

late capitalist commercial entertainment both of which relied on pre-socialist gender boundaries and rejection of feminism.

Television humour drew on pre-socialist tastes, values, and even formats, evolving forms of European cabaret for television. Satire was central to socialist television, especially the tradition of “Stiob” or “overidentification” with official positions (p. 247). In 1980s Hungary, Imre argues, satire was the “default mode with which to reference the socialist system in public discourse” (p. 249). The satirical mode of late socialist programming prefigures the popularity of political satire in late capitalist television. The incredible concentration of media ownership and power, the declining integrity of government and belief in a commonweal, and disappearance of a credible geopolitical antagonist, the role previously filled by the socialist world and the Soviet Union in particular, has made the late capitalist television audience deeply suspicious of authority. In particular, contemporary news “produces a highly reiterative, performative rhetoric,” determined to naturalize the principles of neoliberalism, that echoes the official speak of former socialist regimes (p. 246).

*TV Socialism* is a lively, provocative, and important work that suggests how different our understanding of television history and culture, not to mention the history of post-socialist societies and the Cold War, might be if more scholarship took the socialist part of the project of modernity seriously. It deserves a wide readership among scholars and students of television, socialism, post-socialist societies, political culture, and Cold War history.

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JAFFARY, Nora E. – *Reproduction and Its Discontents in Mexico: Childbirth and Contraception from 1750 to 1905*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016. Pp. 302.

In *Reproduction and Its Discontents in Mexico*, Nora E. Jaffary tackles the topic of reproduction and its regulation in Mexico City and the southern state of Oaxaca, from the mid-eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. One of the primary arguments of the book is that between 1750 and 1905 the sexual and reproductive practices of a wide sector of Mexico’s female population were increasingly scrutinized by society, as sexual honour and public virtue were associated with the independent nation.

The book is divided into six chapters: virginity, pregnancy and contraception, abortion, infanticide, monstrous births, and obstetrics. Its subtitle emphasizes the concepts of childbirth and contraception because they were central to the project of nation building in Mexico and elsewhere. In all cases, Jaffary addresses the legal, medical, and cultural aspects that are the reason behind continuity and change.

Distinguishing between “biological” virginity (presence of the hymen) and “social” virginity (related to factors such as class, Christianity, and honor), in chapter one Jaffary states that though virginity was always socially constructed, some ideas about it underwent transformation throughout the period. Although in the colonial era it had sacred connotations and elite women were the ones that usually needed to establish the public record of their virginity to secure racial and social legitimacy, over the course of the nineteenth century, medical and criminal concerns with virginal status became more prevalent. Many more Mexican women came under scrutiny in terms of the preservation of their virginity as a way of safeguarding the purity of the entire nation.

In chapter two, the author examines conception and pregnancy, showing that ideas and practices surrounding them were the most stable during the period. However, one significant difference that women experienced when professionalization of obstetrics began was the introduction of internal obstetrical examinations. There was also an increasing scrutiny of Mexican women’s reproductive anatomy, which led to the discovery of their supposedly narrow pelvis.

Perhaps the most original chapters in the book are chapters three and four, in which Jaffary studies women’s attempts to regulate childbirth through either contraception or abortion, or by means of infanticide. Analyzing abortion and infanticide cases brought to the Inquisition and later to civil justice, Nora E. Jaffary shows that while Mexico experienced some liberalization in the judicial treatment of these crimes beginning with the 1871 Penal Code, individual denunciations to local authorities by family or community members increased. Jaffary considers that this might have occurred because, towards the end of the century, Mexicans were shifting their expectations about the gendered behaviour they considered socially acceptable. These chapters also reveal that judges did not tend to prosecute women for these offences. The book includes appendices on cases of abortion and infanticide that the author has been able to track down and mentions dates, names of the accused, outcome, and references.

In chapter five, Jaffary looks into so-called monstrous births, and finds that, by the late nineteenth century, physicians turned their focus directly onto (and into) the bodies of the women who had given birth to such creatures and considered these anomalous births as aberrations of Mexican women’s reproductive anatomy.

In the last chapter, she analyzes obstetrics, gynecology, and birth itself. Although midwives continued to deliver the majority of children in Mexico during this period, Jaffary finds that there were significant changes to the ways in which women experienced childbirth; for instance, the use of forceps increased, as did other surgical interventions.

In all, the monograph lays claim to study the period from 1775 (the year the Spanish Royal Protomedicato called for the licensing of midwifery) to 1905 (when the first Mexican maternity hospital was closed). Throughout, however, Jaffary mentions cases from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as Pre-Hispanic times, in order to prove her thesis about continuity in Mexican reproductive health traditions.

