa and her most eloquent worshipper. On returning to Africa to claim power, he salutes the shoreline in tones of annunciation and adoration. Ardently identifying with sun/son imagery, Udomo claims agency and 'sonship' for himself: 'Mother Africa! Oh, Mother Africa, make me strong for the work that I must do. Don't forget me in the many you nurse. I would make you great. I would have the world respect you and your children. I would have the sun of freedom shine over you once more'.⁶

The sentiment of Udomo's cries, the yearning to cleave, champion and unite, recalls something of the longing and striving expressed in (the historically prior) Negritude poetry, once described as a 'vindication of the black *man's* humanity in the face of the white man's racism' (my emphasis).⁷ The speaker in Negritude poetry is invariably male; the object of his desire female. Assuming the attitude of a supplicant and worshipper, the Negritude poet addresses himself to Africa, continent of his people, location of their historical memory, and conceived of in womanly form. Again, Africa is never so much Africa as when the landmass is incarnated as woman, as a manifestation of the people's (alleged and acclaimed) corporeality, mystery and sensuality. In Léopold Senghor's much-quoted poem 'Femme nue, femme noire', for instance, the woman is apostrophised as Beloved and as desirable body.⁸ Her physical form is glorified, even fetishised: it is a body triumphantly corporeal, entirely body, and thus, in terms of the values endorsed by the poetry, a true embodiment of Africa. Yet, even if sexualised, her form is also maternal; she is the nurturing presence of the past: '*J'ai grandi à ton ombre; la douceur de tes mains bandait mes yeux*' ('In your shadow I have grown up; the gentleness of

your hands was laid over my eyes').⁹ Love for home and Africa is expressed simultaneously as sexual desire and as filial adoration – a yearning to cleave with a/the body of the land that is at once maternal lap and lapping flesh of the desired woman. The conjuncture is possible because the land of the poet's desire is both the place of his childhood dreams, associated with his mother, and the cherished object of his present need and future hope.

Camara Laye is not strictly speaking a Negritude writer, yet his terms of apostrophe in recalling Africa and the African woman, also produced in the 1950s, are similarly lyrical, even rhapsodic, and again bear comparison with those of Udomo. *L'Enfant Noir* (1953) (*The Dark Child* (1955)), which is roughly contemporaneous with *A Wreath for Udomo*, is the nostalgic autobiographical account of Laye's Cameroonian childhood and its hankering for the African heart(h)land is intensely mother-bonded.¹⁰ Laye's mother is the still point – though far from voiceless – to which the increasingly more alienated child returns for sustenance. Echoing her centrality, the novel begins with a dedication which is also, as for Udomo, an invocation from an exiled son: a call to 'my mother', who is also Mother, a generic 'Black Woman, Woman of Africa', a muse of, simultaneously, nostalgic longing and belonging. In contrast to this mystic mother force, the male characters in Camara Laye's autobiography have specific jobs of work to do and a more localised power – the father is a goldsmith, the son an engineer-to-be. As the practical actors and authors of African life, males are the more normatively human.

If we are to believe Aijaz Ahmad's persuasive case concerning the canonisation of writing preoccupied with national experience as 'Third World' literature, Salman Rushdie is the definitive 'Third World' writer, not least because he is at the same time a leading proponent of postmodernist narrative form.¹¹ Rushdie himself repeatedly dramatises and literalises the understanding which forms the point of critical focus of this book: that 'legends make reality', 'homelands' are for a large part imaginary, and, to round off the syllogism, that the nation is as much a fictional construct as it is real.¹² The highly influential *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* (1983) thus do not hesitate to narrativise and allegorise the postcolonial histories of India and Pakistan, portraying these in terms of ironic epic and caricature, respectively.

Unsurprisingly for two such self-aware national allegories, both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* are knitted together using the complicated, symbolically loaded lines of family trees, or the paradigm of the nation as family, which, certainly in the case of *Shame*, reflects the monopolistic operation of nepotistic power. At the same time, in particular in the earlier novel, national history is played out in the life of a single protagonist, clearly identified as male, as a son figure: Saleem Sinai in *Midnight's Children*, and, in *Shame*, the more 'peripheral hero', Omar Khayyam Shakil. The destinies of both characters match, or at least march in step with, the fortunes of their nation: as Saleem says, state

and self are equated. The same could not be said of the dominant female characters. Their roles *vis-à-vis* the nation and the national family, by contrast, occupy an idealised or fabulistic sphere, one that is cast, even by the second-guessing, 'India-as-mother'-aware Rushdie, in essentialised, at times misogynistic terms.¹³

