groups; but they have not done so without actively reinterpreting traditions and rituals, reshaping them to fit their own needs. Development of any specific religious dimension among a particular people was grounded in the creative imagination of that people as it constructed, maintained, and reconstructed its cultural landscape.

With his emphasis on the twentieth century, Harrod goes beyond Lee Irwin's *The Dream Seekers: Native American Visionary Traditions of the Great Plains* (1994), which focuses mainly on world-process in nineteenth-century Plains Indian cultures. Yet Harrod, like Irwin, depends on the willingness of readers, in reviewing the ancient and contemporary sources presented in the text, to make connections among the mythological, visionary, and ritual dynamics of complex social worlds. In *The Dream Seekers,* Irwin demonstrates that religion (in this context carried in dreams) became a fundamental, creative source for cultural change and innovation. Not only were groups' experiences strengthened, but new patterns of individual and collective behavior were created. Harrod's work builds on these ideas.

Harrod (Vanderbilt University) is the author of additional texts on Native American religions: *Renewing the World: Plains Indians' Religion and Morality* (1987) and *Mission among the Blackfeet* (1971). His latest work should prove of interest to instructors in northern American history, anthropology, and religious studies. Its availability in a relatively inexpensive paperback, along with its considerable scholarly merit, makes it suitable for course adoptions.

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Comparing the Policy of Aboriginal Assimilation: Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. By Andrew Armitage. Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 1995. 286 pages. $20.95 paper.

The definition of assimilation, according to *Collins Gem English Dictionary,* is threefold: to learn and understand; to make similar; and to absorb into the system. Andrew Armitage's book provides a very detailed look at assimilation policies in the three commonwealth countries of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, all of which ultimately opt for the last two aspects of the definition.

Assimilation is a word that varies in intensity, depending on whether the force of its meaning points to you or to others. If it points to you, you will not need to change; others will change to your system. But if the word points away from you, then you must assimilate and change. Andrew Armitage focuses on how the aborigines of Australia, the First Nations of Canada, and the Maori of New Zealand were forced to assimilate to the British colonial populations.

Armitage explores the historical precedent set in the British House of Commons Select Commitee on Aborigines, established in 1835, and the subsequent *Report of the Select Commitee on Aborigines*. The report established policies to deal with those outside of the accepted economic structure of Britain; its scope included governance; land ownership; citizenship; appointment of "overseers and protectors"; special regard for children open to change, education, salvation; Christianity's efficacy in producing citizens; and reports on the welfare of the aboriginal people and paupers. The last element of British policy referred to and was influenced by the 1834 Poor Law, which specifically dealt with the indigent population of Britain. Thus the identification and implementation of policies regarding the aboriginals are founded on the idea that native peoples are outside the accepted economic structure, are indigent, and must be treated as such. Armitage succinctly summarizes the report by describing the aboriginal populations in the three countries as providing opportunities for "trade, commerce, peace, and civilization. The other alternative is extermination." The striking reality concerning the "other alternative" is that it was perfectly acceptable and somehow was not considered a contradiction of "civilization."

In relation to each country, Armitage looks at historical contact; land loss; the issue of identity; and family and child welfare policies. He summarizes his findings with a discussion of the similarities and differences among the three countries and ends with a chapter entitled "Understanding the Policy of Aboriginal Assimilation" in an effort to explain what happened and why.

Beginning with Australia and Canada, Armitage immediately divulges the very problematic approach that the original colonizers implemented. The aborigines in Australia suffered tremendously as a result of British contact. They were treated as less than human—forced off their lands or exterminated if they resisted. The British pattern was simply to invade and remove any inhabitants to another location. In Canada, the First Nations faired

somewhat better. Their lands were seized and their power was extremely limited, but they did not suffer the genocidal annihilation that Australia's aborigines did, although elders did recall similar stories of extermination throughout Canada.

Armitage explains that the issue of identifying tribal members was quite simple in the beginning for both countries, prior to intermarriage, but it would become a difficult issue very soon. Armitage makes a powerful observation that the process of identification was never entrusted to the aboriginals, but was always decided by the colonizers.

The welfare policies of Australia reveal harsh treatment of the aborigines. For both countries even as late as 1947, citizenship requirements included forsaking the aboriginal culture and language. During implementation of welfare policies, the government separated children from parents and communites regularly in order to school the children in the Australian society. The parents had no power to approve or object to the taking of their children. Aboriginal children were placed in foster homes at twelve to twenty times the rate of nonaboriginal children. It was not until 1967 that policy changes began to allow aborigines to have some control over their own lives, and in 1973 the Australian government approved self-government for aborigines. In Canada, these issues followed a similar timeline. The aborigines of Australia and the First Nations of Canada now control elements of their land, identity, welfare (medical and social), and citizenship.

