



Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film

By Neva Jacquelyn Kilpatrick

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Native American characters have been the most malleable of metaphors for filmmakers. The likeable Doc of *Stagecoach* (1939) had audiences on the edge of their seats with dire warnings about “that old butcher, Geronimo.” Old Lodgeskins of *Little Big Man* (1970) had viewers crying out against the demise of the noble, wise chief and his kind and simple people. In 1995 Disney created a beautiful, peace-loving ecologist and called her Pocahontas. Only occasionally have Native Americans been portrayed as complex, modern characters in films like *Smoke Signals*.

Celluloid Indians is an accessible, insightful overview of Native American representation in film over the past century. Beginning with the birth of the movie industry, Jacquelyn Kilpatrick carefully traces changes in the cinematic depictions of Native peoples and identifies cultural and historical reasons for those changes. In the late twentieth century, Native Americans have been increasingly involved with writing and directing movies about themselves, and Kilpatrick places appropriate emphasis on the impact that Native American screenwriters and filmmakers have had on the industry. *Celluloid Indians* concludes with a valuable, in-depth look at influential and innovative Native Americans in today’s film industry.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a seminal study of how Native Americans have been portrayed in film since the start of the film industry in this country. . . . This is much more than a book for film buffs; it's about how stereotypes of Native Americans were created. As the book treats the evolution of film images of Native Americans, the reader may begin to appreciate it as a history of how white people have dealt with Native Americans, including how they have created popular stereotypes of them. . . . An elegantly thoughtful book."—*Kliatt* (*Kliatt*)

"Any filmmaker seeking to present images draped in honesty should read this book. It is an absolute must."—E. Donald Two-Rivers, author of *Survivor's Medicine*
(E. Donald Two-Rivers)

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, of Choctaw, Cherokee, and Irish descent, is a professor of English at Governor's State University in University Park, Illinois. Her articles have appeared in *Creative Screenwriting* and *Cineaste*.

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