Native American Religion and Film: Interviews with Chris Eyre and Sherman Alexie

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Abstract
For decades Hollywood films have cast the American Indian as the savage, the medicine man and the noble warrior, stereotypes that either demonize or romanticize a people. Ritual and religion rarely receive much better treatment. One of the reasons for this poor representation is that filmmakers are coming from a white perspective. Director Chris Eyre and writer-director Sherman Alexie, both American Indians, have emerged in the last decade to rectify the situation, jointly creating the film Smoke Signals, a buddy road picture that forces the protagonists to rethink Indian identity and the bonds that tie them. Eyre and Alexie examine how their films deal with religion.

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