

References and further reading are extensive and encourage the reader to explore Torres Strait literature further. Sources are diverse, varying from a 1902 account to 2012 publications.

The book contributes to the field in that it adds to the Torres Strait Islander voice in literature. It describes life in the region in a previous era and shares with the reader the pearl shell industry. The book can be read by a young audience and is diverse and interesting and keeps the reader engrossed.

The book's strengths lie in the places where Uncle Seaman speaks in his own voice, especially with the use of direct quotes to illustrate points. The research material of old photographs and archived material is another strength of the publication.

Weaknesses include that it seems to be two books in one. It leaves out family and could have done more in terms of teasing out the relationship with Uncle Seaman's grandson, Patrick Mau (Mau Power), and supporting the next generation of musicians. A minor comment is that it does seem a bit disjointed in parts, not flowing as smoothly as it could.

Overall, the book is relevant because it covers an area of not well-known Australian history. It adds to other Torres Strait Islander life stories and compares well alongside *Eded Mer* (Thomas Lowah, Rams Skull Press, Kuranda, Qld, c. 1988) and *Somebody now* (Ellie Gaffney, ASP, Canberra, 1989) as a contemporary and award-winning musician's life would and should. *Steady steady* is a great tribute to Uncle Seaman and his musical legacy.

Entangled subjects: Indigenous/Australian cross-cultures of talk, text and modernity

Michèle Grossman 2013

Rodopi BV, Amsterdam, 390pp, ISBN 9789042036444 (hbk)

Reviewed by Jeanine Leane, Australian Centre for Indigenous History, Australian National University
<jeanine.lean@anu.edu.au>

Entangled subjects: Indigenous/Australian cross-cultures of talk, text and modernity by Michèle Grossman is an exploration into the area of contemporary collaborative Australian

Indigenous life writing. Grossman positions this research in the context of her cultural history, location and heritage as part of a Hungarian-Jewish diaspora in New York. Because this has deeply informed her interpretative practices and, in her own words, 'blind spots', this self-reflexive approach has led her to question the norms that guide cultural desires, assumptions and expectations that Western readers bring to texts and their understanding and value of reading and writing more generally. The result is a critique of the conventional anthropological and literary binary between orality and literacy.

Grossman contends that orality and literacy are vexed terms (p.xxiv). And, they are so because they operate on at least two separate registers in relation to cross-cultural collaborative Indigenous Australian life writing. One of these registers involves the way in which Western modernity has pervasively been associated with the development of literacy, and that this is used to mark a rupture in the transition between 'primitive and civilized societies' (p.xxi). Grossman explores the ways that the discursive regimes of orality and literacy have informed performance and representation in the 'realm of text – talk relations in collaborative Indigenous life writing' (p.xxiii).

In pointing out that the initial project of analysing the dynamics of collaborative texts was more liberal than radical in that it sought to problematise the visual presence and agency of non-Indigenous editors and co-authors in Indigenous life writing without really questioning the underlying discourses about literacy and writing themselves, Grossman outlines how this approach shifted as she became more intrigued with the issues collaborative texts posed concerning insights into how European colonial oppositions of 'self' and 'other' play out in the contexts of literacy and the cultural other (p.xx). The aim then became to move beyond analysis and critique of how orality and literacy are discursively coded and embedded and managed in life writing to what this may say about the challenges posed to re-thinking modernity in cross-cultural contexts.

This prompted a change to a more radical analysis, with an etymological emphasis on the origins of contestable formations, that sought to understand the underlying forces and energies that nourish current understandings or 'blindness'

about what is taken for granted and what is constrained and impeded in terms of other possibilities of knowledge, organisation and action. Such an approach allowed for the critical space to question the roots of modernity's conceptualisation of orality and literacy. In doing so, Grossman replaces the terms 'orality' and 'literacy' with 'talk' and 'text' to move beyond the orality/literacy binary and refer more expansively to constituted domains of speaking and writing systems. Talk can signal a broader array of forms from 'primary oral languages' to vernacular and practices of speech; 'text' moves beyond alphabetical writing to include a range of linguistic or other forms of inscription, including written narrative signifying both social and material contexts (p.xxvi).

In exploring the complex subjectivities of life writing in Australia through talk and text, Grossman draws on the works of Indigenous scholars such as Martin Nakata, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Ian Anderson, Jeanie Bell, Mick Dodson, Marcia Langton and Mandawuy Yunupingu, who use the English language for emancipatory, activist and cultural projects, thus emphasising the ways that Indigenous peoples in Australia and the world have interacted with and created their own systems of writing and literacy-based forms of knowledge. In this way her work mounts a substantial critique of the accretions of Western anthropology that have perpetuated the oppositional binary between oral and written narratives and which continue to control the lives of Indigenous Australians in a 'myriad of material and cultural domains' (See Nakata cited in Grossman, p.xxiv).

Chapter two, entitled '(Re)writing histories: the emergence and development of Indigenous Australian life writing', positions Australian Indigenous life writing as a significant intervention in the official history of the nation and as an important genre in which Indigenous Australians 'write back' to hegemonic historical accounts of invasion and occupation. Grossman offers her reading of Stephen Muecke's (1988) influential essay 'Aboriginal literature: the repressive hypothesis', which refuses to provide a homogeneous theory for Indigenous life writing and offers instead multiple sites for the emergence of this genre.