Midnight's Children is of course a novel teeming with plots, sub-plots and multiple minor heroes, not least the thousand other children of the independence hour, Saleem's virtual brothers and sisters. Even so, the relationship that provides the central axis for the novel's entire second half develops between the child of midnight, the hyper-symbolic Saleem – Hindu and Muslim, highborn yet plebian – and 'the Widow' of India, the Indira Gandhi surrogate. This Cruella De Vil monster, who significantly never appears in person, is determined to impose restraint upon India's 'teeming' through her rapacious agent and Saleem's rival, the castrator Shiva. Rushdie thus inflates and intentionally distorts the traditional equation of mother figure and nation, encapsulated in the novelist Bankim's nineteenth-century 'Bharat Mata' or 'Mataram' formulation. By short-circuiting history (the 1975 Emergency) and myth ('Maya-shakti mothers' and destructive widows), the novel thus succeeds in setting up a malign (feminine) principle as the motor force governing the disintegration of the by-now-dysfunctional national family.¹⁴ Along very similar lines, in *Shame*, the metaphysical quality of the nation's shame – all that has gone amiss in terms of the abuse of power – is embodied in the blushing, wordless, demented figure of Sufiya Zinobia, Omar Khayyam's at first virginal, then vampirish wife.¹⁵ The deeply compromised representation of both characters, the Widow and 'Shame', demonstrates that Rushdie's national imaginary operates, even if cynically, as a specifically male construct, projected on to, yet ironically distanced from, archetypal embodiments of woman. As Nalini Natarajan comments in her reading of *Midnight's Children*, woman functions for Rushdie as a multifaceted sign in the imagining of national community – but, in particular, it could be added, in the imagining of failed, flawed or disjointed community.¹⁶

As these readings both suggest, it is virtually a literary and socio-political given that mother symbols cement national feeling, and that, worldwide, the cognate-metaphors of soil, earth, home and family buttress the process of making national claims, or invoking the modern nation into being. Constructing sexual difference is bound up with symbol-making and signifying practices, and in this regard the everyday vocabularies of the nation are no exception.

Consider, for example, the metaphors buried in the terms 'motherland' – and/or 'continent', 'country', 'tongue' – and the less frequently used 'fatherland'. Of immediate interest are the differing symbolic valencies of these terms, implying, like the literary examples above, that images of mothers and of men

occupy different positions and levels in national iconographies and ideologies. Syntactically, the epithet 'father' cannot be used interchangeably with that of 'mother'; so, too, the meanings that collect around the mother metaphor when applied to lands, languages and other national entities are incommensurate with the idea of the father. The image of the mother invites connotations of origins – birth, hearth, home, roots, the umbilical cord – and rests upon the frequent, and some might say 'natural', identification of the mother with the beloved earth, the national territory and the first-spoken language, the national tongue. In contrast the term fatherland has conventionally lent itself to contexts perhaps more strenuously nationalistic, where the appeal is to *Bruderschaft*, filial duty, the bonds of fraternity and paternity.

As with figures of speech, so with narratives: literary tales, but also stories more broadly, replicate and inscribe gender roles in the nation. Indeed, narrative processes which tell the self into being may generally speaking be held to underpin the construction of identity, including national, class and sexual identity, as will be demonstrated many times in the course of this book. Any nationalist discourse demands the narrativistic invocation of birth and origins, historical continuity and synthetic closure – a demand that the novel, its fortunes closely tied to those of the emergent middle class, as to the nation's, has always been ready to meet.¹⁷ The novel, as Simon Gikandi among others suggests, clears a space for the modern national community to narrate itself out of the traditional past¹⁸ – typically, I would add, by way of its 'staging' of the iconic 'drama' of filial insurrection, generational conflict and eventual resolution. The postcolonial novel in particular, whether in Nigeria, India or Britain, allows for the rationalisation and validation of selected 'national' customs and traditions, including the embedding of talismans of fatherly power and motherly influence – those remnants of the past which are deemed still to have value. It is for this reason that the distinctive configurations of character in novels deployed in the service of nationalism may be adopted, as here, to derive paradigms for the nation's symbolisation of both masculine and feminine gender.

At a metatextual level, too, the novel operates as a powerful medium of nationalist self-articulation. It provides the writer with a space where nationalist traditions of 'sonship' or filial inheritance structuring the public sphere intersect with the vocabularies of patrimony and filiation which inform modern writing, from South Asia and Africa through to the Americas.¹⁹ Establishing himself as at once an inheritor and a remaker of cultural traditions, the male nationalist writer both fashions his identity as a citizen of his modern nation-state and, setting himself against the European canon taught in university colleges across the colonised world, claims rights of literary paternity. In an oeuvre inaugurated by *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *No Longer at Ease* (1960), Chinua Achebe, for example, simultaneously inscribes a formative narrative of the Igbo community, interrogates his father's legacy of

Christian conversion and Nigeria's post-independence history, and, in so doing, secures his status as a national writer.

It is of course true that, from the time of the late eighteenth-century revolutions, nationalism across the world developed alongside, indeed often as indistinguishable from, liberation movements in support of equal representation and in opposition to vertically organised authority. Nationalism, whether expressed as cultural self-representation or as the demand for political enfranchisement, makes its appeal, or professes to make its appeal, to all citizens equally: hence its worldwide attractiveness to feminists and reformers in quest of democratic rights. Whereas dynastic or colonial structures signify hierarchy, the controlling idea in nationalism is of a homogeneous, horizontally structured society: all are equally interpellated; all theoretically participate on the same terms.

