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Review of The Dog's Children: Anishinaabe Texts Told by Angeline Williams

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The Dog's Children: Anishinaabe Texts Told by Angeline Williams. Ed. Leonard Bloomfield and John Nichols. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991. Notes, appendices, glossary. 262 pp. \$29.95.

This book is tremendously valuable as a tool for understanding not only linguistic research but for understanding the life and culture of an Ojibwe woman. Angeline Williams, *Biidaasigekwe* or "Sunlight Woman," came to Virginia in 1941 from Sugar Island on the St. Mary's River to teach the Ojibwe language to Leonard Bloomfield. Bloomfield's subsequent translations and understanding of the Algonquian language family led to significant advances and changes in the study of linguistics. This series of Ojibwe stories and their up-to-date translations to English illustrate the thoroughness of Bloomfield's linguistic research.

The Ojibwe word *inaajimowin* means "story" in English. Throughout this book, Angeline Williams weaves Ojibwe "stories" that are influenced by myth, regionality, and family. The oral quality of her stories is rich in meaning and humor. More important these stories remain as an ethnographic record of her life and her contributions to further cultural understanding of the Ojibwe people.

The updated version of Bloomfield's notes and the orthography installed by Nichols serves to enhance the fine translations and culturally rich Ojibwe stories. The notes on inflectional endings and the glossary with a dictionary of Ojibwe-to-English and English-to-Ojibwe translations make the book even more valuable as a linguistic resource tool. The mirror-like lay-out of the book also aids in understanding the translations. With alternating pages of Ojibwe and English, it is easy to compare the translations paragraph by paragraph, even line by line. The only deficiency in this book is the lack of detailed biographical information on Angeline Williams, specifically her tribal ties and childhood upbringing.

Many of her stories incorporate myth thematically and portray a multiplicity of meanings. The first story involves the old Ojibwe

trickster, Nenabush, who not only loses his cache of ducks to Indians but burns off a second face that once covered his backside. As Williams explains with seriousness and humor simultaneously, "Now a person has only one face . . . human beings would have had a double aspect, if he had not done that way, burning himself at his rump" (p. 23). The title story, "The Dog's Children," and two other stories describe the myth of people who are either half-dog or married to dogs. These three stories best illustrate the fear and wonder that the Ojibwe myth instilled in the listener.

The regional influence of Canada affects the content of the stories. One learns about the making of baskets, foods, and medicines important to the Ojibwe people. Nothing, however, seems as important to Williams as her relationship to her family, especially her granddaughter. Her constant scolding of her granddaughter gives the reader insight into her temperamental personality. A translated letter to her granddaughter tells of her fear of traveling on a thin road through the Smoky Mountains. She intends to take a different route home when she returns to Canada. That is exactly what Bloomfield's book of translation stories does. It takes the reader on a different route through a new culture full of wisdom and personal expression, while providing an excellent example of linguistic research and translation.

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