

Tlingit culture hero the Raven

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DIM VIEW OF TLINGIT CULTURE HERO THE RAVEN

According to George Pettitt author of Primitive Education in North America, "the importance of myths and folk tales as a body of knowledge to be transmitted to primitive children as a means of inculcating attitudes in harmony with cultural patterns has been generally accepted if not a taken for granted thing by virtually all writers on primitive education."

Tlingit children are not likely to get the necessary sense of ethnic pride from reading the content in The Raven: which is a collection of woodcuts extracted from the Tlingit culture by Dale DeArmond, illustrating a series of folk tales adapted and rewritten from the linguistist John Swanton's collection of Tlingit Myths and texts. Ms. De Armond's re-translation of the Tlingit Text and language is abusive and insulting to all of our people who reside in Southeast Alaska and in other places.

The Raven as found in the Tlingit translation more justified to stand alone without further comment. The essential purpose of my comments is to inform Ms. DeArmond simply that her effort to re-translate the Tlingit language as it appears in the series about the Raven is quite childish and dull. It is not consistent with the effort to promote mutual understanding and respect between all citizens and groups.

We are by birth children of the great Raven Phratry who are brothers to each other. With a sense of ethnic pride, I am obliged to defend their dignity and unity of thought in rhetoric. And, naturally, I believe in giving strength and support to our Tlingit oral tradition by maintaining respect for all that had to be believed, obeyed, and accepted. For that reason, I am unwilling to accept Ms. DeArmond's re-translation of the Tlingit Language utilizing English concepts in the stories about The Raven.

Tlingit storytellers are not going to accept it, because of its intent to make a mockery of their language, and of the impression it gives which identifies them as a group who were unable to express themselves intelligibly. Our ancestors were a people of ability. They produced a language that is very expressive in rhetoric and action..they could not have survived if this had not been so

(Haa ' has awe yei has at wul.goooon, tleix at wul.oon kayi aw yi han tsu.)