In New Zealand, the Maori's story is somewhat different. Armitage suggests that the difference may lie in the fact that New Zealand was never seriously considered for colonization because of the Maori's presence and the island's remoteness. Thus although trade communities were established and missionaries were brought in, both looked upon the Maori as rightful owners of the land.

Not until 1839 was a treaty signed that facilitated the colonization of New Zealand and the advent of foreign government. But, with the help and intervention of the missionaries, the Maori were immediately recognized as citizens and landowners. Identity never was a problem for them, according to Armitage, because the process of identification was largely self-determined—unlike in Canada or Australia, where government officials and blood quantum decided who was an aborigine or a member of a First Nation.

The welfare policies that devastated Australia and Canada finally began to plague New Zealand during the assimilation

period of 1847 to 1960. At the beginning of this period, the Maori were the majority, but by 1960 they were a minority. A fifteen-year period of integration then began, followed by a resurgence of the Treaty of Waitangi, a language and cultural renaissance, and a social policy based on partnership.

In all governments, aboriginal voices are heard now more than ever in relation to the major issues of land ownership, identity, welfare, and citizenship, although outcomes are different in each country. Australia has established programs to compensate aborigines for their losses, but the prevailing hope is for their complete integration. In New Zealand, the resurgence of the Treaty of Waitangi provides impetus for a rebirth of language and culture and has facilitated a greater Maori presence in governmental and developmental policies.

Canada's treatment of the First Nations is problematic to say the least. Although there have been many changes in welfare and developmental policies as a result of greater First Nations presence in the decision-making processes, the issues of identity and land claims are still in question. Federal laws and policies favor the First Nations' cause, but provincial governments tend to resist change in the areas of land claims and even territorial recognition. The situation in British Columbia exemplifies the powerlessness of First Nations bands to attain recognition of their land rights. It is apparent that colonization is still in effect.

Armitage's analysis of the issues is thorough, penetrating, and fair, and his presentation of the history is easy to grasp. However, his conclusion that intercultural openmindedness, tolerance, and self-criticism would benefit everyone is delusional. The benefit is temporary at best and does not address the need to compensate native peoples for historical mistreatment. When battles for land and mineral rights must be fought in courts that traditionally have held unfavorable views of aborigines, when questions of tribal identity are controlled by nonnative governments, then openmindedness, tolerance, and self-criticism on the part of native peoples only serve to continue the mindset of colonization. When aboriginal peoples have practiced openmindedness and tolerance, they have lost their identity, history, language, religion, voice, land, and power. In each of the mentioned countries, the legal and political mechanisms are invariably conservative and slow; since aboriginals are a very small part of the total populations of these nations, their voices often remain unheard and their political power is severely limited.

In the political and legal environment of Canada, specifically British Columbia, although the government may be willing to listen to the First Nations' concerns, in practice it ultimately refuses to acknowledge their need for self-determination (including in matters concerning tribal identity), historical presence, and hunting, fishing, land, and mineral rights. Going to court is merely an exercise in futility, because no matter what is argued and sought by the First Nations, the atmosphere of hostility and the practice of discrimination perpetuate the subjugation of First Nations peoples. Although Armitage's concluding sentiment is hopeful, it is unrealistic. Even though intercultural interaction seems to be based on fairness, when the dominant culture decides how, when, and what fairness is, colonialism still reigns.

Frederick H. White

Eagle Transforming: The Art of Robert Davidson. By Ulli Steltzer and Robert Davidson. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994. 164 pages. $39.95 cloth.

Eagle Transforming: The Art of Robert Davidson is the kind of book I would heartily recommend to anyone interested in the processes through which art makes the journey from idea and motivation to true artistry. Indeed, the cover photograph by coauthor/photographer Ulli Steltzer shows the artist and subject of the book, Robert Davidson, intently engaged in carving. This rich image provides an opening into a powerful and personal account of Davidson's development as an artist and a Haida man.

Davidson has enjoyed international recognition of his work, including a one-man show at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1993 and the publication of the show's catalog, *Eagle of the Dawn*. It would be wrong to think of *Eagle Transforming* as just a sidebar to the exhibition catalog. *Eagle Transforming* complements the catalog by providing some different approaches that the catalog does not. One example is the inclusion of Davidson's monumental work, such as totem poles, houseposts, and housefronts. Another is the photodocumentation of the artist at work over a span of more than twenty years, recording the development of his large pieces in stages from roughed-out logs to their placement *in situ*. Likewise, the photos show Davidson's masks from their beginnings in the workshop to their metamorphosis as adornment for