From Missionary to Frontier Scholar

An introduction to Carl Strehlow's Masterpiece,
Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stamme in Zentral-Australien
(1901 - 1909)

Anna Kenny
2008

University of Sydney
The University of Sydney

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From Missionary to Frontier Scholar

An introduction to Carl Strehlow’s Masterpiece,

*Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*

(1901-1909)

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2008

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Ph.D., except where indicated, that due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other materials used, and that this thesis is less than 100,000 words in length excluding figures, tables, footnotes, bibliography and appendices.
Acknowledgments

I first wish to thank my supervisor Professor Diane Austin-Broos without whose supervision and critical comments some ideas would not have emerged. Under her guidance my understanding of intellectual histories that impact on anthropology's development has expanded in a major way and has opened up various ways to approach also in the future new projects. I am deeply indebted to her.

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Abstract

Carl Strehlow's work belongs to a humanistic anthropological tradition that has often been neglected in Australia. This thesis retrieves his ethnographic masterpiece Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien from obscurity and locates it in the context of Australian anthropology and intellectual history.

The first section of the thesis positions Carl Strehlow's anthropology in its own intellectual context: the German anthropological tradition of the 19th century, and in the tradition of Lutheran theological and language studies. Carl Strehlow's interests and the questions he posed show the influence of both these milieux which were integral to the production of a work very different to others in Australia at the time.

The second section of the thesis shows the way in which Carl Strehlow, like Spencer and Gillen, was a transitional but significant figure in modern anthropology. I will discuss his output as an empirical anthropologist and locate it not only in nineteenth century thought but also with reference to the 20th century. His studies of myth, social classification and land tenure bear on research today although his rendering of these phenomena lacked a modern comparative perspective. This account will show that his work had certain limitations, but at the same time strengths that are still significant.

My analysis concludes that Carl Strehlow made an important contribution to Australian intellectual history and that Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien is a classic in early international anthropology that stands beside the works of Spencer and Gillen and even the early works of Boas. However, this study is not only intended to re-introduce a major transitional work of German-Australian ethnography, but also to suggest new ways for writing about the history of Australian anthropology. This study has implications for re-assessing Spencer and Gillen and T.G.H. Strehlow, as well as for assessing histories of anthropology relating to Australia, which have been solely histories for an English-speaking world.
Preface

I first encountered Carl Strehlow’s work over twenty years ago whilst studying ethnology, Germanistic (German studies) and linguistics in Zürich. At the time Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien did not strike a chord in me, although I was keenly interested in Aboriginal culture and particularly interested in language per se. My interest in oral literatures had been sparked by my father. In my childhood he had read to me every available collection of mythology ranging from Swiss legends, to Greek myths and Tibetan fairy-tales. Carl Strehlow’s work did not seem unusual among other collections of ‘Mythen, Sagen und Märchen’ found in a German context, although it seemed rather cryptic due to the lack of a glossary that explained Arrernte and Luritja terms used in the translations of the indigenous texts. The collection presupposed an enormous amount of knowledge and language proficiency which I did not have. It was soon returned to the library shelf.

Many years later, I had worked with Aboriginal people on land and native title claims as well as on mining related issues in central Australia, I again encountered Carl Strehlow’s ethnographic work during research into Western Arrernte culture and country. The nature of my work provided me the opportunity to travel with Central Australian indigenous people over their traditional lands, and in time I became attuned to mythology associated with landscape. Suddenly, the significance and the mastery of Carl Strehlow’s work, compiled in the first decade of the last century, became clear to me. Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien and his unpublished materials described the sophistication of Aboriginal cultures that other Australian works of the time lacked.

Not only had he written the base for a successful ‘claim book’, which is a legal anthropological report, and compiled Stammbäume (family-trees) of the people who own the country featured in these narratives, he had also compiled as Marcel Mauss expressed it ‘un précieux recueil de 1500 vers aranda qui forme une sorte de Rig Veda australien’ (Mauss 1913:103).
Research

The evaluation of Carl Strehlow’s oeuvre is based on:

1. archival and literature research conducted between 2004 and 2007 at the Strehlow Research Centre (‘SRC’), the Lutheran Archives Adelaide (‘LAA’), the Barr Smith Special Collection, the South Australian Museum and the Museum Victoria in Australia and the University of Frankfurt and the Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk in Germany;

2. fieldwork conducted with Western Arrernte and Luritja people in Central Australia since mid 2000 that has primarily concerned Native Title and mining pursuant to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth) and the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth).

Orthography

The spelling of Arrernte and Luritja words, including names of individuals, subsections, sites, countries (estates) and dreamings follow the Western Arrernte and Luritja spelling systems developed by the Institute for Aboriginal Development (‘IAD’). The original orthography has been retained for established place names such as Ntaria (the Hermannsburg mission), personal names of people who have long passed away and are not remembered by the Western Arrernte and Luritja people and a few words that are no longer in use such as ‘aljtirangamitjina’. I have made exceptions with the Western Arrernte words ‘aljtira’ and ‘ratapa’, which are Carl Strehlow’s spellings. Their contemporary spellings are ‘altyerre’ and ‘rathepe’. The term aljtira occurs in nearly every chapter of this thesis, because it is one of the key concepts in Carl Strehlow’s work that is polysemic. When spellings from the published works of Spencer and Gillen, Howitt, Roth, the Streihlows, Röheim and Pink have been retained, the usage has been referenced.
Main Primary Sources

This thesis is based on a number of primary sources held in Australia, Germany and England. However, the main body of my research material is held at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs, Central Australia:

1. Carl Strehlow’s complete magnum opus, *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*, published by the Frankfurt Völkerkunde-Museum between 1907 and 1920; quotations in English in this thesis are extracted from the unpublished Oberscheidt translation (1991) if not otherwise indicated;

2. original handwritten German manuscripts of Carl Strehlow’s *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* (1224 pages in German Script);

3. 43 unpublished letters from Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow written between 1901 and 1909 (in German); quotations are based on my translations;

4. unpublished draft letters from Carl Strehlow to Moritz von Leonhardi and others; Carl Strehlow’s letters are duplicates that were written in German shorthand interspersed with old German and Latin script (shorthand transcribed by Hans Gebhard); quotations are based on my translations;

5. unpublished lists of questions taken from letters by Moritz von Leonhardi and others (in German) with answers penned in shorthand/German/Latin;

6. unpublished manuscripts of lectures given by Carl Strehlow while in Germany in 1910 and 1911, which are transcribed and translated in part; and

7. letters by Spencer, Lang and other anthropologists of the 1900s.
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INTRODUCTION

Around the turn of the twentieth century three outstanding researchers were investigating societies of central Australia. The writings of Baldwin Spencer, Professor of Biology at the University of Melbourne, Frank Gillen, Post and Telegraph Stationmaster in Alice Springs, and the Lutheran Missionary Carl Strehlow at Hermannsburg contain unique documentation of Australian indigenous life and culture as it may have been pre-contact. Yet, while Spencer’s and Gillen’s work and achievements are a celebrated part of Australian intellectual history, Carl Strehlow’s contribution to our knowledge and understanding of Arrernte and Luritja language, oral literature and culture remains almost unknown.

Spencer and Gillen became central figures in international anthropology. British, German, French and American social scientists used *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899) and *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (1904) to illustrate their theories and acknowledged these works as major contributions to the discipline.¹ In contrast, Carl Strehlow, although known in Germany and cited by both Durkheim and Lévi-Strauss in France, has been consigned to obscurity in Australia and elsewhere. His magnum opus *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* (1907-1920), a masterpiece of classical Australian anthropology written at Hermannsburg in central Australia, is virtually unrecognised² in English-speaking anthropological circles. This work is often inaccurately attributed to his youngest son, Theodor George Heinrich Strehlow, who also conducted extensive research in central Australia. The latter’s research, however, received its initial impetus from his father’s outstanding work.³

The significance of Carl Strehlow’s *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* was recognised by some of his contemporaries. The reviews were

¹ Frazer, Malinowski or Freud, for example.
² Even though this work has been in the public domain for nearly one hundred years, and two unpublished translations exist, one by Charles Chewing made in the 1920s and the other by Hans Oberscheidt (1991), it has not been republished, which is astonishing, considering the ongoing general interest in Australian indigenous cultures in Australia and overseas.
³ T.G.H. Strehlow was strongly influenced by his father and is unlikely to have been able to achieve what he did without the material of his father (see Chapters V and VI).
favourable. By the time the second volume of the work was published in 1908, N.W. Thomas noted:

Strehlow writes with full knowledge of the language, and we cannot but feel the enormous advantage which this knowledge gives him over all other enquirers. Further memoirs are to appear, and they will be eagerly awaited, for the two already published are masterly. (Thomas 1909:127)

Andrew Lang wrote in *Man* that ‘No one should henceforth write on Mr. Strehlow’s tribes who has not mastered his valuable volumes’ (Lang 1909:28). Lang suggested that the work should be translated into English, but World War I intervened and the leading figures of the British anthropological establishment had reservations about the German Lutheran who had spent over half his life, from 1894 to 1922, in central Australia (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985; Veit 1991, 2004). Another attempt was made in the late 1930s by Charles Chewings, who translated Carl Strehlow’s monograph, and Adelaide Professor of Classics and English literature, J.A. FitzHerbert. However, the publication of the translation was also eclipsed by war.

Other reasons for the ‘disappearance’ of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Australia and elsewhere are anti-mission sentiment past and present, the impact of Nazism on anthropology in Germany, Australian hostility towards the German Lutherans of central Australia in the first half of the twentieth century, and finally the antagonistic debate between T.G.H. Strehlow and the Australian anthropological establishment in the 1960s and 1970s. Strehlow junior’s unique relations with Arrernte people, his idiosyncratic interpretation of that relationship, and his intellectual style all made him marginal to academic anthropology. His peripheral status seemed to transfer back to his father’s work.3

Carl Strehlow’s ethnographic oeuvre as well as Spencer’s and Gillen’s were written at a time when the discipline of anthropology was still ‘pre-theoretical’ or ‘transitional’. They preceded the development of modern field anthropology as the empirical study

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1 FitzHerbert Papers (Barr Smith Special Collection) and Tindale Collection Acc. No. 1539 (South Australian Museum Archives).

3 Also T.G.H. Strehlow’s tragic ‘Stern Case’ in 1978 contributed to the marginalisation of his and his father’s work and gave the name Strehlow a negative tinge. See Kaiser (2004:66-75).
of cultures and social systems that underpin particular peoples (see Morphy 2001). Carl Strehlow and Spencer and Gillen were turn of the century empiricists, who collected data out in the field and then referred it to mentors in Europe. These were the ‘armchair anthropologists’ of the discipline’s mythic history. Strehlow collaborated with Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, a German intellectual with interests in philosophy and anthropology. In England, Spencer’s interlocutor was James Frazer although Spencer’s dominant influence came from the natural sciences.

Baldwin Spencer was a biology professor in the Darwinian mould (Mulvaney 2001:20), a representative of the evolutionary thinking in the British Isles. He believed in biological and racial determinism and saw the Arrernte as a missing link between animals and humans. Jones (2005:17) observes that ‘Spencer was constrained by the natural historical framework and the evolutionist approach’ in which ‘rudimentary customs and beliefs’ among the Arrernte were identified ‘just as he had located primitive forms in the Australian biota’ during the Horn Expedition. He quotes Spencer and Gillen as follows:

... it seems that in the evolution of the social organisation and customs of a savage tribe, such features as those which we are now discussing are clearly comparable to the well known rudimentary organs, which are often of great importance in understanding the phylogeny of the animal in which at some time of its development they are present ... we may recognize in them an abbreviated record of a stage passed through in the development of the customs of the tribe amongst which they are found. (Spencer and Gillen 1899:105)

Their opinion, unfortunately, influenced attitudes and policies towards indigenous people in Australia and elsewhere during the twentieth century and even today manifests itself in policy making. In the nineteenth century, evolutionism was a common presumption of anthropology in the British colonial world and influenced, in some degree, the foci in ethnography. Baldwin Spencer’s particular interest in biology gave his work an added evolutionary emphasis. The ethnographic material collected by Gillen and published in The Native Tribes of Central Australia (1899), The
Northern Tribes of Central Australia (1904) and The Arunta (1927) is still valuable as a reference for scholarly research. In this case, the broad ranging empirical work of the collaboration outlasted Spencer’s Darwinian backdrop. If anything, the latter is regarded now as a period anachronism. Still, Spencer never abandoned his view that the Arrernte were ‘Stone Age’ or primitive people and the evidence of the ‘the missing link’ proclaimed in social Darwinist theories. He still maintained this position as late as 1927 in The Arunta (Spencer 1927:vii) as did Frazer until he died. The majority of the British establishment saw the original central Australians as representatives of an early and inferior stage of human development.

This view was embodied in museum collections. Terminology derived from the natural sciences was applied to Aboriginal artefacts as well as people. For example, in 1907 South Australian scientists like museum’s director Edward Stirling called all the artefacts of Reuther’s Diyari collection, ‘specimens’ (Jones 1996:384). In his expedition diary of Wednesday, 11 February 1917, another director of the South Australian Museum Edward Waite described Nellie, an Aboriginal woman, as the finest specimen he had yet seen:

Had a hurried breakfast and then walked to the Black's camp and took photos of 4 youngsters and some gins, the latter objecting to undress, or rather I had not time enough to humour them. I then went across to another camp and found 3 gins. They all soon posed for me in the altogether. Returned to our own camp and the manager of the station (Battams) introduced the belle of the tribe (Nellie) to give me a sitting, she is a finer specimen than I have yet seen.⁶

In contrast, on the same issue Carl Strehlow commented: ‘And these people with such mental capacities should form the “missing link”? Never.’⁷ Like his mentor, Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, Strehlow’s views were shaped by German humanistic thinking. As a consequence, his monograph Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien is significantly different from other Australian anthropological work of the period. Guided by von Leonhardi’s interrogations and his own sense

⁶ E. R. Waite Diary No. 63, 7.10.1916 to 30.6.1917. The Diaries of Edgar Ravenswood Waite are held at the Archives of the South Australian Museum.
⁷ Carl Strehlow, Register, 7 December 1921.
derived from observation and a Lutheran training, Carl’s work reflected the aims of this tradition, ‘centred on efforts to document the plurality and historical specificity of cultures’ (Penny and Bunzl 2003:1). Its central concern was language and the mythic corpus that was seen to be culture’s main manifestation in language. Unlike the British anthropological tradition which dominated Australian discourse, German anthropology was based on a humanistic agenda, and as a result it was anti-evolutionist, anti-racist and anti-colonial. The permanent general secretary of the German Anthropological Society, for example, took regular advantage of his position between 1878 and 1908 ‘to drum into his colleagues, at the annual assemblies, the unity of mankind and the equality of feelings and mental life of all humanity’ (Massin 1996:87).

The two most influential figures in nineteenth century German anthropology, Adolf Bastian (1826-1905) and Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), rejected socio-cultural evolutionism. Bastian was particularly opposed to social Darwinism (Petermann 2004:535), warning explicitly against over simplification and generalisation, and did not believe in a straight line of stages of progression for one particular culture or for that matter for the whole of mankind. Bastian’s anthropology was governed by methodological convictions rather than an overarching theory. He drew on induction and empirical observation to avoid the classification of data according to predetermined categories, regarding schemes of classification as work in progress rather than definite models (Penny 2003:93). Also Rudolf Virchow, the leading physical anthropologist and pathologist at the time in Germany, maintained that no one race or people was superior to another (Evans 2003:200). With most of his other colleagues he professed the unity of humankind.

One of the main reasons for this humanistic and pluralistic position was that Germany (like other politically less significant European countries) was not an imperial or colonial power until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was therefore not committed to an ideology of racial superiority ‘that is virtually a political necessity for colonial powers’ (Adams 1998:264; see also Gingrich 2005:68). The intellectual roots of nineteenth century German anthropology reached back to philosophers who

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8 Before Germany’s unification in 1871 under Bismarck, it was made up of a large number of autocratic principalities.
emphasised the ideas of particularism opposing progressivism and deduction. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), the founder of German historical particularism, exerted a major influence on the development of anthropological thinking, as he was interested in the differences of cultures from age to age, and from one people to another (Adams 1998:271). He rejected the concept of race (Mühlmann 1968:62) as well as the French dogma of the uniform development of civilisation. Instead Herder recognised unique sets of values transmitted through history and maintained that outlooks and civilisations had to be viewed from within; in terms of their own development and purpose (Berlin 1976:174). Thus humanity was made up of a great diversity. Herder's concepts of Volk, a cultural group or entity, and Volksgeist,9 the individual expression of the being of a group which sets it apart from others, provided the basis for this particularism. They were to become central tenets of German nineteenth century anthropological thought. The Volksgeist of a people, he believed, was embodied in their language and their literature, which included the oral traditions of indigenous peoples. Therefore language became crucial in German anthropological research. It became the pre-condition of authoritative ethnography.

To achieve their Herderian goal, (i.e. to cover the various manifestations of Volksgeist as completely as possible), German anthropologists were committed to inductive science and an empirical methodology. They stressed the need to gather as much information as possible before attempting to generate theories about human difference (Penny and Bunzl 2003:15). These aims made German nineteenth century anthropology a bustling enterprise. German anthropologists had networks of collectors, officials, missionaries and scientists throughout the world gathering information and examples of material culture. They launched some of the largest anthropological expeditions, sent researchers all around the globe, and were an influential presence at international conferences engaging in debates about human history, culture, environment and race. They founded the best equipped anthropological museums (Berlin, Leipzig, Hamburg and Munich) and a number of internationally recognised periodicals devoted to the discipline. The humanism of German anthropology with its pluralistic outlook and its anti-evolutionist position

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9 The word Geist is very difficult to translate, because its semantic field and the underlying concept is vast. Literally it means spirit or ghost, however in this context it means something like 'the essence of a people' or 'the mind and spirit of a people'.
lasted nearly to the eve of the First World War. This German tradition was exported by Franz Boas to the United States in the late nineteenth century. Its fate in a post-Nazi Germany was replicated in Australia: to become a ‘nontradition of good anthropology … forgotten, repressed, and noticed only after tremendous time lags’ (Gingrich 2005:103).

Carl Strehlow’s intellectual style was shaped by his German background and the tutelage he received both as a Lutheran and from his editor, Baron Moritz von Leonhardi. He wrote within a tradition that acknowledged that all societies are equal, notwithstanding their different moral values, and have individual features that cannot be rendered in terms of generalised stages of development. The descriptiveness of Die Aranda- und Luritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien is a typical example of this German humanist position. Carl Strehlow collected his comprehensive record of language, mythology and song because he believed that these items in their particularity reflected the essence of Arrernte and Luritja minds and spirits.

Two Routes to Empiricism

Carl Strehlow’s route to empirical anthropology was traced through German philology, the German Romantic Movement, Humboldtian cosmography, history and comparative geography. Baldwin Spencer’s, on the other hand, came through Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and other evolutionists. This route was also shaped by the role of biology in the late nineteenth century. The excitement with which advances in biology were received meant that the discipline’s procedures became a model for others, and a model for empirical science generally. Later, this method would be known as ‘the organic’ model for social sciences. The idea was that societies, like natural species, exhibit organic structure. Such a view influenced Radcliffe-Brown to term anthropology ‘a natural science of society’ (Barnard 2000:62-63,70-71). Spencer and Gillen are taken by many to be among the forerunners of this analytic style and modern fieldwork-based anthropology (Morphy [1997] 2001).

The ethnographic classics of these very different field-researchers illustrate two distinctive pathways to empirical studies in social-cultural anthropology. One leads through natural science as method using the taxonomic process of collecting,
describing and identifying specimens. The other uses the study of language, its semantics, syntax and semiology to specify a social life and its oral traditions. In this thesis, I will trace the path to empiricism that Carl Strehlow and his editor Baron Moritz von Leonhardi followed. On this pathway language featured prominently as methodology and ultimately as evidence that Arrernte and Luritja people were not by virtue of their material culture inferior human beings.

Carl Strehlow’s *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* is the richest and densest ethnographic text written on Western Arrernte and Luritja culture and society of central Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is the first Australian work that comprehensively records the oral literature of Australian Aboriginal people in their own languages. The German tradition that grew out of Herder’s seminal thoughts on language, the particularity of the ‘other’ and his humanism, which profoundly influenced German and North American anthropology, is also present in Carl Strehlow’s work. It is not that Strehlow cites the scholars of German historical and philosophical thought. He does not. Like Boas, however, his work follows a distinctive form that privileges language and particularism. Moreover, his interests and emphasis reflect a pattern typical of the German tradition. Beyond diffuse influences, his teachers of Lutheran hermeneutics and von Leonhardi’s probing questions secured him on this course. Like Spencer, Strehlow reflects his society and time.

Because his monograph was written in the German nineteenth century humanistic style, which was strictly descriptive, ethnographic and resistant to grand theory, nearly one hundred years after its publication, *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* remains an invaluable resource for Arrernte and Luritja people. In documenting the complexity and richness of central Australian societies, this classic allows regional comparisons, and an opportunity to chart change and continuity across a century. These issues are particularly significant in the contemporary setting of state-sponsored recognition of rights for indigenous Australians. Strehlow’s masterpiece has, among other things, bolstered the evidence for the continuation of traditional laws and customs and has been used as evidence in land right claims,
native title claims and the protection of large tracts of country from mineral exploration.

Aims of the Thesis
With this thesis I hope to retrieve Carl Strehlow's oeuvre from obscurity and to locate him in the context of Australian anthropology and intellectual history. This also involves repositioning Carl Strehlow's work in relation to the oeuvre of his son, T.G.H. Strehlow.

The first aim of the thesis is to position Carl Strehlow's anthropology in its own intellectual context: the German anthropological tradition of the nineteenth century (one that has often been neglected in Australia), and in the tradition of Lutheran missionary studies in language. Strehlow's interests and the questions he posed show the influence of both these milieux which were integral to the production of a work very different from others in Australia at the time.

The second aim of the thesis is to show the way in which Carl Strehlow, like Spencer and Gillen, was a transitional but significant figure in modern anthropology. I will discuss his output as an empirical anthropologist and locate it not only in nineteenth century thought but also with reference to the twentieth century. His studies of myth, social classification and land tenure bear on research today although his rendering of these phenomena lacked a modern comparative perspective. This account will show that his work had certain limitations, but at the same time strengths that are still significant today.

My analysis will conclude that Carl Strehlow made an important contribution to Australian intellectual history and that Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien is a classic in early international anthropology that stands beside the works of Spencer and Gillen and even the early works of the German American scholar, Franz Boas (see Stocking 1985:195-233). In some of its detail, which Strehlow accessed through intensive language study and decades of intensive engagement with Arrernte and Luritja people, his work exceeds that of his contemporaries.
Overview of Chapters

Section I of this thesis (Chapters I to IV) positions Carl Strehlow’s anthropology in its own intellectual context: especially with regard to the German anthropological tradition of the nineteenth century, and his Lutheran missionary background. His work falls in a German tradition of anthropological specification pursued through language which bears a strong resemblance to Franz Boas’ approach. In this style of work language is a recurring theme because early German anthropologists believed it was the key to both a people’s thought and sentiment. This language-based form of anthropology took hold in North America through Boas and his students, such as Edward Sapir (a crucial representative of early twentieth century linguistic anthropology) and Ruth Benedict who wrote on patterns of culture. Famously, it was Sapir with Whorf who located these patterns within a people’s language.10

In Chapter I, discussion begins with a general outline of Carl Strehlow’s life and work in central Australia and a brief contact history of the Arrernte and Luritja. In this chapter I also overview the contents of Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien. Carl Strehlow was interested, as it seems, in all aspects of religious and secular life, with special attention to mythology and social classification. He also made a very detailed and serious investigation into Aboriginal material culture sending artefacts and objects back to Germany. In this chapter I will introduce ‘altjira’, a key term in Arrernte mythology. This concept and its polysemy will be gradually explained, as it appears in Chapters IV to VII. My discussion will demonstrate how some dimensions of the term’s meaning in Western Arrernte have changed in the course of 100 years.

Chapter II introduces the German anthropological tradition of the nineteenth century which is based on late eighteenth century German philosophy which in turn shaped a style of ethnography. The roots of this tradition are mainly to be found in Johann Gottfried Herder’s concepts of Volksgeist, Humanität and language that together

10 Cultural anthropology, influenced by semiotics, and linguistics in particular, took a symbolic turn, often known as interpretive anthropology. This style of anthropology had relatively little influence on Australian ethnography until the 1980s (see Munn, Myers, Morphy) although it was nascent in the work of Carl Strehlow’s son, T.G.H. Strehlow (see 1971, [1967] 2005). Other early ethnographers, including the Berndts (1993 publication for example) and Warner produced material that might be interpreted by this method. (Ronald Berndt had a German background.)
provide the bases for a form of cultural particularism. His ideas were developed in various directions by the brothers von Humboldt. The inherent cultural pluralism and particularism of German anthropology contrasts with biologically-based theories of human difference. This was an anthropology uninterested in organising the world’s peoples according to a single evolutionary sequence. It stands in contrast to the Anglo-American and French schools of the nineteenth century which tried to generalise and systemise the social and cultural frameworks of indigenous peoples around the world (Bunzl and Penny 2003:12). Strehlow’s masterpiece is a typical example of German particularism.

In order to position Carl Strehlow within a framework in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century anthropology, I will also discuss (albeit briefly) Franz Boas and Fritz Graebner, two important representatives of German anthropology. Franz Boas and Carl Strehlow were both interested in regional research and studies of small-scale diffusion within a well-defined area. These foci were linked with intense detailed study of language, myth and folksong, the data that allowed for limited comparisons and comments on diffusion. Both were particularists and empiricists. Both avoided broad comparisons and generalisations in their work. Strehlow shared a critical approach to data collection with Boas and other German anthropologists. Placed in a scholarly context, rather than a mission one, Strehlow might have written Franz Boas’ seminal critique of evolutionism. On the other hand, Strehlow’s corpus does not share with Boas’ work evidence of an emerging modern culture concept. As Stocking suggests, a repudiation of culture stages to explain particularity almost certainly suggests a multiplicity of consociate cultures in its stead (see Stocking 1982: 200, 229). This tendency can be discerned in some of von Leonhardi’s letters to Strehlow. However, possibly Strehlow’s Christian theology held him from this course and from Boas’ nascent relativism. As a contemporary of Boas in Germany, Graebner is also of interest. His ideas and hypotheses regarding Kulturkreislehre (diffusionism) influenced Strehlow. This form of theory, at least, bore on Strehlow’s account of the relations between Western Arrernte and Luritja culture.

In Chapter III I discuss the major influences on Carl Strehlow as a frontier scholar other than the German anthropological tradition. To understand his scholarship it is
necessary to look at his missionary background which reveals some characteristics shared with the German anthropological tradition. The Lutheran emphasis on learning language as a precondition of mission work dovetailed with their intensive focus on textual interpretation of the Bible. Their spoken language tradition in conjunction with the Lutheran theological work of Warneck, Löhe and Deinzer, had a significant bearing on the manner in which Strehlow approached both his missionary and ethnographic work. In this chapter I also introduce Baron von Leonhardi who was indisputably Strehlow’s major influence, as their heady intellectual partnership opened the pastor in the bush to the questioning world of science.