In practice, however, and certainly in the operation of its iconographies and spectacles of power, nationalism operates as a masculine *family drama* (borrowing a term from Freud's 1909 work), based on, as will shortly be seen, gendered and unequal images of family roles.²⁰ In one of Cynthia Enloe's snappy formulations: '[women] have often been treated more as symbols than as active participants by nationalist movements organised to end colonialism and racism'.²¹ Judith Butler sheds light on this central contradiction of nationalism in a 2000 essay on the paradoxes of universality, noting that feminist inheritors of Europe's age of revolutions demanded equal rights on two grounds: on the basis of their sexual difference, *and* as a logical extension of universal enfranchisement.²² As things turned out, within the still-hegemonic, hierarchical and male-dominated state structures of the time, the second goal, the extension of male rights, proved more achievable or permissible than the recognition of the first, the rights of difference. The situation has persisted until the present day.

The symbolic economy or drama of nationalism would thus appear to be sharply delineated by gender, or, more precisely, by tropes that match up with prototypical categories of sexual difference. From this emerges the semiotic schema central to this study. Almost invariably, as *A Wreath for Udomo* in particular demonstrated, key national 'actors' are cast in conventionally masculine, typically 'alpha-male', roles: as a soldier, leader or representative of state, as an official artist or faithful citizen-hero – in most cases as a fraternal or otherwise as a fatherly figure. (It may be of course, as in chapter 4, that a national son grows into the role of father of the nation across the course of a narrative detailing his exploits, though he will continue to honour the nation or land as his mother.) By contrast, woman as equal participant in the *action* of the drama is noticeably absent. She is rarely assigned a role *alongside* that of the male actors, even, or perhaps especially, after the achievement of national independence. External to the 'serious' affairs of the national community, she assumes an emblematic status as a symbol of maternal self-sacrifice or of the nation's

fierce, 'virginal' pride – if, that is, she is not excluded from the action entirely as an unknown subversive quantity and a threat.

Developing the schema further, I propose that male roles in the national family drama may be characterised as *metonymic*. As the author and subject of nationalism, the male is a part of the national community or contiguous with it; his place is alongside that of his brother citizens. Where he appears as a personification of the nation, he is often individualised – a John Bull, an Uncle Sam, a Saleem Sinai born alongside the other children of midnight (though in a pole position).²³ In contrast, the figure of the woman in the drama of national tropes is usually seen as generalised and generic (not to say generative also). Often set in relation to the figure of her nationalist son, her ample, childbearing, fully *representative* maternal form typically takes on the status of *metaphor*. Cast as originator or progenitress, a role authorised by her national sons, she herself, however, is positioned *outside* the central script of national self-emergence. In special cases, where, for example, she assumes the androgynous shape of a woman fighter, soldier or activist (as in the mature Parvati of *Midnight's Children*, Achebe's 'girl' Gladys, or Ngugi's Waringa, as chapter 2 will describe), a woman character may be ranked together with her nationalist brothers. Yet, despite or indeed because of the cross-dressing, her singularity is totemic: it is at once a product of specialised conditions, and a means of reinforcing the *a priori* construct of the national subject as male.²⁴

In general, then, the woman – and usually the mother – figure *stands for* the national territory and for certain national values: symbolically she is ranged above the men; in reality she is kept below them. If male filial figures experience the gravitational pull to the national ground, women constitute part of its gravid mass. As, for example, in the iconography of Hindu nationalism, in many forms of African nationalism, as also in Pan-Africanism, the elevated woman figure takes on massive, even continent-wide proportions. She is the Great Mother, Durga, Mama Afrika, embracing each and every one of her peoples in her generous arms. This *family romance*, in which the male leader, citizen-hero or writer addresses himself to his national mother (land, home) in tones variously deferential or reverential and gains her protection, repeatedly reproduces itself in the literature and history of national movements. At the same time, however, it is the case that right across the continent and the sub-continent women, subsisting as they may despite the bright myths of motherhood, make up the greater part of these territories' illiterate, oppressed and poor.

When viewed from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, some of this may admittedly appear rather obvious and familiar. How long has it not been that the female form has been deployed as a repository of value in patriarchal societies? In the shape of Madeleine, Britannia, Liberty, Joan of Arc, Boudicca – or, more recently, of, say, Princess Diana, Indira Gandhi, Margaret

Thatcher – woman has served as the personification of national virtues and, sometimes, vices, even as ordinary women within nations have continued to occupy subordinate positions. Then again, it could be said that the dominance of mother images in nationalism is a natural outgrowth, an expression at a socio-political level of a respect for mothers built into social attitudes cross-culturally.²⁵ Therefore, in answer to the proposition that nationalism bears pronounced patriarchal features, it might simply be argued that this is only another expression of the worn if resilient figure of the father, a projection of male heterosexual desire, or the honouring of the mother writ large. As Maurice Godelier has aptly put it: ‘It is not sexuality which haunts society, but society which haunts the body’s sexuality. Sex-related differences between bodies are continually summoned as testimony to social relations and phenomena that have nothing to do with sexuality. Not only as testimony to, but also testimony for – in other words, as legitimation.’²⁶ Gender always already gives nationalism its legitimating symbols, its self-validating show.

