

sion of female puberty rituals, and explains why, for the Rauto, "the female puberty ritual conflates male and female realms and thus indicates that the Rauto ideal of humanity is represented by an amalgam of male and female powers" (p. 139). Also particularly good are chapter 6 ("Images of Time, Person and Place") and chapter 7 ("To Remember the Faces of the Dead"). The first concerns Rauto notions of human agency, while the latter is a valuable inquiry into the meaning of death.

As Maschio himself notes in the opening chapter, this book could be considered as part of the "romantic" tradition, as represented by thinkers such as Leenhardt, Jung and Vico (p. 33). As such, it tends to place the Rauto in a sort of timeless existence that ignores history, the nation state and other wider social contexts. It does not seem fair, however, to criticize the book for not including things that the author found irrelevant to the task at hand.

That task is not less than to explain the way that the construction of Rauto religious and emotional life is related to the overall process of individuation. Individuation, like plenitude, concerns becoming a fully adult, fully social person. Maschio demonstrates how expressive culture is connected to this process, suggesting that the creation of culture itself is strongly tied to this primary form of mimesis.

Often, in anthropology, certain concepts become associated with particular authors. Clifford Geertz and "thick description" and Victor Turner and "communitas" are but two small examples of this. It may be that in the future these associations will include Thomas Maschio and "plenitude," for in this book Maschio has amply demonstrated the relevance and rewards of using this concept for the consideration of a people and the construction of an ethnography.

In the Shadow of the Antichrist: The Old Believers of Alberta

David Sheffel

Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1991. xvii + 252 pp. N.p. (paper)

The Old Believers

Researched by David Sheffel, directed by John Paskiewich, produced by Joe MacDonald and John Paskiewich

National Film Board of Canada, 1989. VHS format. Running time 56:51. \$31.00

Reviewer: Richard MacKinnon

University College of Cape Breton

This book and accompanying video provide an ethnographic study of a Russian Eastern Orthodox sect, the Old Believers, who live in isolated areas of Alberta. Based on Sheffel's Ph.D. dissertation at McMaster University, they offer a detailed examination of life in a community whose explicit goal is to be isolated from Canadian society. Instead of accessing the media, Old Believers "learn about their place in the world predominantly through history, and the past serves as the preferred method for reducing the burden of voluntary isolation" (p. 3). Consequently, the author's aim is to "lift the cloak of obscurity to which the Old Believers seem to have been condemned by history and modern scholarship . . . [and to] provide inspiration and perhaps justification for the study of other seemingly insignificant societies and communities" (p. 9). To that end, Sheffel offers thick ethnographic description of the culture of this small commu-

nity, and makes explicit the significance of ritual and adherence to the past, which form the basis for the Old Believers' world view.

A historical synopsis outlines Old Believers' Byzantine and Russian origins; the "Raskol," or schism of the Russian Orthodox church in the mid-17th century; their persecution in the 18th century; and their subsequent migration to China and then to North America. This is followed by five ethnographic chapters on the community, Berezovka, detailing beliefs, community organization, economy, foodways and the symbols of orthodoxy in home and community. The final chapter addresses the relevancy of this ethnography for the study of society and culture, puritanism, tradition and modernity.

Sheffel provides the reader with a sense of the significance of material culture and belief to the Old Believers. Every aspect of their material culture is suffused with spiritual meaning connecting this people to its past. Their icons, their clothing and their food utensils are imbued with meaning. Whenever a meal is prepared and eaten, the food, drink, plates and spoons are sanctified by ritual. Outsiders to the community are not permitted to sit at table and share food, since they are considered pagan and unclean. Old Believers situate their homes close to the source of spiritual purity, the river. Their sacred images are washed in river water, which is returned to the river, charged with the power of the icons. Before drinking, Old Believers make a sign of the cross to drive evil spirits out of the drink and swallow it in one gulp, before the spirits have a chance to slip back into it. As the narrator in the video states, for Old Believers "life is a perpetual act of worship."

Both book and video lead us to a better understanding of the significance of ritual in the transmission of culture. The many rituals of this people function not only as communication devices, but as links between them and their past, providing a "dialogue between past and present Christians," between those who cannot interact directly" (p. 215). Their family and community rituals connect this group with the many Old Believers from Russia who, despite persecution, maintained their orthodox beliefs.