Chapter IV is devoted to the letter exchange and dialogue between Carl Strehlow and Baron von Leonhardi. If Strehlow was in a sense ‘pre-anthropological’, then it was von Leonhardi’s incessant questioning and probing, as he responded to a scholarly community that shaped Strehlow’s work into an opus that would dialogue with other anthropology. Von Leonhardi was a committed empiricist. He never ceased to emphasise to Strehlow the need to avoid preconceived ideas and to record what he heard as faithfully as possible, cautioning Strehlow from time to time on one or another theoretical issue. His comments on methodology to Carl reveal the commitment and desire to see indigenous peoples described in their own terms. Carl Strehlow’s descriptive and humanistic style is in significant part the result of von Leonhardi’s influence. This chapter outlines the intellectual friendship between two diametrically opposed people, the missionary and the armchair anthropologist, and how this complementary partnership produced a major ethnographic work. It is doubtful that Strehlow’s classic monograph *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* would have been published without his mentor and editor who helped shape Strehlow’s ethnographic insights. It is noteworthy that this, like Spencer and Gillen’s work, was collaboration. Where Spencer brought an evolutionary frame to Gillen’s observation, von Leonhardi brought rigorous particularism to Carl Strehlow’s Christian humanism.

These three influences, the German philosophical-cum-anthropological tradition, missionary hermeneutics and cosmopolitan scholarship shaped Strehlow’s major work. The meeting point for these three was an intense engagement with the
particulars of human experience. Herder and his successors, such as the von Humboldt, the Neuendettelsau seminary and von Leonhardi, each required real engagements with the meaning that 'others' might give to their lives. Both through training and through personal propensity, it seems, Strehlow responded to these demands.

Section II of the thesis (Chapters V to VII) aims to show the way in which Carl Strehlow, like Spencer and Gillen, represents a transitional phase in modern anthropology. An acute and effective fieldworker, a committed empiricist, he nonetheless brought with him implicit models from Europe that did not fit indigenous Australian cultures. Still, his European preconceptions and assumptions allowed him to begin systematic data collection in a way that was rare for the period and remains of immense value. This data exemplifies many 'take-off points' for central developments in the modern field of twentieth century anthropology.

In this sense he was collecting material for a new century of anthropology; the ingredients that would be essential for a modern comparative and specifying study of societies and their cultures are present in his work. Die Aranda-und Loritja Stämme in Zentral-Australien supplied source material for the study of religion and society, as well as for another purpose which he could not have anticipated at the turn of the century: land rights, native title and mining agreements. Although Strehlow’s work is a product of its time, the very rich data he collected provide an enduring legacy.

I have chosen three areas of his work that demonstrate this paradox: his studies of myths, social classification and land tenure. The treatment of myth and social classification (kinship) build towards the understanding of land tenure because the former constitute the nature of traditional ownership.

Chapter V examines Carl Strehlow's focal interests, mythology and cosmology, which he recorded for both Arrernte and Loritja groups. His linear and free translations of myth are truly innovative and provide some of the earliest insight into the true sophistication of Aboriginal culture. Strehlow’s explicit framework of Grimmian 'Mythen, Sagen und Märchen' (myths, legends and fairy-tales) reflects his
transitional status as a modern ethnographer. There are no traces of the more conventional approaches to myth in twentieth century anthropology. Among these one might list metaphoric or symbolic accounts that treat myth as integral to a particular culture specified by its master symbols and genres of metaphor. One would also include the twentieth century’s three major comparative approaches: functionalism (what do myths do for society and how in this particular case?), structuralism and psychoanalysis that in their different ways address particular aspects of cognition taken to underlie all myth. Carl Strehlow’s data collection and translation lacked a sense of symbolism, and of comparison beyond the immediate region. Yet, he possibly began a path to ethnographic appreciation of an Arrernte ontology, of person-land relations. Röheim and Morton, not to mention Strehlow junior, have followed this route. Carl Strehlow’s sophisticated corpus of data made it possible for his son to apprehend the specificity of the dreaming.

In Chapter VI, I discuss Carl Strehlow’s studies on social classification, which he examined through ‘marriage’, the subsection system, kinship terminology, and family trees. Carl Strehlow had only a limited sense of comparative social analysis: subsections were mainly identified with ‘marriage rule’, and kinship with family trees. Again Strehlow’s kinship data is atheoretical source material. His ethnographic groundwork provides a point of departure to pursue an analysis of kinship systems. It gives a comprehensive overview of the subsection system and kinship terms that are still used today in Arrernte and Luritja societies. His lists of relatives by generation and their totems, for example, provided the basis for his son’s extraordinary genealogical exercise in data collection. Together their work produced a truly unique record of marriage and relatedness, place and ritual significance. Ironically, it could well be argued that this record has so impinged on Western Arrernte consciousness that it has become an artefact in their modern culture, invested with their own use-values. Certainly contemporary anthropologists find this material valuable.

Finally, I examine issues of tenure and traditional ownership in Chapter VII. Carl Strehlow did not study territorial organisation, which would become important in Australia in the mid-twentieth century. Nonetheless he provides significant information on the system at a particular time, one which resonates with current
trends in Arrernte and Luritja land tenure. His material can inform modern views on these subjects and has been used in land and native title claims. The discussion of Strehlow’s legacy in the context of current land claim and native title issues reveals both the strengths of his material, its important historical nature, and also limitations in terms of contemporary anthropology. Carl Strehlow’s corpus suggests that he did not grasp the specific nature of the relationship between Aboriginal people and their land in central Australia, or the forms of ritual and knowledge politics that sites could engender. His son T.G.H. Strehlow would later conceptualise this relationship, first indicated in his *Aranda Traditions* (1947).

The study does not contain a literature survey of the usual type in doctoral dissertations. Rather, I have supplied an ‘Afterword’ that does two things for those who read this study with interest. I overview the literature on Australian Aboriginal groups that was contemporaneous with Strehlow’s work. I also address some of the contemporary writings in the history of Australian anthropology that bear on Carl Strehlow’s time. My brief account of contemporaneous literature makes a beginning for other scholars who might, for instance, wish to compare and contrast Strehlow’s and Spencer and Gillen’s work with the numerous travellers tales that began Australian ethnography. My short address to current work in the history of Australian anthropology locates an area of scholarship in which much more could be done.

This account of Section II and the Afterword reveals that a consideration of Strehlow’s work from the vantage point of the 21st century tells us something about both Strehlow and his German tradition, and the nature of modern professional anthropology. Carl Strehlow’s opus is a unique work that allows us both to look back to a classical tradition not represented well within Australia, and forwards to a modern anthropology in Australia and elsewhere that carried his interests, and others, into the academy. Importantly, this latter development routinised fieldwork and with the beginnings of a global modernity also began to shrink its significance. Prior to writing a doctoral dissertation students today generally spend at most two years ‘in the field’. A decade or even a lifetime in the field has become almost unknown in anthropological practice. Strehlow’s life circumstance provided a unique opportunity for his empirical work but also necessitated a mentor to guide him through the
demands of scholarly production. Like Spencer's relationship with Frazer, and Gillen's with Spencer, the relation between von Leonhardi and Strehlow is a specific and fascinating intellectual mode. It deserves attention in its own right. In noting the transitional status of Strehlow's text in its relation to modern anthropology, it is also imperative to note what Carl Strehlow gave, and what modern ethnography has lost. These matters make Die Aranda-und Lortijja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien a work of international significance in anthropology's history.
CHAPTER I

Carl Strehlow and the Arrernte and Luritja of Central Australia

On the 23 December 1871 in a little village called Fredersdorf in Northern Germany, Carl Friedrich Theodore Strehlow was born as the seventh child of the village school teacher (Liebermeister 1998:16). Carl grew up in modest circumstances that offered few opportunities. In the Germany of the late nineteenth century, clerical institutions were the only source of education for the talented poor. The Lutheran Seminary at Neuendettelsau where Carl trained offered a rich and intense intellectual grounding for the bright and gifted student. As Carl Strehlow was finding a calling that would take him to the remotest place on earth – as Europeans imagined it – the world in which he would spend 30 years was already being up-rooted.

At the time, the Overland Telegraph Line was making its way north traversing Arrernte country in central Australia. In just a very few years, this initiative was followed by the Lutheran missionaries, A.H. Kempe and W.F. Schwarz. In 1877, they built a small mission settlement at Ntaria, a sacred site associated with the rathepe dreaming.11 The missionaries called this mission ‘Hermannsburg’ in recognition of the seminary that had trained them. The missionaries’ journey from Bethany in South Australia to the centre of Australia had lasted nearly 18 months because they had been travelling with an entourage consisting of 37 horses, 20 cattle and nearly 2000 sheep (Leske 1977, 1996; Scherer 1977; Harms 2003).

Not long after their arrival Kempe and Schwarz were joined by Louis and Charlotte Schulze (nee Gutmann), and their future wives Dorethea (nee Queckenstedt) and Dorethea (nee Schulz), who were the first European women to settle in central Australia.12 One year after the missionaries’ arrival in 1878 a group of Western

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12 The presence of these European women at the isolated mission in the late 1870s raises some interesting questions in regard to the perception of Arrernte people of white people. They were different to the other white single men, who were a threat as potential predators on indigenous women. At the mission in contrast, the men had their own women and children, which made them significantly less threatening and more human.
Arrernte men led by Nameia\(^{13}\) returned from a long revenge expedition into the southern territories of the Matuntara and must have observed with great surprise and indignation 'the first structures erected at Hermannsburg' that 'greeted their eye' (Strehlow 1970:125). These were not the only wary or hostile eyes trained on the missionaries. By 1879 the mission lease was surrounded by squatters who were backed by local police (Hartwig 1965; Donovan 1988:60,87). Both groups tended to disparage the missionaries.

At Ntaria, the newcomers immediately built pens for the livestock. They also began their crusade to evangelise the indigenous people who chose to stay temporarily at the new settlement. This proximity allowed the Lutherans to begin their study of language and culture. The missionaries called these people Adolinga meaning 'from the west'. However, the progress in spreading the gospel among the 'Adolinga' was slow and life on the frontier incredibly harsh due to droughts, isolation, disease and the aggression of other white settlers. By 1891 the little mission was abandoned, the missionaries had been disillusioned and defeated by the challenges and the loss of their families (Austin-Broos 1994:132).

The Arrernte and Kukatja Peoples

For the Arrernte, first contact with the newcomers occurred in the early 1860s when John McDouall Stuart was trying to find his way to the northern coast of the continent via the inland (Strehlow 1967:7-8). Owen Springs was the Centre's first pastoral station, and the Arrernte who resided between that station and Ntaria would certainly have encountered the cattlemen and other explorers who passed that way in the early 1870s (Austin-Broos 1994:131). Ernest Giles, for example, seems to have recorded the first Western Arrernte word, Larapinta (Lherepirnte: Finke River), on the 28 August 1872:

Soon after we had unpacked and let go our horses, we were accosted by a native on the opposite side of the creek. Our little dog became furious: then two natives appeared. We made an attempt at a long conversation, but signally

\(^{13}\) Nameia was murdered in 1889 at constable William Willshire's police camp on the Finke River. It seems the murderers were never identified with certainty (Nettelbeck and Foster 2007:71-73).
failed, for neither of us knew many of the words the other was saying. The only bit of information I obtained was their name for the river - as they kept continually pointing to it and repeating the word Larapinta. (Giles [1889]1995:8)

The Arandic group whose culture Carl Strehlow would document identify today as Western Arrernte. They lived in an area bounded roughly in the north by the Western MacDonnell Ranges, called Tyurretye (Strehlow 1907:32,42; T.G.H. Strehlow 1971:670, note 19) that separates them from the Anmatyerr and Northern Arrernte peoples. In the south, their country runs along the Lherepirnte (Finke River) to the countries of Pertame (Southern Arrernte) and Matuntara Luritja peoples. To the west, this country extended to the Derwent River and to the east it abuts the territory of today’s Central Arrernte people (see also T.G.H. Strehlow 1947:59). The Western Arrernte people belonging to Tyurretye call themselves sometimes Tyurretyerenye, meaning ‘belonging to Tyurretye’, and refer to their Arandic dialect as Western Arrernte and sometimes as Tyurretye Arrernte.

The country of the Western Arrernte is of a rare beauty, painted by Albert Namatjira Kngwarreye (1902–1959), and other artists of the watercolour school of Hermannsburg, who still capture in their art the river systems, magnificent gum trees, gorges, rocky valleys and the creeks that emanate from the aged ranges. The area is one of the best-watered parts of central Australia. This automatically resulted in conflict with the new intruders. The majority of cattle runs in this region were established between 1876 and 1884, bringing thousands of cattle and horses onto traditional lands. Naturally the local people reacted, as their waterholes were being destroyed and contaminated by these new animals. A kind of partisan war broke out. The cattle killings were answered by shootings. As the scarce desert resources were fouled by stock, droughts set in and the aggression towards the indigenous population increased, Arrernte people drifted to the mission that offered easy rations and some safety (see also Morton 1992:52). Life on the mission was fraught with difficulties for

14 Tjoritja (Tyurretye) was not only the name for the McDonnell Ranges, but also for Alice Springs which lies in the McDonnell Ranges. However, Carl Strehlow also wrote that ‘Lately, Alice Springs has been called Kapmanta; kap is an abbreviation of kaputa = head, and manta = dense. Kapmanta literally means: dense head. What it refers to are the roofs close together (roof = head of the house) because here the natives had first seen roofs of corrugated iron’ (Strehlow 1907:42).
the Arrernte. They were crowded into a small area that many of them once would have visited only occasionally, if at all. By the time Carl Strehlow arrived at the mission the Arrernte had been largely pacified, although there remained pockets of resistance that annoyed the local police as well as Strehlow. The cattle spearing affected the mission by dragging Strehlow into court to address ‘partisans’ who lived on the mission lease, or mission cattle speared by these or other groups.\footnote{Carl Strehlow’s letters to his superior Kaibel held at the Lutheran Archives Adelaide often describe the court dealings and cattle killings which he grudgingly had to tend to. See Vallee (2006) and Nettelbeck & Foster (2007) on frontier conflict in this region.}

The people living to the immediate west of the Western Arrernte called themselves Kukatja. Today they call themselves Luritja or Kukatja-Luritja when referring to their ancestry and history.\footnote{There is a distinct group of people living at Bulgo in Western Australia who are also called Kukatja.} The Kukatja may have heard of the newcomers from their eastern and southern neighbours. We cannot know, but at the very latest they would have encountered Europeans when the exploring parties of Ernest Giles in 1872, and William Christie Gosse in 1873, pushed into the Centre.

The country of the Kukatja-Luritja lies to the west of the Derwent River which marks the language border between Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja territories. This language boundary sometimes determines how people perceive their country and themselves. The border area is often described as Arrernte-Luritja ‘mix-up’ country, referring to the fact that a number of places have alternative Luritja and Arrernte place names. Vice versa, Kukatja people see themselves as Luritja-Arrernte ‘mix-up’. Röheim (1974:126) called these people ‘Lurittyja Merino’, and noted that they were seen as ‘half Aranda’. Even today the people who belong to the Kukatja-Arrernte border area are fluent speakers of Arrernte and Luritja and share Arrernte and Luritja ancestors as well as traditional laws and customs. The current linguistic boundaries mapped by the Institute of Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs approximate those proposed by T.G.H. Strehlow in his maps of 1947 and 1971.\footnote{See maps in Appendix C.}

Carl Strehlow remarked that the people whom the Arrernte at Hermannsburg called ‘Loritja’, referred to themselves as ‘Kukatja’ (Strehlow 1907:57, Anmerkung 9). According to T.G.H. Strehlow ‘Loritja’ was the Arrernte name applied to all Western
speech groups (Strehlow 1947:177-178). The people themselves refused this designation and used instead 'Kukatja, Pintubi, Ngalia, Ilpara, Andekerinja, etc'. According to Tindale, the name 'Luritja' had a negative connotation with the result that Kukatja people asked him to call them 'Kukatja' rather than 'Luritja' (1974:229). In his monumental _Aboriginal Tribes of Australia_ he used Kukatja and placed them 'west of the Gosses Range and Palm Valley on the south of the MacDonnell Ranges; south west to Lake Amadeus, George Gill Range, Cleland Hills (Merandji), Inindi near Mount Forbes, and Thomas Reservoir (Alala): on upper Palmer, Walker, and Rundall creeks' (Tindale 1974:229).

However, over the course of time Luritja has become a linguistic and cultural self-label despite its foreign origin for a number of peoples. By the 1960s people preferred to refer to themselves as 'Luritja' and today 'Luritja' remains a broad term that can be used interchangeably with other Western Desert labels (Smith 2005:73). 'Kukatja' and 'Mayutjarra', for example, are recognised by middle aged and elderly speakers as being equivalent to the new label, 'Luritja' (Holcombe 1998:217).

Additional confusion surrounding the language and group label 'Luritja' is a result of migration towards the south by Ngaliya Warlpiri, Pintupi, Jumu or Mayutjarra and Kukatja peoples (see Tindale 1974; Holcombe 1998:217). Some of these groups refer to themselves as 'Luritja'. The movements of 'Luritja' groups have been mainly caused by the disruptions of the past 100 years. These disruptions involved epidemics and environmental stress including drought and starvation. According to Tindale for example, a group called 'Jumu' was decimated by an epidemic in the 1930s. Following the extinction of the Jumu or Mayutjarra, Pintupi and Ngalia Warlpiri people moved into their vacated country (Tindale 1974:138, 227-8, Holcombe 1998). Smith writes that the Kukatja were on the move to the east and south by the late 1880s (Smith 2005:1). This was a chain migration of desert people into the settled districts that took several generations to run its course.

During Carl Strehlow's time, Kukatja belonging to the area immediately to the west of Western Arrernte territory moved south-eastwards towards Arrernte land and the Hermannsburg mission (see Leske 1977:26-27; Smith 2005). When Winnecke passed
through the general area in 1894, he still encountered ‘sandhill tribes’ living west of Hermannsburg (Winnecke 1897:37). However, eastward migration of the Kukatja intensified with the onset of a major drought from 1895 to 1906 (Smith 2005:29).

Throughout the 1920s, the Kukatja people moved through the frontier to resume contact with relatives at the mission and on the outlying pastoral properties (Smith 2005:51; Holcombe 1998:26). The missionaries were aware of ‘a vigorous tribe just west of Hermannsburg’ with a large population,18 and in the late 1920s, plans for Arrernte evangelists were made to take their message to these groups.

The location of the ‘Kukatja’ area today is understood as being along the western edge of Western Arrernte territory.19 T.G.H. Strehlow has maintained that Kukatja land stretched from the western border of Western Arrernte westwards to Mt Liebig and Putati spring (1970:110). Heffernan describes a current perception of the territory that was owned by Kukatja:

The Kukatja (as distinct from the people of the same title living at Balgo in Western Australia) lived in the country west of Glen Helen Station (Ungkungka) along the tail of the Western MacDonnell ranges through to Mt Liebig, south to Gosses Bluff, the Gardiner Range and then out to Mt Peculiar and Mt Udor. The country includes such prominent communities as Papunya, Haasts Bluff, Umpangara and Mt Liebig. (Heffernan 1999:4)

Pre-contact, Kukatja-Luritja culture was strongly influenced by Western Arrernte traditional laws and customs and vice versa (Strehlow 1947). When white settlement destabilised desert life, and they moved into the Hermannsburg mission, the Arrernte influence on Kukatja ways would have become more intense. Heffernan (1999:4-5) writes: ‘Because these people lived on the fringe of Arrernte country, they moved into Hermannsburg very early on (for reasons that were important to them at the time - easy food is one most frequently given). A good number of their descendants today live in outstations west of Hermannsburg, and in the Papunya region. They

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19 Stirling had noted in 1894 that ‘the territory of the Luritchas marches on the western boundary of Aruntas, and comprises the country about Erklunda, Tempe Downs, Gill’s Range, Mereenie Bluff and Glen Helen’ (Stirling 1896:11).
instinctively refer to themselves today as Arrernte or Luritja and only as Kukatja on the basis of ancestry.' They share both vocabulary and various other cultural commonalities (Strehlow 1947) in contrast to other Luritja groups who are heavily influenced by other Western Desert cultures. Pintupi-Luritja spoken at Mbuinha, Papunya and Mt Liebig, for example, is an amalgamation of different Western Desert dialects including Pintupi, Ngalia and Kukatja (Heffernan 1984, 1999; Hansen 1992; and Holcombe 1998, 2004).

The cultures and traditional laws and customs of Western Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja people have many features in common. This is not surprising, given their close relationships that involve joint ceremonies, intermarriage and over lapping land tenure (Strehlow 1908, 1913; T.G.H. Strehlow 1947, 1965, 1970). In more recent times, commonalities have been re-enforced not only at Hermannsburg/Ntaria but also at other settlements including Haast Bluff, Mt Liebig and Papunya. Where peoples have shared environmental conditions – the well-watered range system of Western Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja countries – there would have been marked similarities in culture (Strehlow 1970). Carl Strehlow’s ethnographic data belonged mainly to these two distinct cultural groups whom he broadly labelled Arrernte\(^2^0\) and Luritja in the title of his publication.\(^2^1\) In reality they were mainly people of two small groups. One was an Arandic group and the other was a Western Desert group that did not display all typical features of a Western Desert culture due to social and environmental reasons. They shared a number of cultural traits, laws and customs, because they were immediate neighbours.

Carl Strehlow’s Life and Work in Australia

Carl Strehlow arrived in Australia in 1892, not long after graduating from the Neuendettelsauer seminary in southern Germany. His first posting was the Bethesda mission at Lake Eyre in South Australia. The moment he arrived at the mission, he

\(^{2^0}\) T.G.H. Strehlow (1971:xx) wrote that ‘C. Strehlow’s information came mainly from the north-western and Hermannsburg sectors of the Western Aranda area.’

\(^{2^1}\) Although Carl Strehlow refers often to the Western, North-Western, Eastern and Southern Arrernte, he does not define exactly were the territories of these groups lie. His map (1910) shows language and dialect distribution rather than territories belonging to particular groups. He placed the western dialect Aranda-Ulba as spoken between the McDonnell and James Ranges including Hermannsburg, the Aranda Roara as the dialect for the area between the eastern part of the MacDonnell Ranges and James Ranges including Alice Springs, the Aranda Lada from approximately Henbury along the Finke River and the Aranda Tanka between Charlotte Waters and Oodnadatta along the Finke River.
showed interest in the language of the local people. Within six months he spoke Diyari (Schild 2004:55) and by the end of 1894, with J.G. Reuther, he had translated the New Testament into Diyari. It was called *Testamenta marra*, published in 1897.

In October 1894 at the age of 22 he was transferred to Hermannsburg in remote central Australia. He arrived at the abandoned mission station with two fellow missionaries, Reuther and Linke. His first impressions were not favourable as the small congregation had dispersed:

... One more sandhill and there was Hermannsburg. I was disappointed... It was very hurtful to see the jewels of a mission station, the little church and school, fallen into disrepair... There was not one Christian to welcome us like
at Bethesda. Only a few naked heathens looked at us in amusement when we arrived.²²

This is the place that Carl would be running as a mission, a cattle and sheep station, and where he would raise a family of six children and provide pastoral care for more than 100 Aboriginal people. At the same time he was confronted with aggressive pastoralists and the forcing together of different Aboriginal groups. Carl Strehlow had to deal with a whole range of issues, some involving groups who did not even like each other. Some Western Arrernte and Kukatja at Hermannsburg, for example, had been enemies for a long time (Strehlow 1947:62).

These local arrangements were extraordinary. Hermannsburg was the largest settlement in central Australia, bigger than Alice Springs. The people living at the mission were not a group that traditionally would have lived there together for extended periods. The mission created a completely new setting for the indigenous population. People must have been constantly trying to accommodate this situation by activating, reconciling and adapting every imaginable tie to country and kin. It is likely that tensions emerged between the actual local group of Ntaria and other mission inhabitants from neighbouring or far-flung countries. The situation therefore did not favour traditional territorial organisation as a research focus.

Administrative work for both church and state were also a part of Strehlow’s duties. He became the postmaster, Justice of the Peace and contributed to the school by developing curricula, translating hymns to the music of Bach, and preparing lessons in Arrernte. His work at Hermannsburg would bring him into conflict with pastoralists, the police, governments, the British anthropological establishment and even his own church. The young man was soon left to his own devices by Reuther and Linke who returned south. Despite the desolate conditions of the mission, Strehlow started rebuilding it with great enthusiasm, not least motivated by the prospect that his young fiancée Friedericke Johanna Henriette Keysser would be arriving within the year. Their courtship is documented in endearing epistles that travelled between central Australia and Germany. The complete correspondence has survived and gives a

²² Carl Strehlow, Kirchlichen Mitteilungen, No.3, 1895:19.
unique insight into their relationship. From Hermannsburg, Carl wrote to Frieda about every detail that she would encounter. Her future home, the surrounding landscape and the palm garden behind the house - which he considered the ‘most beautiful place in the whole of the Northern Territory’ - were familiar to her when she arrived at the mission:

My dearest loved Frieda! (...) Now you may want to know more about Hermannsburg, where, so God will, we shall find our home. The area around the stations is nicer than around Bethesda. Transpose yourself in your imagination to Hermannsburg standing beside me and looking out of the window, you will see to the north, not far, a long, high range, with some mountains in its foreground, that is the MacDonnell Range. When you move to the next window with me, looking to the south, you can overlook our gardens, they are quite big. You will see the date palms, the peppertrees and some pomegranate trees, that are in bloom now, the red blooms are wonderful. ... There is also a gazebo there, in which we will be sitting comfortably and be chatting intimately, in the cool evenings. Beyond the garden lies the Finke River, but no water is flowing in it, only some Gumtrees stand in it. Behind the Finke rise steep and high mountains, which are sparsely vegetated with grass and flowers.

The young couple had only met once for two hours on Good Friday in 1892, just before Carl had left for his Australian calling. It was love at first sight. Three years would pass until they met again after a long and protracted battle with her guardians. Her letters back to him shared his passion and enthusiasm. About their first meeting she writes:

When you looked at me with those blue eyes, I knew, that you loved me. When you had left that day, I just wanted to cry and cry, but I was not

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23 Held at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs.  
24 Carl Strehlow to Frieda Keysser, 10.10.1894.  
25 Carl Strehlow to Frieda Keysser, 12.11.1894.
permitted to let anyone know... But now you are mine after a long battle. If it were only my decision, I would come sooner to you.26

Frieda was looking forward to her new life and adventure in Australia, which her imagination clothed in a romantic haze. In her letters she discussed with her future husband her dowry which included measured curtains for their home. Travelling from Germany, Frieda, 19 years of age, joined Carl in 1895. The voyage to the Centre in the early summer was an ordeal. The heat, the flies and discomfort of the travel were unbearable. In addition she suffered from excruciating toothaches. Her luggage with the curtains for the house arrived months later leaving her without essentials for her new life.