On this point hangs a related objection, namely, that the symbolic baggage nationalism has inherited from older social formations should not be regarded as *necessarily* impinging on the ideology itself, or on the allocation of roles and power within the nation. As gender is usually ‘implicated in the conception and construction of power’, in Joan W. Scott’s words, why make an issue of the nation’s gender markings in particular? It is perhaps unrealistic to assume, as I may be construed as doing, that the artifice of the nation be free – or, given its assertions of equality, be relatively free – of such formative symbolic acts.²⁷

To this the response must be that no matter how widely entrenched the symbols, nor yet how iconoclastic, recuperative or revolutionary the ideology – and its power against empire has indeed been important and immense – nationalism’s vocabularies of self-representation do matter; fundamentally so. As I have emphasised, it is not merely the case that nationalism springs from masculinised iconographies, social memories and state structures (this would be the ‘soft’ argument for the nation as a gendered construct). It is also that, the nation’s liberatory promises to the contrary, gender has become (though possibly need not be) its *formative medium*. Metaphors of self, place and history reveal not simply how national entities identify, but also how and why power relations in the nation are configured. As Florence Stratton writes in a commentary on Fredric Jameson’s gender-blind theory of narrative as ‘a socially symbolic act’, the ‘national allegory’ which allegedly structures the Third World text is subtended and supported by the standard ‘sexual allegory’ that plays on the binary terms of male/female, good/evil.²⁸ The first allegory, in other words, is inconceivable without the second. If the structures of nations or nation-states are soldered onto the struts of gender hierarchies, and if the organisation of power in the nation is profoundly informed by those structures, how then is the nation to be imagined outside of gender?

This assertion is stronger than that which would refer only to the legitimating force of standard gender-specific tropes. The claim is instead is that nationalism articulates and consolidates itself through such tropes because it is ideologically imbricated in gender. The male-dominated family drama of most nationalisms embodies, justifies and *reproduces* the organisation of power within nationalist movements and in nation-states, and delimits the national participation of women. It is this androcentrism of the nation that co-exists comfortably with and indeed informs the dominant orientation to mother images. However, as a consequence of the persuasive representation of nations as collectivities of equals, questions concerning who occupies the position of subject and who of object are too infrequently asked of the national community. The codification of gendered power within nationalism, believed to be contingent and context-based, has till relatively recently been only superficially investigated.

It is important, however, to avoid seeming to attribute the 'genderedness' of nations to timeless truths or universal templates such as an unchanging and all-pervasive patriarchy. An argument of this kind would seek, for example, to attribute the close relationship between patriarchy and the nation to the tendency *innate* in both to favour unitary order and to suppress plurality.²⁹ As against such a reading, how might the male dominance of, in particular, established and successful nationalist movements be *historically* explained? Here the family connection becomes especially significant, as does the concept of national identity as constructed and incorporative, and as reproducible across different contexts.³⁰

Nationalism, whether ideology or movement, is never *sui generis*: it relies on the formative structures which are immediately to hand, and across history these have tended to comprise the formations of the old dynastic state and the patriarchal family. In the capitalist societies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in Europe as in Latin America, as later in Europe's other colonised regions, the nation grew up in conjunction with the formation of the bourgeois family, characterised by its construction of the home as a private, feminine sphere.³¹

Putting it another way, nationalism, although it is an unmistakable development of a dynamic modernity, typically asserting rationalist objectives with regard to social organisation and political representation, is also classically 'Janus-faced'.³² It legitimates itself via recourse to archaic rituals and time-honoured traditions – in short, to so-called organic social and cultural forms. It was relative to the private, hierarchical collectivity of the family, ostensibly a natural or given structure, that the horizontally organised nation found an ideal way to sanction its structures of power and to impose its boundaries. Existing, binary gender differences were repeated and reinforced within another dichotomy, of the feminine private as against the masculine public

sphere, with the result that men defined national agency and apportioned the rights of citizenship by and between themselves.

Within the space of domesticity, as Anne McClintock among others has observed, the historical formation of gender was therefore successfully recast as women's externalised, static and a-historic relationship to power.³³ If men occupied the dimension of time – linear, future-directed, associated with change and progress – women presided over the static dimension of space – the past, tradition, nature. This development was particularly pronounced in the colonial context, as in Partha Chatterjee's now canonical explanation, deftly elaborated by Susie Tharu and K. Lalita.³⁴ Here a nationalist movement might adapt the political models of the west in the 'material' domain in order, contradictorily, to assert its freedom, yet reserve the 'spiritual', private domain of the family, a space so-called untainted by colonialism, to articulate a cultural nationalism that inflected those imported modes of thought.

The state should not, however, be left out of the picture of the modern nation's emergence. In a context where older forms of feudal and religious authority were disintegrating, state structures importantly found in nationalism a new means of representation and legitimation.³⁵ While nationalism endowed the middle classes with an ideology that insisted on wider, more democratic access to power, the inherited frameworks of the state at the same time provided an important means of establishing and maintaining their new political order. However, as these inherited formations and the capitalist economic system operated according to principles of gender-domination, in the state, as in the new workplaces, as also in the new middle-class home, lines of control emanated from the feared and/or revered figures of fathers.

