

friend arrived/out of the past for a visit between readings/and appearances on television talk shows.” And the wife of the local poet says to the visiting celebrity: “You know, Ernest’s poems have always been/better than yours, which are full of/bombast and pretension” (p. 177). And there, several pages later, are the stunning poems of Ernest Sandeen, who produced volumes of poetry I had never read.

And so, once again, I am reminded that the house of literature has many rooms. They are all there, always. But how unvisited and unlit they

might remain, if not for anthologies like this one. And how many young poets will be inspired to build rooms of their own when they see that yes, it is possible to create poetry of and about this place they call home.

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The Catholic Calumet
Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America
 By Tracy Neal Leavelle

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Pp. 255. Illustrations, notes, index. \$39.95.)

The Catholic Calumet traces the deeply personal and often localized interactions between the French and Algonquian Indians in the seventeenth-century Great Lakes and Mississippi valley region, and the ways in which “hybrid cultural forms and religious practices” created the “Catholic Calumet” (p. 8). Tracy Leavelle challenges the traditional idea that Europeans imposed conversion upon native peoples. Instead, he argues, Indians and missionaries made genuine and heartfelt connections by negotiating “plural, dynamic, and flexible concepts of conversion” that were reciprocal and negotiated (p. 8). Leavelle’s cutting-edge work re-centers Native

history and demonstrates the importance of the shared processes that frame colonial relationships.

Violence wrought by the mid-seventeenth-century Beaver Wars put groups such as the Illinois and Ottawa into precarious positions—either they would adapt to tremendous social disruption or die. Algonquian Indian communities formed new social bonds with outsiders and incorporated disparate peoples and ideas into their world. Jesuit missionaries found themselves in new terrain as well. And while they undoubtedly arrived in North America with a set of rigid doctrines and beliefs, their efforts to survive in Indian country

required that they too adjust. When missionaries realized that Indians would not live in Jesuit communities, they preached conversion in Indian homes and followed native peoples on their seasonal migrations. In time, the missionaries also discovered the complexity of Indian religious beliefs; rather than condemn them in totality, the Jesuits learned to graft Christian values onto Indian behaviors.

In a chapter titled "Geographies," Leavelle details the extent to which missionaries co-opted Native landscapes. By planting a cross and adorning it annually, missionaries hoped to remake areas Indians held sacred. Yet these rituals sometimes forced both natives and whites to harden in their approach to one another. In a process he likens to "homemaking," Leavelle discusses the stages in which Indians and missionaries converted not only their souls, but also physical places, origin stories, and neighbors in an attempt to restore a sense of order. The process of constructing new physical and cultural boundaries, in other words, proved essential to maintaining spiritual power.

Leavelle derives much of his insight into these new spiritual worlds from his creative use of sources. Rather than interpret Jesuit documents through a European lens, Leavelle

uses the *Jesuit Relations* and other manuscripts as intercultural sources "that reveal . . . the effects of meditative processes of cultural dialogue and intellectual engagement" (p. 98). This method is nowhere more apparent than in Leavelle's analysis of the Apostles' Creed, which demonstrates how both Indians and missionaries altered a rigid text. While such alterations might lead some historians to conclude that conversion had failed, Leavelle conclusively demonstrates that both parties protected the values and cultural concepts that they held dear. Both sides shaped Christianity to meet their own needs.

Leavelle's analysis of the Illinois Christian community is just as enlightening. He not only contextualizes its formation within the reciprocal world of French colonialism, but traces its eventual weakening through the latter half of the eighteenth century as the French and their Illinois converts lost power. Leavelle's work offers insightful analysis on conversion and Catholic identities in the trans-Mississippi West, while also reframing colonialism as a process that created new Christian, Indian, and European identities.

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