3. Frieda Strehlow and her first child Friedrich, 1897. Source: SRC 7762.

26 Frieda Keysser to Carl Strehlow, 22.7.1894.
Despite the inconveniences, Frieda whole-heartedly embraced her role as a missionary’s wife. She started to learn Arrernte, teach the women household skills intended to improve health and elevate living standards, and had six children at the Hermannsburg mission. Her first child Friedrich was born in 1897, her only daughter Martha in 1899, Rudolf in 1900, Karl in 1902, Heinrich in 1905 and her youngest son Theodore, who would later become one of the most controversial figures in Australian anthropology, in 1908. Together Carl and Frieda made Hermannsburg a refuge for the local people and fought for their physical and mental survival. By 1912 the efforts of the Strehlows manifest themselves:

... the number of deaths during the past years has steadily gone down; and therefore the state of health of the blacks on our station has improved and as far as the inhabitants of our station are concerned, the Aranda are not yet thinking of dying out (!) (Strehlow 1913:Preface)

Frieda was one of the very few European women to know the unforgiving life of the desert frontier, becoming by default one of central Australia’s first female ethnographers, predating Daisy Bates and Olive Pink. She was not to know that her married life would include work on her husband’s ethnographic masterpiece.
Carl Strehlow started work on language and translation immediately. His fluency in Diyari and the bible translation facilitated his acquisition of the local languages, Arrernte and Luritja. His previous experience is likely to have helped him understand the intellectual concepts of the Arrernte and Luritja whom he met at Hermannsburg. He was also able to draw on Arrernte language material compiled by his predecessor missionaries, Kempe and Schulze. He became fluent in Arrernte within months and preached in the vernacular. In 1896 only two years after his arrival on Arrernte territory, Strehlow’s Arrernte was so good that Gillen, who had been living among Arandic peoples since 1875, used his services as a translator for his anthropological research in Hermannsburg (Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch [1997] 2001:118-119; John Strehlow 2004). In 1899 Strehlow supplied some information on Arrernte kinship terms and subsection systems to Otto Siebert and Howitt.27

In 1904 Carl Strehlow published an Arrernte Service Book, Galtjindintjamea-Pepa Aranda Wolambarinjaka which included one hundred German hymns translated into Arrernte and some of them set to Bach’s church music. This work was partially based on that of his predecessor Kempe and the assistants of Arrernte men like Moses Tjalkabota who seemed to have embraced Lutheran teachings (Tjalkabota 2002:237-300). On the other hand, Tjalkabota was one of the main informants for Strehlow’s ethnographic oeuvre and had been initiated. At the end of 1904, Strehlow’s future editor, Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, who had some queries on religion, offered to publish anything that Carl might write. Although Strehlow at this stage had already collected material on mythology28 and collated an extensive dictionary of Arrernte, Luritja, Diyari and German containing thousands of entries, his ethnographic research only started seriously in 1905 after Moritz von Leonhardi expressed his interest in a publication (Kenny 2005).

The building blocks were now in place: language fluency, a stable domestic life, growing ease with the people, increasingly engaged informants, a European contact promising publication and, most importantly, intellectual engagement. Carl Strehlow spent the following five years collecting ethnographic data from senior men at

27 Otto Siebert to A.W. Howitt, 22.4.1899 (Howit Collection at Melbourne Museum).
28 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 30.7.1907.
Hermannsburg and also sent a vast amount of plant, animal and insect specimens as well as material culture\textsuperscript{29} to Germany. The specimens were widely distributed by his editor to museums and reputable scientists in Germany for research, classification and display.

Strehlow was very careful about what he collected and did not push issues when he thought that he may not receive the right answer or his informants would simply agree with his views.\textsuperscript{30} He went over and over his information, kept as closely as possible to what his informants told him, and sought his material from senior people. Carl Strehlow tried to collect his material mainly from men who were not Christians or were still deeply immersed in their traditions. From what we know about ownership of dreaming stories and country, Strehlow could only have gained his material from the appropriate owners of a certain age group. Four of his main informants, Loatjira, Pmala (Tmala), Moses (Tjalkabota)\textsuperscript{31} and Talku\textsuperscript{32} are mentioned by himself and his son (Strehlow 1971:xx-xxii).

![Photo of four men sitting outdoors]


\textsuperscript{29} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.6.1906. Strehlow sent von Leonhardi a letter on the 8.4.1906, in which he seems to have offered for the first time to send ethnographic objects to Germany.

\textsuperscript{30} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 23.10.1907 (SH-SP-14-1).

\textsuperscript{31} Also mentioned as Car Strehlow’s informant by Röheim (1944).

\textsuperscript{32} Taku (aka Wapita) is said to have been Carl Strehlow’s main informant on Luritja culture, according to Tindale (1929: Card 16 of Records compiled from the Hermannsburg expedition in August 1929) and T.G.H. Strehlow (1970).
Loatjira (circa 1846-1924)\(^{33}\) was Carl Strehlow's main informant on Western Arrernte culture. He was the most important contributor to *Die Aranda- und Lortjia-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*. He was the ingkarte (ceremonial chief)\(^{34}\) of Ntaria, ‘the grand old man of Hermannsburg’, and an important ngangkere (healer, doctor), who ‘had possessed full knowledge of the dreaded death charms’ and had taken part as a young man in avenging parties (Strehlow 1970:116). He was not resident at the mission and resisted conversion. According to T.G.H. Strehlow, Loatjira was the main upholder of Arrernte religion who ‘remained strongly opposed to Christianity throughout the lifetime of my father, and in fact came to Hermannsburg very rarely after the completion of my father’s book’.\(^{35}\) Loatjira chose to live outside Hermannsburg near the Ellery Creek, which was on the eastern boundary of the mission-lease, and only came permanently into Hermannsburg after Strehlow’s death. Carl wrote that 'the old heathen Loatjira' had learnt the commandments despite of his old age and blindness, but left the station with his wife due to a death.\(^{36}\) That day in 1913, 20 people left the mission in accordance with mourning customs. There must have been lots of coming and going due to the deaths that occurred often at Hermannsburg. It is not known if Loatjira returned to the mission before Carl’s death.

H.A. Heinrich noted that Loatjira was among a number of persons who had received pre-baptismal instruction from Reverend Strehlow. He was baptised in 1923 and christened Abraham. T.G.H. Strehlow reports that he died a broken man on the 4 October 1924 from Spanish influenza (Strehlow 1970:116; 1971:xxi, xxxviii, 262-3, 599,650). In *White Flour, White Power*, Rowse (1998:82) cites Lohe (1977:37) who does not quote his sources:

> Quite significantly was the baptism of the old blind Aranda chief and sorcerer, Loatgira (Loatjira), who only three years before has called Christianity 'rubbish'. Already in 1913 as reported above, he had joined Strehlow’s class of instruction, but this was disrupted when he left Hermannsburg in 1914,

\(^{33}\) According to T.G.H. Strehlow (1971:753).

\(^{34}\) T.G.H. Strehlow’s gloss for ‘ingkarte’.


returning only in the early 1920s. With longing joy he announced his desire to be baptised. In answer to the question ‘why’, he said: I believe that Jesus is my Savour. Tjurunga (the sacred objects of the Aranda and the ceremonies connected therewith) is of the devil and a lie. I desire with all my heart to become a Christian. I believe that Jesus is able to save even me... (Lohe 1977:37)

I doubt that Loatjira really converted. He wanted to die on his own country. One of the main features of Arrernte belief is 'becoming country', going into the country and becoming part of it - all songs end with the ancestors growing tired and longing for their home and returning to their place of origin. Loatjira wanted to die at Hermannsburg. It was on his father’s and arrange’s country as well as in the vicinity from where his spirit-child (called ‘ratapa’ in Carl Strehlow’s work) had come from and where his ‘iningukua’, his spirit-double, usually dwelt.37

Not much is known about Pmala (Tmala), the second person on the photograph of Strehlow’s main informants. Pmala (c. 1860-1923) was a Western Arrernte man with his conception site at Ndata belonging to the renge (euro) dreaming, north-west of Glen Helen Gorge (Strehlow 1971:xxi,599,760). Pmala married Annie Toa in 1890. He was baptised ‘Silas’ on the 16 April 1900 by Carl Strehlow. According to T.G.H. Strehlow Silas often chopped firewood for the Strehlow home, and normally brought down on his head the large bread-setting dish with the fat and innards from the killing pen. He died on the 24 June 1923 suddenly of heart failure. He had been blind from youth.38 He appears on one of Carl Strehlow’s genealogies as Ulakararinja (Carl Strehlow 1913). He is known to his descendants as Silas Mpetyane.

Moses Tjalkabota (c.1873-1950) is the best-known contributor to Strehlow’s oeuvre. He became a famous evangelist in central Australia, despite of his blindness, and thus was well documented by the Finke River Mission. He had been baptised on the 26 December 1890 by A.H. Kempe when he was about 12 or 13, but had been nevertheless initiated. He was married on the 25 January 1903 to Sofie and had twelve

37 Loatjira’s conception site was Mbutjigata near Ntarea (Ntaria), belonging to rameia (yellow goanna) dreaming (T.G.H. Strehlow 1971:753). According to Carl Strehlow loatjira is a synonym for rameia (1907:80 fn.3).
children, only one of whom survived. Interestingly, Moses also had his sons initiated, despite being a staunch Christian. According to his autobiography, he was among the first to shake Carl’s hand at his arrival in 1894 and taught Carl Arrernte (Tjalkabota 2002:272).

The fourth man in the picture is Talku (c.1867-1941), Carl Strehlow’s main informant for his Luritja myth (1908,1911) and kinship terminology (1913) collection. However, Carl Strehlow was not able to complete Talku’s family tree and remarked:

Unfortunately, I could not gather sufficient data to complete [the family tree], for my informant, Talku, who also supplied most of the Luritja myths and cult songs, has once more left our station, and his other tribal companions residing here have married local women and have therefore already been included in the family trees of the Aranda.

The man sitting at the end of the row on the right is Talku. He used to make it his task in life to spear the cattle belonging to the whites. An attempted escape during his arrest resulted in him being shot through the abdomen. He was then brought to the Mission station and remained there until he ran away one day to enjoy his golden freedom. (Strehlow 1913:85, and note 2)

Talku was also an important informant for T.G.H. Strehlow (1970:137, 1971:xxi,768), who knew him as Wapiti, Talku’s name in old age. ‘Wapiti’ means yam in Kukatja-Luritja. T.G.H. Strehlow made some biographical notes on Talku, aka Wapiti, as well:

Talku, like Loatjira, was not a resident of Hermannsburg. He was the ceremonial chief of the Kukatja yam centre of Merini. Born about 1867, he organised raids upon cattle belonging to Tempe Downs Station at the beginning of the century. A police party surprised these raiders one day south of Ltalatumu, and fired upon them when they sought to evade capture. Talku was hit by a bullet from a police tracker’s rifle which passed through his body and emerged again without apparently injuring any vital organs. His upper
thigh bone was, however, shattered. He was carried on the backs of his friends across the ranges to Hermannsburg, a distance of some twenty-five miles. His tough constitution and unconquerable courage carried him through this ordeal. After being nursed back to health at Hermannsburg, he showed his gratitude to my father by providing him with detailed information on Loritja totemic rites, sacred songs, and social organization. And then he disappeared again one day into the free wild life of his own country. (Strehlow 1971:xxi)

Talku must have left the station at the very latest in 1909. By 1929 he was back at the mission. On his research trip to Hermannsburg, Norman Tindale made a data sheet of Wapiti which also confirms his identity. He died at about the age of 70 on the 14 January 1941.

Other informants of Carl Strehlow seem to have included Hezekiel's fathers, tyelpe men, and Nathaniel Rauwiraka, a main man of the Ellery Creek.

Carl Strehlow's data collection process was rigorous. He sat down with his informants who sang and dictated word by word their songs and myths and described ceremonies and performances. Their dictation allowed verbatim recording of songs along with their accounts of the choreography and meaning of the sacred ceremonies and the material artefacts used in them. Strehlow's records were not an eyewitness description of performances. On the other hand, his facility with language allowed detailed, accurate recording of the descriptions, explanations and interpretations that Arrernte and Loritja people themselves provided for their ceremonies and cultural precepts.

He seems to have spent as much if not more time between 1905 and 1909 on his ethnographic projects than on his missionary duties. The Lutheran hierarchy criticised Strehlow for the amount of time and energy he devoted to his research and writing. As far as his superiors in the Barossa Valley were concerned, he was wasting his time on research and not addressing his pastoral obligations. We can only imagine what kind of impression he made on the Arrernte. Certainly it seemed to elicit respect. Strehlow's Arrernte informants may have read in their engagements with him a form of exchange they were not unfamiliar with. Here perhaps was a man bent on building
a portfolio of knowledge concerning both his own law and the Arrernte’s (see also Austin-Broos 2004:61). Of course, the emplacement of Christian knowledge would have been an issue, especially for Loatjira and other custodians for Ntaria. Carl Strehlow had become a form of ingkarte regarding Christian law and ceremony. In the course of his stay, Carl was the ingkarte of Altjira (Christian God; this is also the word used around the turn of the century for beings significant in indigenous religion). For the Arrernte it was not so difficult to extend these meanings. Strehlow junior also suggests that his father was seen as a form of ingkarte.\(^{39}\)

In the last few months of 1909, before leaving central Australia for Germany, Carl Strehlow was working frantically on the conclusion of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*, which was concerned with material culture and language including sign language. After five years of intensive research he finished his ethnographic inquiries on the 24 November 1909 and copied the last pages for von Leonhardi on the 16 February 1910.\(^{40}\) Also his dictionary was completed by the time he left Hermannsburg in 1910.

Carl Strehlow left Hermannsburg with his family in mid-1910. The trip was intended as a well-deserved break for Carl and Frieda, and to secure an education for the eldest five of their children who had, by all accounts, adopted the ways of the bush. During his stay in Germany his editor Baron von Leonhardi died. After von Leonhardi’s death, staff members of the Frankfurt museum, B. Hagen and F.C.H. Sarg, took on the arduous and time-consuming work to complete the publication of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*. Baron von Leonhardi’s anthropological library and Strehlow’s unpublished material had been bequeathed to the museum. Sarg prepared five family trees out of twenty that Carl Strehlow had sent von Leonhardi for publication and completed the editing of the fifth volume on social life, which had been proof-read by Marcel Mauss (Strehlow 1913:Preface). Mauss was initially also going to help with the publication of the sixth volume, but he dropped out at the

\(^{39}\) Ingkarte as a word has change its meaning significantly over the past century. Today it is used for Lutheran pastor. It is likely that the shift started to occur during Carl Strehlow’s period, because he seems to have been their first white ingkarte.

\(^{40}\) Strehlow’s handwritten manuscript has 1224 pages. By December 1909 Leonhardi had 1104 pages. It is not clear if in the course of 1910 he received the remaining 120 pages on sign language. Von Leonhardi mentions in May 1910, that he had all material for vol 5 and 6 on social life and material culture of the Arrernte and Loritja (Strehlow 1913:XVII).
beginning of World War I, keeping some of Strehlow’s material in Paris. Mauss had been on friendly terms with von Leonhardi, whom he had visited in Gross Karben, and had taken great interest in Strehlow’s work. After von Leonhardi’s death, Mauss travelled to Frankfurt specifically to find out what was going to happen with the remaining manuscripts and offered to correspond with Strehlow in place of von Leonhardi. 41

It is not quite clear who finalised the editing of the sixth volume (Strehlow 1915) as Sarg and the museum had fallen out with each other42 and further communication with Carl Strehlow was not possible due to World War I. Hagen was involved and possibly Dr. Ernst Vatter, a young and talented geographer. 43

After Hagen’s death, the seventh and final volume on material culture was published by Ernst Vatter in 1920, just after World War I. He added an index and wrote in his preface that further research may follow by Carl Strehlow, as his work had raised new questions and aspects, which were of great interest to science. He expressed the optimistic and enthusiastic hope that Carl would continue his ethnographic investigations, because:

This comprehensive, indeed in many ways singular, observation and report concerning the Aranda and Loritja constitutes a challenge to further study and scientific preoccupation. The publication of the concluding part from Strehlow’s pen will finally open the door to further debate. The Ethnological Museum of Frankfurt intends to devote one of its forthcoming publications to a continuing scientific study of Strehlow’s vast material, enriched and enlarged by further inquiries from him, and to make up for lost opportunities due to the war. (Strehlow 1920:Preface)

However, Carl Strehlow did not pursue any further ethnographic research. After an extended stay in Germany and placing his five eldest children with relatives and

42 B. Hagen to Carl Strehlow, 10.9.1913.
43 Vatter wrote a book on Australian totemism (1925) and a classic German monograph called Ata Kiwan (1932) which pre-empted post-modern ethnography (Kohl 2001:498). He had to leave Germany in the late 1930s as his wife was Jewish and became a poultry farmer in Chile.
friends, he returned in 1912 to central Australia, with his wife Frieda and only with
their youngest son Theodore. Instead, he started translating the New Testament into
Arrernte with Moses Tjalkabota, Nathaniel Rauwirarka and Jacobus in 1913.\textsuperscript{44} It was
the first Arrernte translation of the bible.

Carl Strehlow’s Magnum Opus

Carl Strehlow’s magnum opus Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien
was published in Germany between 1907-1920 in seven instalments by the
Ethnological Museum of Frankfurt. The work was the result of an intense
correspondence between Carl Strehlow (1871-1922) and Moritz Wilhelm Georg
Freiherr von Leonhardi (1856-1910), Strehlow’s German editor in Frankfurt. The
correspondence occurred between 1901 and 1909, when Carl Strehlow’s most intense
research occurred.

Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien is a very dense and difficult
text. The exact transcriptions of indigenous myths and songs in Arrernte and Luritja
are accompanied by German interlinear and free translations. However, the text still
presupposes knowledge of the existing literature on indigenous Australians and some
ideological standpoints common at the turn of the century. It is also rendered difficult
because the Arrernte, Luritja and Diyari prose and poetic texts and terms are not
always explained. A dictionary that at the time was and still is unpublished is required
to study this text in its full richness.\textsuperscript{45}

First and foremost, Strehlow’s ethnography documents the mythology and cosmology
of the Arrernte and Luritja. The material occupies volumes one to four. In his letters
he employs various terms including ‘religiösen Anschauungen’, ‘Religionen’;\textsuperscript{46}
‘religiösen Ideen und Traditionen’ and ‘Religion der Schwarzen’ to refer to this
corpus.\textsuperscript{47} He employs these terms in the style of the time with a range of inter-
connected references. There is little evidence that he saw religion as a functionally

\textsuperscript{44} Lutheran Herold, 16.2.1925, p.54; Carl Strehlow’s letter to the Mission Friends, 9.1.1920 (Albrecht
Collection Acc. No. AA662, SAMA). He writes that he worked on it between 1913 and 1919.
\textsuperscript{45} See chapter III on this unpublished dictionary and its projected purpose.
\textsuperscript{46} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).
\textsuperscript{47} Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
integrated phenomenon of cosmology and ritual practice geared to particular ends. Nonetheless, he and his editor were asking the right questions such as:

The Aljeringa half animal, half human [like the Mura-mura of the Dieri] lived before the present human beings and left a large number of ceremonies behind which are still performed. Spencer and Gillen’s accounts give no indication of the purpose of these ceremonies; is it a kind of cult?48

Given the times, it is significant that Strehlow and his editor understood these indigenous beliefs as ‘religion’ whereas Spencer, Gillen and Frazer called the same system ‘magic’. For Frazer, magic was a ‘false science’. In this he followed E.B. Tylor who argued that magic belongs ‘to the lowest known stages of civilization, and the lower races’, practice based on a false ‘Association of Ideas’ and the ‘antithesis of religion’ (see Lawrence 1987:22-24). Indigenous religious belief was also the focus of von Leonhardi’s interest. His concerns included the issue of high gods, totemism, ceremonies, ritual cults, tywerrenge, and concepts of ‘soul’ – lthane (Itana) and kwerrrene (guruna) in the case of the Arrernte.

Carl Strehlow’s myth collection focuses on the ancestral beings, called in Arrernte ‘altjirangamitjina’ and in Luritja ‘tukurita’, who created the central Australian landscape and its laws, and play a crucial role in ceremonial life. The stories concerning these mythological ancestral beings are referred to in today’s literature as ‘dreamings’. It has often been claimed that Carl Strehlow’s view of Arrernte and Luritja cosmology was flawed, because he was a missionary and ascribed indigenous high gods to the Arrernte and Luritja.49 Despite his data on the supreme beings, Altjira and Tukura, he also maintained that ancestral beings were the main protagonists in the sacred life of the Arrernte and Luritja peoples. As subsequent discussion will reveal, the positioning of high gods in different cosmologies can vary considerably. The subtlety of this ethnographic issue was not grasped by Spencer, or by later anthropologists in Australia (but see Hiatt 1996).

48 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 9.9.1905.
49 I discuss the controversy surrounding high gods in Chapter V.
Volumes five to seven describe aspects of Arrernte and Luritja social life. Carl Strehlow was going to call this section 'Land und Leute' (land and people) and according to a letter written on the 13 December 1906, he had intended it as an introduction to his work.\(^{50}\) However in the course of his correspondence with von Leonhardi, the issues on 'social life', i.e. social classification and organisation, seemed to grow in importance especially as they studied relevant contemporary English and Australian anthropology. They were both interested in social aspects and were familiar with contemporary debates and hypotheses. Marriage classes and kinship terminology were topics raised regularly in their correspondence. Von Leonhardi remarked in 1906, for example:

The views of Spencer and Gillen, as well as of other Australian researchers, on the meaning of kinship terms,\(^ {51}\) as well as of the marriage classes, seem to be still hypothetical.\(^ {52}\)

All volumes contain material, which von Leonhardi greatly admired, relating to language and material culture. The word lists and comments that Strehlow includes were 'only' a supplement to the major dictionary and an Arrernte grammar that Strehlow had constructed in manuscript form. Additionally he collected data on the natural environment, often seen from an Arrernte or Luritja perspective, and specimens that were classified in Germany by leading scientists of the time. In sum, the project of these two committed scholars came very close to being cosmographic.

The Original Manuscripts
Unlike Strehlow's scientific letters to his editor that have only survived in draft form and shorthand, the original handwritten manuscripts of Die Aranda-und Loritja Stämme in Zentral-Australien have survived. The only previously known manuscripts, destroyed in World War II, were duplicates provided to Baron von Leonhardi. Strehlow had copied his original meticulously for his editor, sending it in segments to Germany for publication. The bombing of the Ethnological Museum of Frankfurt

\(^{50}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 13.12.1906 (SH-SP-7-1).
\(^{51}\) Strehlow's collection of kinship terms, for example, is still current and a take-off point for modern kin-studies. Further detail in his unpublished dictionary (1909) exceeds the supplements of what was published in Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien.
\(^{52}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.6.1906.
buried forty-seven people sheltering in the vaults. It also destroyed Streihlow’s research collection and correspondence.


The original manuscripts consist of three volumes called Sagen, Cultus and Leben. Sagen (myths/legends) contains the myth collections. In Cultus (cults) Carl Streihlow collated the Arrerne and Luritja songs belonging to the individual myths that were sung during ceremonies. Here he also describes the choreography and paraphernalia of rite and ceremony. Leben (life) describes aspects of social life. Streihlow’s handwritten manuscripts runs to 1224 pages.

These original manuscripts had been in the possession of Carl’s son, T.G.H. Streihlow. They sat all his life on his desk alongside his father’s epic unknown and unpublished dictionary.53 Its existence was known only to a handful of people. In the light of these original manuscripts it is clear that von Leonhardi kept largely to his protégée’s original, which disproves Spencer’s allegations that an educated editor had changed the work.54 The original is in actual fact even richer than the published

53 The manuscripts were among the items confiscated from K. Streihlow's (T.G.H. Streihlow’s second wife) house in the 1990s. Notes with these mss indicate that he had owned them since the 1930s. Also FitzHerbert's letters of the 1930s held at the Streihlow Research Centre and the Special Collection of the Barr Smith library indicate this.
54 Spencer to Frazer on the 10.3.1908 (Marett and Penniman 1932:110).
version. Were there ever a republication of the German text, possibly the original manuscript should be used with critical annotations.

Arrernte Sagen

 Carl Strehlow's first publication (1907) is a collection of Arrernte myths. The Arrernte narratives called Mythen, Sagen and Märchen are arranged into seven sections. A preface by Moritz von Leonhardi gives a brief context and remarks on the main actors, the ancestors:

In primordial times the "totem gods" (altjirangamitjina) walked this earth and eventually entered the earth, where they are still thought to be living. Their bodies changed into rocks, trees, shrubs or tjurunga made of stone or wood. (Strehlow 1907: Preface)

Following von Leonhardi's short preface, Carl Strehlow's brief account of Altjira, a moral high god, follows in Section I. Altjira is thought to be eternal ('ngambakala': ngampekale) having emu feet, many wives, sons and daughters. They live in the sky which is imagined as an eternal land which is always plentiful with water, trees, flora and fauna. Altjira and his family live much like the Arrernte, they hunt, gather, and so
on (1907:1-2). Here Carl Strehlow makes an important remark on the meaning of the word ‘altjira’, which pre-empts Röheim and T.G.H. Strehlow:

The etymology of the word Altjira has not yet been found. The natives associate the word now with the concept of the non-created. Asked about the meaning of the word, the natives repeatedly assured me that Altjira refers to someone who has no beginning, who did not issue from another (erina itha arbmmakala = no one created him). Spencer and Gillen’s claim (Northern Tribes of Central Australia p. 745) that “the word alcheri means dream” is incorrect. Altjirerama means “to dream”, and it is derived from altjira (god) and rama (to see), in other words, “to see god”. The seme holds true for the Loritja language. Tukura nangani = “to dream”, from turkura (god) and nangani (to see). It will be demonstrated later that altjira and tukura in this context do not refer to the highest God in the sky but merely to a totem god which the native believes to have seen in a dream. 55 (Strehlow 1907:2)

After introducing Altjira, Section II, ‘Die Urzeit (Primordial Time)’, delivers a general account of the situation on earth, or precisely of the territory of the Arrernte, in primordial times (Strehlow 1907:2-8). The earth is described as an eternal presence in which undeveloped humans, who were already divided into moieties, called ‘alarinja’ and ‘kwatjarinja’ (of the earth and water respectively), and an eight-class (subsection) system. Here the anthropomorphic ancestors called ‘altjirangamitjina’ are introduced, emerging in their primeval state from their underground dwellings (Strehlow 1907:3). The ancestors wandered over the as yet formless land, shaping the landscape as it is still seen today, performing and transforming themselves, establishing the world’s structure.

Section III deals with Putiaputia und andere Lehrer der Aranda (Putiaputia and other teachers of the Aranda) who came from the north and taught the Arrernte about certain institutions such as initiation (Strehlow 1907:9-11). The ‘erintja’ (evil beings), and ‘rubaruba’ and ‘wurinja’ (bad winds) are mentioned in Section IV (1907:11-15)

55 My emphasis.
and 'Die Toteninsel (The Island of the Dead)' (Strehlow 1907:15-16) is the subject of Section V.

Section VI, the largest, is called 'Sagen über die Totem-Vorfahren (Myths about the Totem Ancestors)' (Strehlow 1907:16-101). It contains 64 narratives of the individual mythical beings, the altjirangamitjina, who populated and created the Arrernte landscape and its particular places. They are associated with celestial bodies (sun, moon, evening star, Pleiades), animals, plants and other natural phenomena (including fire and rain). These narratives are roughly arranged in three groups: 'dead objects', animals and plants, and female ancestors.