Via these mutually reinforcing pathways, therefore, the new nation-state secured a controlling metaphor for its existence in the unitary and hierarchical structure of the patriarchal family. The family became at one and the same time an important vehicle of social organisation and a primary carrier of the gendered ideology of the middle class. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of post-revolutionary American society: 'every association, to be effective, must have a head, and the natural head of the conjugal association is the husband. . . . in the little society composed of man and wife, as in the great society of politics, the aim of democracy is to regulate and legitimate necessary power.'³⁶ A telling analogy to this appears in the 1980s African Charter on Human and People's Rights which, using the generic pronoun 'he' throughout, observes that 'the family shall be the natural unit and basis of society' (Article 18).³⁷ The step from embracing these figures of the male-headed national family and the feminine domestic space, to endorsing concepts of passive state-mothers, is a relatively easy one to take. Reproducing the 'natural', gendered division of the public as against the private sphere at a macropolitical level, the nation-state guarantees not only its own stability but also its reproduction over time.

The nation's *en-gendering* took on particularly acute forms in Europe's former colonies where the intersection of the male dominance prevailing within imposed and indigenous social structures meant that a *hyper-masculinity* became both the overdetermined legacy of colonial state power and a means of resistance to it.³⁸ As with colonial power, the most successful forms of national power worked through exploiting pre-existing power relations of hierarchy and subordination. So it was almost universally the case that the condition of woman under empire was deemed a key index of a people's level of 'civilisation'. Male-led imperialism effectively operated as a process whereby white men dominated native men by wresting away control over 'their' women in order to civilise them (the men), as, for example, in British India with legislation such as the banning of sati (1829) or the permitting of widow remarriage (1856). Far from being merely an outward manifestation of colonial rule, patriarchy, the articulation of imported with native forms, became its primary medium. In consequence, as chapter 5 describes at greater length, to male nationalists even more intensely than to colonials, 'woman', even or especially if vulnerable to co-optation, was set up as the redemptive carrier of the nation's cultural traditions and hence as the signifier to men of the community's integrity.³⁹ Women in the new postcolonial nations came to be subjected to a syncretic fusion of male rules, encoded as principles of law and enforced as cultural authenticity.

With national liberation essentially defined as male liberation – as resistance to colonial iconographies of native weakness – it was predictable that at independence the new national masters shifted smoothly into the halls and offices of power vacated by the male coloniser. These offices and other state formations, instruments of colonial rule imported from Europe, in any case remained in form and expression elitist, patrimonial and alienated from civil society. In this situation, where further legitimation of the state's power required, the family metaphor – local, familiar, embedding the a-political, domestic character of women – could again be put to official use. Despite claims of universal enfranchisement, power was confined to the authoritative positions that the trope made available, in particular, the role of 'father of the nation', a title assigned to national leaders from Gandhi through Kenyatta and Kaunda, to Michael Manley and Mandela. In a word, therefore, at independence an ideology privileging mother symbols did not in reality empower mothers; instead, the authority of national fathers and sons became the more deeply entrenched. Rather than extending a politics of self-assertion to women, postcolonial nations tended historically to re-enshrine male privileges even as nationalist men sought to regain control over the women who had become empowered during the struggle for independence.

In this context it is not surprising that the mother symbol has provided a powerful talisman for male-led pan-nationalist as well as national movements. 'She' stands as a figure both embodying and transcending national boundaries. 'Non-ethnic nationalisms', in Tom Nairn's definition, favour 'a personalised

and totemic symbolism', in the case of Britain the monarchy, in Africa the image of Mama Afrika, in order to help arouse and crystallise supra- or transnational loyalties.⁴⁰ Here, once again, processes of compensatory representation are discernible. The identification of an entire continent – or in the case of India, sub-continent – as a mythical mother betrays clear affinities with iconic material adopted from Europe. Africa in popular colonial mythology was personified as a dark, alluring woman: Rider Haggard's She, Kurtz's African woman in Conrad. Woman, the unknown, dangerous and seductive other, habitually equates both with the 'East' and, as Freud pointed out, with 'the dark continent'.⁴¹

In sum, postcolonial independence across the world has manifested by and large as a take-over rather than a radical transformation of gendered power. For this reason the strong patriarchal presence built into nationalist ideologies and the nation-state has continued even in liberatory and revolutionary situations to dominate more or less unchallenged. Where anti-colonial nationalisms were marrying the symbolic legacies of at least two patriarchal systems, male elites, as in other spheres, remained manifestly in charge: they defined the shape and meaning of their new nationhood on behalf of 'their' people. Representations of the national territory that formed a part of colonial rhetoric were assimilated to local conventions of respect for the mother and the land. The nation as a body of people was imagined as a family arrangement in which the leaders had the authority of fathers and, in relation to the maternal national entity, adopted the position of sons.

The obvious conclusion to all this is that the unshackling of the colonised world by way of nationalism has tended to date to preclude a corresponding full emancipation for most women, including those of the middle class. In the iconographies of nation-states there have conventionally been few positive roles on offer to women that are not stereotypes and/or connected in some way to women's biological capacity for mothering. As regards women's day-to-day reality the situation is even bleaker. Notwithstanding the achievement of family and work rights by some women, as for example in Cuba, notwithstanding United Nations' efforts to raise awareness in this respect, the queenly status of mother icons only serves to point up by contrast the actual lowly status of women within most postcolonial nations. Instances of the nation-state mobilising against women appear right the way across the decolonised world, especially where Third World economic decline has produced crises in state power. Rarely if ever has military or political participation by women in the liberation movement translated into progressive gender politics.⁴² Maria Mbilyni outlines measures taken in Tanzania during the 1970s and 1980s to control the migration of women from the rural areas.⁴³ The Zimbabwean and Zambian states have since the 1980s undertaken regular campaigns against prostitution, baby-dumping, squatting and 'uncleanness' – ways of obtaining control not simply over unplanned urban settlement, but specifically, of disciplining

women as urban dwellers.⁴⁴ Caribbean countries, too, have vigorously, even oppressively, heterosexualised the nation-state, in particular its sex industries, in order to mediate the pressures of globalisation.⁴⁵ Neocolonial India's collaboration with dam-building multinationals, as Arundhati Roy describes, put women, tribals and the rural poor in the direct firing line.⁴⁶

