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Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding by Valerie A. Fildes

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interesting consequences. First, she presents the underlying concepts (jural rights in land, etc.) as the *real* ones, expressed by surface discourse. To defend Aborigines against White readings of surface commits Williams to this position. Her emphasis on juralty may be a reading of how Aborigines interpreted the discourse in the claim, but is it acceptable to substitute analyzed reality for the surface?

Williams argues that this approach to translation is acceptable, that one can "reduce ideas to principle" to show a coincidence of underlying ideas (p. 101). She does not, however, really consider how and by whom representations of Yolngu jural principles are produced. Isn't she, like many anthropologists before, interrogating their uses for our concepts?

Yet, how can it be otherwise? In advocacy, the hermeneutics of translation finds its limit. Williams believes that an adequate translation of Aboriginal concepts of land tenure satisfies the Euro-Australian model. In order to justify Yolngu claims, Williams must accept the judge's notion of law and juralty as the framework in which to explain them.

I have no quarrel with this. Understanding the practice in which she is engaged helps us to evaluate not only the emphasis on systematicity and juralty in her account, but also to tolerate meandering discussion of the complexities of names, social categories, and

groupings. Much of her presentation in the first half of the book becomes intelligible only in light of her later discussion of the court findings. Williams's appreciation—her hermeneutic—of many features of Yolngu discourse on the relationship to land is motivated by the requirements of Australian law.

Finally, Williams shows how the judicial analysis raises questions about anthropological definitions (p. 191). It is one thing to render a different society's reality anthropologically intelligible to us; it is quite another to be held literally accountable, in court, for the implications of the translational devices chosen to signify that reality. This problem of literalism is eschewed in contemporary debates about "poetics" and "science," or "fiction" and "realism."

Recognition of the book's value may be hampered by its organizational problems and scant mention of recent work in Australia and relevant theoretical developments elsewhere. Still, in exploring the complexity of relations of social identity and group formation to land, Williams's account is a major contribution to the ethnography of Aboriginal Australia. Further, in demonstrating Yolngu society as a system of adaptability within a long-term framework—where logic or deeper structure resides, her criticism of the law's misreading of Aboriginal juralty is joined eloquently to criticism of the once dominant flexibility models of hunter-gatherers.

General/Theoretical Anthropology

Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding. Valerie A. Fildes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986 (distr. by Columbia University Press, New York, NY). 490 pp. \$30.00 (cloth).

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This book is basically a descriptive work, tracing the development of infant feeding practices among the upper classes in England from 1500 to 1800. Fildes identifies two shifts in thinking about infant feeding brought about, she claims, by the publication of influential medical texts in 1668 and 1748. In addition to the medical and midwifery texts which form her primary sources, she uses archeological evidence, diaries, letters, contracts for wet nurses, paintings, poems, and even plays. The book is clearly written and well organized, including sections on maternal

breastfeeding, wet-nursing, mixed feeding, artificial feeding, and weaning. The archeological evidence of the antiquity of infant feeding vessels is particularly fascinating.

There are, however, a number of problems with the book. I was surprised to find no mention of Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (Harper and Row, 1977), a major source of information concerning the same country, the same time period, and many of the same topics. Ten years ago Stone questioned the usefulness of "old-fashioned studies of domestic relations based on handbooks of behavior and anecdotes culled from upper-class records" (1977:19), a description that fits *Breasts, Bottles and Babies*.

Another serious problem stems from Fildes's lack of anthropological sophistication and sensitivity. As Crandon has noted, "the assumptions of unilinear ethnocentric evolutionists . . . still abound" (*AA* 88:471, 1986).

Two of Fildes's more distressing examples include: "mothers in some societies (for example, Australian aborigines) have little regard for hygiene and are often soiled with faeces when they breastfeed" (pp. 199–200); and "The idea of pre-chewing paps and foods, although distasteful to modern Western societies, is widely accepted as normal among less developed peoples" (p. 239).

Throughout the book, Fildes tries to draw a series of analogies between infant feeding practices of England some 200–500 years ago, and those of Third World societies today. She claims that "The errors in infant nutrition made during industrialisation of western societies are being repeated today. Even though we have the knowledge and expertise to prevent the diseases associated with malnutrition, and to correct the ignorance of health measures that could prevent them, the infant mortality in Third-World societies today is identical to that of 18th-century London: up to 70 per cent of infants born did not survive to their second birthday" (p. 401). Fildes is extremely naive if she believes that lack of knowledge of Western infant feeding practices is the only, or even the primary, factor responsible for the high infant mortality observed in developing nations. On the contrary, the adoption of Western infant feeding practices has often *contributed* to high infant mortality.

A number of minor problems also detract from the book, including Fildes's confusion of kwashiorkor and protein-calorie malnutrition, oversimplification of the relationship between lactation and amenorrhea, and misuse of statistical tests. On several occasions she oversteps the boundaries of credibility in her interpretations of data and conclusions. For example, her suggestion that the "melancholia" of 16th and 17th century England was the result of the abrupt weaning practices of the times is entirely unsupported. Likewise, her attempt to link infant feeding choices to expressions of grief at a child's death ignores entirely the factor of culturally appropriate patterns of mourning.

Although full of fascinating tidbits of information, the book will be of little real value to anthropologists interested in infant feeding.

Culture and Reproduction: An Anthropological Critique of Demographic Transition Theory. *W. Penn Handwerker*, ed. Westview Special Study. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986. 412 pp. \$35.00 (paper).

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This collection of papers results from an interdisciplinary conference held in 1981 at UCLA, in which demographers and anthropologists exchanged perspectives on demographic transition theory. The volume contains 16 papers, mostly by anthropologists, focusing on determinants of human fertility. This is a broad and complex subject and it is to Handwerker's credit that the organization of the volume maintains a focus on some central issues. Part 1 concentrates on "micro-level," or microdemographic, processes. For the most part these papers examine specific fertility data in light of several common explanatory models. Part 2 treats the linkages between microdemographic processes and the larger arena of cultural (largely economic) constraints.

An introductory chapter by Handwerker effectively ties the papers to a central theme, provides both summary and critique of current transition theory, and argues for an explanatory model of fertility transition based on an evolutionary perspective. His discussion and modification of Caldwell's Wealth Flows Theory is clear and concise, summarizing a series of earlier papers.

In part 1, several papers challenge current concepts of fertility determinants. Crosbie tests rationality models with data from a survey-questionnaire and finds that rationality variables have little effect on reproductive behavior. Wilmsen tests Bongaarts's model with data from the !Kung and finds it valid only within a narrow range of biological parameters, arguing instead for a modified critical-weight hypothesis. Bongaarts's commentary and Wilmsen's rejoinder tend to clarify, if not resolve, their differences. Handwerker's examination of Liberian fertility suggests that "natural fertility" is not a simple category but has determinants that vary historically and regionally. Brainerd and Overfield describe changes in mortality and fertility among the Western Alaskan Eskimo without the expected fertility transition.

Odell compares Easterlin's and Caldwell's models in a study of Guatemalan villagers, where behavioral constraints influence fertility among farmers and poor specialists while intentional control is a major influence among wealthy specialists. Schumann shows a different determinant-consequent relationship among the Tzeltal Maya, where fertility in part determines economic strategy by providing not only subsistence labor but additional labor for commercial production. Stamm and Tsui describe incipient fertility transition in Tunisia, where delayed reproduction has followed increased economic opportunities for