prepared for prayer and prostrated themselves before God, and as they dressed. Particularly compelling is her account of the importance French authorities attached to providing the right foods, in the right quantities, for the two major Islamic feast days, even in the midst of general Parisian penury during and after the Second World War.

These two premises stood in contradiction to the dream of an *Islam français* that would be compatible with French civilization. This idea lay behind the erection of the Great Paris Mosque in the 1920s, intended to be both a monument to the Muslims who had fought for France and an anchor, in the intellectual Left Bank, of that vision of Islam. Much as contrary plans for assimilation and "associationism" animated colonial debates on Algerians' future, so too these two contrary ideas of what Islam could become prevented any smooth policy trajectory in Paris or elsewhere.

The Paris Mosque serves as the emblem and narrative pivot of Davidson's fine book. She chronicles the plans and the intrigues surrounding it from the 1920s to the present, when it sits as a relatively bland and banal object of curiosity to visitors. Its architecture links French policies to images of preferred Islamic visibilities, drawing from the built forms and the imagined religious sensibilities of Morocco. This momentary imagining presents a sharp contrast to the postwar identification of Islam with Algerians during and after the period of the Algerian War (1954–1962), and to current projects on "Islamic cultures." This well-written account successfully links space, place, and administrative policies to the broad sweep of twentieth-century French history.

———John R. Bowen, Washington University in St. Louis

Rebecca Jo Plant, *Mom: The Transformation of Motherhood in Modern America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012, 250 pp.

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Conventional accounts of postwar women's history often emphasize the regressive character of the era, suggesting that the drumbeat of mother-blaming by Freudian psychiatrists and the shrill attacks on "mom-ism" by misogynists such as Philip Wylie were part of an effort to force women back into the home after World War II. What these accounts miss is that stay-at-home mothers who constructed their identities around their role as nurturers were as often, if not more often, the subject of these attacks as were women who worked outside the home. In *Mom*, Plant tells a more complex and interesting story about the ideological campaigns waged against women in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

In the nineteenth century, the Victorian cult of domesticity bestowed upon middle-class white women a unique moral authority as mothers, even as it justified their exclusion from individual political and economic rights. By

that century's end, the exaltation of maternal self-sacrifice gave women a powerful—indeed, often the primary—claim on their children's love and loyalty well into adulthood, while also allowing some women to claim a voice in the regulation of public morality.

But the emotional impact of the "silver cords" that bound children to mothers could be coercive as well as cloying, as Plant shows through letters, poems, and public statements about "Mother Love" that will stun most modern readers. Further, the moral authority that proponents of "maternalism" accorded to mothers was based on white, middle-class, Victorian sensibilities. As such, Plant shows, it provoked resistance from many different quarters. Plant deftly uses a wide range of primary sources to demonstrate that opposition to maternalism crossed political lines and was associated more with modernists (including many liberals and left-wingers) than with defenders of nineteenth-century gender relations.

This does not mean that anti-maternalists were sympathetic to feminism. In fact, Plant notes, most anti-Mom crusaders wanted to eliminate the ideological and emotional esteem that middle-class women had received as compensation for their exclusion from individual rights, without extending them such rights in return. Nevertheless, many women who later became feminists were equally hostile to the white middle-class moralism and essentialist definitions of femininity that characterized maternalist ideology. The new idea that motherhood was a temporary stage of life rather than a lifelong calling and master identity helped to justify the reintegration of women into the workforce after, as well as before, the early years of childrearing.

Plant does a superb job of tracing the multi-stranded origins and mixed legacy of the assault on maternalism that peaked in the years between Wylie's 1942 attack on Mom-ism and Betty Friedan's 1963 critique of "the feminine mystique." Her work sheds new light on the origins of the modern women's rights movement, and on the ambivalent, contradictory ideas about motherhood with which we still grapple. This well-documented, clearly written account of the social transformations in motherhood ideology will engage established scholars and students alike. It would be excellent for classroom use.

———Stephanie Coontz, The Evergreen State College

Andrea Major, *Slavery, Abolitionism and Empire in India, 1772–1843*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012.

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The past five years have seen a flourishing of studies on British abolitionism, with notable new works especially by Seymour Drescher, David Beck Ryden, Nicholas Draper, and Richard Huzzey. This scholarship has examined the