The myths on the celestial bodies cover the mythical beings associated with the sun, the moon, Tmálabaralénana (The Evening Star), Kuralja (Pleiades), and are followed by a water dreaming story linked with the site Kaporilja. The second group concerns the majority of ancestors who are associated with the plant and animal world of the central Australian landscape. The myths take place in particular places with which particular ancestors have a specific affinity due to the fact that 'most of their myths are local myths, that belong to particular places'. 56 Again, 'These totem gods are associated with certain places where they have lived and generated their totem animals' (Strehlow 1907:4). The Arrernte myths are concerned with the actions, travels, places, petrifying, going into the landscape, place names, the proper way to do things, interaction with other beings from other places and even from other language backgrounds, as there are place names, words and even songs in languages other than Arrernte. Nearly all of these stories end with the ancestors turning into tywerrenge (tjurunga) or metamorphosing into natural features.

The third group of stories in Section VI are about female ancestors who are usually called alknarintja (means literally 'eyes look away'). These narratives tell of women who reject advances of men. They too are connected to particular places on Arrernte country and have ceremonies connected with them. The last Section VII contains four narratives classified as fairy tales. (The issue of genre will be discussed in Chapter V.)

56Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
Luritja Sagen

Strehlow’s collection of Luritja myths in Volume II is smaller than his Arrernte collection. It is organised in a similar fashion. Only one myth is reproduced in Luritja, called ‘Papa tua, Knulja ntjara (the dogs)’ (Strehlow 1908:12-16). It is also reproduced in Arrernte. Later in the fourth volume we are informed that its ceremony is part of Luritja as well as Arrernte initiation (Strehlow 1911:15). It is also only in this fourth volume that Baron von Leonhardi was finally able to append six additional Luritja texts (Strehlow 1911:59-75) which he had been begging from Strehlow for years, because he had thought that there had been a lack of Luritja myths in Luritja language.

Section I of this second volume is called Tukura, after the highest being of the Luritja. Like the account of Altjiira, this one is rather short. Here I reproduce the entire passage on Tukura to illustrate how Altjiira and Tukura feature only in passing as ‘high gods’ in this work:

The Luritja call the supreme being Tukura.Linked with Tukura is the concept of the Non-created One, the eternal. I am unable to provide an etymological derivation of the word. One envisages Tukura as a man with a beautiful red skin, long flowing hair and a long beard. The Western Luritja believe that he has emu feet - like the Altjiira of the Aranda - but the Southern Luritja accredit him with human feet. Tukura has only one wife, by the name of Inéari (A: tnéera meaning the beautiful), and one child which always remains a child. The latter is called Arátapi (A: ratapa; i.e. offspring). The Western and Southern Luritja agree that Inéari has human feet. Tukura’s residence is the sky ilkari (A: alkira). The Milky Way, called merawari, i.e. wide creek, or tukalba, i.e. winding creek, by the Loritja, is lined with gum trees (itára), mulga trees (kurku) and other trees and shrubs. In their branches live parrots and pigeons, while kangaroos (mallu), emus (kalaia) and wild cats (kuninka) roam through Tukura’s realm. While Tukura amuses himself in his hunting ground, his wife and son are out gathering edible roots called wapiti (A: latjia) and tasty bulbs (neri), as well as grass seeds which grow there in abundance. Tukura sleeps at night, but during the day he conducts ceremonies to which he
calls the young men (nitaii) living nearby. The stars (tjiltjana) are the campfires of Tukura. As is the case with the Aranda, the women and children also know of Tukura's existence. The Loritja imagine the sky, which has existed from eternity (kututu), to be a vault-like firmament, resting on "legs of stone". One fears that some day the vaulted sky could collapse and kill everybody. (Strehlow 1908:1-2)

The following pages relate again the scene at the beginning of time when the tukutita, the eternal-uncreated ones, emerged out of the earth that, like the sky, had always been in existence (Strehlow 1908:2-5).

Section III concerns ‘Die bösen Wesen (The evil Beings)’ and Section IV, ‘Die Toten-Insel (The Island of the Dead)’ (1908:5-7). Again the largest section V, ‘Sagen über die Totem-Vorfahren’, is ‘about the Totem Ancestors’ (Strehlow 1908:8-48). It includes 42 narratives about the earth-dwelling ancestors, the tukutita, who are associated with celestial bodies (moon, sun, morning star, Pleiades), and the animal and plant world. The stories of how the travels of tukutita and the events surrounding them create the landscape and constitute society are prominent in this volume as well.

In his discussion of Loritja myth, Strehlow starts to indicate differences between the Arrernte and Loritja (Kukatja) mythologies. The Loritja concept of what it was like at the beginning, that in primordial times the earth ‘was not covered by the sea’ but was always dry, contrasts with ‘the views of the Aranda’ (Strehlow 1908:2). This account of ‘primordial times’ points to a number of differences between the Arrernte and Loritja:

There is a marked difference between the Aranda and Loritja legends. According to the tradition of the Aranda, most of the meandering altjirangamitjina were changed into tjurunga-woods or stones and only a few became trees or rocks. According to the tradition of the Loritja, however, the reverse is true. The bodies of the tukutita were mostly changed into rocks and trees. Naturally, this results in the lessening of the religious meaning and importance of the tjurunga. Among the Dieri living in the South-East, all the
bodies of the Murra-murra are changed into rocks, trees, etc. and the tjurunga
do not occur at all any more. (Strehlow 1908:3-4)

He also starts cross-referencing the Luritja myths with each other and with Arrernte
myths published previously in volume one, because he observed that story lines
connect with each other at a particular place, or the same song is sung in two different
myths, or else a word is borrowed between myths. Sometimes the Luritja ancestors,
the tukutita, interact with the Arrernte ancestor, the altjirangamitjina. The Luritja
myth about malla beings (Strehlow 1908:27), for example, is cross-referenced with an
Arrernte myth (Strehlow 1907:24) because a place called Tunkurba features in both
narratives as a ceremonial place. The myth of a Luritja wallaby man (Strehlow
1908:28) is cross-referenced with the Arrernte possum myth (Strehlow 1907:62,
Anmerkung 15) because at a place called Tunguma the wallaby ancestor joins some
possum ancestors for a ceremony and go together into the ground there creating a
water-source. A Luritja myth on emus (Strehlow 1908:18-20) is cross-referenced to
the Arrernte one on emus (Strehlow 1907:42-45), because at the end of both myths
the emus coming from Arrernte and Luritja country end their travels at a place called
Kalaia-tarbana, meaning in Luritja ‘the emu go in’.

Another emu myth of the Luritja (Strehlow 1908:32) is also connected to an Arrernte
myth (Strehlow 1907:44, Anmerkung 6) because the site Apauuru which lies north-
west of Hermannsburg features in both narratives. This Luritja dreaming story has a
number of interesting ‘foreign features’ incorporated into its narrative. It starts in
Luritja country and travels east. At Iloara, a salt lake on the southern edge of
Anmatyerr country, the emu’s wife hurts her foot and cannot follow her husband. He
sings a threat song which inserts Luritja words into an Irlpere (Warlpiri) song,
additionally mentioning Kurlurla, a famous Arrernte tyelpe ancestor, who had thrown
a boomerang at his disobedient wife. This treatment of myths went as much towards
particularism as refined diffusionism.

The Luritja myths, like the ones of the Arrernte, tell about the ancestors’ epic journeys
over country visiting places and metamorphosing or going into the landscape. Again
these narrations end with the mythic beings (tukutita) turning into natural features,
kuntanka stones and rocks.57 The last two narratives in Carl Strehlow’s Luritja myth collection are designated as fairy-tales.

The second part of Volume II deals with the totemic concepts of the Arrernte and Luritja (Strehlow 1908:51-70) and tywerrenge (Strehlow 1908:71-83). Here Strehlow explains that the belief systems of the Arrernte and Luritja were very similar, but that the difference lay in the fact that the myths were ‘local myths’ and each connected to particular places in the landscape.

Cultus: Songs and Ceremonies

The manuscript Cultus was published in two instalments in 1910 and 1911, called Die Totemischen Kulte der Aranda und Loritja Stämme. It contains the songs belonging to many of the myths recorded in prose as well as other songs belonging to sacred ceremonies. Carl Strehlow documented 59 Arrernte ceremonies and their associated songs and 21 Luritja ceremonies which included some for female ancestors acted out by men. He found that two types of ceremony were performed:

The Aranda and Luritja today still regularly hold the cult rituals according to the instruction of their altjirangamitjina. However, there is one significant difference. In primordial times one ceremony was intended to serve two purposes, now two distinct performances are held, each with its own name, and each serving a specific purpose. When the young men undergo the various initiation rites, a series of ceremonies are performed for them which are identical to the real cult rituals, except for certain very special and characteristic details, but do not serve the purpose of increasing and enhancing the growth of the respective totem. Their only aim is to show those who are about to become men or have become men how these ceremonies should be performed. In view of their purpose these ceremonies are therefore known as intitjuma (L. tintinpngañi) i.e. to initiate into something, to show how something is done. However, when the same ceremonies are performed at the particular totem place which an altjirangamitjina called home in primordial

57 Like tjurunga, kuntanka is polysemic. Kuntanka describes to a lesser degree a sacred object, but rather particular features of a landscape that represent dreaming beings or parts of them.
times, or where he had spent some time, and if their purpose is to care for the increase and growth of the totem, then this performance is called mbatjalkatiuma (L. kutintjinggaňi), i.e. to bring about, make fertile, improve the conditions of. (Strehlow 1910:1-2)

T.G.H. Strehlow’s material of the 1960s seems to suggest that by that time the mbatjalkatjuma ceremonies had lost some of their currency which is likely to be due to sedentarisation and also due to Western Desert influences that put more emphasis on man-making ceremonies, regarded as the most sacred (see Strehlow 1970:102-105).

Carl Strehlow also wrote ‘that in primordial times the altjirangamitjina travelled about with their novices and that they performed certain ceremonies at their "eternal camps" as well as at other locations during their journeys’ (Strehlow 1910:1). These accounts of songs and ceremonies are accompanied by drawings, descriptions of who performs what, where it is performed (place names are given), how it is performed, what ceremonial artefacts are used and their purposes. The letters between Strehlow and von Leonhardi discuss and analyse these ‘cults’ in detail whereas the publication is a straightforward descriptive account.

*Leben*: Social Life
The remaining volumes, based on Strehlow’s manuscript called *Leben*, are not as well structured and presented as the first four because they were not edited by Baron Moritz von Leonhardi. After von Leonhardi’s death, staff members of the Frankfurt museum, B. Hagen, F.C.H. Sarg and E. Vatter, completed the publication of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*. Volumes five and six describe a number of important facets of Arrernte and Luritja life around 1900, some of which are still practised, other customs have disappeared or changed. These volumes cover the subjects: birth, smoking and name giving, games, disfiguration of the body, initiation ceremonies, the marriage system, kinship terminology, marriage customs, the political and legal system, death, burial, blood revenge, illnesses, magic, terms for numbers and time, secret languages of men and sign language.
These instalments also include Carl Strehlow’s kinship data. It appeared in the fifth volume in 1913, called *The Social Life of the Aranda and Luritja Tribes*. Compared to his four volumes on myth, his kinship material appears deceptively slim. However, he managed to condense into twenty-six pages an incredible amount of empirical data. He published substantial accounts on the section and subsection systems of people living at Hermannsburg at the time, extensive lists of kinship terms (Strehlow 1913:62-89), five extensive family trees and a list of all names occurring in the family trees with their linguistic and technical explanations (Strehlow 1920).

As mentioned above Frieda Strehlow contributed to his ethnographic work. The chapter *Birth, Smoking and Name-Giving* in Carl Strehlow’s fifth volume is almost certainly based on information collected by his wife (Strehlow 1913:1-5). The relevant part in the handwritten manuscripts is in Frieda’s hand; it is the only passage in these manuscripts written by her. She may only have copied her husband’s notes on this particular topic. However, the topic relates to birth and women’s ritual. It is unlikely to be mere chance that this part of the manuscript is in her hand. Only with great difficulty and coercion would Carl Strehlow have been able to obtain this kind of data, because the information is closely connected to the domain of women. It could of course be second hand information from Arrernte and Luritja men which I doubt. Another indication of Frieda’s involvement in the production of *Die Aranda- und Luritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* is a remark by Sarg, one of Strehlow’s later editors. Sarg asked Carl to indicate which data his wife had collected. He thought that it was very important to be able to say that ‘this I observed’ or ‘the observation was made by my wife’. However, World War I intervened and communication with Australia broke down.

Both Frieda and Carl had an excellent grip on indigenous kinship systems. Frieda Strehlow was particularly good at retaining and recalling kinship ties. Carl Strehlow was a Perrurle and his children therefore Kamerre. He used his knowledge of

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58 Sarg to Carl Strehlow, 18.11.1912.
59 Obituary by Frieda Keysser’s brother, Christian Keysser.
60 According to T.G.H. Strehlow ([1950] 1997:47), he was classified as a Kamara (Kamerre) by reason of his conception site Ntarea (Ntaria) which makes his father a Perrurle. It is just as likely that Ted simply received the right subsection through his father’s classification. (Garry Stoll thought that Ted was a Kamara (p.c.).)
indigenous kinship, which determines conduct connected to obligations towards particular kin (rights and responsibilities), when engaged with his congregation.\footnote{Strehlow’s letters to Kaibel (1899-1909) held at the LAA.} However, this does not seem to have made its way into his ethnographic work. It is likely that some of the genealogical material was also obtained by Frieda, if the current situation can be taken as indicative. During field research in the past 14 years, I have generally found that the majority of central Australian Aboriginal men have a hard time reproducing a significant list of lateral relatives in their own and proximate generations. Even the names of their own children escape their minds occasionally. Aboriginal women tend to be far more able to provide a kin universe.\footnote{Gillen was probably also asking about people with tabooed names which is likely to have caused some distress.} A contemporary’s reference to Frank Gillen’s method of data collection also provides some insight. Ernest Cowle, a policeman in the 1890s in central Australia, remarked once to Spencer on Gillen’s genealogical work with one of Cowle’s Aboriginal prisoners:

Gillen got at him in his den and unfolded a papyrus as long as himself and started to trace his descent through endless aunts, and great great grandfather’s mothers he fainted away completely! ... even a Sub-Protector has no right to invent tortures, surpassing those of the Inquisition in general fiendishness ... (Cowle 2000:91)

Frieda may also have contributed to Carl’s myth collection. The whirlwind which brings bad spirit-children, or the myths relating to female ancestors, may have been inserted by her. Her letters often talk about her work with Arrernte women, her close engagement with them in everyday life and indigenous beliefs. She talks in her letters to family and friends, for example, about the infanticide of twins and beliefs about spirit children.\footnote{Other letters by women from Hermannsburg make interesting remarks on the life of Arrernte women. Maria Bogner for example talks about a women’s ceremony one night in the creek in 1896.}

Material Culture

Images, descriptions and interpretations of material culture are interspersed throughout the work to illustrate and enhance the text. Only the last volume (Strehlow
1920:8-14) contains directly a few pages of data on material culture although Carl Strehlow's collection would have warranted an entire volume.64 He had sent an enormous amount of artefacts and sacred objects of various quality to his editor in Germany. Interestingly many of these objects were commissioned, not originals. Strehlow remarked for instance about stone knives: 'I regret, that I cannot send you better stone-knives. These ones are not at all well worked; only steal knives are in use now.'65

From 1906 onwards Carl Strehlow, on his own initiative, had started to send indigenous artefacts and tywerrenge to Baron von Leonhardi as well as samples of flora and fauna. Strehlow initially collected material culture so that his editor could compare it with what he had written and that 'maybe better drawings could be made' because 'I am a bad drawer'.66 Strehlow may also have been inspired by Siebert and Reuther,67 who had been assembling material culture for their own research on the peoples of the Lake Eyre basin, as well as by Eylemann (1908) who had been in Hermannsburg in 1900 and collected artefacts and ethnographic data as well as by Spencer and Gillen's plates in their publications.

Carl Strehlow's collection included well over 1000 sacred objects and mundane artefacts. He sent hundreds of tywerrenge,68 a large number of ceremonial objects like wanenge (wonnings),69 carrying dishes, boomerangs,70 spears, spear throwers, clubs, shields, hair strings, stone knives and axes, digging sticks, chains made of native beans, and many other items that he documented in his unpublished dictionary. His collection also included some hybrids: 'As a curiosity without scientific value I include tied up rabbit tails that the blacks have started to make since the rabbit plague

64 F.C.H. Sarg (1911) and Vatter (1915) used his collection for their publications.
65 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably on 3.12.1906 (SH-SP-8-1).
66 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
67 Siebert had collected objects by 1904, which the new Völkermuseum of Frankfurt (called Museum der Weltkulturen today) exhibited in the same year at its opening (Nobbs 2006:12). Reuther collected approximately 1300 artefacts including ceremonial objects, nearly 400 toas and a large collection of ethno-botanical specimens (Jones and Sutton 1986; Nobbs 2005) between 1903 and 1906. Reuther's collection was purchased by the South Australian Museum in 1907 for £400 (Nobbs 2005:42).
68 Carl Strehlow wrote to von Leonhardi that 'there are nearly no Tj. left in most stonecaves in the vicinity' (SH-SP-15-1).
69 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 10.12.1907 (SH-SP-15-1).
70 F.C.H. Sarg (1911) described in 'Die Australischen Bumerangs im Städtischen Völkermuseum' some of Strehlow's boomerangs.
has reached the interior of Australia ...” His editor in Germany greeted Strehlow’s collection with great enthusiasm and became his agent for the distribution of these objects. In fact, Baron von Leonhardi seems to have become nearly addicted to these consignments. Much of Strehlow’s collection did not survive the bombing of Frankfurt in World War II.

Strehlow used his collection to illustrate and explain aspects of traditional Aboriginal daily life and sacred ceremonies. He described each artefact’s form and function, but does not seem to have recorded the artisan. Information on how the artefacts were made and where they were used and traded among the different groups, make interesting reading:

Because the natives have no concept of money, they engage in lively trade. Important living places along the borders of befriended tribes are also important trading places, unbulna. At Ingodna on the lower Finke, for example, the Aranda-Tanka barter with the Aranda-Lada and the Aranda-Ulbma; and at Utnádata on the southern border of the Aranda Tanka, they conduct their trade with the Arában.

The Southern Loritja, as well as the Southern Aranda, bartered with the Aranda-Ulbma here at Hermannsburg. On the other hand, the trading place for the Aranda Ulbma and the Western Loritja is at Apanuru, situated on Loritja territory. The Aranda-Ulbma also trade with the Aranda-Roara at Alice Springs, with the Ilpara at Ilóara in the north, and with the Katitja and Imajtja at Tnimakwatja in the north.

The Aranda trade the following items with other tribes: shields, spears, spearthrowers, small boomerangs ulbarinja lubara, strings ulera, nose-bones lalkara, pitch nobma, stone knives karitja, trays made of para wood, etc. With the northern tribes, however, they trade trays made from inita, headstrings

71 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 10.12.1907 (SH-SP-15-1).
72 Bastian’s salvage anthropology had triggered an international run on the world’s existing indigenous material culture. The German and international collecting frenzy before everything was lost forever seems to have reached every corner of the globe. Strehlow also saw it as a source for some extra income for his ever financially suffering congregation.
kanta, necklaces gulațja, breaststrings tmakurka, neck decorations matara, shells takula and sticks wolta; while from the south-eastern tribes they receive the large boomerangs and pubic coverings. (Strehlow 1920:13)

Strehlow continued to collect for Fritz Graebner in Cologne\textsuperscript{73} and the Frankfurt museum,\textsuperscript{74} and to distribute artefacts, when he returned from Germany on the 5 April 1912 with his wife and youngest son Ted. However, it became impossible to export Aboriginal material culture once the Great War overshadowed international relations.


When World War I broke out Strehlow suffered greatly for leaving his children in Europe. He had left them in Germany, so they would be properly educated. He was not to see them again. This guilt and loss may have driven Strehlow to increase his efforts for the people at Hermannsburg and the bible translation into Arrernte; completed in 1919. Although an Australian citizen, he was hounded by the South Australian Government to register as an alien. With the support of Sergeant Robert

\textsuperscript{73} Letters between Carl Strehlow and Fritz Graebner between 1912 and 1913, held at the city archives in Cologne.
\textsuperscript{74} Correspondence between Strehlow and his second editor Sarg. Letters at the SRC in Alice Springs.
Stott who was known as the ‘Uncrowned King of Central Australia’ Carl Strehlow was able to continue his and Frieda’s work. However, the mission was permanently threatened by financial ruin. In 1917 Hermannsburg lost its 300 pounds per year government subsidies, largely due to anti-German prejudice which flourished during the Great War (1914-1918) (Rowse 1998:84).

With war’s end and word that his children had survived, Strehlow attempted to get a replacement so he could leave for Germany to see his children. As he waited at Hermannsburg for his superiors in the Barossa Valley to organise his replacement, he made a last effort on his still unpublished dictionary of over 6,000 Arrernte and Luritja words including additional thousands of derivations. The dictionary would be the ultimate proof that indigenous languages can express the gamut of human cognition, including the bible’s revelations. Thirty years of effort had taken their toll on Strehlow. The desert, the battles with state and church bureaucracy and pastoralists as well as his limited success with conversion, had weakened his body and spirit.

Mid 1922 Strehlow was struck down by a mysterious illness which he himself diagnosed from his medical books as dropsy, and for the first time he did not take the service on Sunday. His youngest son wrote in his childhood diary:

I played the organ because Mum and Dad stayed at home. ... The congregation remained completely silent during the first liturgy, so Herr Heinrich started singing the responses himself fairly in the wrong tune, until some men took over and ended the verse in a strangely off melody.

All attempts to treat him locally proved fruitless and his ‘Journey to Horseshoe Bend’ began. As he was taken away his Arrernte friends sang Kaarrerrai worlmparinyai, a hymn he had translated for them to the music of Bach. The journey down the bend was agonising and his youngest son, who accompanied him on this last journey, was to write that ‘Horseshoe Bend is a place whose shadows I can never escape’. Carl Strehlow died on the 20 October 1922. Shortly after his death it was reported:

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75 Register 1921 and C Strehlow’s dictionary 1900-1909.
76 T.G.H. Strehlow’s childhood Diary III, 30 July 1922. Translated by Lisa Wendtlandt.
Not long after the death of the late Rev. Strehlow, it was indeed perceptible how a spiritual awakening stirred not only our natives at Hermannsburg, but all Aranda people. All seemed to feel and realise, that by devoting his whole life to it, even laying down his life in the service, there must be something great and true in what Rev. Strehlow taught, to thus enable him to unselfishly work for them, in contrast to most other white folks they knew.\textsuperscript{78}

On the 4 November 1923, one year after Strehlow's death, something like a mass-baptism seems to have occurred at Hermannsburg (Strehlow 1969-70:178-180). Moses Tjalkabota and H.A. Heinrich had continued Strehlow's pre-baptismal instructions that resulted in the baptism of 26 adults and 14 children on that day. Carl Strehlow had baptised only 46 adults at Hermannsburg in nearly three decades.\textsuperscript{79} As mentioned above among these converts was Carl Strehlow's main informant Loatjira who had been christened Abraham that day, and died shortly after his 'conversion'. There are no reliable records of Carl Strehlow and Loatjira's state of minds towards the end of their lives. Both men had been devoted to their faiths, but were troubled. They had both reached the edge of knowing and doubted. Loatjira had obviously wavered in his faith, and, according to T.G.H. Strehlow (1969:174-179), so had Carl.

\textsuperscript{78} Lutheran Herald, 1926:75.
\textsuperscript{79} Carl Strehlow, Kirchen- und Missionszeitung, 9.1.1920.
CHAPTER II

A Certain Inheritance:
Nineteenth Century German Anthropology

In the context of Spencer and Gillen's work, and also that of Howitt ([1904]1996) for example, two questions should be posed of Carl Strehlow's text. First, how might one explain his lack of engagement with anthropological debates on the origins and evolution of indigenous Australians? Second, what explains Strehlow's quite particular focus on myth and song among the Arrernte and Luritja when the work of his contemporaries tends to move, in a British vein, from origins, to social organisation, to rite?

The first explanations that come to mind are the accidental ones. Strehlow, it might be argued, had little contact with his British-Australian contemporaries. Neither Spencer nor Gillen rated the Lutheran Strehlow highly as a colleague or consultant. Gillen's interaction with Strehlow as a scholar was minimal. Spencer's dismissal of Strehlow's scholarship was advertised widely when Strehlow junior answered his father's critic in his own masterwork, *Songs of Central Australia* (1971:xv,xvi,xx-xxxviii). In addition, Frazer's long list of consultants around Australia makes it clear that he chose Spencer as his Arrernte source, not Strehlow. Perhaps then, Strehlow's text was simply the product of an isolated missionary, distant from professional or mainstream scholarship. Again, as a missionary bent on the task of conversion, possibly he was required to maintain a Christian humanism. Concern with the history or evolutionary stage of the lower human ranks could not sit happily with proselytising. On the second question, possibly Strehlow started with myth because he could. As a Lutheran missionary of his era, it was incumbent on him to acquire the indigenous languages. He was clearly talented in this regard and pursued the task with alacrity. Was he therefore equipped simply by accident for tasks that his contemporaries were not? And did this explain the unusual character of his Australian work in the period when he wrote it?
This chapter and the following two will present an alternative view. Strehlow was a missionary rather than an academic. However, he received his Christian education within the context of nineteenth century German humanism. Although the Lutherans sustained their own distinctive tradition of scholarship and missionary work, they were also part of a broader German intellectual milieu deeply influenced by historical particularism. The modern culture concept, and its repudiation of rationalist theories of universal human development, had its origins in this setting. In fact for Herder, himself a Lutheran pastor, the plenitude of human culture was also the plenitude of God’s creation (see Darcy 1987). The two approaches dovetailed into one consistent humanistic approach. From this viewpoint, the central concerns of Strehlow’s magnum opus were not accidental. His correspondence with Moritz von Leonhardi contains no suggestion on the part of the latter that starting with oral literature was strange. To the contrary, it was natural simply because Strehlow and von Leonhardi shared an intellectual orientation that affirmed the status of language and literature, or oral text, as the key to a culture.

