

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

wider perspective of British antislavery activities in the first four decades of the nineteenth century, within the context of the expanding empire and the justification of British world imperial rule in relation to what Christopher Brown has called the “moral capital” associated to abolitionism. Though scholars have focused primarily on the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and of slavery in the British Caribbean, they have also referenced India within the imperial context, and the final “delegalisation” of slavery there by 1843. Yet, until now no full-length account existed of the difficult relationship between British abolitionism and Indian slavery in the decades that saw the peak of the British antislavery struggle. Andrea Major’s new book has filled this gap in scholarship. The author, a specialist in British colonial rule in nineteenth-century India, is able to bring a fresh, extremely welcome, and altogether different perspective to the topic by arguing convincingly that “the question of Indian slavery provides an anomalous chapter in the history of British abolitionism” (p. 8).

Major relies mainly on British parliamentary records, missionary accounts, and a number of contemporary newspapers and periodicals to sketch a history of the development of British involvement with, and changing attitudes and perceptions of, Indian slavery between the later decades of the eighteenth century and the early 1840s. She begins with a sensitive portrayal of the difficulty of defining the category of “Indian slavery” when dealing with European sources. She looks first at the moral justification the East India Company employed for ruling India in the 1780s–1790s, with its convenient policy of suppressing a slave trade that harmed British economic interests. This was in marked contrast with the situation in the West Indies. Major then moves on to show how the Company constructed specific images of the different slaveries practiced in India in order to suit the main purpose of ensuring an efficient and ordered British colonial rule, particularly through an artificial distinction between the internal slave trade, which needed to be eradicated, and domestic slavery, which was mostly allowed to continue. Finally, she demonstrates clearly how the efforts of evangelical missionaries and abolitionists led to the instrumental conclusion that, “Whereas slavery in the West Indies was a scandal of the British state, slavery in India ... was repositioned as a scandal of Indian society” (314). This explains the absence of British parliamentary debates about Indian slavery in the 1810s and 1820s, and of any idea of British responsibility. Only after the British government emancipated slaves in the West Indies in 1833–1838 did Indian slavery become a target of British abolitionists, most significantly through the 1839 establishment of the British India Society (BIS) “for the amelioration of India” (330), and that society’s subsequent argument with the East India Company up until the latter’s “delegalisation” of slavery in India in 1843.

Major says her aim was to write “a study of how slavery in India was constructed in various colonial discourses and what this tells us about ideologies of

colonial rule; how ideas of Indian slavery intersect with wider debates about slavery, abolition, trade, empire, evangelicalism, missionary enterprise and civilizing mission” (14). Reading her book, one can only think that she has amply fulfilled her objective, and that this will remain the standard history of British abolitionism and Indian slavery for years to come.

——— Enrico Dal Lago, National University of Ireland, Galway

Sasha Newell, *The Modernity Bluff: Crime, Consumption, and Citizenship in Cote d’Ivoire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

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This highly insightful and beautifully researched book provides a window on the insecurities and frustrations of young people, mainly men, in near contemporary Cote d’Ivoire, situated with reference to a broader literature on the anthropology of youth and modernity in Africa. It is a compelling read, rich in insight, very clearly written, and full of important new material on the lives of twenty-something and thirty-something young men living in a highly fluid and uncertain environment.

Sasha Newell’s fieldwork took place primarily in Cote-D’Ivoire in 2000 and 2001, a period immediately preceding political conflict in the country. He interviewed young men, but also conducted research among young women and other members of urban society. Much of the fieldwork took place in the city of Abidjan, which grew from a population of fifty-eight thousand in 1948 to over two million today.

At the heart of this book is a central story about the importance of “bluff” in the survival strategies of unemployed men aged between their mid-teens and mid-thirties. Ivorian young men from poor backgrounds often spend huge sums of money on Western-style clothes and staging lavish parties in bars. Large quantities of food and alcohol, dancing to U.S. hip hop, and other extravagant displays of apparent wealth characterize these displays of power. But the luxury is a sham: those staging these cultural performances are poor, and they often lack even the money to feed themselves on an everyday basis. Others understand that the men are bluffing, raising the question of why young men spend so much money in this way. Newell argues that the lavish displays serve to nurture social networks that are important in the everyday efforts of young people to navigate an uncertain political environment and the city more broadly. They are also a means for young men to cultivate a type of lower-middle-class urban identity, superior to “rustic youth” in rural areas and distinct too from French-influenced cultural practice of Ivorian elites.

The book contains a pithy chapter-by-chapter summary of the arguments (pp. 29–31), and I will not attempt such a thing here but instead draw out some of the key further arguments of the ethnography. Newell draws attention to the