Later chapters will address the questions that have been urging to speak themselves within the interstices of the foregoing propositions. That is, how are postcolonial women, specifically in this case women writers, to work their way around the patriarchal legacies embedded within nationalism, especially as postcolonial literature has been so deeply imbued with nationalist themes? In nations that are in fact less mother- than father(ed)-lands, where and how are women to find a voice, to position themselves as children or daughters of the nation? How do they interrupt the duologue of colonial master and national father? And how are male writers to respond to the nation once its fictive status as a natural given and a mother-surrogate is exposed?

I will suggest that the contradictory legacies of nationalism which have often denied women and other minorities a voice are to some extent addressed when these marginalised groups begin to claim access, even if circumspectly, to the public sphere. They go against the hegemonic line when they tell their own histories, re-place the unplaced space in the national drama with the concrete figures, bodies and voices of 'daughters'. Or, where, as in chapter 8, in the face of neocolonialism, they confront the implications of the nation as fiction, even as political nightmare. This assertion embeds an important premiss, which I share with Susan Andrade, that though they *appear* to deal more than do men in the domestic, the private, the 'small', women writers are always, even if implicitly or covertly, engaging the political.⁴⁷

In order not to second-guess the readings that follow, I will at this point confine my comments on women writers' engagement with the national to a few observations on their fictionalisation of community. As intimated, the postcolonial novel has been dominated by historical and nationalist themes: in this respect, however, it provides a pre-eminent site for active reinterpretation and contestation by women involved in telling the story of their day-to-day lives. So we find that novelists such as the Nigerian Flora Nwapa, the Zimbabwean Tsitsi Dangarembga, or the Indian writer Manju Kapur situate their novels *alongside* the conventional narrative of a national, public history – the account, that is, of the deeds and exploits of nationalist males.⁴⁸ By concentrating on ordinary experience in a community of women, as later chapters will show in greater detail, these writers succeed in foregrounding women's presence in history and in claiming a moral and political validity for the parts they play. In the case of Nwapa, most prominently, this claim is reinforced by the assertive, conversational babble of her narrative style.

Nwapa's technique of sharing out narrative responsibility among a chorus of voices is also one employed by Bessie Head in her historical colloquy *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind* (1981).⁴⁹ More formally than Nwapa, Head, who as a South African exile of many years' standing lacked a passport and an officially recognised nationality, engages with communal history, the experience of a Botswanan village suffering political and environmental change, yet consistently avoids the single perspective, the conventional 'national' line. In order to speak in others' tongues, or to allow those tongues to speak, Head gathers together the testimonies of village members, male and female. Multivocality becomes in her text a method and a formal principle – and a means of imagining community for herself. It is by commemorating voice and babble that a woman writer like Head begins to irrupt her presence as both participant and observer into the re-presented, idealised nation to which she aspires.

Notes

- 1 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 294.
- 2 Sangeeta Ray, *En-gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 5.
- 3 See, for instance, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalisms* [1983], rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 7 and 36, or Ernest Gellner's fabulistic characterisation of early European national formation as involving (male) labour migrants and iconic shepherd boys in *Nations and Nationalisms* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 58–62. See also the introduction to this book, pp. 7–8.
- 4 See Neil ten Kortenaar, 'Midnight's Children and the allegory of history', *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 26:2 (1995), 41–62, on how the novel invites a provisional faith in the myth of the nation – one that it itself explodes.
- 5 Peter Abrahams, *A Wreath for Udomo* [1956] (London: Faber, 1979). See p. 15 for the quotation that follows.
- 6 Abrahams, *A Wreath for Udomo*, pp. 122–3. This bears comparison with Kamau Brathwaite's *Mother Poem* and *Sun Poems*, in which the mother is identified with the land, while the poet, the son of the 'i:land', draws on sun-god myths to present himself as the inheritor of that land, who will grant it i:dentity. See *Mother Poem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); *Sun Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- 7 Clive Wake, 'Invitation to dissent', review of Julio Finn's *Voices of Negritude*, *Third World Quarterly*, 11:1 (January 1989), 178.
- 8 Léopold S. Senghor, *Poèmes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973), pp. 12–15; and *Selected Poems*, trans. John Reed and Clive Wake (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 16–17.
- 9 The same caring gesture is invoked in 'Nuit de Sine', and, sure enough, the Beloved, both desired and nurturing, is duly seen to comfort Senghor's poet.