This chapter considers the emergence of nineteenth century German anthropology and its passage to the United States in the hands of Franz Boas. As noted above in the Introduction, Boas and Strehlow shared similar intellectual interests and a similar scholarly style. Following this account, Chapter III describes Strehlow’s own education and the intellectual milieu of the German Lutheran seminary. Chapter IV unpacks the detail of Strehlow’s correspondence with Baron Moritz von Leonhardi. In their letters, a shared concern with language and concrete, particular observations is clear. These are the three major influences on Strehlow, some quite direct and others more diffuse, that shaped the production of a unique Australian work. However, while this work was unique for its time in British-influenced Australia, it readily finds a place in the tradition of German historical particularism and its foundational role in modern (American) cultural anthropology.
Johann Gottfried Herder’s Concept of Volksgeist

During the nineteenth century, a German tradition of anthropology emerged that paid great attention to specific cultural configurations. According to this tradition, humanity was comprised of distinct cultures (Kulturen) and peoples (Völker) which were the products of individual histories and environmental milieux. This plurality of milieux reflected the unity of humankind. It reflected the universal creativity of groups, most immediately evident in their particular languages.

The ‘birth’ of German anthropology may be seen in the light of the standoff or tension between two prominent intellectuals of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottfried Herder (Zammito 2002; Gingrich 2005:65). Kant was a classic representative of the Enlightenment whereas Herder marked the beginning of the Counter Enlightenment in Germany, a movement called Romanticism. Although Kant was the first to use the word anthropology in his work for a new ‘science of man’, it was ultimately Herder who determined the course of German anthropology. Kant’s relativism played a role only insofar as his idea of understanding phenomena on their own terms entered anthropological thought. Consistent with this view, people should be studied not to prove or disprove a theory, but rather because a scholar ‘[finds] them interesting’ (Adams 1998:296). In this sense Kant contributed to the cultural relativism and particularism of German anthropology (Adams 1998:276-277). At the same time, Kant had the dubious honour of promoting the concept of race in intellectual life (Zammito 2002; Petermann 2004:320). When Kant turned from general reflections on human thought and a ‘cosmopolitan law’ for all peoples to accounts of people and place, scholarship was pushed aside by other presumptions. As Harvey remarks, ‘Kant’s Geography is nothing short of an intellectual and political embarrassment’ (Harvey 2001:275). He cites the following passage, among others, from the Geography:

In hot countries men mature more quickly in every respect but they do not attain the perfection of the temperate zones. Humanity achieves its greatest

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80 The meaning of this term was not well defined at the time. It encompassed what is known as ethnology and ethnography as well as aspects of other disciplines like physical anthropology to which it tended to cross over. In the late eighteenth century it was simply understood as ‘the science of man’ which was very broad and not well defined.
perfection with the white race. The yellow Indians have somewhat less talent. The negroes are much inferior (...). (Harvey 2001:275)

Herder, who vehemently rejected Kant’s notion of race, provided crucial concepts that would determine the study of cultures. Many of Herder’s pioneering concepts including both Zeitgeist and Volksgeist entered intellectual and anthropological discourse, without users being aware of their Herderian origins (Barnard 2003:5,108). Already in 1828, Goethe,⁸¹ both foe and friend to Herder, observed that a number of Herderian ideas had become seminal; absorbed into the mainstream of philosophical and, ultimately, anthropological thought (Marchand 1982:20).

Among many other disciplines, Johann Gottfried Herder’s (1744-1803) rich and complex oeuvre influenced the development of German anthropology in a lasting and profound way. His concept of Volk, a cultural group or entity, and Volksgeist, the essence of a cultural group that sets it apart from other groups, were the basis of his particularism, which was to become a central principle of nineteenth century German anthropology. He recognised that each culture possessed a moral and intellectual framework that determined its possibilities and its individual development. For Herder, language was the defining element of a cultural group and its identity, as it was in language that a people’s Volksgeist is expressed (see Barnard 1969:32).

For Herder there were no people without a culture (Barnard 1969:24-25; Barnard 2003:134). In his Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind (1784-91), he used the concept in the plural deliberately (Petermann 2004:309). He professed to a humanity made up of a multiplicity and therefore rejected the notion of enlightenment as a pervasive developmental stage. Herder’s idea that culture was a universal phenomenon was novel at a time when cultured and uncultured peoples were distinguished from each other. In contrast, he maintained that wherever people live together as a group over a period of time there is a culture (Barnard 2003:134-5). In short, the universal human property he recognised was difference: the propensity of groups to specify themselves through culture.

⁸¹ Goethe wrote in his memoirs Dichtung und Wahrheit that one of the most significant occurrences in his life was his acquaintance with Herder whom he had met by chance in the Gasthof zum Geist (Goethe [1812]1991:430).
The principles of the French Enlightenment, in which the universality of human reason across space and time, the subjection of uniform human nature to unchanging natural laws, the steady progress of civilisation through history toward an enlightened state of reason and the laws that governed these codes, were questioned by the Counter Enlightenment (Berlin 1980:1-25). By rejecting the French dogma of the uniform development of civilisation, Herder argued for the uniqueness of values transmitted throughout history:

Herder sharply differs from the central thought of the French Enlightenment, and that not only in respects that all his commentators have noted. What is usually stressed is, in the first place, his relativism, his admiration of every authentic culture for being what it is, his insistence that outlooks and civilisations must be understood from within, in terms of their own stages of developments, purposes and outlooks; and in the second place his sharp repudiation of that central strain in Cartesian rationalism which regards only what is universal, eternal, unalterable, governed by rigorously logical relationships – only the subject matter of mathematics, logic, physics and the other natural sciences – as true knowledge. (Berlin 1976:174)

Herder laid the foundations for German historical particularism, because he was interested in historical difference and in the differences between contemporaneous groups in different places (Adams 1998:271). In his view, every cultural group was the product of its circumstances and could not be measured by the values of another group. He made it amply clear in his Letters for the Advancement of Humanity (1793-97) that European culture was not to be considered superior to any other:

Least of all must we think of European culture as a universal standard of human values .... Only a real misanthrope could regard European culture as the universal condition of our species. The culture of man is not the culture of the European; it manifests itself according to place and time in every people. (Herder cited in Barnard 1969:24)
Herder attempted to free the assessment of the 'other' from imposed value systems and categories. He urged historical study of a culture and analysis of its own internal relations (Barnard 2003:137). He projected a history of peoples of the globe in terms of their self-defining values and cultures (Fink 1993:56). In *Auch eine Philosophy der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (*This Too a Philosophy of History for the Education of Humanity*) published in 1774 he wrote: 'Each man, each nation, each period, has its centre of happiness within itself, just as every sphere has its centre of gravity' (Herder cited in Barnard 1969:35). Thus, each human group could be understood only as a particular historical configuration. Each one of these in its individuality contributes to humanity as a whole. Through language the intricacies of cultures could be understood. Herder wrote that to enter into the spirit of a people, to understand and share its thoughts or deeds:

... do not limit your response to a word, but penetrate deeply into this century, this region, this entire history, plunge yourself into it all and feel it all inside yourself – then only will you be in a position to understand; then only will you give up the idea of comparing everything, in general or in particular, with yourself. For it would be manifest stupidity to consider yourself to be the quintessence of all times and all peoples. (Herder [1774] 1969:182)

Herder's humanistic ideal, his *Humanität*, is one in which diverse cultures exist side by side (Berlin 1980:11) and also together exhibit the essence of humanness involved in the potential for creativity and specificity. His concept of humanity was a unifying principle through which to formulate his understanding of human existence in the infinite variety of its configurations (Knoll 1982:9). It was his universalist principle of Humanität that enabled him to fit his pluralist concept of humankind into his view that all humans were equal and had the same origin (homogenetic). He believed that the diversity of peoples had only developed in the course of time, rejecting all claims that man evolved from animal forms (Nisbet 1992:10-11). From this unity of humanity he concluded that there are no superior cultures and condemned, for instance, colonialism and slavery.
He rejected the concept of race (Mühlmann 1968:62) and stated that the term ‘race’ was not fit to be used in relation to humans, as it referred to a posited difference in origins that he repudiated (Barnard 1969:41). Herder believed in homogenesis and thus saw humanity as a unity. In his Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind) (1784-91) he wrote that ‘in spite of the vast realm of change and diversity, all mankind is one and the same species upon earth’ (Herder 1969:283). Herder’s view on humanity encompassed the plurality of mankind which made humanity up as a whole. He concluded:

In short, there are neither four or five races, nor exclusive varieties, on this earth. Complexions run into each other; forms follow the genetic character; and in toto they are, in the final analysis, but different shades of the same great picture which extends through all ages and all parts of the earth. Their study, therefore, properly forms no part of biology or systematic natural history but belongs rather to the anthropological history of man. (Herder [1784-91] 1969:284)

This passage was considered by Kant as truly indicative of Herder’s intellectual shortcomings (Barnard 2003:65).

In 1772, Herder published an epoch-making essay on the origin of language called Über den Ursprung der Sprache (On the origin of language). This essay had a tremendous influence on his contemporaries. It would also influence the development of anthropological and linguistic thinking (in hindsight marking the beginning of a modern philosophy of language). Although this essay already contained what would become one of Herder’s most original contributions, his concept of pluralism evolving out of his thoughts on language (as languages are an expression of humanity’s variability and multiplicity), his initial concern was different. His main intention was to counter Süssmilch’s assumption that language was a direct gift from God and to deny ‘Condillac’s and Rousseau’s theories which traced the emergence of human speech to animalistic origins’ (Barnard 1969:17). The Lutheran pastor Herder also

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82 Herder held the highest position in the Lutheran Church at the court of Weimar.
did away with the view that language has a divine origin. Instead he introduced the idea of slow and gradual development of language ‘from rude beginnings’ (Sapir 1907:110). Language for Herder was an organic product grown in time, determined by the history of each individual group. Every language was therefore unique, like its speakers. Each language expressed a particular culture in space and time.

Herder argued that language originated and developed from within the individual; that it was not the imitation of nature’s sounds or a given act by God. His key concept in accounting for the development of language was ‘reflection’ - in which individuals arrive at awareness and recognition of the self. Through language the individual becomes at once aware of his selfhood and of his cultural identity (Barnard 1969:7; see also Fink 1993:54-55).

In Herder’s view, language lies at the basis of being because there is no coherent thought without words. He believed that a people did not have an idea or concept for which there was not a word. Ideas are constituted through language (Frank 1982:16). There is no thinking outside languages and human beings are historical because there is no language in the abstract detached from human beings. There are only historical languages placed in the real world, with specific characteristics which mutate through time (Burns 2002:61). This view would be repeated by Boas’ student, Edward Sapir. He expressed the view that ‘thought is impossible without language, that thought is language’ (Darnell 1990:99) and thereby echoed Vico, Herder, the Humboldts and other German thinking on language.

For Herder the human condition was ever changing, constantly developing and altering in response to diverse historical needs and circumstances. The most important element for Herder in this dynamic process of human historical transformation was language (Whitton 1988:151). Herder recognised that whether language had been used to write history or not, it constituted a history of a given culture at a given time and place with all its idiosyncrasies. He perceived language as perpetually engaged in the process of generating a new self out of the old self (Frank 1982:18). In Herder we find already the notion of language’s constant change or flux, (Sapir called it ‘drift’). Herder used the metaphor of organic growth to explain the permanent evolving of the
nature of language (Marchand 1982:26). He used ‘organic’ in the sense that that which is being transformed is assimilated and applied (Whitton 1988:153). Through the historical transformation of a language, traditional concepts and beliefs are continually synthesised with those of new generations (Whitton 1988:152).

The empirical investigation of language was for Herder the basis for understanding cultural life, because a people’s innermost essence was inherent in their language and literature, including the oral literatures of indigenous peoples (Zammito 2002:155,159). The language, mythology and folksong of a people were particularly important because they were the highest form of expression and revealed the essence of a people, the Volksgeist. Thus, indigenous text ranked high on the agenda of German nineteenth century anthropology. Language embodied a people and reflected its Volksgeist. A group’s Volksgeist was manifest in language. Language defined human beings, making them human. For this reason, as Whitton observes:

As an attribute specific to human beings, language is seen by Herder as the central expression of a uniquely human, reflective consciousness. In developing language, individuals give shape to their inner conscious nature, formulating their ideas and preconceptions through reflections on their experience of the external world. (Whitton 1988: 151)

Herder believed that no greater misfortune could befall a people than to be robbed of their language. With language loss came the loss of their Volksgeist.

Herder’s unique particularism which at the same time embraced universalism infused the new nineteenth century science of man. Herder’s insights were carried forward by others including the Humboldts, Waitz, Bastian and Boas. Ultimately they would lead to the modern culture concept, and to forms of ethnographic method that privileged language and the text, including indigenous oral literature.

Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt
Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) pursued Herder’s thoughts on human cultural diversity and on the relation between language and culture (Barnard 2000:48;

His comparative approach in anthropology was built on two foundations: a view that humanity shared a common nature and that this nature was expressed in individual national characters. This range of nation-characters encompassed the entire human species. Documenting these characters was the empirical task of anthropology (Bunzl 1996:22). Each national character was embodied in a totality of traditions: customs, religion, language and art. These outward manifestations revealed the degree of development in each group or nation. Since these achievements were specific to each national entity, they could not be compared to an external standard. Each deserved an unconditional respect. However, in Wilhelm von Humboldt’s view, some nations had realised their potential to a greater degree than others. Not surprisingly Wilhelm’s view was that European nations were among the more developed (Bunzl 1996:22).

Wilhelm von Humboldt also elaborated and refined Herder’s thoughts on language. For Humboldt language was the defining element of human life (Bunzl 1996:29), and the embodiment of each people’s soul (Burns 2002:61). It was through language that a people expressed their worldview (Weltanschauung) and Geist. In his view, language is the single most important factor that determines human culture – both human beings’ capacity for culture and their specific Geist. Wilhelm focused on the different linguistic forms of diverse languages and the relation between language and cognitive structure (Losonsky 1999:ix). He chose language as his focus because in language national character expresses itself most fully. Wilhelm von Humboldt’s idea of a comparative linguistic method for the empirical study of diverse languages was to lead to central developments in the study of culture (Bunzl 1996:29).

At least in part this was due to the fact that he saw clearly that language was both a unifying element of humanity, and also a point of differentiation. He acknowledged
the ability of the human mind to acquire different languages, enabling any individual to acquire numerous worldviews (Weltanschauungen). Wilhelm believed that different languages embody different types of psychological structures. These structures in turn shaped different views of the world (Bunzl 1996:34). He regarded all languages as functionally equivalent, as no language had yet been found that was functionally or formally incomplete (Humboldt [1820] 1994:12). Each and every language in his view was equally capable of expressing any conceivable idea; an opinion that he shared with both Jesuit and Lutheran scholars at the time. Thus, for Humboldt it followed that language is universal to humankind. The urge to speak, to use sound, to designate objects and connect thoughts is the subject of certain general laws that are universal. In this sense, all human beings have the same language though their initial capacities are developed historically in diverse ways (Losonsky 1999:xii, xx; Foertsch 2001:112-113).

Wilhelm von Humboldt believed that the study of the origins of language could only be 'the object of futile speculation' (Bunzl 1996:34). His empiricism led him to emphasise that comparative linguistics offered no answers to questions beyond the realm of immediate experience. He rejected explicitly the notion that any known language offered a glimpse into the far past or origins of human communication. No language had been found that lacked grammar or that was so recent as not to be the product of the activities of many generations of speakers. In the spirit of Herder he refused to propose a uniform law for the development of languages.

Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), Wilhelm's younger brother, was one of the most influential figures of his time in the field of natural science. In his Kosmos he tried to embrace 'all individual phenomena in their totality'. His inclusion of human interpretation in his cosmography though, led him to make an explicit contrast between positivist approaches and his own. He emphasised an empirical approach to a natural world that included cultural phenomena (Bunzl 1996:39). He believed that both the unity of humanity and the specificity of individual cultures had to be studied empirically. He hoped to reveal 'the law of cosmic harmony' by reducing the multiplicity of forms in the natural world to some general laws of variation (Koepping 1983:70,77).
Like his brother, Alexander was furiously opposed to deduction and classification established without empirical observations. Alexander von Humboldt demanded the thorough description of the physical reality of nature as the primary objective of his cosmography (Bunzl 1996:38). In this task, he included ethnography as a strictly descriptive exercise. The beginning of German ethnography may possibly be traced to the 'prodigious travels and explorations of Alexander von Humboldt between 1799-1829' (Adams 1998:290) and the Humboldts' joint demands for empirical study of cultural phenomena.

Another crucial figure in the formation of nineteenth century German anthropology was Theodore Waitz (1821-1864), a philologist who maintained that humanity was homogenetic by virtue of the fact that all human beings had similar cultural and moral propensities (Petermann 2004:429). He sought to integrate both the linguistic and natural science orientations that came from the Humboldts in an all-embracing project. Waitz produced an influential six volume work called Anthropologie der Naturvölker (1859-1872) which appeared in English translation as Introduction to Anthropology (1863). His study was a response to the polygenist ideas advanced by various mid-nineteenth century writers. To prove homogenises he confronted evidence provided by physical anthropology with his own ethnological interpretations of culture. Amassing the data available on physical traits among all the world's peoples, 'Waitz demonstrated the constant blurring of purported lines of racial demarcation, asserting that this precluded the existence of truly distinct types – an argument that Alexander von Humboldt had previously made in his Kosmos' (Bunzl 1996:45). Waitz echoed Herder's view in his Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind and would be echoed in turn by Boas in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

This psychic unity of humankind proclaimed by Waitz was fundamentally different from the French Enlightenment's universal rationality. Following Herder and the Humboldts, Waitz saw cognitive processes as diverse and always the product or result of particular histories. These forms differed in time and space and could not be reduced simply to a standard repertoire of rational reflection. At the same time, Waitz
rejected any innate racial hierarchy in cultural achievement (Bunzl 1996:46). He was a forerunner of Franz Boas’s humanist relativism. Waitz criticised the racist and supremacist world-view of his French contemporary Arthur de Gobineau (a founding father of twentieth-century racism). He was ‘the author to establish the monogenetic theory of a unified descent of races in German anthropology, a position on which Rudolph Virchow, Bastian and Boas would be able to build soon thereafter’ (Gingrich 2005:80).

However, Waitz was not without bias towards his own cultural group. He assumed that people he identified as Caucasians had attained the highest form of culture, other peoples could also attain given the right context. According to Streck (2001:508), his achievement lies in his idea that all humans are encultured and thereby have the same potential to learn and develop (see also Petermann 2004).

During this period German philologists of the Romantic Movement, such as Schlegel and Bopp, were studying non-European languages and developing a great admiration for these other languages and cultures. They accompanied these studies with comparable ones focused on Europe’s folklore (Gingrich 2005:77). In this process German philologists began to develop a sense of German linguistic identity (Smith 1991:61). At the same time, and under the influence of Herder, the Grimm brothers were pursuing systematic studies of folklore by collecting folktales and ‘recovering’ the essence of German culture, its Volksegeist. With these activities grew the view that the essence of a cultural group could be discerned in its mythology. This interest in the traditional culture of Europe (folk tales and song) was transferred to the so-called primitive peoples. Comparative mythology seemed to help trace the diversity in human unity. Myth and ritual or song became central to German anthropology.

Prior to these developments, the concept of culture and in particular the traditional philological concept of culture had been reserved for European societies; for places where Bildung, the cultivation of a people, was clearly apparent in a written literature. For some time, classicists had been drawn to the study of ‘primitives’ for the contrasts that could be drawn between these groups and the Greeks and Romans,

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83 China, India and other literate societies were often also included.
the cultured people (Whitman 1984:216). Now this traditional German philology exerted some influence on a nascent German anthropology with its own new interest in primitive life. The classicists were allies in a response to vulgar materialism that tried to apply natural scientific method to all fields of knowledge, and reduce all phenomena, including the cultural, to a single material substrate (Whitman 1984:215-216). Barnard remarks that 'the development of theoretical ideas in linguistics has throughout the history of that discipline foreshadowed the development of related ideas in social and cultural anthropology' (Barnard 2000:48).

By the late 1850s when Bastian returned from his first long trip (1850-1858) around the world he found that cultural scientists had opened up a new academic territory, the study of primitive life, and this was exactly the scope for Bastian's new science of man (Whiteman 1984:224).

Adolf Bastian and Rudolf Virchow: The Psychic and Physical Unity of Man

The two most influential figures of nineteenth century German anthropology were Adolf Bastian (1826-1905), who established anthropology as an academic discipline in Germany, and Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), the leading pathologist and physical anthropologist at the time. Intellectually, they dominated the main institutional sites and ideological tendencies of German anthropology. They maintained that no one race or people was superior to any other and that humanity was based on psychic and physical unity (Evans 2003:200). With Waizt, Bastian and Virchow ensured that the emerging discipline of anthropology in Germany would be based on the presumption of monogenesis (Streck 2001:503; Massin 1996:87).

These representatives of nineteenth century anthropology were opponents of race theory, the attempt to assert the primacy of a biologically defined 'race' in determining the shape of social and historical process. They publicly opposed the biological determinism of social Darwinism or social-cultural evolutionism.\(^4\) In 1880, for example, as the deputy of the Progressive Party in the Reichstag, Virchow rejected

\(^{4}\) There are different evolutionist positions not all of them are based on biological determinism and polygyny. Sociocultural evolutionism, which can be understood as a proto-theory for comparison, has to be distinguished from Darwinian based evolutionism.

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any kind of racism and challenged Bismarck himself, asking him to explain his position on anti-Semitism (Massin 1996:89).

Rudolf Virchow was the most influential and powerful physical anthropologist of nineteenth century German anthropology. He and the majority of his colleagues (Ranke, von Luschen, Kollmann), believed in the unity of the human species and argued that there was no physical evidence that one race was superior to another. Virchow’s declared empiricism led him to regard Darwin’s biologically-based evolutionist hypotheses as unproven (Massin 1996:83). He also criticised social-cultural theorising based on biological determinism, pioneered by Herbert Spencer (Stocking 1987:134-136,141-142). Virchow made sure that no race theorist ever published a single line in any of the reputable German anthropological journals which he controlled directly or indirectly with Bastian and Ranke (Massin 1996:93).

Bastian delineated and differentiated the field of anthropology/ethnology from a range of other disciplines. He held the first academic position in German anthropology and championed empirical observation (Koepping 1983:3, 28). He was the founder of the Royal Museum for Ethnology in Berlin in 1886 and its director until his death in 1905.85 He was also instrumental in establishing the Berlin Society for Anthropology, along with its journal, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, which became the most prominent German journal in the field (Adams 1998:291; Penny 2002:19).86 To document the diversity of human life, Bastian spent twenty-five years recording ethnographic data and collecting items of material culture in the Americas, Asia, Australia and Africa as well as in Europe (von den Steinen 1905:242). The end result was an oeuvre of unmanageable proportions, but nonetheless a testimony to his commitment (Ankermann 1926; Petermann 2004). Bastian’s salvage anthropology was driven by the conviction that most other cultures would vanish in the confrontation with the imperial European powers.

He put great emphasis on the collection of material culture, because in his view artefacts were the embodiment of ideas and the tangible expression of the diversity of

85 Felix von Luschan succeeded Bastian as the museum’s director in Berlin (Lally 2002:77).
86 From Bastian and Virchow, Boas learned that intellectual influence had to be combined with institutional power.
humanity (Koepping 1983:107). Material culture, filtered through European eyes and understanding, was seen as rich in historical significance and of great empirical value that went beyond the limitations of written records (Penny 2002:26). Bastian’s museum project initiated a collection frenzy that took hold of German anthropologists and ethnographers, and as a result German museums held the world’s best collections of non-European material culture by the turn of the century. Through the incredible mass of material culture accumulated from overseas, it was believed that humanity could be represented in museum spaces. These ethnographic museums were meant to be well-ordered institutions, and were intended to function as laboratories for the comparative analysis of human artefacts. It was thought that they would be the foundation of an inductive study of mankind, leading to fundamental truths about human character and development (Penny 1998:159). Soon, however, museums were over-flowing with material, collections became disorganised, and personnel unable to realise Bastian’s and others’ initial goals (Penny 2002).

The institutional achievements and legacy of Bastian are more obvious than his theoretical and intellectual influence. Although he produced a vast amount of ethnographic data and publications, his main theoretical framework circled around the attempt to explain the unity of mankind (von den Steinen 1905; Ankermann 1926). At the heart of his theoretical approach lay three main elements: Elementargedanken (‘elementary ideas’ or ‘thoughts’), Völkergedanke (folk thought or idea) and geographical province (Ankermann 1926:223,226; Penny 2002:22-23). Bastian believed that human nature was uniform around the globe despite its ostensible diversity. This unity was captured in elementary forms of thought. These elementary ideas or thoughts, Bastian argued, were common to all human beings due to the psychic unity of mankind: ‘Elementargedanken were thus hidden behind humanity’s cultural diversity – a diversity that was historically and geographically contingent. Understanding the unique context in which each culture took shape, Bastian stressed, was thus critical for gaining insight into the universal character of human being’ (Penny 2002:22). However, elementary ideas materialised in the form of unique folk thoughts (Völkergedanken) among each cultural group. These were the product of environment and the interactions between a particular people. The third element of Bastian’s theory was the ‘geographical province’ in which a certain Völkergedanke
was at home. Thus, there are as many Völkergedanken as there are geographical provinces (Ankermann 1926: 226).

In sum, every Völkergedanke is based on the same elementary thoughts, common to all people. Each Völkergedanke though is also dependent on an environment including social practices in concert with what Bastian called a ‘geographical province’. Previously Herder, and later German diffusionists understood these factors as historical circumstance and immediate context. It was largely Bastian’s interest in identifying these particular contexts in time and space that led Fritz Graebner to credit him with bringing indigenous peoples into history (Penny 2002:22), although Gustav Klemm had already attributed history to non-European peoples in the first part of the nineteenth century (Rödiger 2001:192; Gingrich 2005:79). However, Bastian’s influence was certainly significant.

Bastian’s view of humankind was closely related to Herder’s perception of Volksgeist, Volk and humanity. The Völkergedanke approximates Herder’s Volksgeist and Wilhelm von Humboldt’s national character or Weltanschauung. From Herder, Bastian also inherited the ‘seminal notion’ of language as the vehicle for development of a folk psyche (Volksgeist). These ideas were influential in Bastian’s formulation of Völkergedanke (folk ideas) or the collective representation(s) of a particular ethnic group (Koepping 1983:55). Bastian, however, also underlined the issue of ethnography, of recording cultural particularity. This served to stress his view that there is no inherent difference between the thought of primitive and modern men:

The propensity is the same in both cases, and the elements are the same. The results of these thought processes, in the form of folk ideas or worldview, are diverse, but the formative and structural principles are the same. Bastian emphatically denied the superiority of the European value system or the possibility of measuring one against the other. (Koepping 1983:54)

Bastian used the notion of psychic unity to explain some of the ‘extraordinary similarities’ that cultural groups could display even though geographically they were distant from each other. Because he believed that cultures evolved in similar ways due
to the nature and workings of the human mind, he argued that independent invention rather than diffusion or direct cultural contact should explain similarity. This seemed the preferable path to positing forms of contact or influence where there was no proven historical record (Adams 1998:293). Bastian’s emphasis on the psychic unity of mankind or the primacy of collective consciousness as the moving principle for endogenous growth led to a controversy between advocates of independent invention and advocates of diffusion (Koepping 1983:60). Bastian’s main opponent in this was Friedrich Ratzel (see below).

