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Urban Homelands: Writing the Native City from Oklahoma. By Lindsey Claire Smith. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2023. 258 pages. $65 cloth; $65 ebook.

In the minds of European colonizers and settlers, the ideas of cities and Indigenous peoples have long been assumed to be fundamentally incompatible. As for Native people themselves, they have always known that urbanization is a part of their past and present. And yet, scholars were still quite slow to catch on. In the past few decades, however, more have finally started to take notice. With this book, *Urban Homelands*, Lindsey Claire Smith has given us a thoughtful, thought-provoking, and insightful addition to that important effort.

Informed by her background as a professor of English and American studies, Smith makes good use of the work of Indigenous artists as well as academic historians in her study. With regard to the former, she offers extensive analyses of the creations—in the form of poems, novels, music, film, TV, theater, and other media—of Joy Harjo, Sterlin Harjo, LeAnne Howe, Lynn Riggs, and Elisa Harkins, with several others getting significant, if briefer, mentions, too. With regard to the latter, historians will recognize the work of, for example, Donald Fixico, Coll Thrush, and Myla Vicenti Carpio—with their histories of Indigenous urbanization—and scholars like Ned Blackhawk, Pekka Hämäläinen, and Kathleen DuVal—with their contributions to the broader and deeper understandings of Native peoples in the region.

Those taking a quick glance at the book's title may expect a focus on Native experiences within the confines of a single city in the state of Oklahoma. *Urban Homelands* transcends those expectations, however, in provocative and useful ways. Drawing upon her readings into urban studies as well as Indigenous studies, Smith takes a considerably more expansive, fluid, and dynamic view of urbanization. "I understand *urban* more broadly and spatially," she writes (4), later adding, "My work . . . extends the conversation to new understandings of where urban spaces can be found—in both space and time—and how they have structured the identities and cultures of Indigenous peoples of the former Indian Territory" (12). With that view in mind, Tulsa, Oklahoma, is certainly one of the three cities she focuses on, but the other two are beyond the state's borders: New Orleans and Santa Fe. After all, as the book's subtitle aptly announces, this study looks at "writing the Native city *from* Oklahoma," not just *in* Oklahoma.

This approach pays off, as it can help readers better appreciate a more complicated but more accurate understanding of Indigenous urbanization. That is, Smith gets readers to notice that Native people did not and do not always tend to lock themselves into static existences in one fixed spot, urban or rural. Rather, they have taken their Indigenous cultures and identities from Oklahoma to cities in other states, while simultaneously tapping into the Native histories in those cities, and sometimes

returning—physically and mentally—to those Oklahoma homelands, including the city of Tulsa.

Smith walks readers through these ideas by starting, in chapter one, with good attention to the long presence of Indigenous peoples in Tulsa, New Orleans, and Santa Fe, along with the Oklahoma connections that exist for the latter two. As noted above, she synthesizes the interpretations of several historians for this section, but then also takes a look at public monuments in these cities. Such monuments affirm Native absence and/or disappearance—again revealing the assumption of Indigeneity and urbanization as incompatible domains—even if the historians are showing otherwise. Chapter two then turns its attention specifically to New Orleans, with insightful discussions of how Oklahoma writers and filmmakers have been influenced by, and have in turn influenced, that city. Tulsa then takes center stage for chapter three, which, along with continuing the discussion of Joy Harjo's artistic productions, provides a timely and incisive look at the groundbreaking television show *Reservation Dogs*. The final chapter carries us across the plains to Santa Fe, goes back to the 1920s with Cherokee writer Lynn Riggs, then moves onto the 1960s, when Joy Harjo described the city as "the epicenter of hippiedom in the West" (182), before assessing contemporary times, where indigeneity and tourism continue to exist in a complicated relationship. Throughout these chapters, Smith does well to note the agency of the Muscogee, Cherokee, Choctaw, Comanche, Osage, and other Native peoples, actively shaping their impact on these urban places rather than only passively being shaped by them.

There is much of importance to ponder and take away from this book, but I will make special note of three elements that I found especially worthy of comment and commendation. One is the ample attention to the complex, sometimes fraught history of Indigenous relations with African Americans in this Oklahoma urban realm. On this subject, Smith brings us, for instance, some of the discussions it generated in relation to parts of *Reservation Dogs*, and also its coverage in the podcast helmed by Rebecca Nagle. The second item of note is the book's afterword. In it, Smith discusses the recent (2020) McGirt decision of the United States Supreme Court, which ruled that tribes actually have sovereignty over the city of Tulsa. It serves as a fitting and intriguing way of closing the book, giving us a chance to consider the more practical aspects of laws as a complement to the often more intangible (but no less important) views of the artists that comprise the bulk of the rest of the book. Third, Smith is open in sharing her own connections to the topic that her book aims to study. "My family is deeply rooted in Oklahoma," she writes, noting that her late father "taught high school English for decades in Tulsa and first introduced me to the works of N. Scott Momaday" (x). She clearly cares about this place and its people, and she cares about helping to show the ways it has influenced the world beyond its borders. The evident and genuine energy she puts into describing these stories will certainly help readers better care about them, too.

Indeed, Smith's thoughts on this array of Indigenous Oklahoma creatives and their accompanying comments on urbanization are just those of one scholar, of course. And, for that matter, this review of her book is also just the perspective of

one scholar in one academic journal. To go further into this topic and the complex identities it is glimpsing, readers could ideally also read the work of these artists on their own. In addition, they could listen to contemporary Native people themselves as they reflect on all of this. To her credit, Smith has already included a good deal of Indigenous commentary on these texts. But there is always more to hear, with diverse opinions being shared in myriad forms and multiple forums. With that in mind, *Urban Homelands* can stand as a part of such conversations, and a solid one at that.

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