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 breastfeeding 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).

After these links are discussed, the author goes on to suggest that breastfeeding—and the social, policy and institutional supports that are required to make it possible—is an example of sustainable development. She concludes that it is more important to focus on improving conditions that affect women's lives than to be overly concerned with the more narrow issue of infant-feeding decisions.

There are a number of other specific, noteworthy aspects of this book. The four case studies of poor women in Colombia, Kenya, Java and Bangkok (Chapter 2) illustrate the issues and problems in the lives of women and their infants, and put human faces on the more general statements about poor women and the world system. Parts of Chapter 5, "The Commoditization of Infant Food," contain excellent discussions of the prestige aspects of food and the use of infant formula as a status symbol. And finally, Chapter 6 discusses how the various aspects of the argument interconnect, emphasizing the long-term negative consequences of bottle feeding, particularly in the less developed countries.

In sum, this book represents the kinds of contributions that nutritional anthropology can make to the understanding of issues of food consumption by viewing them in a broader context. Van Esterik demonstrates that larger forces, including those of the world system, play an important part in affecting the options of women deciding how and what to feed their infants. This book will be highly useful to anthropologists and other social scientists (as well as health professionals) interested in issues of nutrition, medical systems, gender and development.

Health and the Rise of Civilization
Mark Nathan Cohen
New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1989. x + 285 pp. N.p. (cloth)

Reviewer: C.R. Hallpike
McMaster University

The prevailing image of the noble savage, despite a sentimental admiration, has been of someone "poor, ill, and malnourished," while "the major transformations of human society have been portrayed as solutions to age-old problems which liberated human populations from the restraints of nature" (p. 3). Cohen, however, argues that agriculture, sedentism, urbanization, the state and industrialism have not necessarily produced better health and nutrition but rather, in many cases, the reverse. His evidence is based on: (1) modern dietary and epidemiological research, (2) field studies of contemporary hunter-gatherers, and (3) osteological and palaeopathological studies of archaeological sites.

The first category of evidence is the basis for a number of conclusions about the relative advantages of foraging and agriculture. Cohen argues that hunter-gatherer populations are vulnerable to diseases carried by organisms which complete their life cycles in animal hosts or the soil, as opposed to human hosts. Such diseases may be severe but are of limited distribution. Sedentary agriculturalists, however, especially with large populations, are increasingly vulnerable to diseases which depend on human hosts. "Large populations make possible the survival and transmission of certain diseases that could not have survived at all . . . in a prehistoric world populated by relatively small and isolated human groups" (p. 48). Measles,