

Storytelling in the film smoke signals by chris eyre

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



In the movie *Smoke Signals*, inspired by Sherman Alexie the audience was taken on a cross country journey with the lifetime friends of Victor and Thomas. While on their journey they end up forming a close relationship with each other by discovering themselves and their relationships with others as well. Thomas's stories tell the audience stories that are not true but they tell truth about the things he is talking about. Storytelling to Thomas is about telling the truth of something but not necessarily the reality. Thomas Stories told through the use of backstory and a third-person narrative that introduces the audience to difficult relationships and the search for self-identity from the Native American point of view. The narrative is used by storytelling through Thomas's perspective which are fabrications of what actually happens in the movie.

Folk tales tell stories based on oral traditions. They have the power to influence a person's perception, attitude, behavior, and many other factors important to life. Oral traditions let people pass down knowledge from generation to generation. Native Americans use folk tales to create unity with each other by telling stories of what they value and ultimately who they are. Rayrai Priwan writes on the importance of folk tales and says " Folk tales bring people's pride of their locality so that they would perceive that they have something in common. Such attitudes greatly lead to people's unity and harmony." To simply put this means that Thomas's attitude and passion that he puts into each of his stories even if they are not completely true at the end of the day they leave a positive impact on people's lives.

One of the main components of tale-telling is according to Priwan is the Tell-tellers. Tell-tellers is someone " who has particular skills and styles for

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telling stories because he/she will make the stories even more exciting." This completely fits the description of how Thomas is when he tells his stories, he's able to captivate an audience and also make them feel like the stories he tells are empowering.

Thomas is a storyteller, Thomas tells many stories to Victor throughout their journey to Phoenix because he is deeply connected with his heritage, memories, and finding signs and symbols in things. Victor is struggling to be more modern, so he has problems listening to Thomas most of the time. Also Victor, who's pretty aware of Thomas's point of view, just wants the truth, even though he is not into being so open to what truth he will really receive.

An example of Thomas telling one of his stories is when he told Suzy was about fry bread that Victor's mom makes. He tells the story about how she makes the best fry bread, and at a feast, there were one hundred people but only fifty pieces of fry bread remaining. So she splits the fry bread into two. Victor immediately states that Thoma's story is a lie. What makes Thoma's stories is how he's able to make them all passionate and charming. The passion and charm manifest in more than one story and helps to shape the story itself. That's why it seems like a lie-in Victor's point of view but that is what makes the audience view the story from a new perspective from Thomas' view.

When Thomas asks Susie to tell her own fun story she asks whether or not he wants her to tell a true or untrue story, Thomas then replies with, " I want both." Comparison with the fact that Thomas will accept the story however as it will come because he knows that it will bring value to him in a way.

The passion and charm Thomas uses in his storytelling does, in fact, alter the story but it can also allow the truth surface in a way that some facts can not. When Susie tells Victor the story his father used to tell all the time about a basketball match he and Victor played against two priests at the reservation. In the story, Victor is so good and determined he ends up scoring the last point at the last minute and they end up winning the match. Victor tells Susie that his father lies and that in fact he never scored that last point. And still, through the altering in that story, through the magic-infused into it, Arnold's true feelings for how proud he was of his son finally came out.

Throughout the film flashbacks from the past interfere with the story that the audience follows. For instance, Sometimes the audience would see adult Victor on screen together with child Victor as this creates a complex narrative that layers the truths and meanings of the story that Thomas tells. Brian A. klems a writer says " Flashbacks can hint at backstories, but they aren't backstories themselves." Meaning that flashbacks Thomas used help create a clear narrative in order for him to continue to tell his many stories.

Through the use of storytelling so typical of Indian culture, Smoke Signals weaves together fantasy and realism in a series of flashbacks and fast-forwards, often narrated by Thomas. In the process not only are Thomas and Victor able to accept their past and present, but we as viewers are able better to discover our stories as well.

Through the use of Thomas's storytelling throughout Smoke Signals he's able to narrate and tell his own truth which brings passion and charm in many flashbacks. Sharing stories with one another allows people to

understand the human experience by finding ways to relate to and connect with one another. At the same time, Thomas and Victor are able to take on their past and present.