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Review of *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film* Edited by Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor

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Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film. Edited by Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor. Foreword by Wilcomb E. Washburn. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998. Illustrations, bibliography, contributors, index. xiv + 226 pp. \$24.95.

This collection of essays, a number of which first appeared in a special issue of the journal *Film and History*, represents a variety of perspectives within the basic historical, cultural approach to film. Though the emphasis on the context and content of the films discussed may give pause to some film critics, the essays provide valuable ways to think about the meaning and impact of Hollywood's portrayal of American Indian characters.

One of the first, Ted Jojola's "Absurd Reality II," is notable for the tour of modern and contemporary film and TV its American Indian author offers the reader, focusing on acting to illustrate the failure of Hollywood to deal with the realities of American Indian life. In addition to annotating a filmography of

recent films at the essay's close, the author establishes a useful new category, "Indian sympathy films." The remaining essays deal either with individual films or such topics as the history and institutionalizing of the fictional American Indian and the portrayal of Indians in the films of John Ford.

The essays on films consider *The Vanishing American*, *Broken Arrow*, *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here*, *Little Big Man*, *Powwow Highway*, *Dances with Wolves*, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992), *Pocahontas*, and *The Indian in the Cupboard*. "Going Indian," Robert Baird's essay on *Dances with Wolves*, was for me the most complex and stimulating analysis of an individual film, elucidating in great detail a key theme in recent films. The essay that stretched my sense of relevance to the limit was a Finnish scholar's discussion of the portrayal of Lapp peoples in Finnish "Westerns."

Though the book's writing and scholarship are generally impressive, I was puzzled by two remarkable errors. In one essay, *Little Big Man* is described as a "milestone in the portrayal of the Sioux people," when in fact the film portrays the Cheyenne. In another essay, the Apache tribe of *Broken Arrow* is consistently identified as Cheyenne. As for omissions, I wish that two significant Canadian films, *Black Robe* and *Clearcut*, had been the subject of an essay.

Written by a diverse and lively group of scholars, the essays as a whole are a fine addition to previous studies of the portrayal of American Indians in narrative film. The volume sharply illustrates its subject's cross-disciplinary nature; its variety of approaches will help its audience develop readings of older films, as well as the new generation of Indian productions such as *Smoke Signals*.

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