

A Rejoinder to Dr. Wendell Oswalt Review of Dorothy Jean Ray's Book: "Artists on the Tundra And the Sea". (Anthropologica, Vol. V, No. 1, 1963, 82.)

It is not my wish to enter into a debate with a subjective reviewer, but I would like to correct several misleading impressions that Mr. Oswalt left with the reader in his review of my book, *ARTISTS OF THE TUNDRA AND THE SEA*.

In the first place, Mr. Oswalt makes it appear that the book is a comprehensive study of Eskimo art, which it is not. It is, rather, a study of the contemporary Bering Strait Eskimo ivory carvings and carvers, based entirely on my own field work in Alaska.

The chapter on archeology, which I called "Ancient Carvers," was designed only to summarize existing information and to familiarize the general reader with the archeological and historical antecedents to the contemporary carving. Although I stated for the first time some new historical generalities, I did not present new archeological interpretations, which the reviewer thinks I should have done. That already had been admirably taken care of by Collins, Giddings, Larsen, and Rainey as indicated in a special bibliographic section. Despite this fact, the reviewer presumptuously devoted over one-half of his review to the archeological portion of the book, which comprises only one out of ten chapters, 12 of 170 pages. Many of the points to which he chose to take exception are still debatable. For example, Mr. Oswalt cites Froelich Rainey's opinion that the "Okvik Madonna" shows the female sex organ. I think not. Only the Okvik people could tell us. There is nothing comparable in the carvings today. Furthermore, with the exception of several dubious examples, I could not find from first-hand examination of over 3,000 objects any characteristics that suggested eroticism.

Because the book was based primarily on field research, I did not list any books or articles not directly used in the book. To have made a complete list under such circumstances would

have been undesirable; uncited or peripheral material can be readily found in the ARCTIC BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Mr. Oswalt questions my precision and quality of research, apparently on the basis of his assessment of the archeological summary. I am happy that the effective judgment will be made by my readers as a whole, but I wish to put on record that I examined the complete Alaskan Eskimo ivory collections of eight major museums (completely apart from my work with the contemporary carvers) to supplement the printed sources for that one brief archeological chapter. I obtained the information about Figure # 29, which Mr. Oswalt says is erroneously captioned, from the catalogue of the University of Alaska Museum. It said: "Unidentified object from Wales." Neither the object of the catalogue provided a museum number, and the listing indicated it as a gift to the museum. Mr. Oswalt had been for some years a member of the University of Alaska Museum staff when I photographed the object. Am I to understand that he considers high-quality research to be the arbitrary rejection of a museum's provenience and the substitution of a guess by the researcher who publishes on the material? If not, it would appear that the error was Mr. Oswalt's or his colleagues.

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