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populations. This book, fortunately or unfortunately, follows directly on another recently published book on Trinidad by Viranjini Munasinghe (2001), which, while troubling the trope of callaloo, also implicitly invokes its importance. The overexposure of the metaphor *callaloo*, its etymology still undeveloped, and the submersion in details leave one with the profound feeling not only that too many metaphors have been mixed, but that in the process of deconstructing minutiae, meanings have not so much been recovered as their significance has been lost.

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Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom. *Tiya Miles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 329 pp., 19 illustrations. \$34.95, cloth.

In 1824, a battle-scarred Cherokee warrior named Shoe Boots made an arresting petition to his tribe's governing body. Shoe Boots's position as a prosperous farmer had provided him the means to purchase an African slave woman, with whom he had fathered three children. He then found himself in the awkward position of being simultaneously "the holder of property and the father of property" (p. 76). This respected leader expressed concern that, upon his death, his children would become nothing more than an item in his estate, to be parceled out among his heirs.

As it turned out, the fate of Shoe Boots's Afro-Cherokee children was not nearly so simple, being by turns both better and worse than their father might have expected. Things at first seemed to be going well when the Cherokee National Council formally emancipated the children, certifying their legal status as free Cherokee citizens. However, only a few years later, with Shoe Boots dead and the Cherokee government disintegrating under an overwhelming assault by the state of Georgia, the children were captured and forced into race-based servitude. Although a sister managed to secure her freedom and regather her siblings, the family was subsequently deported with other Cherokees to Indian Territory (later Oklahoma) on the horrific mass removal known as the Trail of Tears. Strikingly similar vicissitudes would beset Shoe Boots's grandchildren who, like the generation before them, straddled an unstable boundary between evolving African and Cherokee racial classifications.

Earlier scholars have discussed Shoe Boots's legal case as a transitional moment in Cherokee national politics—an event marking new tribal concessions to the patriarchal organization of the encroaching, dominant society. Miles, however, takes a more comprehensive look at the lives of Shoe Boots and his family, closely tying their experiences to events in the surrounding society. She expands on and sometimes corrects previous scholarship, even carrying her inquiries into the modern day with a brief discussion of some twentieth-century descendants in Shoe Boots's lineage. More importantly, Miles uses biographical facts as a platform from which to launch readers into the swirl of events surrounding the coalescence of a racial caste system in America, showing how the process was undergirded by changing laws, political relationships, social mores, gender roles, and family structures. She skillfully teaches her readers what the events she chronicles reveal about the evolution of the categories by which whites, Africans, and Native Americans organized their lives together—including powerful ideas about race and racism, slavery and savagery, motherhood and nationhood, religion and property relations, freedom and citizenship.

Available information illuminating the lives that Miles examines is unfortunately sketchy. For this reason, she must often make deductions and draw inferences on the basis of partial and tangential evidence, and sometimes her interpretations are frankly speculative. Miles even extends the factual record by incorporating works of fiction into her narrative, a technique that some may find unsettling. The point seems to be to evoke a *feeling*, to guide the reader in the effort to imagine as fully as possible the elusive texture of lives lived within strictures that are truly unfathomable to modern consciousness.

In crafting her argument, Miles draws skillfully on scholarly work in disciplines including history, anthropology, women's studies, and literature. She also taps a range of published and unpublished archival documents, such as missionary records and newspapers. In this way, she provides as complete a portrait as we are likely to get of a fascinating family and their place in American and Native American history. The work also has considerable relevance to a current and tendentious legal dispute in the Cherokee Nation involving the rights of "freedmen," or individuals whose ancestors were slaves owned by Cherokee people, but who later received tribal citizenship.

Ties That Bind relates a little-known, sometimes shocking, utterly compelling story. It will help readers understand how, why, and to what degree the histories of African and Native peoples intertwined in America, and to trace out contemporary consequences. If the book is in some measure a work of the imagination, it is not an act of unfettered and irresponsible imagination—rather of an imagination informed by all available data. This book should appear on the must-read list for anyone interested in a deepened understanding of Native and African American racial formation. It would form a well-received addition to courses in American, women's, or ethnic studies. It should also be considered for classes in anthropology, history, and sociology.

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