

Semai. Signe Howell looks at Chewong ideology's impact on internal emotional states, emphasizing the paradoxically positive role played by the culture's consistent arousal of fear. Thomas Gibson discusses the historico-cultural meaninglessness of violence among the Buid, where aggression "came to be identified symbolically with the agents of disease and death, while a state of internal tranquillity, equality and individual autonomy came to be identified with the agents of health and growth" (p. 76).

Colwyn Trevarthen and Katerina Logotheti explore, with exceptional skill, the biological and psychological basis for innate sociality among human infants. Joanna Overing shows how the Piaroa definition of manhood is not machismo but the nonsexist "ability to cooperate tranquilly with others in daily life" (p. 81). L.E.A. Howe stresses the role played in Bali's variably violent culture by membership in the differentiated society's unequal and conflicting social groups. Carl O'Neill discusses formal and informal mechanisms for social control, and the actual *functionality* of non-violence, a most useful corrective to an enormous and pathological literature on its "functions" among the Zapotec. Michael Carrithers argues ably and explicitly for a new anthropology, the research focus of which would be the historical evolution and deformation of this impulse for sociality among humans. I hope our colleagues take him to heart. All in all, this is an essential new book for anyone struggling to understand the nature of humanity: I intend to adopt it as a text in my course on aggression.

Uneasy Endings: Daily Life in an American Nursing Home

Renée Rose Shield

Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988. xiii + 243 pp. \$34.50 (cloth), \$12.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Agnes Aamodt
University of Arizona

In 1859 Florence Nightingale wrote her now famous goal for nursing, to wit: "to put the patient in the best condition for nature to act." Nature in this context can be interpreted as the sociocultural, as well as the physical environment of patients wherever they happen to be.

Shield's ethnographic account of daily life in the Franklin Nursing Home is a statement of how far we are from achieving this goal, whether we are nurses, hospital administrators, physicians, social workers or physiotherapists. Her analysis focusses on the structural characteristics of the sociocultural environment that create a gloomy, boring experience in the transition from adulthood to death of an aged, primarily Jewish population.

The book is organized with excerpts from an ethnographic notebook such as: 7:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. shift, resident-care conference, physical therapy, threatened strike, new admission and kitchen. A second set of excerpts are oral history accounts, the words of residents and staff representing the "voices" of this particular nursing home. A final section, the main body of the text, fills three-quarters of the book's 256 pages. The analysis draws from the conceptualizations of liminality and *communitas* as used in the work of Victor Turner. Three theoretical ideas

ground Shield's explanations: the organizational principles accounting for conflict and divisiveness that are often based on different world views of staff members; the passive/receiving role of residents; and the lack of rites of passage between adulthood and death which may also be conceived either as a lack of "*communitas*" in a state of "liminality" or as a lack of bonding and support from a community to help articulate meanings during the passage.

The chapter on liminality of nursing-home life is a valuable account of elements in the transition from adult life in the community to death: separation and dependency, time and a sense of timelessness, dependency and non-reciprocity, old people as children, communication, religion and cultural meanings for healing, losses and unanswerable questions, lack of ritual and feelings of isolation. In an heroic attempt to justify the workings of the nursing home/staff, Shield talks of transforming "a threat of death into the familiarity of nurturance" (p. 209) where the overwhelming needs of the elderly are distanced by a motherly staff rather than confronted with problem-solving strategies familiar to most health professionals.

What is missing in the work is a sense of the multiple stories of Franklin Nursing Home. Shield's intensive 14 months of field research makes a case for the well-known, depressing, cheerless ambience of an average nursing home in today's world. The data fail to enter the imaginative world of stubborn, problem-solving creativeness characteristic of almost all human beings irrespective of age. If, in her ethnographic record, there is no alternative to the cheerless, depressed resident she describes, then we have been truly exposed to an environment where non-persons are allowed to flourish. We can hope Shield will have more to tell us in future work.

Beyond the Breast-Bottle Controversy

Penny Van Esterik

New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989. xx + 242 pp. \$30.00 (cloth), \$13.00 (paper)

Reviewer: Roberta D. Baer

University of South Florida

This book aims to go beyond the usual arguments in favour of or against bottle feeding and to place the entire controversy in a broader context of related issues. One of these is the empowerment of women. Van Esterik sees breast-feeding as a feminist issue "because it encourages women's self reliance, confirms a women's power to control her own body, challenges models of women as consumers and sex objects, requires a new interpretation of women's work, and encourages solidarity among women" (p. 69). Another related issue is the medicalization of infant feeding, by which "the jurisdiction of the medical profession has expanded to include infant feeding in both developed and developing countries" (p. 111). A final issue is the commoditization of infant foods, "the process through which infant foods shift from being a human right with a use value embedded in complex personal relations established through shared production and consumption to being an object of exchange — a commodity based on price" (p. 162).