- 10 Camara Laye, *The African Child*, trans. James Kirkup (London: Fontana, 1980). Camara is in fact the writer's surname, but he has always referred to himself as Camara Laye. The book was first translated in 1955 as *The Dark Child*.
- 11 Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (New York and London: Verso, 1992).
- 12 See, for example, Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (London: Cape, 1983), p. 29.
- 13 In the later novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* (London: Cape, 1995), p. 137, Rushdie concedes that 'Motherness . . . is a big idea in India, maybe our biggest: the land as mother, the mother as land, as the firm ground beneath our feet'. Even so, the emblematic protagonist of the novel is the powerful mother Aurora Zogoiby's son Moraes.
- 14 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London: Cape, 1981), p. 406. See also Rajeswari Sunder Rajan's analysis of how gender articulates with female political power – of Indira Gandhi in particular – in *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 103–28.
- 15 See Ahmad, *In Theory*, p. 50.
- 16 Nalini Natarajan, 'Woman, nation, and narration in *Midnight's Children*', in Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (eds), *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 76–89. See also Meenakshi Mukherjee (ed.), *Rushdie's Midnight's Children: A Book of Readings* (Delhi: Pencraft International, 1999).
- 17 On the imbrication of the novel and the nation, see Ray, *En-Gendering India*, pp. 10–14; Steven Connor, *The English Novel in History, 1950–1995* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).
- 18 See, for example, Simon Gikandi, *Reading Chinua Achebe* (London: James Currey, 1991).
- 19 In a variety of literary traditions, including several forms of African nationalism, writing has typically been characterised as a masculine activity, and the formation of a literary tradition as a struggle between 'author'-itative fathers and their sons. The theory of the anxiety of this influence (including the term 'sonship') is obviously adapted from Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), and his cognate works. See also the canonical discussion of the 'legal fiction' of literary patrimony in Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1984); and chapter 5, p. 93.
- 20 Sigmund Freud, 'Family romances', *On Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey, rpt Penguin Freud Library, vol. 7 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 221–5. See also Jeffrey Moussaieff (ed.), *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*, trans. Jeffrey Moussaieff (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 56.
- 21 Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1989; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 42. As Valerie Smith, 'Gender and Afro-Americanist criticism', in Elaine Showalter (ed.), *Speaking of Gender* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 60, has remarked of African American nationalism in the United States, the discourse of liberation and cultural assertion has tended controversially to '[enshrine] the possibilities of black male power'.

- 22 See Judith Butler, 'Restaging the universal', in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (London: Verso, 2000), in particular pp. 29–41.
- 23 The case of Nelson Mandela may be an exception in this regard. As a national father figure he is also considered as a generalised and elevated symbol of the new South Africa. To corroborate this fact, according to the *Guardian* (21 October 2002), p. 14, plans are underway to build a colossus of Mandela in the South African city of Port Elizabeth, based on the model of the Statue of Liberty. Towering 30 storeys high over the harbour, the statue, due for completion in 2006, will stand on a plinth housing a 'museum of freedom'.
- 24 See Ray, *En-gendering India*, pp. 23–50, for her discussion of the novelist Bankim's nationalist reification of woman as a naturalised category despite female character performances in male garb in his work (as in *Devi Chaudhurani*). Etienne Balibar and Achille Mbembe, too, have described the nation-state's and the colonial state's 'secret affinity' with family hierarchies.
- 25 Although the category 'mother' is named and conceived differently from culture to culture, no analysis should disregard such respect. In societies in southern and West Africa, in India north and south, in the Caribbean, and elsewhere, mothers are accorded significant social status, especially as they grow older. The name 'mother' may thus function as an honorific title, or a generic term of respect for an adult woman, as women accrue power in ways that exceed, though often depend upon, their reproductive capacity. The 1900s Bengali activist Sister Nivedita, for instance, was 'Mother' to her revolutionary acolytes, while Ramakrishna's mother was called 'ma' by his followers. See Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National and the Postcolonial: Resistance in Interaction, 1880–1920* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 67–78, 115–17; Parama Roy, *Indian Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Kofi Awoonor, *The Breast of the Earth* (New York: Nok Publications International, 1975), pp. 99–100, describes the mother as the presiding 'inspirer' of the West African home and community: 'the most steadfast person in the homestead, but also the symbol of the eternal giver, the earth itself'. So, too, in the South African Mongane Serote's *Selected Poems*, ed. Mbulelo Mzamane (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1982), especially pp. 72–92, the mother image is the focus for his longing for Africa as place of authenticity – though the poet is concerned to tag his own identity as male. In Ingoapele Madingoane's *Africa My Beginning* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988), the dichotomies are starker: the mother is the comforting custodian of Africanness who serves to guarantee the 'manhood' of Africa's black men (pp. 4–5). See also Deborah Gaitskell and Elaine Unterhalter, 'Mothers of the nation: a comparative analysis', in Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds), *Woman-Nation-State* (London: Macmillan 1989), p. 72. It is worth adding that, in societies where rates of urban and transnational migration for men are high, as they were in apartheid South Africa, and as they still are in Zimbabwe, women may practically speaking become the guardians of the land: they hold the earth in safekeeping.
- 26 Maurice Godelier, 'The origins of male domination', *New Left Review*, 127 (May–June 1981), 17. I am indebted to the Scott essay cited below for this reference.