One of the outstanding values of this publication is that the author manages to give voice to the actors involved: mothers, midwives, physicians, authorities, lovers, and people in general. The research is ambitious due to the number of themes studied, as well as for the extensive period analyzed and the broad diversity of primary sources it is based on: Inquisition trials, pastoral letters, medical texts, legislation, criminal trial records, medical journals, newspapers, and handwritten manuals. She confronts the archival sources and investigates many secondary sources. However, some significant authors of the subjects under analysis are not quoted. In the case of the Inquisition and the cases made against midwives and women giving birth, one feels the absence, for instance, of the classical work *Medicina y magia. El proceso de aculturación en la estructura colonial* by Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán. Likewise, Jaffary fails to engage others, such as Estela Roselló, who have written about some of the cases analyzed in *Reproduction and Its Discontents*. Also missing is any dialogue with the work of Mercedes Alanís' on Casa de Maternidad e Infancia; Miruna Achim, Frida Gorbach and Oliva López on virginity and the hymen; and, Dolores Enciso and Fernanda Núñez on abortion in Colonial, Independent, and Modern Mexico. Núñez, for example, wrote a decade ago that, in the nineteenth century, intentionally caused abortion changed from a private sin, seldom reported and given a very light punishment, to a crime against the interests of the family, the society and the State, and therefore subject to punishment. In other words, in certain themes analyzed by Jaffary, there is a broader historiographic tradition than the one shown in her bibliography, and she should have engaged with it.

By assuring the reader that the previous historiography states that in the nineteenth century doctors displaced the midwives, and by proposing to apply Steven Palmer's model of "medical pluralism" in Mexico, Jaffary claims that she is making an original contribution. However, the historiography has stated that the displacement happened in the twentieth century and only to professional midwives. Moreover, for decades historians and a great number of anthropological publications have recognized the existence in Mexico of a plural model for medical care, which includes academic medicine, domestic medicine, traditional medicine, and other medical practices. Just as an example, we have the thirteen books of La Biblioteca de la Medicina Tradicional Mexicana (Library of Mexican Traditional Medicine); in practice, we have the constitution of the Consejo Nacional de Médicos Indígenas Tradicionales (National Council of Native Traditional Doctors) in the 1990s and constitutional recognition that Mexico is a multicultural nation and that Indigenous people have the right to use their traditional medicine.

Despite these shortcomings of the book—the absence of some important secondary sources and the unawareness of the previous academic recognition of the existence of a plural model for medical care in Mexico—there is no doubt that *Reproduction and its Discontents in Mexico* is the first publication to cover the development of obstetrical practices through Mexico's transition from colony to an independent republic in a comprehensive manner. It succeeds in demonstrating that virginity, pregnancy, contraception, abortion, infanticide, "monstrous" births, and obstetrics were intertwined and played an important role in the development

of modern Mexico. Nora E. Jaffary's book will prove to be of interest for historians of Mexican medicine, as well as for historians of sanitary professions and gender history in Latin America.

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LIPMAN, Andrew – *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. 339.

In his award-winning *Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast*, Andrew Lipman reframes the colonial era along the northeastern coast of North America. By Lipman's own admission, the book is a discourse about how "seafaring, violence, and Atlantic geopolitics shaped one place" (p. 14). He sees the history of the contest for the Algonquian-controlled coast and the early history of the colonies of New England and New Netherlands as one of "overlapping maritime zones with a shared history rather than as discrete territories with separate pasts" (p. 4). This watery frontier was a place where sachems and colonial governors engaged in a "multidirectional struggle," (p. 4) for dominance. He simultaneously frames this as a fight between European seaborne empires and a fight for native independence. His study is a rich, nuanced, and thought-provoking reimagining of this well-trodden area of colonial history, important for its conclusions as well as his approach. The work should be seen in the context of recent works by a new generation of early American historians seeking to recast the colonial encounter. They do so through the creative application of ethnohistorical methodologies that foreground Native people as historical actors and highlight indigenous cultural and political aims. At the same time, they move beyond the local to frame this new history using borderlands theory, imperial histories, and Atlantic world perspective.

Lipman examines the interplay between English invaders, Dutch colonists, the indigenous inhabitants of the region, and the environment and geography of the coast itself between Cape Cod and the Hudson River drainage—a heavily populated and resource-rich area in the early seventeenth century. The book's strength comes from Lipman's triangulation of the competing political ambitions to control this "saltwater frontier." He reveals important differences and similarities in how each power dealt with the others. The English, Dutch, and a number of powerful Algonquian confederated sachemdoms (Wampanoag, Narragansett, Pequot, Mohegan, and Susquehannoc) as well as various smaller, loosely organized, Delaware-speaking Munsee groups, all jockeyed for power, sought to corner trade, and sometimes fought each another. They spread misinformation about each other's intents and activities, and deftly played rivals off one another, be they European or Algonquian. All also built towns and forts along this contested coast and exchanged and adopted each other's marine technologies and coastal