

Tipi tales analysis



Mahealani SubadAs children grow, we try to teach them certain values that will help them later in life to become good human beings. Some of the teachings can be taught from children shows as they show scenarios of life lessons, such as honesty, through characters that children attach themselves too. In the children show *Tipi Tales* (Oswald 2002), it presents children with life lessons and stories that based upon Indigenous culture through puppeteer work. With the children show ended in 2007, it taught lessons, specifically Ojibwe teachings, and converting some of the values from those teachings into characters to make the show relatable to younger audiences (“Ojibwe Teachings & The 7 Grandfathers”). The show was seen as a way to present Indigenous culture to Canadian children in a way to connect the indigenous community with prime-time television as it was mainly shown on the popular television station Treehouse (Course Entertainment 2002).

Within the show, *Tipi Tales* (Oswald 2002) follows four cousins of Indigenous descent who visit their great-grandparents where they are taught life lessons from various characters who resemble Ojibwe teachings. In the children’s show, there are seven animal characters, in which, each of the animal characters correspond with the Ojibwe teaching of the Seven Grandfather Teachings (“Ojibwe Teachings & The 7 Grandfathers”). The Seven Grandfather Teachings are the ethical values of the Ojibwe people, which consists of humility, bravery, honesty, wisdom, truth, respect and love (“Ojibwe Teachings & The 7 Grandfathers”). These values that the Ojibwe had set was apart of their oral traditions that have been passed down by elders within the community (Verbos and Humphries 2013). The values were told through story that conveyed the meaning of how human beings should

behave whether if it is towards each other or the Earth (Verbos and Humphries 2013). An example of the values and the relation it has with human beings and the Earth would be respect as it attaches itself to all creations such as nature, creatures and people (Verbos and Humphries 2013). In indigenous culture, nature is not seen as an object, but as a living thing, in which, indigenous people believe that the Earth should not be treated or be exploited by human beings at the expense of other forms of life (Verbos and Humphries 2013). The way Tipi Tales portray these values sets them in an understanding that children can comprehend the meaning of each lesson taught within each episode of the show. However, when analyzing the show, I did not comprehend the Indigenous origins of the values that were being portrayed within the show. Although the show involved an indigenous family and had undertones of Indigenous music during the title sequence, I had to look further into learning about the 7 Grandfather teachings to truly understand the indigenous origins behind the show.

Nonetheless, with the exclusion of the extensive research to understand the origin of values taught within Tipi Tales, it does create a cultural outreach to Canadian audiences as there are not many children shows that present an indigenous culture or identity on prime-time television. As mentioned before, Tipi Tales was one of the two shows, along side The Mole Sisters, to present “...the rich and oral traditions of Canada’s Aboriginal community and our strong literary traditions” on Canadian prime-time television (Course Entertainment 2002). By making the decision of adding a children show based upon Indigenous teachings, it can be seen as respectable allowing

diversity into younger audience's entertainment as the show shares the values of the Seven Grandfather Teachings of the Ojibwe people. The show can be a starting point into introducing Indigenous culture to children as there are aspects of the culture that everyone can learn from, especially as an adult as life can be construed from the mistreatment and exploitation that we see often that effects the Earth or our everyday lives.

Upon researching the children show, Tipi Tales, I had only heard of the show and watched some of the episode as a child not putting any thought into the show as it seemed like any other children show that taught life lessons of how to be kind and to treat others the way they wanted to be treated.

However, with taking another look at the show, it presents a deeper meaning as the show introduces life lessons in the perspective of Indigenous culture where the whole show is based upon the Seven Grandfather Teachings of love, honesty, bravery, wisdom, humility, truth, and respect. All values a child must learn and with the extent that the values can be applied to nature as it is seen as animated.

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