

support one's children (Sampang); finding the story of one's journey (Mayor); and coming full circle to discover what is gained and what is sacrificed (Conlin).

Ultimately, this collection offers an alternative take on domestic narratives. In fact, editor Cori Howard teaches classes on the "momoir," and this collection offers excellent examples of the genre. Perhaps all domestic narratives need not conclude with weddings, but can begin with motherhood.

The Monster Within: The Hidden Side of Motherhood

Barbara Almond

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

Reviewed by Maya Bhawe

In her latest book, *The Monster Within: The Hidden Side of Motherhood*, author Barbara Almond daringly explores the taboo subject of maternal ambivalence. She probes the "maternal spectrum of disturbance" that ranges from "good-enough" mothering to "vampyric mothering" (in which a parent survives psychologically through a child) to the darkest side of motherhood, child murder.

Almond, a medical doctor who specializes in psychiatry, gleans her data from her own busy private practice. Her book is unique in its pairing of detailed clinical data with narrative frameworks from novels, including Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone*. Such a methodology encourages readers to connect Almond's intimate qualitative data with literary interpretation. The author systematically deconstructs the mother-child relationship, exposing thoughts and beliefs that most women struggle to acknowledge, let alone articulate, given their tendency to focus on the "bright side of maternity," or what she calls "motherlove." Her hope is that by examining maternal ambivalence through a "psychoanalytic lens" women will come to see it as normal within the mothering process, and subsequently find ways to deal with feelings of ambivalence.

Almond does an excellent job of exposing the guilt, anxiety, and shame of mothers. She illuminates the concept of "monstrosity" within the mother-child relationship by dissecting complex layers of unexplored feelings that range from incessant worry about not being able to love a baby or having such

love unreturned, to more malevolent feelings of anger and sheer hatred. Her work shows that such fears in the pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing stages are often a result of women's social and emotional histories, coupled with unresolved anxiety as they shift from being "women" to "mothers." Almond 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