H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Michael J. Zogry. *Anetso, the Cherokee Ball Game: At the Center of Ceremony and Identity.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. x + 318 pp. $49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-3360-5.

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Published on H-Florida (September, 2010)
Commissioned by Jeanine A. Clark Bremer

Anetso: A Vehicle of Indigenous Identity, Religious Tradition, and Cultural Persistence

Michael J. Zogry presents a thoroughly researched exploration of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' ball game, Anetso, and its larger implications for and connections to a Cherokee identity and "theology" (p. 59). Theoretically, he suggests that Anetso "resists and problematizes such classifications" as either simply "Game" or "Ritual" (according to the theories of Claude Levi-Strauss) while broaching the complex issue of a Cherokee religious system (p. 1). Further, he situates his fieldwork within a larger body of ethnological writings by James Mooney, Raymond Fogelson, Sam Gill, Stewart Culin, Levi-Strauss, Alexander Lesser, Leonard Bloom, Clifford Geertz, and more recently Catherine Bell and John MacAloon, concerning either the distinction or correlation of "Game" to "Ritual." Zogry concludes, in contrast to many of these scholars, that "Game … cannot be distinguish[ed] from Ritual easily" as Anetso ("Game") offers a cultural and religious identity and ritual expression far more valuable to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians than just simple "Game" (p. 225). Zogry ably demonstrates the cultural and religious historical significance of Anetso to the Cherokee people as a vehicle of shared identity and community, ritual and religious expression, and resistance to Euro-American civilization and Christianization programs throughout the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Further, he addresses historians' ever present concern for change and continuity across time and space, revealing that the Cherokees' twenty-first-century version of Anetso exhibits remarkable similarities to the recorded features and rituals of the Cherokee ball game from eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century observers, participants, and critics. With this argument, Zogry illustrates Anetso as a cultural and ritual purveyor for the Cherokee people for more than three centuries in contrast to traditional historical and anthropological scholarship that assumes a declension of North American indigenous peoples and cultures during this three-hundred-year span.

Zogry's first chapter focuses specifically on how the Cherokee ball game has been represented in indigenous narrative traditions (or myth), which also provides an introductory cursor to a Cherokee religious worldview. Examining Mooney's late nineteenth-century compilation of the Cherokee's "Cosmological Myths," "Animal Myths," and "Wonder Stories," Zogry illuminates how Anetso served in these narrative traditions as a "figure of speech" for war, trials of courage, coming of age rites, and interactions and contests between humans and "other-than-humans" (Thunder Beings and other non-supreme deities) (p. 52). Further, he argues that this figurative understanding of Anetso sheds new light on how Euro-Americans interpreted and observed the Cherokee ball game, evidenced by the "Incident at Chestow" where a Cherokee invitation to the Yuchi Indians to join a game of Anetso was perceived by Euro-Americans as a duplicitous ploy to draw the Yuchi into conflict. Instead, Zogry proposes that the pretense of an Anetso match conformed to Cherokee understandings of the ball game, that the invitation extended to the Yuchi resembled more a figurative note for impending warfare between the two native nations, divesting the situation of its deceptive connotations.

In chapter 2, Zogry channels the methodological approach from Frederick E. Hoxie's *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (2001) by interpreting widespread Cherokee participation in and popularity of Anetso from 1799 to 1838 as evidence of Cherokee ball players "talking back" to Euro-American missionaries and government officials. For example, he suggests that Cherokee boarding and mission school pupils' involvement in Anetso constituted overt resistance to federal and private Christianization and civilization ef-

forts, facilitated cultural and religious persistence in the midst of great change (Cherokee "Renascence" and Indian Removal), and offered an alternative agency for indigenous peoples by speaking with one's actions as opposed to words. In his next chapter, Zogry examines what he calls the "Anetso Ceremonial Complex," revealing the ritual aspects of the Cherokee ball game that emerged during the eighteenth century, solidified during the early to mid-nineteenth century, persevered throughout the twentieth century, and continue even today. From "Conjurers" (team "Managers") who solicit the support of "other-than-humans" or cultural prohibitions and taboos for Cherokee ball players, as well as "Going to Water" (a water purification ritual) and "Scarification" (scratching to energize team members in preparation for an Anetso match), Zogry suggests that the Cherokee ball game retains many of its cultural and religious elements that date as far back as the late eighteenth century. In addition, he provides a brief glimpse of the modern religious "spectrum" of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians that gravitates not only between Christianity or a Cherokee religious system, but also multiple middle grounds between the two traditions based on individual practice, observance, attendance, and beliefs. Furthermore, Zogry argues that these competing religious worldviews do not necessarily entail conflict, but instead demonstrate that "many Cherokee people have been, and continue to be, able to harmonize the religious and social ideals of two or more cultures" (pp. 141-142).