Bastian’s anthropology also stood in contrast with trans-Atlantic and Continental anthropology influenced by Lewis Henry Morgan, Herbert Spencer and E.B. Tylor. Bastian eschewed social evolutionism and also progressivism. In German anthropological circles a more general reaction against social Darwinism had emerged (Petermann 2004). Bastian, Waitz and Virchow opposed the biological presumptions in social Darwinism. These German anthropologists insisted that the development of a people’s culture was something that should be understood with reference to their own particular history and environment. Moreover, the study of these specificities should be historically grounded.

Despite his admiration for Darwin’s travels, Bastian found Ernest Heackel’s popularisation of Darwin’s thought especially offensive (Penny 2002: 21, Streck 2006). Bastian even rejected reflection on the origin of man, maintaining that were the issue to be tackled, this could only occur following exhaustive empirical research and the considered use of induction. The prefix ‘Ur-’ was highly suspect to him (Petermann 2004:535). Thus, he and most of his colleagues steered away from Darwinian theorising and distanced themselves from the race debate (Massin 1996). Bastian hoped, rather, to use extensive empirical research to the end of formulating uniform principles for the mental creations of mankind (Koepping 1983:78). Bastian warned explicitly of simplification and generalisation resulting from notions of biological determinism in accounts of socio-cultural evolutionism. He drew on induction and empirical observation to avoid the classification of data according to predetermined categories, regarding schemes of classification as works in progress rather than definite models (Penny 2003:93).
Bastian took human distribution across the earth as a given of natural life (Ankermann 1926:226). He did not pursue an explanation of how this distribution occurred or of its particular features. This would be the task of the German diffusionist school.

Friedrich Ratzel and Fritz Graebner: German Diffusionism

German diffusionism acquired its impetus from Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), a German theoretical geographer. He was interested in the relationship between humans and their immediate environment. In 1882 Ratzel published his major work, *Anthropo-Geographie*. It was an attempt to formulate a general theory of the human geography that Alexander von Humboldt had envisioned, and to provide a comprehensive account of the world’s various histories of the type that Bastian had in mind (Müller 1993:210; Petermann 2004:538). Ratzel tried to develop an approach in which the materials collected could be deployed to explain the multiplicity of humanity in terms of migration and diffusion across the globe (Barnard 2000:50). He opposed Bastian’s idea of independent invention, the explanation of similarities in terms of a psychic unity. Ratzel was not prepared to place that much weight on a shared human creativity. Rather, he argued that cultural similarities were due to diffusion through migration, while differences could be explained with reference to particular environments. Ratzel was peripheral to the dominant anthropological circle and sought ways to have an impact on the establishment in Berlin. Therefore he initially adopted Darwin’s idea of natural selection. It seemed to have at least in part an environmental reference in its account of the diversity of species (Smith 1991:141). However, later he abandoned this position due to the biological determinism and progressivism involved in social Darwinism. Ultimately he believed that mankind was a homogenetic species influenced by history (Petermann 2004:542; Müller 1993:198).

Ratzel proposed that the object of ethnological study should be historical. It should trace the movements of people and cultural traits across the earth’s surface in the past. The patterns of these past movements should be linked with similar phenomena in the present in order to predict the future (Smith 1991:142). In this fashion, Ratzel thought, one might begin to understand origins as well (Petermann 2004:540-541). To study
the processes of change in society and culture, the (early) histories of specific peoples had to be investigated and from this research historical laws inferred (Smith 1991:145). In pursuit of his ideas, Ratzel too emphasised detailed empirical research.

Ratzel’s theory was developed into an elaborate Kulturkreislehre (theory of culture circles) by the German diffusionists who took up his objectives. Initially Leo Frobenius (1873-1938) extended Ratzel’s ideas (Barnard 2000:50). It was only in the 1920s, however, that Frobenius became influential when he returned from his African adventures to formulate his own Paideuma-Theory and to found his own institution for Kultur-Morphologie (Müller 1993:203-4).87

Fritz Graebner (1877-1934) and Pater Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) elaborated on Frobenius’ initial theory. Frobenius suggested that the diffusion of ideas occurs in successive waves from a few fixed points of special cultural creativity. This position set itself against social Darwinian views because it built on Ratzel’s and Bastian’s thought. It used ideas of diffusion and human creativity in concert. At the turn of the century, the Kulturkreislehre was emerging as the main anthropological theory in Germany. It found its footing on 14 November 1904 when Graebner and Ankermann presented ground-breaking papers at a meeting of the Berlin Anthropological Society. Subsequently, the papers were published in the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie. This meeting is often said to be the birth place of the Kulturhistorische Methode, although only in the 1910s did the first major works appear (Hahn 2001:135).

In the first decade of the twentieth century most theorising on the Kulturkreise and -schichten was undertaken in private letters or at anthropological gatherings. Many of the anthropologists who would publish later were still developing their methods and theories or out collecting data and examples of material culture. Only occasionally did short contributions - works in progress - appear in anthropological journals such as Globus, Petermann’s Mitteilungen, Anthropos or Zeitschrifft für Ethnologie. As the leading theorists of the new school, Graebner and Schmidt were still refining their ideas (Lowie 1937:177).

Work on migration waves and subsequent cultural ‘layering’ as well as culture circles took as its focus in the first instance material culture, religion and marriage rules. Language appeared later in these studies, because comprehensive language studies barely existed, especially for Australia. Graebner focused on material culture in Oceania, including Australia; across the world he only compared cultures that seemed to be closely historically related.

The first brief linguistic contribution on Australian language in connection with the Kulturkreislehre was written by Pater W. Schmidt in 1908.\textsuperscript{88} Interestingly, he had been in contact with Strehlow’s mentor, Moritz von Leonhardi but not with Strehlow himself. Based on his linguistic evidence Schmidt declared, for example, that the Arrernte were not ‘primitive’;\textsuperscript{89} not an earlier form of inferior culture as social Darwinists in the British Isle wanted to see them. In 1899 Schmidt started the process of comparison of Oceanic languages. His research seemed to indicate an historical diffusion of language through Oceania carried on waves of migration. Comparative linguistics at the time was accustomed to relating languages historically and then locating their speakers on time-lines of cultural development. The comparison and classification of language was believed to give insight into ethnic origins, migrations and prehistory (Hoenigswald 1974:348).

For Schmidt as well as Graebner and Foy,\textsuperscript{90} the population of Australia was not homogeneous, but consisted of a number of layers of peoples and cultures who had migrated and partially amalgamated. Graebner (1904,1911) speculated that cultures emerged from different places of origin and spread in phases over the globe. Graebner was proposing three layers.\textsuperscript{91} His work was not based on empirical observation and he did not qualify his sources properly, although paradoxically he advocated meticulous and critical research. In Australia, his view was that the oldest layer of culture came from Tasmania and then extended itself across the entire continent. Von Leonhardi proposed to Strehlow that at least two further layers of culture had extended over this

\textsuperscript{88} The first major work on the Kulturkreislehre and linguistics was Pater Schmidt’s Die Gliederung der Australischen Sprachen published between 1912 and 1918 in his journal Antropos, which he used scrupulously as his vehicle during his long academic life.


\textsuperscript{90} Dr. W. Foy was the director of the Cologne Ethnological Museum and Graebner’s editor.

\textsuperscript{91} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.3.1909.
Tasmanite layer. It was these that had brought new cultural elements like totemism, the boomerang and the spear thrower to mainland Australia. Schmidt (1908:869) suggested that a fourth layer originated in New Guinea and had swamped the Australian continent from the north, its southern reach being marked by the Arrernte. Schmidt believed that he had found evidence for this in his study on language.

One obvious trait of a culture circle was language or a language group that helped to distinguish one circle from another, or suggested overlay and mixing. Language presented itself as a central medium for tracing a people’s historical development and cultural connections. However, these directions in anthropological thought were in their infancy (Kluckhohn 1936). The theory of the emerging Kulturkreislehre was still very hypothetical and most details still quite unclear at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Where Australia was concerned, for instance, the source of the two layers and waves of migration thought to overlay the Tasmanite stratum remained something of a mystery. It was not even clear what particular features or ‘traits’ needed to be present in a culture circle to define it (Kluckhohn 1936:138-9). This and other problems remained unresolved although Schmidt (1911:1013) wrote in 1911 that his language studies corroborated Graebner’s views on the composition and distribution of Oceanic culture circles. In general terms, diffusionism described some apparent patterns rather than presenting a coherent theory (Smith 1991:151). The approaches of the main Kulturkreis theorists, like Ankermann, Graebner, Schmidt, Frobenius, Foy, Thomas and Baron von Leonhardi himself, were too diverse.

In 1911 Graebner’s classic Methode der Ethnologie was published, as well as Boas’ seminal works The Mind of Primitive Man and his introduction to the Handbook of American Indian Languages. These works were milestones in the history of anthropology. They synthesised important aspects of an historical and language-based approach to research in the first decade of the twentieth century. This was also the year in which W.H.R. Rivers declared his conversion to diffusionism, though his writing was not yet directed towards a critique of the social evolutionism of his time (Langham 1981:118-121). Later Rivers would make the first serious attack on

92 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.3.1909.
93 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.3.1909.
nineteenth century evolutionism in England, leading rapidly to the emergence of English functionalism (Langness 1975:51).

Graebner’s diffusionism was based on deduction and suggested a general history of humankind. In the end, and notwithstanding his own recommendations, his work was not empirically grounded. In his crisp review of Graebner’s work, Boas stated that concepts of diffusion and cultural transmission could not be applied to distances that spanned continents (Boas 1940:295-304). In Boas’ view, Graebner remained an armchair anthropologist. Ironically though, he did attempt fieldwork in Australia, an excursion that ended with his internment as a prisoner of an Australian war camp during World War I (Petermann 2004)\(^4\), and after the war in the rising tide of Nazism his Kulturhistorische Methode and the Kulturkreislehre (German Diffusionism) would be forgotten.\(^5\) However, Graebner’s futile trip to Australia into Strehlow’s proximity (Baron von Leonhardi’s ethnographer) draws attention to the intellectual milieu in which Carl Strehlow worked.

This story will be continued in Chapter IV through an account of Strehlow’s correspondence with von Leonhardi. It is appropriate at this point, to place Strehlow in the context of his German predecessors and particularly his contemporary, Boas, who, unlike Strehlow, became a professional in the academy in the United States.

Strehlow in the Mission and Boas in the Academy
An overview of nineteenth century developments in German anthropology almost immediately allows Carl Strehlow’s magnum opus to fall into place. No anthropological theorist himself, and kept to the empirical task by von Leonhardi’s constant queries, Strehlow’s work makes sense within the context of these developments.

In the first instance, Strehlow’s respect for Arrernte and Luritja people, his certainty that their intellects equalled his own, was in accord both with his theological training and with the presumptions of German historical particularism. Although a clear

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\(^4\) Graebner did not have the same luck as Malinowski, to be confined on the Trobriand Islands.

\(^5\) Only surviving in P.W. Schmidt’s work.
formulation of a plural culture concept would await the emergence of Boasian
anthropology in the United States, Strehlow showed respect for another
technologically limited culture and carried the nascent assumption of plural cultures
across the globe; the same nascent concept that resided in the work of Herder,
Wilhelm von Humboldt and Bastian. Consistent with this position, Strehlow simply
assumed a homogenetic humankind. Certainly, his theology promoted the view, also
endorsed by Humboldt, that any culture and language group could express any
conceivable idea. Although he laboured in his task of Christian conversion, Strehlow
was confident in his reporting of high god beliefs among the Arrernte and Luritja. In
an ironic way perhaps, and one that Spencer would not have understood, this aspect of
Strehlow’s ethnography reflected his commitment to plural cultures. Central
Australian cultures like European ones were, in his view, open to the full range of
human possibility. As did Herder, he used in the place of polygenetic theory, a theory
of plenitude to explain a multiplicity of cultures. Boas would later begin the task of
supplying this theory of plenitude with a basis in symbolic imagination rather than
theology. Contemporaneous multiplicity would be explained not by spurious biology,
or appeals to God’s creation, but rather in terms of the multiple forms of
representation that human beings can create – mainly through language.

Noting the impact that Herder had on the brothers Grimm, and the central role of
studies in myth and language in an evolving German tradition, Strehlow’s initial focus
is also not surprising. He collected assiduously and carefully translated numerous
examples of Arrernte and Luritja myth and song. He tried to classify this material
according to the Grimms’ categories – ‘Mythen, Sagen und Märchen’ (myths, legends
and fairy-tales). Clearly inadequate to the task of a modern anthropological
interpretation of myth, Strehlow’s resort to this schema also demonstrates his
engagement with that genre of nineteenth century German thought that saw the key to
a culture in oral text. Almost without reflection perhaps, Strehlow sought to record
phenomena that would provide most ready access to a Volkgeist (Herder) or a
Weltanschauung (Humboldt). The fact that this German tradition saw language study
as a sine qua non of the empirical focus that they recommended, may possibly explain
the role that Strehlow’s Arrernte dictionary had in his own research. This
extraordinary compilation that grew to vast proportions only to remain incomplete

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and unpublished was perhaps evidence of the missionary's serious scientific intent. Consistent with both the German and Lutheran humanistic tradition from which he came, this compilation of language would be the ultimate and definitive route to central Australian culture.

Finally, Herder's view that the greatest misfortune for a people would be to lose their language also throws interesting light on Strehlow's German-to-Western Arrernte translations. His initial translation of the Bible was an unusual achievement. Also interesting though, was his Arrernte primer written for school children. *Pepa Aragulinja: Aranda Katjirberaka* was published posthumously in 1928. It contained the elements of Arrernte literacy along with a small collection of Bible stories and Lutheran hymns in Western Arrernte. 96 Strehlow quite literally grasped Arrernte culture in the act of translation. There could be no greater testimony to the importance of language study than his pioneering work.

There is little evidence in Strehlow's work of great engagement with Graebner's and Schmidt's ideas about multiple cultural layering. However, Wilhelm Schmidt's exchange of letters with Moritz von Leonhardi brought Strehlow indirectly into contact with diffusionist thought. Like Boas, Strehlow was interested in small-scale regional diffusion. It is possible that he chose to record both Arrernte and Luritja myth noting differences in theme engendered by natural environment under the influence of the German diffusionists. His observations on geography also seem to recall Ratzel, and make an interesting link with T.G.H. Strehlow's observations on environment and social structure in different regions of arid Australia (Strehlow 1965). Carl Strehlow certainly had a sense of regional cultures. It is notable that as W.H.R. Rivers moved through diffusionism and towards functionalism in his studies of kinship terminology, Strehlow was developing a sense of culture area studies that had a resonance both with Graebner and Franz Boas.

Strehlow also collected material culture, in which he may have been responding indirectly to the priorities set by Bastian which seem to have reached every corner of the globe. Governed by their own tenets of empiricism, there was undoubtedly a view

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96 The work was published by the Finke River Mission in Adelaide with the co-operation of Auricht's Printing Office, Tanunda, S.A.
that in some sense or other the material object carried truth – something eternally retrievable for further research and also the counterpoint to a central focus on language. In sum, Strehlow’s major text was in one sense the product of a lonely missionary scholar at Hermannsburg. Placed in the intellectual tradition from which both Strehlow and his mentor came, however, his magnum opus mirrors in a striking way the anthropological concerns in the Germany of his time.

A second way in which to position Carl Strehlow’s intellectual endeavours is to juxtapose them with his contemporary, Franz Boas (1858-1942). Boas migrated from Germany to the United States and would become the founder of North American cultural anthropology. Initially he studied physics and geography, taking his doctorate in 1881 from Kiel University in Germany. He began to travel between Germany and the United States, developing a life-long interest in west coast Native American groups and especially in the Indian groups of British Columbia. By 1886, Boas had an appointment in geography at the University of Berlin and maintained an association with Bastian’s Museum of Ethnology. His later interests in museums, collecting, and in the human unconscious in culture likely stemmed from this association. Silverman writes that Boas ‘transposed the notions of Bastian and Rudolph Virchow to his treatment of culture in the American context’ (Silverman 2005:260). In 1892, Boas was instrumental in the founding of Chicago’s famous Field Museum and from there moved on to the Museum of Natural History in New York (Bohannan and Glazer 1988:82). At this time, he also delivered lectures at Columbia University. This would be a life long association; a base from which Boas would train numerous prominent anthropologists including Alfred Kroeber, Ruth Benedict and Edward Sapir. Carl Strehlow’s affinities both with a nineteenth century German tradition, and with the anthropology that Boas would develop are clear. The following account focuses on three central areas: Boas’ field-based anti-evolutionism, his focus on language as a key to culture and, finally, his use of culture-area studies, a refined and empirically focused diffusionism.

Although this discussion juxtaposes Strehlow’s immersion in the field to Boas’ engagement with the academy, Boas was also an assiduous fieldworker. The injunctions of Bastian, Graebner and others to a disciplined empiricism were realised
in Boas' professional practice. As Stocking proposes, Boas was the person who, in the United States, founded a modern fieldwork discipline. He was deeply rooted 'in the intellectual traditions of his homeland' (Stocking 2001:26) and transformed 'a museum and government-based inquiry into an academic discipline in which “culture” replaced “evolution” as a dominant paradigm' (Stocking 2001:1). Boas' anthropology was well informed by his predecessors in the German tradition. The cosmographic approach of Alexander von Humboldt is evident in his writings as well as Wilhelm von Humboldt's language project (Boas 1940:639-647; Bunzl 1996). He had a good understanding of Herder, Kant and other classic German thinkers through his education at a German gymnasium (Liss 1996:155-185; Cole 1999:280). Like his colleagues of the Kulturkreislehre, he did not believe in racial or biological determinism or linear development of societies in which peoples could be arranged according to evolutionistic sequences.

During his sojourn in Berlin, Boas also formed a lifelong friendship with Rudolph Virchow. From him Boas learned quantitative method and also became an expert in physical anthropology amassing anthropometric data to prove that no grounds existed to discriminate against any group of people on the basis of physical difference (Boas 1940; Petermann 2004; Synnott and Howes 1992:154). In his work he approached the question of races from diverse angles, each time reaching the conclusion that there was no conclusive evidence regarding physical traits to establish a diversity of race. Boas found that 'differences were not great enough to allow living men to be placed on different evolutionary stages' (Stocking 1968:220).

Empiricism and quantitative method initially determined his approaches to the new discipline. However, the fieldwork experience itself seems to have been the crucial one for Boas. According to Lévi-Strauss he 'became aware of his anthropological vocation during the course of his first field work, as a result of a flash of insight into the originality, uniqueness, and spontaneity of social life in each human group'. Thus, while Boas sought to apply to the subjective world the 'rigorous methodology that he had learned in the natural sciences, he recognized the infinite variety of historical processes which shapes [the subjective] in each case' (Lévi-Strauss 1963:8). As Boas proceeded in his work, language and history became increasingly important in his
interpretation of human multiplicity. In the late 1880s, Boas wrote that his method was to inquire into the peculiarities of single tribes through a thorough comparison of language, customs, and folklore. His historical analyses were focused on issues of inheritance and borrowing. In his view, it was crucial to evaluate and distinguish what was original and what was borrowed in customs and folklore as well as in language (Stocking 1968:206). Cultures were the product of numerous elements coming together from a range of factors in a region. Therefore, they could never be a simple matter of linear progression from one stage to the next.

Because his work was empirical with a small area focus, Boas was led to the view that each culture has its own 'logic', and its own particularity. Ultimately, his view was relativistic and a product of the tradition from which he came. In an interesting comment, that bears on Carl Strehlow's work as well, Darnell remarks that 'Boas' emphasis on descriptive ethnology in a historical context, later criticized as atheoretical, was itself part of a consistent methodology based on an explicit theoretical commitment' (Darnell 1998:290). For example, in his descriptive work on *Primitive Art* published in 1927, Boas weaves the repudiation of speculative theory regarding origins into his comments on style:

I doubt very much that it will ever be possible to give a satisfactory explanation of the origin of these styles, just as little we can discover all the psychological and historical conditions that determine the development of language, social structure, mythology or religion. All these are so exceedingly complex in their growth that even at best we can do no more than hope to unravel some of the threads that are woven into the present fabric and determine some of the lines of behaviour that may help us to realize what is happening in the minds of the people. (Boas 1955:155)

This developing fieldwork method fed into Boas' rejection of nineteenth century evolutionism and its notions of sequenced developmental stages. Boas criticised the premature classification of superficially similar phenomena that may be the product of quite different regional histories (Stocking 1968:205). It was these concerns that produced one of his most famous essays, written in 1896, *The Limitations of the*
Comparative Method in Anthropology (Boas 1940:270-280). By 'comparative method' he meant 'the specific procedures followed by the evolutionists' (Silverman 2005:261). In this essay he denounced the evolutionary assumptions that dominated the English-speaking world. By noting that ostensibly similar phenomena are not always due to the same cause, Boas was undermining the approach of independent invention and evolutionary sequencing. In this famous article, a nascent sense of the modern culture concept began to emerge. In criticising comparative method as it was understood within evolutionism, Boas was pointing not simply to particularism but also to contextual specification; to the variable meaning or significance of a thing or practice within varying historical contexts (Sahlins 1976:67; Bohansen & Glazer 1988:84). He argued that the same phenomenon, a mask for example, does not always have the same meaning and may well have developed out of very different contexts (Sahlins 1976:68).

According to Stocking, 'what was actually at issue was not simply the general evolution of culture but the extrapolation of evolutionary stages in every area of cultural life - the presumed sequences of art forms, of marriage forms, of stages in the development of myth, religion, and so forth' (1968:211). Boas focused on the fundamental historicity of cultural phenomena, and on the ability of cultures to assimilate and also innovate with newly acquired material. In this he stood in marked contrast to the evolutionists who tried to arrange all peoples of the world in stages of a linear development according to predictable laws with a predictable outcome. Once again, the very different views that Baldwin Spencer and Carl Strehlow held on Arrernte people conform with this divergence. Where Spencer saw inevitable decline, Strehlow as missionary and nascent historicist, saw innovation and a future.

Boas' critique of evolutionism rested on his German historical particularism; on an appreciation of the historically conditioned plurality of human cultures. This position also allowed him to engage other ideas concerning notions of Volksgeist and, most importantly, the centrality of language in culture. Language was central in Boas' work for a number of reasons. As with other early German anthropologists, he believed that language was something that belonged to every human group. There were no

\[7\] At the basis of the critique of independent invention were his view of causality and classification (see Stocking 2001).
'inferior' languages. He saw language as one of the routes to unravelling the history of indigenous peoples and traditional worldviews, because 'the history of language reflects the history of culture' (Boas 1940:631). In the introduction to his *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (1911), Boas argued that it was paramount for the student of American Indian cultures to have a thorough knowledge of the language of the people studied, to be able to grasp the essence of that particular culture (see also Stocking 2001:72):

... we must insist that a command of the language is an indispensable means of obtaining accurate and thorough knowledge, because much information can be gained by listening to conversations of the natives and by taking part in their daily life, which, to the observer who has no command of the language, will remain entirely inaccessible. (Boas 1911:60)

In view of these remarks, one cannot but summon the image of Carl Strehlow's more than 20 years in 'the field'. In addition, Boas argued that text collection in original languages was paramount for ethnography. According to Jacknis (1996:196), this was in fact his methodological centre and foundation for all further research. Boas wrote that 'no translation can possibly be considered as an adequate substitute for the original' because 'the form of rhythm, the treatment of the language, the adjustment of text to music, the imagery, the use of metaphors, and all the numerous problems involved in any thorough investigation of the style of poetry, can be interpreted only by the investigator who has equal command of the ethnographical traits of the tribe and of their language' (Boas 1911:62).

Language knowledge was the pre-condition for meaningful ethnographical research, but at the same time language was also in itself an ethnological phenomenon (Boas 1911:63). Just as language mirrors a culture, 'the peculiar characteristics of languages are clearly reflected in the views and customs of the peoples of the world' (Boas 1911:73).

Boas was particularly interested in folklore, meaning the body of customs and traditions of a society that were largely stored in mythology, and thereby in the
language and texts of a people. It was this complex that determined culture rather than biology or race. Language and mythology were possible sources of data on migrations. They revealed customs which were often hidden or extinct and provided a way to trace the history of a people. Most important though, the folklore of a people reflected their Volksgeist or Weltanschauung (Stocking 1968:223). The mythology of a people provided the best material for evaluating beliefs and practice as well as the ethical and aesthetical values of a culture. Folklore and mythology were the key to a people’s particularity.

Text or oral literature (myths and tales as well as related traditional laws and customs) were therefore immensely important to Boas. Developing his argument against racially-based mental differences, Boas suggested that the minds of humans shared similar powers of abstraction, inhibition and choice. Their particular manifestation, however, was shaped by the body of custom and traditional material that was transmitted from one generation to the next. Much of this was unconscious, like the hidden complex morphological or grammatical categories and structures of language. The behaviour of all humans was the result of a body of habitual behavioural patterns of a particular culture in which they live (Stocking 1968:220-222).

Lévi-Strauss wrote that Boas must be given credit for defining more lucidly than ever before the unconscious nature of cultural phenomena. By comparing cultural phenomena to language in this regard, Boas anticipated both the subsequent development of linguistic theory and a future for anthropology. He showed that the structure of a language remains unknown to the speaker until the introduction of scientific grammar (Lévi-Strauss 1963:19). Boas wrote:

It would seem that the essential difference between linguistic phenomena and other ethnological phenomena is, that the linguistic classifications never rise to the consciousness, while in other ethnological phenomena, although the same unconscious origin prevails, these often rise into consciousness, and thus give rise to secondary reasoning and to reinterpretation. (Boas 1911:67)
This was Boas’ primary and secondary rationalisations that pointed to the taken-for-granted in culture and juxtaposed it to conscious elaborations of meaning; different dimensions of culture with different degrees of stability (see also Ogden and Richards 1946).

Boas accepted diffusion but not the grand patterns of Graebner’s approach (Adams 1998:294). In Boas’ view, diffusionist accounts were useful only when applied to small areas where empirical research was possible and allowed comparison. Only detailed studies of phenomena would be able to shed light on how cultures evolved through time. The thorough study of local phenomena in a well-defined, small geographical area would bring the histories of individual cultures alive. Boas offered a critique of generalising approaches in his review essay, ‘Review of Graebner, “Methode der Ethnologie”’ which he included in Race, Language and Culture (Boas 1940:295-304). He emphatically rejected Graebner’s method because, ultimately, Graebner fell back on generalised notions of historical development. Boas concluded:

Thus it seems to me that the methods of Mr Graebner are subject to the same strictures as those of the other schools, and the “Ferninterpretation” (remote interpretation), “Kulturkreise” and “Kulturschichten” must be considered as no less hypothetical that the “Stufenbau” of Breysig or the sequences of Lamprecht (Boas 1940:303).

