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to be of particular value in Métis studies or other indigenous studies courses in Canada, although it would also be quite suitable in more general race relations courses as an in-depth case study of the “othering” phenomenon. It should be compulsory reading for politicians and policy makers, Native and non-Native alike, who are grappling with issues of membership and entitlement or with the urban indigenous phenomenon more generally. While it is set in the Canadian context, much of what Lawrence writes transcends the limits of geography and of her sample. Her various explicit comparisons with the situation in the United States increase its attractiveness there.

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Splendid Land, Splendid People: Chickasaw Indians to Removal. By James T. Atkinson. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004. 366 pages. \$65.00 cloth; \$34.95 paper.

In this new work on the Chickasaw Nation archaeologist James T. Atkinson presents a detailed political history of European-Indian affairs prior to the so-called Indian removals. Atkinson’s narrative derives from official government and military sources, from which the author competently describes the important men and events of the era. Atkinson’s work may be fairly termed old-style Indian history. His methodology, sources, and approach, in addition to his narrative style, recall the pre-1970s scholarship that excluded any effort to understand the effect of culture on the historical narrative. Ethnohistorians of the 1970s dramatically altered the methodology of studies on Native Americans to include an interdisciplinary approach that explored the effect of culture, language, worldview, and belief systems. This new ethnohistorical scholarship allowed non-Native scholars to more effectively, and hopefully accurately, understand the actions and behaviors of Native peoples in the past. Recently more and more Native American academics have taken places within the academy and are revising the historical record, making significant strides in presenting much more balanced accounts of the past. Unfortunately, Atkinson’s work is uninformed by an understanding of Chickasaw society and culture. Important questions go unasked in this study. Instead the author has constructed a work that is heavily infused with ethnocentric misunderstandings of the Chickasaw past.

Splendid Land, Splendid People is preceded by very few monographs on the Chickasaw people. Arrell Morgan Gibson’s *The Chickasaws* (1971) is considered the most authoritative. Gibson was a true ethnohistorian. His work reflects his training and interest in the Chickasaw culture, as well as political events. Gibson devotes many pages to understanding the Chickasaw society and how their unique cultural beliefs and values infused their actions with Europeans and Americans over time. Gibson’s work is now rather dated and so does not include the latest research in the various disciplines over the past thirty years. Still, Gibson presents the reader with a much better understanding of the

Chickasaws. W. David Baird's *The Chickasaw People* (1974) is a short tribal history that is fairly limited in scope. Aside from these, students of Chickasaw history must turn to Grant Foreman's *Five Civilized Tribes* (1934), Daniel Littlefield's *The Chickasaw Freedmen* (1980), and older works that do not focus on the Chickasaws exclusively. Certainly the time was right for a new work on the Chickasaws. Unfortunately, Atkinson's work is so limited in scope and so narrow in approach that it misses the opportunity to fill a gap in the literature.

While Atkinson succeeds as a political historian, he is less successful in rendering a balanced account. This failure results not only from his exclusively political approach but also from his disinterest in cultural aspects of the historical record. For example, in Chickasaw society women had prominent and important positions. Contrary to prevailing belief, Chickasaw women were not subordinate, had a great deal of power, and asserted their opinions in official and unofficial forums. Atkinson rarely mentions women at all, and when he does, it is to identify a man's wife—not a person of interest in her own right. One of the few women the author mentions by name is Queen Pucaunla, who is mentioned as "Chinubbee's widow" (213).

In addition to including few female actors in his account, Atkinson omits any discussion of their role in Chickasaw society. The Chickasaws were a matrilineal, clan-based society whose female leaders informed all the major decisions of the tribe. Women were members of the Councils of Elders, which were instrumental in the governance of every Chickasaw community. Atkinson attributes too much power and authority to the "king," following his every move, despite the fact that Chickasaw government was highly democratic and strikingly fluid, perhaps an indication he has become lulled into the same mistakes made by his highly Eurocentric official sources. The back-cover blurb goes so far as to assert that Atkinson "covers important issues" such as "the lives of Chickasaw women." As an example of his treatment of women, Atkinson asserts that women "were valuable in boosting the morale of the warriors, in addition to their numerous other roles and tasks of bearing and raising children, planting, tending, and harvesting crops, fishing, gathering wild plant foods and firewood, cooking, making clay pottery and wooden baskets, and so on" (140). Students seeking an understanding of the role of women in Chickasaw society will need to look elsewhere. Indeed, women are all but invisible in this entire work, including the index, which lists no entries for "women," "kinship," "clans," or "gender roles."

The most fundamental and all-pervasive concept in the Chickasaw worldview was that of relationships—between people, spirits, animals, and inert objects. The Chickasaws' world revolved around maintaining harmony and balance in these relationships, and this balance ordered their world and everything in it. Without a thorough understanding of these ideals and concepts, non-Native historians cannot even attempt to portray the Native perspective accurately. One key source omitted from Atkinson's study is Charles Hudson. Atkinson uses some of Hudson's minor works, but his most important major study of southeastern indigenous people would have introduced Atkinson to an entirely new world. (See Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* [1976].)

Atkinson's treatment of the topic of slavery is also problematic. The Chickasaws in Indian Territory had a small number of families, usually of mixed heritage, who had numerous slaves working on large plantations that were very similar to those found in the American South. Most of these families were well-to-do, and many were very rich. They lived in sumptuous mansions and enjoyed the services of dozens, sometimes hundreds, of enslaved African Americans. This small group of slaveholders had overseers who asserted the total domination of the master. Yet Atkinson argues that Chickasaw slaves enjoyed an easy life compared to slaves in the South, stating that they were in a more "symbiotic" relationship in which labor was far lighter than in the white South and in which master and slave worked short hours. Atkinson is correct in thus characterizing slavery when the slaveholder was a small subsistence farmer, as were almost all those Chickasaws of non-mixed heritage, but it is certainly arguable that the majority of slaves were owned by Chickasaws who practiced southern style slavery in all its ugliness.

Without a solid understanding of the Chickasaw worldview, kinship system, gender roles, language, government, and clans, Atkinson is led into numerous errors and odd explanations for behavior he does not understand. For example, he asserts that the almost total opposition to "removal" proposed by American government officials resulted from confusion and uncertainty rather than from considered and unified decision making on the part of an intelligent and savvy people. Atkinson's Eurocentric approach finds expression in odd overstatements of European power; for example, he proposes that during the last four decades of the Louisiana colony the Chickasaw and Choctaw played roles scripted for them by the French and the English. The Native people of the South played off the national interests of the invading Europeans with great virtuosity, maneuvering for at least a century to obtain military weaponry and support for their own aims and in their own self-interest. The southern indigenous peoples were certainly not puppets of the Europeans; indeed, their favor was courted relentlessly by the Europeans, who needed their alliance in the contest for power over their rivals.

In sum, *Splendid Land, Splendid People* is valuable in that it provides a summary of the European and American official records. However, it is unfortunately Eurocentric and misogynistic and is simply not a balanced account. A study of the Muskogee language, worldview, and culture is necessary for scholars who were not reared in this culture so that at least some understanding of the actions and behavior of the Chickasaws can be incorporated into the narrative.

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