Chapter 4 involves the public performance of Anetso during the early to mid-twentieth century, and examines part of the tourism and film industries that curried monetary support for the Cherokee during this time. Zogry stipulates that contrary to traditional historical and anthropological scholarship of declining Cherokee cultural and religious traditions during the twentieth century, Anetso exhibited a preservation of cultural and ritual expression embodied in the public spectacles of ball game matches. Additionally, Anetso constituted a form of identity for both Cherokee ball players and spectators (who often participate by wagering on the outcome of the match) that offers a continuity, or connection, to the Cherokee past, which provides the impetus for Zogry's concluding chapter on the theoretical meaning of Anetso to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians today. While according to Zogry the ball game exemplifies a Cherokee identity, it also envelops specific clan and community (formerly village) identities as well as a traditional identity and connection with an indigenous past. Although Zogry acknowledges that not all, or even a majority of, members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians regard Anetso as a source of cultural and ritual expression or indigenous identity, he perceives the ball game as a "public display of a dedication, or adherence, to the preservation of a certain mode of living, or stance toward life" that thrives after three centuries of adversity and change (p. 234).

Zogry utilizes both historical and anthropological methodologies in his examination of Anetso, employing both the documentary record and ethnological fieldwork to indicate the cultural and ritual persistence and change associated with the Cherokee ball game throughout the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries. Written sources include the correspondence of colonial governors, federal Indian agents, and missionaries (predominantly Moravian and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions); travelers' narratives and observations; boarding school annual reports; legislative journals and proceedings; treaties; court records; newspapers; and personal papers (John Howard Payne and Major John Norton), all of which lend a historical context to Zogry's work that is often absent from many ethnological studies of indigenous peoples. Supplementing his use of the documentary record, Zogry engages "cultural narratives" (Cherokee oral traditions or myths), ethnological data from past anthropologists and his own fieldwork (including photos and video), insider perspective and information from Cherokee informants, and social theory to situate Anetso in its proper cultural context. Together, these historical and anthropological methodologies and sources offer a complementary analysis of the Cherokee ball game, its cultural and religious meaning to not only indigenous participants and spectators but also Euro-Americans, and the momentous continuities and nominal changes that Anetso has undergone over the past three hundred years.

Zogry's work contributes to the relatively sparse scholarship on Anetso as well as the Cherokee religious system that traditional historical and anthropological interpretations attribute to steady decline beginning in the eighteenth century, with accelerated declension during the nineteenth century due to Indian Removal, Christianization and civilization programs, and the "Indian Wars," with a continued erosion of traditional cultural and religious elements throughout the twentieth century as a consequence of allotment, termination, and relocation. He primarily challenges the works and assumptions of eminent historian William McLoughlin, theorist/anthropologist Levi-Strauss, and scholar MacAloon, all of whom remain influential in modern scholarship regarding the Cherokee, native religions, and study of indigenous cultural games like Anetso. He asserts that

