

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Northwest Voices: Language and Culture in the Pacific Northwest*

Kristin Denham, editor

Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2019. 224 pp. \$25.95 paper.

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WHAT, IF ANYTHING, is the socio-linguistic glue that binds together the region often referred to as the Pacific Northwest? When it comes to language and culture, do the peoples of Washington and Oregon in the United States and those living in the Canadian province of British Columbia share identifiable linguistic behaviours and a distinct cultural heritage?

These timely questions lie at the core of a welcome new collection of essays on the cultural traditions and speech patterns of the communities who live on either side of the western US-Canadian border. The ten chapters in this diverse collection, edited by Kristin Denman, a Western Washington University linguistics professor, make a strong case for why terminology matters and why we must take care with the words that we use to describe the world around us.

Given the volume's focus on representation and linguistic precision, we might wish to investigate the regionalism baked into the book's title and ask whether "Pacific Northwest" is an appropriate geographical locator and, if so, what it encodes. As I have learned, not all British Columbians feel well served by the term "Pacific Northwest," which appears to demarcate the outer limits of the continental United States but only the very beginning of Canada. Such terminology can inadvertently reinscribe a centre-periphery way of thinking that works against the very goals of a collection such as this: namely, re-centring the region as an interconnected socio-linguistic continuum. Another option, albeit one that carries its own eco-regional baggage, is the term "Cascadia," which appears to be gaining traction.

Structured in four parts with a succinct editorial introduction to each section, *Northwest Voices* takes the reader through the region's linguistic history and place-making practices; two case studies and one overview of Indigenous language revitalization; contributions on dialect diversity, attitudes to English and other settler languages; and two well-structured reflections on perceptions, pragmatics, power, and place. The range of contributors is commendable – including

school teachers, Indigenous scholars working in their own communities, and university faculty – although it is noteworthy, and perhaps a limitation, that all were trained in, and are based at, institutions in the United States.

Affordable and readable, *Northwest Voices* is a welcome addition to the scholarship of this rich and complicated eco-cultural region. The structure of the collection lends itself well to individual chapters being assigned in anthropology, linguistics, geography, and Indigenous studies classes at high school or university, while there is plenty of valuable detail for more specialist readers.

The Pacific Northwest – or however we may describe and identify this area – is at once so old and yet so young. *Northwest Voices* offers an accessible and much-needed reminder that, while English was introduced to the region only two hundred years ago (96), Indigenous languages have been spoken, sung, learned, and transmitted up and down this coast for thousands of years. If anything, this collection underscores the gulf between the absurd thinness of colonial settlement, on the one hand, and the profound depth of Indigenous place-based, territorial, and embodied knowledge, on the other.

*The Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples*

Gregory Younging

Edmonton: Brush Education Inc.,  
2018. 168 pp. \$19.95 paper.

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GREGORY YOUNGING'S (1961–2019)  
*The Elements of Indigenous Style* is

a testament to how prioritizing listening to Indigenous peoples, instead of merely writing about them, can both change the way settlers view their relationship with Indigenous peoples and affirm the validity of Indigenous thought, story structure, and contemporary existence. Although the book is a short guide consisting of twenty-two “principles” for writing with, for, about, and by Indigenous peoples, as well as a series of brilliant “case studies” to illuminate these principles, those looking for a simple, quick-reference guidebook will be disappointed. In very little space, Younging (Cree) poses an important challenge that unseats a colonial practice of placing Indigenous nations under a microscope for settler consumption and instead pushes readers themselves to do the work of listening to, centring, and valuing Indigenous voices in their writing practices.

*The Elements of Indigenous Style* is not so much a how-to guide as it is an invitation for readers of all backgrounds to listen intently to Indigenous voices and to participate in respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous people if they are to do any writing about Indigenous people in the first place. In a Canada where Indigenous stories are often hot media topics, and Indigenous studies continues to grow as a field with interested parties inside and outside Indigenous nations, the conversation that Younging starts with this book makes an intervention with a wide reach. Younging himself admits that the intervention is not his alone: aside from the knowledge in this style guide coming from Younging's years of experience in Indigenous publishing, he also dedicates uninterrupted space in the book for other Indigenous people to speak about the principles listed as well as their own writing, research, and thought. Presenting our work in conversation with