In her 'Introduction', Grossman refers to 'the collaborative ideal' (p.xv) that is not just concerned with the 'independent voices of Indigenous authors from within a distinctively other form of life'; such voices are produced 'as a distinctively other form of life'. In chapter five she discusses Paddy Roe's *Gularabula: stories of the West Kimberley* (1983) as an important attempt by an Aboriginal Elder and white cultural studies academic Stephen Muecke to rethink the cultural and conceptual divide between orality and literacy as oppositional regimes of representation and to challenge the marginal status of oral testimony in relation to writing and literature in Western scholarship more broadly.

The vexed terms of orality and literacy provide a fertile site, as Grossman's work illustrates, for a discussion of the complexities of the 'entangled' and intertwined spaces that the two occupy. Entanglement is fluid and dynamic. A confused space is a good place to begin a conversation. *Entangled subjects* offers a rigorous interrogation of Western discourses surrounding orality and literacy that challenges ideas of where the 'centre' might be located and how multiple centres of truth and textuality may exist and operate simultaneously. Vexation is a catalyst for Grossman — a sign to move beyond current constraints and 'ready-made' concepts that have governed critical approaches to both collaborative Indigenous life writing and modernity's positioning of orality and literacy.

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Art in the time of colony

Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll 2014

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Reviewed by Greg Lehman, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
<Greg.Lehman@aiatsis.gov.au>

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Front cover: *Warrumbul* in the sky/*Warrambool* on the ground (based on a sky image by Alex Cherney). (See Fuller et al., pp. 3–27.)

EDITORIAL

The range of papers and research reports in this non-thematic edition of *Australian Aboriginal Studies* reflects the growing depth in the field of research shaping up as Australian Indigenous Studies in the twenty-first century. The papers and reports cover a range of disciplines now collectively regarded as core to Indigenous Studies, including social, scientific, historical and health research areas. Threaded through this volume is a clear mandate from communities that they now drive research agendas. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities engender and influence research projects and work in collaboration with academics to undertake the research. It is gratifying to see this evolve: best practice in ethical research, in which community agency in research is foregrounded, is a key aim of research at AIATSIS.

Some of the output from our National Indigenous Studies Conference in March this year, 'Breaking barriers in Indigenous research and thinking', is showcased in this volume through two research reports in the health discipline — one by Maddox and Comfort and the other by Tongs and Poroeh. We look forward to publishing more from this significant event in future editions.

During this, our fiftieth, year we have been considering our future role in the developing field of Australian Indigenous Studies. By centralising the network of researchers and funding for the study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, through the formation of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies, the concept of 'Indigenous studies' in Australia was essentially founded. Fifty years on, research at AIATSIS is very much focused on the way research is conducted, privileging ethical collaborations with Indigenous peoples, locally and internationally, on matters identified by Indigenous peoples as important. This is in contrast with the previous approach, which was more focused on single discipline-based research in fields such

as anthropology, archaeology and linguistics. Increasingly, AIATSIS has formal partnerships with local and international tertiary institutions, allowing it to spread its global reach.

Over the past six months key events for AIATSIS have included convening a nationally recognised conference, seminars, attendance by researchers as keynote and invited speakers at major international events, developing our research collaborations and competitive research funding success.

The National Native Title Conference held in June in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, brought together more than 650 delegates in the expanding native title field. This annual event is now an institution relied on by practitioners in the industry and native title holders alike as a key networking opportunity.

AIATSIS continues to build international engagement and partnerships: a government grant from the former Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) enabled delegates from FUNAI, the National Indian Foundation (Brazil), to undertake a study tour of language maintenance and revitalisation projects in Australia in early 2014. In May a reciprocal visit to Brazil was made by AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages researchers Dr Jakelin Troy and Dr Doug Marmion. They joined senior linguist Dr Bruna Franchetto of the National Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and her colleagues Livia Carmargo and Dr Rafael Nonato in Belem for the international conference Amazonica 5, and met with Research Directors at the Museu Emilio Goeldi (Belem), officials of the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage and the Department for Intangible Cultural Assets in Brasilia, and the FUNAI Directors at the Museu do Indio in Rio de Janeiro. To satisfy the final requirement of the AusAID grant, the Brazilian and Australian delegations presented papers at the Foundation for Endangered Languages annual international conference, 'Indigenous languages:

Editorial	1
Major Articles	
The astronomy of the Kamilaroi and Euahlayi peoples and their neighbours <i>Robert S Fuller, Ray P Norris and Michelle Trudgett</i>	3
The Aboriginal Mothers in Prison project: an example of how consultation can inform research practice <i>Mandy Wilson, Jocelyn Jones and Marisa Gilles</i>	28
'Game over': Indigenous Australian sportsmen and athletic retirement <i>Megan Stronach, Daryl Adair and Tracy Taylor</i>	40
The influence of the US Black Panthers on indigenous activism in Australia and New Zealand from 1969 onwards <i>Angelique Stastny and Raymond Orr</i>	60
Community reconciliation: a case study in Gippsland, Victoria <i>Andrew Gunstone</i>	75
Research Reports	
Smoke-free policy catalysts, development, implementation and maintenance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community settings <i>Raglan Maddox and Jude Comfort</i>	85
Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service 1988–2014: breaking barriers in Aboriginal research and services <i>Julie Tongs and Nerelle Poroch</i>	94
Bimodal bilingualism in Arnhem Land <i>Marie Carla D Adone and E Lawurrrpa Maypilama</i>	101
Book Reviews	107

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