these scholars fail to fully appreciate the religious and cultural implications of Anetso for the Cherokee people and the importance of the ball game to Cherokee identity. Specifically, Zogry suggests that McLoughlin's argument of a Cherokee cultural "renascence" during the early to mid-nineteenth century cannot account for Anetso being a vital retainer of Cherokee religious and cultural traditions, which refutes McLoughlin's argument of a wholesale cultural and religious reformation of Cherokee society during the early American Republic era. Instead, Zogry aligns himself with such historians as Hoxie, James H. Merrell (*The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* [1989]), Gregory Evans Dowd (*A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* [1992]), Theda Perdue (*Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* [1998]), Peter Nabokov (*A Forest of Time: American Indian Ways of History* [2002] and *Indian Running: Native American History and Tradition* [1991]), and Joel H. Martin (*Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World* [1993]), harnessing their varied arguments and methodologies throughout his work. These important influences include consideration of alternative Indian agencies (Hoxie), the "rollercoaster rhythm" of change and continuity among North American indigenous peoples (Merrell), pan- and intra-Indian identity and solidarity (Dowd), persistence of Cherokee cultural and religious traditions (Perdue), reconciliation of the oral traditions and sources of native peoples with Euro-American documentation for a complementary interpretation of the past (Nabokov), and a native "cultural underground" that scholars fail to appreciate (Martin) (pp. 72, 149). Of these historians, Zogry continuously employs Martin's "cultural underground" as evidence of the unseen cultural and religious elements of Anetso for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians that both historians and ethnologists have long misunderstood. Yet most of Zogry's revisionary work is reserved for Levi-Strauss and MacAloon. In simplified fashion, he takes issue with Levi-Strauss's and MacAloon's distinctions between "Game" and "Ritual" where cultural and religious elements are not encapsulated in indigenous play or sport like Anetso. The whole thrust of Zogry's monograph is the opposite of what Levi-Strauss and MacAloon suggest, which proves a momentous revision of past ethnological study of the Cherokee and indigenous games and play.

However, Zogry's exemplary work is not without its detractions. From a historian's standpoint, much of his monograph bogs down with anthropological terminology and social theory. In more than half of his lengthy introduction, in nearly the entirety of chapter 5, and continuously throughout the remainder of his work, he positions himself in past and current historical and ethnological literature. While always an important feature of any scholarly work, this facet of his book often distracts the reader's attention to Zogry's historical context for the cultural and religious importance of Anetso to the Cherokee people. Along with this, several of his arguments lay buried deep within his chapters, which hamper the overall effectiveness of his assertions. For example, his profound conclusion concerning Anetso and Cherokee identity in twentieth-century material culture (calendars, photographs) consists of no more than a few paragraphs near the end of the chapter (pp. 142-143). This statement seems more central to his thesis than he gives it credence, that Anetso retained significant cultural and religious meaning for the Cherokee people after more than two centuries of conflict and change, offering a shared identity and connection to the Cherokee past for not only ball players but also spectators.

Additionally, the organization of Zogry's book is often confusing rather than transitioning smoothly. Each chapter consists of several smaller sections dedicated to a certain subject, event, individual, ritual, source, or other classification that sometimes defy organizational sense. A chronological, thematic, or some other linear form of organization could easily have remedied this distraction. Further debilitating to Zogry's argument and evidence is his continuous interjection of self into the monograph, including but not limited to personal experience, commentary, fieldwork methodology, and several stories, such as his retail experience at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and subsequent hostile encounter with a customer (pp. 180-181). Lastly, Zogry's historical context during the early twentieth century lacks understanding of Progressivism's influence on federal Indian policy, that government treatment of indigenous cultures and peoples through Christianization and so-called moral reform differed greatly from past civilization attempts by government during the nineteenth century. Zogry assumes continuity in federal Indian policy from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries while instead great change marked federal attitudes and relations with native peoples during the early to mid-twentieth century.

Yet overall, Zogry's *Anetso, the Cherokee Ball Game* defies and revises past and current historical and anthropological scholarship on the Cherokee nation as well as its cultural and religious heritage, utilizing Anetso as a vehicle for examining the retention of traditional cultural and religious rituals, ways of life, and identity. A superb amalgamation of historical and ethnological methodolo-

gies and interpretations of evidence, Zogry demonstrates the defiant persistence of Cherokee cultural and religious elements embedded within Anesto that contemporary Cherokee ball players and spectators continue to embrace today. As Zogry himself concludes in his book, the real importance of this work is not defining the actual cultural and religious meaning of Anetso, which should in fact be left "up to the Cherokee people who play and watch it," but showing how the ball game proves a "long standing and vital element in Cherokee culture … [and how] Cherokee people have represented it to themselves and to outside observers, some of whom in turn have represented and signified it" (p. 236).

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Citation: Bryan Rindfleisch. Review of Zogry, Michael J., *Anetso, the Cherokee Ball Game: At the Center of Ceremony and Identity.* H-Florida, H-Net Reviews. September, 2010.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=30860

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