- 27 Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), 1069. See also Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
- 28 Florence Stratton, *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 13–18.
- 29 Contrary to its principle of 'one, yet many', nationalism agrees with patriarchy – the claim might be – in promoting especially unitary or 'one-eyed' forms of consciousness: one birth and blood, one growth pattern, one future for all. Such an argument rests on the supposition that the masculine, like the national, favours rationality, homogeneity and unitary order. Nationalism did not therefore become gendered simply through transmission and association. The national instead is *intrinsically* monologic, as is the patriarchal – it is 'a world', to quote from Mikhail Bakhtin, 'of fathers and of founders of families'. Bakhtin has spoken influentially of the coincidence of nationalist unisonance and patriarchal motifs in 'epic' national art forms. See 'Epic and novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas, 1986), pp. 3–40.
- 30 My exposition concurs with Benedict Anderson's idea of the *serial* formation of nations to a certain extent. However, although Anderson would agree that the national idea is adaptable across cultural and temporal borderlines without *necessarily* being determined by any originary context, his concept of the 'homogenous empty time' of the nation is strongly identified with the onset of capitalism in the west. He is therefore forced to privilege the western modular nation over the post-colonial, and the metropolitan over the colonial context as a crucible for nationalism. By contrast, the colonial context, as in what follows, I regard as crucial. See Anderson's *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London and New York: Verso, 1998).
- 31 See Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), pp. 1–13, for their discussion of the familial affinities of nation-states.
- 32 Tom Nairn is the foremost exponent of the 'Janus' character of nations. See, for example, *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism* (London: New Left Books, 1977), and the more recent essay, 'What nations are for', *London Review of Books* (8 September 1994), 6–7. See also Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Identity and its discontents: women and the nation', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 20:3 (1991), 431.
- 33 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 132–80.
- 34 See Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World – A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Press, 1986); and *The Nation and its Fragments Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993). On the cross-hatching of colonial and national patriarchies, see in particular Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, 'Reading against the Orientalist grain', in Susie Tharu and K. Lalita (eds), *Women's Writing in India 600: B.C. to the Present*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 41–64.

- 35 See Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), on the ways in which states draw on nationalist sentiment to establish legitimacy where other socio-political bonds are in decline.
- 36 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence (New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 601.
- 37 'The African Charter on Human and People's Rights', Appendix 1, *International Legal Materials*, 21 (1982), 61.
- 38 See Ashis Nandy's compelling thesis of the compensatory masculinity of anti-colonial nationalism in *The Intimate Enemy: The Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983). For evidence of the intersection of colonial and indigenous patriarchies, a wide range of work might be cited. In relation to Africa see, for example: Christine Obbo, 'Sexuality and economic domination in Uganda', in Yuval-Davis and Anthias (eds), *Woman-Nation-State*; Omolara Ogundipe, 'African women, culture and another development', *Présence Africaine*, 141:1 (1987), 123–39; as well as Terence Ranger's discussion of the transference of kingly motifs in the colonial appointment of chiefs, 'The invention of tradition in colonial Africa', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 211–62. In relation to India see in particular Partha Chatterjee, cited in note 34, and also Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996).
- 39 Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, p. 54.
- 40 Tom Nairn, *The Enchanted Glass: Britain and its Monarchy* (London: Radius, 1988), p. 11. The attractiveness of the overarching Mother Africa trope to Pan-Africanists as to African nationalists does not, however, imply a simplistic equation of Pan-Africanism with nationalism.
- 41 Freud, *On Sexuality*, p. 326.
- 42 See Amina Mama, 'Sheroes and villains: conceptualising colonial and contemporary violence against women in Africa', in M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra T. Mohanty (eds), *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 46–62. Amina Mama points out that even a leader as gender-aware as Samora Machel of Mozambique reinforced the sexual division of labour by calling on women and not men to clean up Maputo's streets after liberation. See also Stephanie Urdang, *And Still They Dance: Women, War and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989).
- 43 Maria Mbilinyi, 'Runaway wives in colonial Tanganyika: forced labour and forced marriage in Rungwe District 1919–1961', *The International Journal for the Sociology of Law*, 16:1 (January 1988), 1–29.
- 44 Similarly, successive campaigns against indiscipline by different Nigerian governments have targeted women petty-traders as prime offenders. See Carolynne Dennis, 'Women and the state in Nigeria: the case of the federal military government 1984–85', in Haleh Afshar (ed.), *Women, State and Ideology: Studies from Africa and Asia* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 13–27.

- 45 M. Jacqui Alexander, 'Erotic autonomy as a politics of decolonization', in Alexander and Mohanty (eds), *Feminist Genealogies*, pp. 63–100.
- 46 Arundhati Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (London: Flamingo, 2002).
- 47 See Susan Z. Andrade, 'Rewriting history, motherhood and rebellion: naming an African women's literary tradition', *Research in African Literatures*, 21:1 (1990), 91–110; and her book *The Nation Writ Small* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).
- 48 Flora Nwapa, *Efuru* [1966] (London: Heinemann, 1987); *Idu* [1970] (London: Heinemann, 1987).
- 49 Bessie Head, *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind* [1981] (London: Heinemann, 1986). See also Neil Lazarus, *Resistance in Postcolonial African Fiction* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 211, where he writes that Head's small-scale agrarian politics 'stand opposed to the grand récit of national liberation struggle that constitutes the dominant narrative mode of political fiction in Africa'.