Boas’ views on diffusionism were influenced by his studies of myth. He had gained a detailed sense of the ways in which culture contact within a region could result in forms of borrowing that re-shaped myth (Darnell 1998:279). Therefore, in Boas’ view, it is never easy to arrive at origins, to discern how ‘foreign material [is] taken up by a people and modified by pre-existing ideas and customs’ (cited in Stocking 1968:207). Myths were the result of complex historical growth combining elements from various sources, thus a product of diffusion and amalgamation. For Boas, human creativity was expressed in the imaginative manipulation and reinterpretation of elements provided by a tradition, or borrowed from proximate others (Stocking 1968:226).
The Boasian style of analysis therefore stressed territorial contiguity and the reshaping of traits within a limited historical area over time (Darnell 1998:188). Comparison was only possible in a small area in which the elements were comparable. Sometimes recent borrowing could not be distinguished from a common origin, but neither 'stages' of development nor 'layers' of culture had much explanatory value for Boas (see also Darnell 1998:217). He thought it very unlikely that whole culture blocks would travel over vast areas virtually unchanged, which was the prevalent belief of German diffusionists of the Kulturkreislehre (Boas 1940). His diffusionism is sometimes termed, 'der verfeinerte Diffusionismus', a 'refined diffusionism' (Szalay 1983:33).

Once again, Boas' position seems consistent with Strehlow's approach to his research with Western Arrernte and Luritja people. It seems likely that the convergence in style of these two transitional anthropologists in the German tradition came mainly through a diffuse humanistic tradition, an interest in history and language, and in a shared admiration for diligent empiricism. Strehlow, missionary in the field, and Boas, doyen of the American academy, had a similar style.

Concluding Remarks

In summary, nineteenth century German anthropology and ethnology was a humanistic endeavour that tried to understand different peoples and cultures in their own right without comparing them with others. As a result the theoretical and ideological orientation of German anthropology was monogenetic, anti-racist, particularist and historical (viz. focused on area studies and small-scale diffusion). In the hands of scholars including Boas and Strehlow, this meant that their ethnographic work was more often than not descriptive and did not present explicit and developed general theoretical insights. Owing to his place in the academy, Boas however drew out the implications of his position in considerable detail and also provided his reasons for rejecting other positions.

German nineteenth century anthropologists challenged eighteenth century progressivism that proposed a linear succession for humanity in time and space from one stage of development to the next, culminating in enlightenment. They were also
opposed to nineteenth century evolutionistic thought that was based on biological determinism and which arranged peoples on a scale of different stages of mental and social development. Social Darwinism was seen as highly speculative and hypothetical, based on vulgar forms of deduction. German historical particularism also carried with it an emphasis on empirical research which encouraged the study of language. Especially with Boas, language rather than biology became the crucible of human difference. Thus, contrary to common perception, nineteenth century German anthropology was anti-racialist and monogenetic nearly to the eve of World War I. The majority of German anthropologists rejected any kind of human difference based on race and professed the unity of humankind. This was the diffuse formative milieu in which both Boas, and Strehlow (guided by von Leonhardi), pursued their respective works.

Carl Strehlow was conducting his research in the first decade of the twentieth century, before Boas and Graebner published their seminal works in 1911. Strehlow concluded his research in 1909 which means that his study of language and myth was pursued in a ‘pre-modern anthropological’ framework phase of modern anthropology - at a time when Boas was still trying to detail his position. Carl Strehlow could not have read Boas’ *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, for instance, prior to the publication of his own work. Strehlow shared with Boas and his circle, the nineteenth century German tradition: a commitment to empirical research, a strong focus on language and myth and an interest in small-scale diffusion as well as an aversion to evolutionism involving biological determinism. With these came also a propensity to collect items of material culture. This is the intellectual milieu into which Strehlow’s *Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* fits. Both Boas and Strehlow were drawn to language and myth, and produced dense records of field material. Strehlow’s *Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* is descriptive ethnography that, in Sahlins’ terms, allowed indigenous Australians to ‘speak for themselves’ (Sahlins 1976:76). With this in mind, Strehlow was almost certainly ‘interested in ethnography as an end in itself’ (Adams 1998:295).

Nevertheless, it seems that Strehlow, and his German contemporaries, had a good sense of the cultural multiplicity that would be the focal interest of a modern,
professional anthropology. The making of a ‘plural culture concept’ is foreshadowed throughout the German tradition.\textsuperscript{98} Surveying the conceptual genealogy of nineteenth century anthropology, it seems that Herder’s Volksgeist, Humboldt’s national character and Weltanschauung, and Bastian’s Völkergedanken are only variations on a theme that echoes Herder’s concept of Humanität and his idea of cultural diversity and pluralism.

The theology of Carl Strehlow finds a curious precedent in Herder’s thought. As Darcy observes, Herder had adopted the Platonist concept of the Great Chain of Being, ‘an imaginary link starting with God and descending through the angels to man and onto the animal world’ (Darcy 1987:7). In fact, Darcy writes:

\begin{quote}
Herder expanded the chain to include a “chain of cultivation”. Humankind became a differentiated totality of cultures all equally attached to the Godhead. The potential in such a philosophical system is clear: once the links to the Godhead were removed, Herder’s intellectual system would become simply an apprehension of the multiplicity of human cultures. (Darcy 1987:10)
\end{quote}

Boas was ensconced in the academy while Strehlow remained in the church. Both, however, were grounded in the German tradition: a unique combination of universalism and particularism with the desire for empirical research and the acceptance of human diversity.

\textsuperscript{98} The plural of the term culture appears in North America with regularity only in the first generation of Boas’ students around 1910 (Stocking 1968:203). Boas did not arrive at the point where he could finally show, despite his massive detailed research on the particularity of individual cultures, patterns and structures that allowed a society/culture consistency over time. Boas did not go beyond the plural of culture; patterns and structures of cultures would be left to his students. (Kroeber’s concept of the superorganic or Ruth Benedict’s \textit{Patterns of Culture}. Lévi-Strauss would tackle structures of the unconscious.) Boas’ programme exceeded a lifetime, like the Humboldts, he would not be able to conclude his project.
CHAPTER III

From Missionary to Frontier Scholar

Carl Strehlow is principally known to us through remarks by his son, T.G.H. Strehlow, in *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* (1969) and *Songs of Central Australia* (1971). In *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* T.G.H. Strehlow records the loyalty of the Arrernte and Luritja people to the ailing man and the apparent disloyalty of the Finke River mission board as it responded in a cumbersome way to his father’s suffering. He also evokes the image of an overwhelming missionary-father. The son’s ambivalence towards the father is readily apparent in the former’s corpus. In *Songs of Central Australia*, T.G.H. Strehlow defends his father intellectually from the glib but damaging critiques mainly of Baldwin Spencer. His defence of his father involves revealing the limitations in Spencer and Gillen’s consultations with the Arrernte people due to their lack of language competence. Yet, he provides only a sparse sketch of his father either as missionary or scholar-intellectual which is strangely devoid of emotion, although he writes in his diary (Strehlow 1960:155) that ‘Horseshoe Bend is a place whose shadows I can never escape’ (Cawthorn and Malbunka 2005:71). The man who peers out with a calm intensity from his best-known portrait, taken with his wife in 1895, remains a relative stranger.

Sketches by Phillip Scherer (1974,1994), Walter Veit (1991,1994,2004a/b), Benedikt Liebermeister (1998), Harriett Völker (2001), Paul Albrecht (2002,2006), Maurice Schild (2004), Barry Hill (2002), and, Carl’s grandson, John Strehlow (2004a/b), provide some biographical and anecdotal detail, and further aspects that were formative of Carl Strehlow’s scholarly development, though they also oscillate between the two poles set by the son. These accounts about Carl Strehlow as a missionary and scholar, explain aspects of his potential, but are still not sufficient to understand how a seemingly stern and at times self-righteous man could have dealt in the same serious way with two very different cosmologies and ontologies. In many ways his Lutheran world that he tried to replicate in central Australia and the indigenous world of that place were and still are so different, although the two worlds
have since converged and produced a particular kind of Arrernte Lutherism and narratives (see Austin-Broos 1994).

A great tension seems to stand between Strehlow’s preaching of the gospel, and the seriousness of his treatment of the indigenous beliefs, which he meticulously recorded, and his constant attempts to understand the core of their meaning. His missionary role does not seem to correlate with his deeply humanistic scholarly work, which was based on great empathy and respect for others and their own world. But his ethnographic masterpiece shows that he engaged profoundly with the people he dedicated his life to, maintaining that they were not a dying or inferior people.

Carl Strehlow’s grandson John Strehlow (2004b:59-91) has followed in the vein of his father trying to reappraise Carl Strehlow’s legacy, by defending and justifying his
grandfather against Spencer. Veit (2004b:92-110) also chose to write about this opposition. He contrasts Carl Strehlow’s ‘cultural anthropology’ with Spencer’s ‘social anthropology’. While this opposition indicates correctly that different ideologies motivated the two investigators, it must be remembered that Modern Anthropology as ‘social’ or ‘cultural’ did not exist yet at the beginning of the twentieth century. As already discussed, different poles generated the tension: one was based on biological determinism and the other on eighteenth and nineteenth century German philosophy. However, Veit (2004b) remarks correctly that Carl Strehlow’s work reflects a tradition that derives from German humanistic thinking.

Thus, Veit as well as Schild (2004) have portrayed Carl Strehlow’s intellectual background through his mission training at Neuendettelsau, trying to explain how this education may have made it possible for a missionary to record the cultures of other peoples in their own right. They write that Neuendettelsau instilled in Strehlow a humanistic approach towards others and encouraged language studies. Veit (2004a) indicates also that at the turn of the century the discussion in Lutheran theological mission circles on how to accommodate different religions became increasingly explicit. However, this does not seem to be quite sufficient in explaining Carl’s intricate interest in the other and the effort he invested in his monograph.

In the following I aim to pull these threads together and try to show how his missionary and German intellectual heritage had elements in common. It was not one or the other that made his ethnography possible, but underlying common premises and the right encouragement from an unexpected source. Three different experiences shaped the scholar that Carl Strehlow became: his youthful education at the Neuendettelsau Seminary; his field encounters with indigenous Australians, the Diyari, Arrernte and Luritja; and finally, his correspondence with Moritz von Leonhardi, his German editor. Each engagement brought something specific to his work and mediated the final product in particular ways. Furthermore, negative encounters, especially attitudes of some Lutheran superiors in Australia to ethnographic work were countered by others – in this case, his keen engagement with indigenous peoples and von Leonhardi’s intellectual support and companionship.
The education at the Neuendettelsau Seminary, at the time run by Dr. Johannes Deinzer, seems to have been formative for Carl Strehlow's development and the 'Menschenbild' or the view of man he took into the field. The seminary's mission-theology was based on the views of Wilhelm Löhe as interpreted by Deinzer. The latter was particularly interested in the 'outer mission' and ethics; not the 'inner mission' that catered for existing and lapsed Lutherans but rather the out-reach to those who remained unconverted. (Again), language was emphasised. Greek, Latin and Hebrew were rigorously taught at the Neuendettelsau Seminary to prepare the missionaries for their language tasks. The German Lutheran linguistic tradition, based on Luther's view that the gospel was to be preached in vernaculars and translated into the mother tongues of peoples (Wendt 2001:8), heavily influenced the seminary's approach towards indigenous peoples. It went without saying that the knowledge of indigenous vernaculars was the prerequisite for successful mission work. Thus, potentially missionaries were encouraged, through linguistic work, to learn about other people's cultures. The serious study of indigenous languages lead some missionaries towards an interest in the 'Weltanschauung' and mythology of a particular people. Neuendettelsau's style made a major impression on Carl when he entered as a young, enthusiastic 16 year old.

However, it seems that even before Carl Strehlow joined the seminary, he was well versed in the classics and familiar with the Romantics. His early teacher and mentor Carl Seidel, pastor in Strehlow's home village Fredersdorf, was very interested in the work of the brothers Grimm and folklore generally (John Strehlow 2004a). He also laid the basis for Carl's interest in classics. Seidel seems to have had a broad understanding of the importance and meaning of mythology, because he saw moral teaching embedded in it.99 Carl Strehlow was a great lover of classic and Germanic mythology according to his youngest son, T.G.H. Strehlow, which dominated his education at Hermannsburg (Strehlow 1978:5).100 These influences and the German philological tradition which emphasised the classics and comparative language studies in educated German circles gave some bearings to his inclination towards language. Like Otto Siebert, a fellow missionary, Strehlow may also have been familiar with

99 Carl Seidel to Carl Strehlow, 12.9.1908 (SH 1908-2-1).
100 However, he was also introduced to other folklore at an early age. Under the Christmas tree in 1914 little six-year-old Theo found 1001 Nacht (Arabian Nights) which his father had ordered a year earlier from Germany so it would be in time for Christmas.
other language theorists of German Romanticism like Bopp, Fichte, Schlegel, etc. However, this is surmise thought, as Strehlow does not cite them.

The second major factor in Carl Strehlow’s experience was his engagement with Diyari, Arrernte, and Luritja people. He learnt firsthand that the different Aboriginal peoples each had a particular language and mythology. His close relationships with people of completely different cultural backgrounds for nearly three decades, and his intense efforts in language learning, enabled him to appreciate, collect and translate the oral literature of the Arrernte and Luritja into a Western language. It also allowed him to render the New Testament into two Australian indigenous languages, Diyari and Arrernte. Through the thorough knowledge of language and its oral literature, Carl Strehlow gained a deep appreciation and understanding of their worldviews.

Finally, this lived experience as missionary and the intellectual training that supported it, could take the form of research and scholarship that it did, also due to Carl’s collaboration with Moritz von Leonhardi. Von Leonhardi had a direct influence on Strehlow as an ethnographer and became his editor. He was a man representative of the nineteenth century German anthropological tradition, and turned Carl’s use of language towards an ethnographic method. Von Leonhardi furthered Strehlow’s anthropological training by posing research tasks, thereby pursuing empirical research with him. From time to time he was provocative sending Carl back into the field to verify his findings. He reinforced the necessary scepticism for a scientific work.

In the following discussion, I propose to focus on the type of background that Neuendettelsau provided Strehlow, and the German Lutheran approach to language as it was reflected in the Australian practice of Lutheran missionaries. Then I will provide a sketch of Moritz von Leonhardi and his seminal influence on Carl Strehlow. In Chapter IV I will show how they worked together and in those that follow I will address Carl Strehlow’s ethnographic work in Australia and its current relevance.

Training at the Neuendettelsau Seminary under Johannes Deinzer
At the age of 16 in early 1888, Carl Strehlow was one of the youngest students to be educated and trained at the Neuendettelsauer Missionsanstalt (Neuendettelsau Mission
Seminary) for mission work. In 1923, Ziemer remarked in Carl Strethlow’s obituary that Carl had entered with reluctant paternal consent, because his father did not wish his son, one of seven children, to be a cleric or have a higher education (Liebermeister 1998:16). He felt that it was not appropriate for a child of such modest station to reach beyond the means of a village teacher. Carl Strethlow’s family was not in the position to finance any kind of further education for any of their seven children beyond that offered in the public system - at the time, a meagre training. For talented young people without any means, the only venue for further education and amelioration of social status was often the path within the church and even that left Carl’s father anxious.

It seems to have been the pastor Carl Seidel of Fredersdorf, Carl Strethlow’s birthplace, who recognised the outstanding talents and potential of the child and sparked his interest in myth and song. With great dedication and effort, Seidel prepared his protégée for entry into a seminary. After Carl Strethlow had been refused at the Leipzig Seminary, due to his young age, Seidel wrote to the Neuendettelsau Mission Seminary. Seidel proposed that it would be ‘generally beneficial for the whole development of the child to be removed from the narrow circumstances in Fredersdorf’ and promised to try to raise as much money as he could to pay Carl’s school fees (Liebermeister 1998:17-18). Carl’s enrolment was accepted. As late as 1899, six years after he had left Neuendettelsau, Carl Strethlow voluntarily tried to pay some of his outstanding fees from his meagre missionary income in central Australia, ‘so other impecunious students may benefit from this’.  

Seidel had to teach Strethlow the basics of classical languages, mathematics, geography, world history and correct German syntax and orthography. Carl needed these in order to compete with applicants to the seminary who mainly came from Gymnasiums (demanding secondary schools which provided their students with a classical education). Until World War I, most seminarists at Neuendettelsau had attended a Gymnasium (Pilhofer 1967:29). Clearly Carl was indebted to Seidel and

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101 Carl Strethlow to Inspector Deinzer of the Neuendettelsau Seminary, 20.1.1899 (Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk).
remained in touch with his early teacher and mentor throughout his life, as he did with the seminary.\textsuperscript{[102]}

![1870-1893](image)


The selection process at Neuendettelsau was rigorous (Koller 1924; Pilhofer 1967). The criteria for successful applicants included a high level of secondary education, as well as a strong personality and excellent health. The intense course lasted three years with a very demanding and dense curriculum. The expectations and the pressure were immense, both imposed by the seminary as well as by the students themselves. Nervous breakdowns, it seems, were not unusual (Pilhofer 1967:29).

The curriculum at Neuendettelsau had a classical orientation. Latin, Greek and Hebrew were taught to the Neuendettelsau seminarians. These linguistic instructions gave them a solid basis to recognise and deal with structures of foreign languages, which facilitated the writing of grammars and dictionaries - essential for the

\textsuperscript{[102]} The seminary was considered as a home-base. Many missionaries returned to Neuendettelsau to teach or to live following retirement. Frieda Strehlow went to Neuendettelsau to die in the 1950s, where her brother, Christian Keysser had become the director. Even today Neuendettelsau still has a number of elderly missionaries who meet on a regular basis; at these gathering indigenous languages are often heard.
translation of the Holy Scripture; and mission preaching and schooling. Clearly language studies were encouraged if not expected from the Neuendettelsau graduates once they proceeded to their postings. (By the turn of the century even Diyari was spoken at Neuendettelsau (Koller 1924).) In addition to classical languages, correct German style and orthography was taught along with basic English. It was assumed that the latter would quickly improve once graduates took up posts in America and Australia. German essay and speech writing were also part of the curriculum. Another subject that held a prominent position was music, in the tradition of Luther’s own deep engagement. Finally even physical education was an integral part of each individual’s training.


Ethnographic approaches or methodology do not appear to have been part of the curriculum at Neuendettelsau; anthropological study came mainly through language study. There do not seem to be any texts that were used at the Neuendettelsau Seminary that explicitly encouraged students to learn about the cultures of the peoples they were to live with - apart from Warneck and the overseas reports or letters from

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103 House tradition of the Neuendettelsau seminary was to use the Greek source for translation (p.c. Dr. Hauenstein of the Neuendettelsauer Missionswerk, Neuendettelsau, August 2005).
104 This can be gleaned from the handwritten chronicles held at Neuendettelsau’s archives.
missionaries which were published in the *Kirchlichen Mitteilungen* and other Mission newspapers and journals. Interestingly, it was Carl Strehlow’s brother-in-law, Christian Keysser,\(^{105}\) who eventually promoted an official approach to other cultures at Neuendettelsau. This occurred when he became a teacher at Neuendettelsau after returning from his posting in Papua New Guinea. Keysser introduced anthropological subjects into the curriculum in 1929 (Pilhofer 1967:32) and explicitly articulated the mission approach to ethnography (Veit 1994; Liebermeister 1998:127).

The focus on language at Neuendettelsau prepared Carl Strehlow well. Not all institutions that trained missionaries had Neuendettelsau’s classical orientation. In the field, missionaries from other seminaries often rued their inadequate linguistic training. Kempe and Schulze, the first missionaries at Hermannsburg Ntaria in 1877, for instance, felt their lack of knowledge of Latin and thus language learning skills and tools. However, they still managed to learn and write Arrernte (Kneebone 2001:149).

Neuendettelsau had its own style of mission theology which was based on Wilhelm Löhe’s view of the ‘innere und äussere Mission’ (inner and outer mission). This particular approach was interesting because it did not have a mission to indigenous peoples as its pre-eminent goal.\(^{106}\) The inner mission, according to Löhe, was to hold the Lutheran congregation together through general pastoral care that would keep them from flagging in their commitment. The outer mission had the task of finding people to be baptised which included Germans and indigenous peoples. Once baptism was accomplished, the outer mission led automatically back into the inner mission which saw its role not only in collecting sheep, but also in caring for the congregation. This included education, and holding and sustaining pastoral assistance (Weber 1996:353,360). It was viewed as a responsibility of the mission. The mission then was an ongoing commitment that stretched well beyond conversion.

\(^{105}\) Christian Keysser published a number of ethnographic works.

\(^{106}\) Wilhelm Löhe is seen today as one of the fathers of World Lutherism. However, he also made significant contributions to social development and education, at a time when the state was not much engaged in social activities and this was left to the church’s care. See Schild 2004, Weber 1996:15, Schlichting 1998:7; Farnbacher & Weber 2004.
Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872) seems to have originally founded the seminary with an emphasis on the inner mission. Missionaries were sent out to take care of existing Lutherans and their communities in North America where, it was thought, communities readily became religiously deteriorated due to the lack of Lutheran clerics. Löhe was principally concerned with the care of German diaspora communities (Koller 1924; Pilhofer 1967). From North America, disturbing, even shocking reports had reached Löhe and other Lutheran clerics regarding perfectly good Christian parents who had up to eleven un-baptised children due to the absence of qualified clergy. The German migrants were growing up 'like the Indians'. The dispersion and spiritual 'decrepitude' proved initially to be far greater than anticipated in America, so that the inner mission amongst Germans took precedence (Weber 1996:346). However, Löhe could mention Indian and German heathen parents in the same breath indicating that the agenda was set (Weber 1996:346). The broader pastures of North America were soon beckoning. By 1888 'the society for the inner mission' added 'outer' to its name (Schlichting 1998:5). The Gesellschaft für die Innere (und Äussere) Mission still exists today and has turned its attention inwards again.307

For Löhe, the inner and outer mission were parts of the same issue and church (Weber 1996:343). Hence missionaries and pastors received the same education at Neuendettelsau. The concepts relating to the inner mission would have been transferred immediately into the indigenous context where, after the outer mission had recruited new members, they would quickly become a Lutheran community with the potential for an inner mission. Therefore, the members of such a community (the result of the outer mission) were treated like any other member of a Lutheran community, regardless of their colour or culture.

Löhe's mission theology was taught to the students of the Neuendettelsau institution by Friedrich Bauer and later on by the brothers Deinzers, university graduates, who integrated this theology into their broader academic programme. Bauer had gained fame by writing an excellent grammar of the German language which was republished fourteen times alone during his life (Pilhofer 1967:11) and became the base of the

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307 For more information see: www.gesellschaft-fuer-mission.de.
DUDEN, a standard work for correct German syntax today. Bauer also drafted the two basic manuscripts _Entwurf einer christlichen Dogmatik auf lutherischer Grundlage_ and _Entwurf einer christlichen Ethik auf lutherischer Grundlage_ pertaining to theological studies in Lutheran dogmatics and ethics. The style was much influenced by Löhe, but also included Bauer's own views on education as the route to individual freedom and 'Bedürfnislosigkeit' (lack of needs) (Pilhofer 1967:18-19). These were regarded as general forms of ethical value that pertained equally to the inner and the outer mission. Free will and individual choice were of paramount importance in the education at Neuendettelsau and a key element in its mission theology. During a six-month probation period, recruits had to prove that they were absolutely certain of their calling if they were to be confirmed as permanent.

In Carl Strehlow's mission approach, individual 'free choice' and true firm conviction was a formative concept. He perceived the indigenous people at Hermannsburg as individual human beings who could make free choices regarding their circumstances. Strehlow only accepted converts when they were firmly convinced of their step, their decision and their commitment was based on free will, or they could convince him of their sincerity. Conversion and confirmation allowed indigenous people to participate at Hermannsburg as full members of the Lutheran community (which included rights and responsibilities). In fact, he often discussed free will and conversion in his letters to his superiors in the south between 1895 and 1922, and often referenced it in his contributions to the _Kirchlichen Mitteilungen_.108 Paradoxically, Löhe’s doctrine of the inner and outer mission, and Bauer’s emphasis on freedom (from desire) may have had an unexpected consequence in the central Australian Hermannsburg. In this lonely and isolated setting, Strehlow came to treat his converts as his community. His outer mission became his inner mission, so that the missionary became the pastor (ingkarte) of, in his view, freely baptised Christians. Löhe’s Lutheran doctrines, with their inward gaze that may have signified a sect more than a broad church, became for Strehlow the basis for an unusual Christian community. The mutual engagement between him and his flock, based on his partial misperception of his congregation,

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108 The _Kirchlichen Mitteilungen_ was a monthly church newspaper about mission work in North America, Australia and New Guinea that had been publishing since 1868. However, it also published letters and some times even brief accounts on indigenous languages, beliefs and customs. It was edited by the University-educated mission inspector Deinzer, the head of the Neuendettelsau Seminary where Carl Strehlow had been educated and prepared for his calling.
may have helped facilitate both his linguistic and ethnographic work. Dr Herbert Basedow remarked in a report on his medical inspection of Hermannsburg in 1920 that:

In Pastor Strehlow the Mission possesses a man who during his twenty five years sojourn at Hermannsburg has mastered the aboriginal’s language and his peculiar ways. As a disciplinarian he has established himself at the head of the tribal group he manages, and even in quarrels and feuds of the bitterest nature his word is and must be final. Moreover the religion taught is sincere and not overdone. I have visited mission-stations in most parts of Australia but must confess that none has impressed me so much as Hermannsburg. (Basedow 1920-1922:22)

Johannes Deinzer’s particular concern led Carl Strehlow in this direction. As the main teacher and director at Neuendettelsau until 1897, Deinzer expanded interest in the outer mission to encompass Australia, Papua New Guinea and East-Africa. It was under him that the first graduates of Neuendettelsau were sent to Australia. By 1914 about 40 had gone to Australia, the majority as pastors for the German immigrants to Australia (Pilhofer 1967:22; See also Koller (1924) on Deinzer). Deinzer had another interest that may have influenced Carl: ethics. He placed a heavy emphasis on ethics in his classes and favoured students who could follow his intellectual path (Pilhofer 1967:23). He considered ethics as more important than dogmatics, because it allowed interpretation according to (historical) context. The dogmatic and ethics texts drafted by Bauer were the main texts for the students which he and, to a limited degree, his brother edited and expanded. These works had to be copied by hand by all students, as the *Christliche Ethik auf lutherischer Grundlage* only appeared in print in 1904. The treaty on dogmatics was published in 1921 by Otto Küffner (Pilhofer 1967:18). Notwithstanding the rigors of these scholarly tasks, Deinzer’s interest in ethics, encouraged among his students, may have directed their missionary task to human engagement with others; an interest in the other person as much as in pietistic

formulae. It is likely that Streholw’s propensity to acknowledge the human dignity of others, including indigenous Australians, was encouraged by Deinzer’s classes.

Although the training at Neuendettelsau was very demanding and strictly regimented, there was also an emphasis on community and community spirit that gave the students a strong sense of belonging and security (Koller 1924). The seminarists were embedded in the communal life of the village as well as in the seminary itself which was perceived as a ‘family’. The strong ideal of family and community was reflected in the perception that the director was seen as the father (patriarch). The students helped in community life as well as in other Neuendettelsau institutions like the psychiatric clinic (Koller 1924) at the time called ‘Blödenhaus’ (mad house or lunatic asylum) (Jenner 2004). They were enjoined to develop empathy for others and practice the true love of ‘thy neighbour’ (Nächstentliebe). This emphasis on communal spirit was crucial in building a loyal and strong community and in maintaining compassion for others. For those who went to Australia and other areas of Oceania, this approach was transferred to the indigenous context.