While the book stands on its own as a fine ethnography, the reader will want to view the video to gain a better understanding of the Old Believers. The videography is magnificent, clearly showing the various family and community traditions, and the many rituals that occur throughout the year. The video focusses on the Reutov family, which is preparing a family feast for a son who is getting married. Various details of daily life are captured, including consulting the liturgical calendar each morning to see what foods are appropriate, collecting river water for cleaning icons, butchering a pig, eating the celebratory meal. Archival footage of some persecutions faced by Old Believers is also included, along with oral testimony from members of the Reutov family who discuss their flight from violence and hunger, from Russia, to China, Brazil and then to North America.

One criticism of the book is that it does not adequately address the intrusion of modern Western culture into the lives of Old Believers. Despite their efforts to isolate themselves, Western influences creep into their lives. The house interiors include constant reminders of Old Believer faith, because the "home is considered a place of elevated ritual status" (p. 164). The houses themselves, however, conform to bungalow styles or are prefabricated trailers, like those found throughout North America. Likewise, and more significantly, the children attend school, wear leather jackets along with their traditional embroidered smocks and drive cars. They live both in the traditional world of Old Believers and the world of teenagers growing up in contemporary Western Canada.

But while the book does not adequately address this complex and important issue, the video does explore it at some length, explaining that this intrusion of Western influence is the beginning of a rift between generations. This is most aptly demonstrated when Old Believers are depicted visiting the West Edmonton Mall, observing capitalism at its height. One Old Believer remarks: "When the end of the world comes, it will probably begin here in the West Edmonton Mall."

Despite the criticism, Sheffel's book and video will be indispensable for those teaching in the many cultural fields in Canada. Anthropologists, folklorists and material-culture and religious-studies specialists will find useful materials and ideas in this analysis of the distinctive traditions and rituals of the Old Believers.

Amerindian Rebirth: Reincarnation Belief among North American Indians and Inuit

Antonia Mills and Richard Slobodin, eds.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. xxiv + 411 pp. \$60.00 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper)

Reviewer: R.G. Williamson
University of Saskatchewan

Like all who teach, ever wanting new material, I welcome this initiative by Antonia Mills and Dick Slobodin. It is a most useful compilation, and a genuine addition to the literature. It contains worthwhile inclusions by long-established writers (like the late Paul Radin, Saladin D'Anglure, and Slobodin himself, now Emeritus but, refreshingly, still professionally active) and a goodly number of exceptionally promising members of the rising generation of anthropologists (like Mark Nuttall, James Matlock and Michael Harkin). Altogether, there are 16 essays by 13 authors: Mills and Slobodin each provide two pieces. Mills also offers a well-rounded introduction and, in addition, collaborates very usefully with Matlock on a compendious trait index (including a clearly coded trait list), maps and bibliography. Altogether, the book is thoroughly indexed and referenced. With the imaginative approach taken by the editors, some unevenness is inevitable, but the overall quality of the book is excellent.

The book presents a theoretical foreword by Gananath Obeyesekere, heralding new knowledge in the comparative-study process. It provides a provocative framework for a rebirth of eschatology; some lucid modelling; a useful concept, "ethnicization"; and an expansion of analysis from the small-scale societies that form the substance of this book to the larger, more complex societies of the world. It is an ambitious and laudable contribution. In her introduction, Mills shows how belief in reincarnation is more wide ranging in North American aboriginal society than has been fully appreciated. She documents such ethnographic material as exists and seeks to explain the incompleteness of the record, while also necessarily discussing the nature of evidence.

The articles that follow are sumptuous, though occasionally intriguing in their selection—as in the case of Saladin D'Anglure's "third sex" Inuit piece, which is not really a daring choice, but is slightly idiosyncratic, perhaps, and conceivably tangential to the collection's main thematic focus. It was pleasing to see Lee Guemple's material on the Qiqiqtamuit cyclical manifestation of souls, refreshingly re-analyzed in a lucid review of his data. Guemple properly indicates that many of the concepts involved are found