Neuendettelsau was less conservative and pietistic than other mission training institutions, like Hermannsburg or the Basler Mission in Switzerland, for instance. It gave its students a broad education in humanities (relative to their time of course), including the classics and languages (Moore 2003:23). The whole education was geared towards the development of strong personalities who would be fit for the demanding tasks and challenges that awaited them at their oversea’s postings. The hard training was to equip the students with self-discipline, endurance and an inner, spiritual (geistige) strength that would carry them through hardships and environments that would push them to their limits. The teachers at Neuendettelsau were painfully aware of the realities that the young people had to face once out in the field (Koller 1924, Pilhofer 1967). At the same time, community shaped by patriarchal structure was emphasised to give the individual a context and to provide

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106 The Missionsanstalt seems to have been better integrated and accepted in the village of Neuendettelsau and its life than the other institutions of Löhö such as the psychiatric clinic, Dikonesenhaus, hospital or Armenhaus (poor house). These institutions were for mid nineteenth century cutting edge social institutions and very experimental. Indeed, Löhö’s Dikonesenhaus was at the forefront of female education which Frieda Streholow had briefly attended. The historical context should not be forgotten. At the time it was not the state but the church who took interest in social issue and pursued reforms in health and education for the general public.
fraternal support. These ideas helped to underline as well a natural shift from outer to inner mission within a newly formed community. These diverse influences in intellectual life, theology and human social ethics all emerged to some degree in the very different and remote context of Carl Strehlow’s Finke River Mission at Hermannsburg. It gave its community some unusual features of humanistic engagement (along with the missionisation) hardly known in other central Australian frontier settlements.

Carl Strehlow graduated with a ‘gut plus’ (good plus) in 1891111 and was sent to his first posting in April 1892 (Liebermeister 1998:19). He had just turned twenty when he was on his way to Bethesda in remote and arid Australia to join J.G. Reuther (1861-1914) who had left the Neuendettelsau Seminary only four years earlier.

Language, Ethnography and the Lutheran Tradition in Australia

The milieu that Strehlow entered when he came to Australia would be both a help and a hindrance when it came to his subsequent studies. German missionaries in Australia brought their linguistic tradition with them. Among the missionaries, it went without saying that it was paramount to learn the language of the people they were working with and sent to serve. It had been a crucial part of Luther’s reformation to spread the gospel in German rather than in Latin or even a German rendition of the Vulgate. Luther preached that the word of God was to be taught in vernacular and translated into a people’s mother tongue (Wendt 2001:8). As a consequence, in the nineteenth century it was characteristic of German Protestant mission theology and practice to pay special attention to a people’s language and its implications for idiom and other dimensions of culture (Schild 2004:54).

It was clear to German missionaries that it was essential to know a people’s language to be able to convey and persuade them of Christianity, as conversion was to be by free will and choice. Already in the late 1830s the missionaries Teichelmann and Schürmann, who had been trained at the Dresden Mission Society, started documenting the Kaurna language of South Australia (Leske 1996:30,92-94). Within 18 months they produced the only existing grammar of this language and a dictionary

111 Zeugniss der Neuendettelsauer Missionsanstalt, 17.4.1892.
with 2000 words. Their work has allowed the partial recreation and revitalisation of Kaurna today (Amery 2004: 9-12). At least sometimes, not surprisingly, a by-product of these studies of indigenous languages was not only grammars and dictionaries but also collections of myth and other traditional laws and customs.

In the 1860s with a stream of protestant missionaries arriving in the Lake Eyre region (Bethesda (Kilalpaninna) and Kopperamanna) the Diyari language and culture received a great deal of attention. One of the first missionaries at Kilalpaninna Mission, Carl Schoknecht, wrote a simple Diyari grammar and a wordlist (Schoknecht 1997:16,80). His successors continued to collect data on the Diyari language and culture until the mission was finally closed in 1917. The Lutheran ethnographers of this region are well-known today. J.G. Reuther produced a monumental 13-volume manuscript on the Diyari and Otto Siebert collected a great amount of data for A.W. Howitt that was incorporated into the latter’s classic *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (Howitt 1904). The first Hermannsburg missionaries, A.H. Kempe and W.F. Schwarz, studied language as well as the culture of the Western Arrernte people in order to develop effective communication for their transmission of the gospel to the local population. In the course of learning about the Arrernte, Kempe and Schulze both published linguistic and some ethnographic data on the people they met at Ntaria.

Upon arrival in 1892 at Bethesda Mission near Lake Eyre, Carl Strehlow immediately started to study the language of the Diyari. According to Otto Siebert and Reuther’s son, the linguistic achievements at Kilalpaninna were Strehlow’s rather than Reuther’s who was ‘lame at languages’. Even for the Diyari grammar Strehlow is said to have been ‘the mainspring of the work’.\footnote{Tindale interviewed Siebert and Reuther’s son in the 1930s. Tindale Collection Acc No 1538, SA Museum.} In Reuther’s defence, it has to be remarked, that the comment ‘lame at languages’ was made in comparison to Carl Strehlow, who was an outstanding linguist, as well as a competent musician (Lohe 1965:5), and to Otto Siebert, who was particularly interested in languages and ethnography for mission purposes (Nobbs 2005).
At Hermannsburg, Strehlow became fluent in Arrernte and preached in vernacular within months of his arrival (Schild 2004, John Strehlow 2004, Eymann 1908). In 1896, two years after his arrival on Arrernte territory, Gillen (Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch 1997:118-119) remarked in a letter to Spencer that ‘Rev Strehlow’ spoke the language of the Finke very well and used his services as a translator for his anthropological research in Hermannsburg. Strehlow compiled an Arrernte Service Book published in 1904; it was called Galtjindintjamea-Pepa Aranda Wolambarinjaka and included one hundred German hymns translated into Arrernte. This work was partially based on the work of his predecessors, in particular Kempe’s catechism.\(^{113}\)

In his last period in Hermannsburg between 1913 and 1919 Carl Strehlow translated the New Testament into Arrernte.\(^{114}\) Parts of it were published after his death (Hebart 1938:317) as Ewangelia Lukaka (1925) and Ewangelia Taramatara (1928), however, without mentioning Strehlow’s role as translator. The first Arrernte translation of the bible was an amazing achievement. Thorough knowledge of the host language was required to be able to translate this text. This translation showed that indigenous languages were just as complex as European languages, and could be turned to the same concepts.

As soon as the mission staff had managed to acquire a moderate proficiency in the vernacular, Lutheran missionaries at Bethesda and Hermannsburg used the indigenous languages in church services and in schools. Lessons were also held in German and English (Moore 2003:24). This ready and constant deployment of language meant that the missionaries were constantly developing their proficiency moving towards that time when their skills would be sufficiently developed to begin the translation task. The latter required familiarity with idiom and generally this came only through immersion and through trial and error. According to Eymann (1908:476), in 1897 Strehlow was still making amusing language mistakes to the great delight of his indigenous congregation at Hermannsburg Mission, Ntaria.

\(^{113}\) Carl Strehlow’s letters to Kaibel (1899-1909) held at the LAA. Strehlow had been able to draw on published and unpublished Arrernte language material (Schild 2004; John Strehlow 2004:83). The SRC and LAA hold unpublished material by Kempe produced between 1877 and 1891.

\(^{114}\) Carl Strehlow’s letter to the Mission Friends on the 9.1.1920, Albrecht Collection Acc. No. AA662, SA Museum.
John Strehlow (2004:82) suggests that his grandfather’s anthropological research also started not long after his arrival in Australia. This was in 1893 when, with the translation of the New Testament into Diyari, Carl spent much time with senior Aboriginal men working out which terms, semantic fields and concepts were most appropriate for the bible translation. This is a fair assumption, because language evaluation involves the understanding of cultural and social concepts. However, this early linguistic research would not have been a conscious decision towards anthropology, but was geared towards concrete mission purposes.

The first preserved ethnographic research by Carl Strehlow is on social classification. It is documented in an 1899 letter from Otto Siebert to A.W. Howitt, in which Siebert uses information and charts on Arrernte marriage rules and subsection systems collected by Carl Strehlow. The information was presumably collected at the beginning of 1899 or earlier. However, in 1896 Strehlow collected ethnographic data for Gillen who had visited Hermannsburg. On the 14 July 1896 Gillen wrote to Spencer that he had ‘Mr Strehlow on the job and he, having a fair knowledge of the Arunta language, should be able to learn something shortly’ (Mulvaney, Morphy & Petch 1997:130). This comment seems to refer to research into the marriage rules of the people living at Hermannsburg (which may have included Luritja people). Additionally some obscure loose notes in Gillen’s notebook of the 1890s, mention Strehlow in connection with research on Ingkwere ceremonies, called Inkura in Carl Strehlow’s work and Engwura in Spencer and Gillen’s. One of the notes is labelled ‘to Strehlow’, dated ‘26/8/96’ and a remark reads: ‘Have the old men any tradition as to the origin of “Rev C Strehlow” Engwura did it originate with altjirra Knaribata?’ This intriguing note is part of a longer piece, but unfortunately the rest appears to be missing. Finally, Strehlow’s personal interest in Aboriginal mythology is evident in occasional small remarks in his published letters to the Kirchlichen Mitteilungen.

Strehlow’s first report on Hermannsburg, written at the end of 1894, for example, shows his immediate interest in myth. He describes briefly how the palms at Palm

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115 Otto Siebert to A.W. Howitt, 22.4.1899 (Howitt Collection at Melbourne Museum).
116 Loose pages in Gillen’s Field-diary 1896 (Barr Smith Special Collection SR/E).
117 Did Gillen forget to reference a crucial informant on Engwura? And who is this altjirra Knaribata [old man altjirra]?
Valley (then called Palm Creek), were created according to the beliefs of the 'Aldolinga tribe': 'According to the old heathen beliefs the gods from the high north brought the seeds to this place.'\(^{118}\) He would later collect a detailed story and its associated songs (Strehlow 1907:88-90, 1910:129-132) about Mt Rubuntja and the fire ancestors who came from the north to Palm Valley; this is still a well known myth among Western Arrernte people. It was one of these unreflected, nearly passing observations, that drew in 1901 von Leonhardi's attention to Strehlow, who from von Leonhardi’s point of view, was at the remotest place on earth.

In Australia, Strehlow had access to Warneck's *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift*\(^ {119}\) as well as to the *Kirchlichen Mitteilungen*, the monthly news-letter of the Neuendettelsau Seminary and *Kirchen- und Missions Zeitung* of the evangelic-Lutheran church of Australia, published in Tanunda South Australia. These monthly publications were not only parish and community announcements, but also included numerous items on different countries and their cultures, including religion, mythology and cosmology. The ethnographic reports were literally from all over the world and some of them were of a high standard. Thus, through his reading, Strehlow became increasingly familiar with other cultures and religious belief systems. In his writings on the Arrernte, for example, he makes an explicit comparison with West African beliefs\(^ {120}\) and, at another time, with Chinese ancestral worship.\(^ {121}\) Neither, he maintains, are comparable to the Arrernte perception of ancestors.

Like many other theologians, clerics and missionaries, Dr. Gustav Warneck, Professor at the Halle University, emphasised the importance of learning local languages for missionaries to transmit God's word (Wendt 2001:8; Veit 2004a). He was one of the main Lutheran scholars of mission studies and well known in German nineteenth century missionary circles. He was a prolific writer on mission topics. In 1874, he founded the *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift*, and was its editor for decades (Lutheran Cyclopaedia 1954:1120). This journal published ethnographic material from all over the world as well as theological and other theoretical treatises. Warneck's main thoughts on mission were synthesised in *Evangelische Missionslehre. Ein


\(^{119}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 23.10.1907 (SH-SP-14-1).

\(^{120}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 23.10.1907 (SH-SP-14-1).

\(^{121}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).
missionstheoretischer Versuch (1897). His chapter on the justification of ethnographic work for mission purposes gives some insights into how and why missionaries could become so interested in ethnography (Warneck 1897:278-304).

The nucleus of Warneck’s thinking on anthropology was that Christianity had the universal capacity to adapt to all peoples and thus could assimilate its teachings to all ethnic, social, cultural and state forms (Warneck 1897:279). In his view, all humans in all times, climates and cultures had religion and language (Warneck 1897:285). He maintained that since there were no peoples in the world that were speechless, there also could be no people that were without religion. This was evident in the fact that the gospel could be preached in all languages and all languages were suited for bible translation. He maintained that translation of the evangelical message into a language actually demonstrated thereby that that language was a vehicle for the relevant culture’s religious and spiritual concepts.

Warneck’s arguments on humanity’s spiritual unity reflected his homogenetic views which stemmed from his reading of the Old and New Testament. He used current German anthropological literature of the time by eminent scholars like Waitz, Ratzel and Müller to support his theological views, and maintained that the unity of mankind was also an ethnological fact. He wrote ‘Humanity is a unity, despite of its multitude’ (Warneck 1897:285). His views were consistent with those of Herder and the Humboldts. He maintained that humanity’s spiritual and intellectual unity was particularly manifest in languages which were a common feature among all humankind. He was also of the view that each language is a masterpiece of Geist (Warneck 1897:286). He postulated that there were no peoples with an inferior language and that the word of God (due to its universality) could be translated into any language and transmitted in any language.

Owing to this universality of a spiritual propensity to Christianity, in Warneck’s view it was never necessary to destroy a culture in order for its people to become Christian converts (Warneck 1897:282). Rather, the object was to learn about them properly so Christian thinking could be conveyed in the appropriate language and cultural

122 Warneck uses the plural: Kulturen.
concepts. He wrote that ‘Christianity has a universal capacity to adopt’ and that ‘the Christian mission rejects emphatically the conscious or unconscious amalgamation of Christianisation and Europeanisation (Anglicanisation, Germanisation, etc.) or even Christianisation and civilisation itself’ (Warneck 1897:279). A few years later he was however not that empathic on this issue (Veit 2004a:139). Nevertheless, the initial position reminds of a guideline of French Jesuit missionaries to East Asia in 1659 cited in Veit (1991:129): ‘We do not want to carry our customs into this empire but our faith, which does not look at or violate the manner and customs of any nation but rather wishes to preserve them’.

Although it is not clear that Strehlow was taught Warneck’s principles on language and religion (or ethnography) at the Neuendettelsau Seminary, Veit maintains that it is reasonable to assume that he was at least familiar with some of these Warneckian thoughts about the ‘foreign and the familiar’ (Veit 2004a:146). Strehlow’s approach to language and culture at his two Australian postings and his anthropological work are consistent with Warneck’s approach. Some of Warneck’s earlier writings and pamphlets seem to have been available at the seminary’s library and Carl may have read them. However when Warneck’s first volume of his main work was published in 1897, Strehlow had already left the seminary and had been living for five years in the Australian desert. He is more likely to have acquainted himself with Warneckian thoughts when he was already in the field and where his observations could corroborate these ideas.

Otto Siebert, also a graduate of the Neuendettelsau seminary and Strehlow’s contemporary, knew the work of Warneck. Siebert was a missionary at Bethesda between 1894 and 1902 (Nobbs 2005:26) and was deeply interested in the culture of the Diyari, presumably to further the success of his mission work among the Diyari. Strehlow and Siebert had studied together at Neuendettelsau, spend a few months together at Bethesda, and been married on the same day at Point Pass.

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123 German wording: ‘Mit aller Energie protestiert die christliche Mission gegen die bewusste oder unbewusste Vereinleitungen von Christianisierung und Europaisierung (Anglisierung, Germanisierung u. dgl.) oder selbst Christianisierung und Zivilisierung’.
Carl Strehlow's keen interest in mythology is the result of a number of factors including his education in the classics at the Neuendettelsau seminary and earlier by Scidel who also emphasised German folklore. He was probably from the outset open to the oral literatures and worldviews of the Aboriginal people he met, because he may have felt that the ancient worlds of the Old and New Testaments as well as Greek mythology and German folklore which he knew from language studies of Greek and Hebrew, had affinities. Such a view seems to appear in a statement he made towards the end of his life:

The well-constructed language of the Aranda remind one of the old Greek language; in fact, it has more moods than the last mentioned. It possesses an indicative, conditional, optative, minative, and imperative, it has not only the usual tempora, present, imperfect, perfect and future, but also three aorist forms, aoristus remotus, aoristus remotor, and a remotissimus; besides, it has dual for all three persons. In the declination of the noun there are not only a double nominative (transitive and intransitive) and a genitive, dative, and accusative, as in other old languages, but also a vocative, ablative, a double locative, an instrumentative, a causative, &c. The derivations and compounds are often quite marvellous. Then the great number of words! It is difficult to count them on account of the many derivations and dialectical forms but, the latter included I estimate, that the Aranda language possess not less that 6000 words.\textsuperscript{124}

Carl Strehlow was a scholar, with a positive and intimate appreciation of the ancient biblical and classical worlds which were older and different to his own; in Australia he came in contact with another different world, which seemed to him in some ways analogous to these remote worlds. This new world opened itself up to him through his intensive study of its languages and his personal interest in myth and song, and allowed Carl Strehlow to enter the world of Aboriginal mythology which gave him a glimpse of the worldviews of the Arrernte and Luritja.

\textsuperscript{124} Carl Strehlow, The Register, 7.12.1921.
Thus, language went hand in hand with culture and its particular intellectual concepts, it was not a big step to ethnographic and other scientific research (Wendt 2001:9). Strehlow’s predecessors Kempe and Schulze had already compiled some ethnographic data which had been partially published in the early 1890s. Schulze had even communicated with Howitt on aspects of Arrernte culture - it goes without saying that this data included ‘marriage rules’ - between 1887 and 1889.125 Thus, precedence for ethnography as a by-product of language studies in the mission context existed at Hermannsburg.

Yet Siebert’s experience shows that on the local Australian scene, ethnographic pursuits - as opposed to linguistic ones - were viewed with more ambivalence, if not suspicion, by the Lutheran church. In the course of his anthropological research, allegations were made against Siebert. In the view of his superiors, he was neglecting his calling for the sake of this scientific work. In a brilliantly argued letter of 28 March 1900 to the Lutheran committee at Point Pass, Siebert rejected these allegations. He made a strong case for the use and application of ethnography in evangelism (Siebert 2005:46-53). His letter reads like a manifesto for ethnographic research in the name of God and the mission, and was convincing enough for the pietistic Point Pass committee to concede, albeit grudgingly. They allowed Siebert to pursue his scientific research as long as it did not interfere with his mission duties (Nobbs 2005:39).

Strehlow knew about this unpleasant incident between Siebert and the Lutheran committee.126 It may have led him to heightened circumspection regarding his own research. It is not clear whether or not he communicated further on anthropology with Siebert, beyond the data mentioned above regarding Arrernte kinship terminology, subsections and their basic functions. However, Strehlow’s letters to friends, family and superiors are virtually devoid of any indication that he was conducting a major ethnographic research project between 1901-1909. So far, I have found only passing references to his anthropological endeavours even to his brother-in-law, Christian Keysser, and to Carl Seidel in this period. Virtually all the remarks he makes are

125 Schulze’s letters to Howitt, 1887-1889 (State Library of Victoria, Howitt Papers MF 459, Box 1051/Icc).
126 Bogner to Carl Strehlow, Bethesda 8.5.1900 (SRC 1900-21-2).
directed to his editor, Baron von Leonhardi. When in 1905 Strehlow made a remark to Christian Keysser that he was researching the ‘Aranda Traditions’, his brother-in-law expressed surprise that it had not been done any earlier. This may reflect more about Strehlow’s mission board in Adelaide than it does about his own interests or aspirations.

Notwithstanding, there is one public statement made by Strehlow in which he felt compelled to show that Aboriginal people had complex religious beliefs. This was triggered by a facile statement of missionary Wiebusch who had proposed that indigenous Australians had only beliefs in ‘devils’. Another instance of public acknowledgement was a brief reference in a letter written to Pastor L. Kaibel in 1904. Strehlow remarked that he intended to ‘proceed very carefully with the publication of my research results, so that only what will withstand scrutiny will be printed’. This was written before he started working with von Leonhardi.

It is likely that Strehlow kept his anthropological research a secret because he was well aware of the conservative position of his superiors in the Barossa Valley. Possibly he thought that his ethnographic research would meet the same kind of resistance as did Siebert’s and later on Reuther’s work. J.M. Bogner had written to Strehlow that Siebert had wasted his time trying to explain his endeavours to their superiors in the Barossa Valley, because ‘they would not understand it’. In 1904, Reuther had send his superior Kaibel some Diyari myths from his collection which were remarked on in the following terms:

If instead of the big piles of legends and fables you have collected, which are of no use to anyone – who would anyway finance their publication? – you

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127 However, Seidel’s reaction to the first volume in 1908 suggests that Strehlow may have written about his research. Seidel organised public talks on Aboriginal culture for Carl when he was in Germany in 1910.
128 Christian Keysser to Carl Strehlow, 4.9.1905 (SRC 1905/26(a)).
130 Pastor L. Kaibel was the Chairman and chief executive of the Lutheran mission committee based in the Barossa Valley between 1900-1918. His successor was J.J. Stolz (Lohe 1977:27,32).
131 Carl Strehlow letter to Kaibel, 30.8.1904 (LAA).
132 Bogner was a co-missionary of Carl Strehlow between 1895 and 1900 at Hermannsburg. He too was a graduate from the Neuendettelsau Seminary.
133 Bogner to Carl Strehlow, 8.5.1900 (1900-21-2).
would send us brief monthly reports, you would be fulfilling your duty, satisfying us and be doing something useful.\footnote{Kaibel to Reuther, 18.2.1904 (LAA). Hereus and McCaul (2004:36) have also translated this passage. However, I am not sure if their interpretation of 'Lügenden' as 'liar legends', is correct. The spelling of this word may also be due to Kaibel's particular German dialect and not a Freudian slip.}

Carl Strehlow had justifiably been reserved and quiet about his anthropological work. Kaibel’s reaction to the first volume of *Die Aranda-und Loritja Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in 1908 was not much better than the one to Reuther’s work:

My heartfelt thanks for sending me your work on the Aranda. It is a beautiful monument of German diligence. In any case, the material is the most worthless one can think of which has been brought into written language. Almost all is chaff with hardly a kernel of moral value here and there. It certainly needs not a little self-denial on your part to have recorded those thoughtless legends in which only an ethnographer could be interested in.\footnote{Kaibel to Carl Strehlow, 6.8.1908 (LAA). Also quoted in Veit (2004b:95).}

Left solely to this barren field, the seed of Strehlow’s interest would surely have withered and died in the isolation of central Australia. Lutherans in Germany had furnished Strehlow with linguistic skills, social and ethical dispositions and even a theology that could nurture his budding interest in ethnography. However, in the Australian milieu, this came with a pietistic parochialism and anti-intellectualism that could have been his undoing. While his superiors supported linguistic studies that had a tangible use in spreading the gospel, ethnography was seen as an indulgence and possibly to a certain degree as blasphemy. This made the contribution and support of another and different type of mentor absolutely crucial for Carl Strehlow’s ethnography.

**Baron von Leonhardi’s Anthropological Influence**

Without doubt, Baron Moritz Wilhelm Georg von Leonhardi was an important and direct influence on Strehlow’s development as an anthropologist. He was born on the 9 March 1856 in Frankfurt am Main; the son of a wealthy, aristocratic family of the principality of Hessen. Moritz attended the Darmstadt Gymnasium (Secondary
School) receiving a classic German humanistic education. He matriculated in 1876 and took up law in Heidelberg (Völker 2001:176). However, he was soon forced to terminate his law studies due to ill health. After recovering from illness, he turned his attention to the subjects of natural science and philosophy. Although he was the Archducal Chamberlain of Hessen and a member of the Upper House between 1892-1910, Baron von Leonhardi spent much of his time studying on his country retreat in Gross Karben which had been in his family’s possession since 1790.

Moritz von Leonhardi was a contemporary of eminent nineteenth century German writers and thinkers such as Bastian, Virchow, Ratzel, Frobenius, Graebner, Schmidt and Boas. He was familiar with the current trends of the cultural sciences and seems also to have had a close understanding of their main intellectual ancestors like Herder, Kant and the Humboldt brothers. The Humboldtian ideas of the unity of man and the project of languages, Herder’s concept of Volksgeist, Bastian’s belief in independent invention due to the psychic unity of mankind and an interest in the emerging diffusionist Kulturkreislehre (theory of culture circles) are all found in von Leonhardi’s letters to Carl Strehlow.¹³⁶

In the last decade of von Leonhardi’s life, anthropology moved into the centre of his interests. He became a classical armchair anthropologist, corresponding and debating from his study with a number of well-known scientists in Europe like A. Lang, N.W. Thomas, P.W. Schmidt, H. Klaatsch, F. von Luschan and numerous representatives of the natural sciences, and reading everything on anthropology available to him. According to Dr. Bernhard Hagen (Strehlow 1911), the director of the Frankfurt ethnological museum, von Leonhardi had a close to complete anthropological library, including books not readily available in Germany (Völker 2001:178). His library held not only books but also most anthropological journals published in America, Britain, France and the German-speaking world. He subscribed to all major journals on anthropology including the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie; Man, Folk Lore, American Anthropologist and Anthropos. He was also an occasional contributor to the German

¹³⁶ Von Leonhardi also corresponded with Reuther and Siebert (see Völker 2001:173-218).
weekly journal *Globus*. His library\(^{137}\) and his letters to Carl Strehlow, document what von Leonhardi had read and make it possible to gauge what his methodological and theoretical position had been. A number of comments and comparisons by von Leonhardi on American, African, Australian and Melanesian indigenous peoples, Asian 'high cultures' and theories by Frazer, Lang, Schmidt, Graebner, Foy, Fison, Howitt and Roth, indicate his broad knowledge of nineteenth century international anthropology. In several letters to Carl Strehlow he refers to anthropological hypotheses and debates of the day, which he asks Strehlow to test, so they could deflate some of the current 'fairy-tales' like 'group marriage of primeval times'\(^{138}\) or 'a disaster (...) like the one of Spencer and Gillen's reincarnation theory'\(^{139}\) or 'A sun cult, which exists without doubt amongst the North American Indians, but does not seem likely to me in Australia'\(^{140}\).

In line with the Zeitgeist of nineteenth century German anthropology, von Leonhardi believed that thorough empirical research had to be conducted before universal laws pertaining to humankind and ideas of origin could be approached and generated. The evolutionistic position of the English anthropological establishment seemed highly speculative to him. Although Moritz von Leonhardi did not subscribe to an evolutionary proposition, due to his grounding in a humanistic tradition, which paid tribute to the plurality and particularity of human kind, like most European cultural scientists, he believed that the indigenous cultures of the colonised world were doomed. Bastian's call for salvage anthropology had resulted in frantic ethnographic research and artefact collecting as traditional cultures seemed to be rapidly disappearing faced with colonialism.

In this context, religion was the most discussed and written about topic around the turn of the century. Central Australian Aboriginal people, the Arrernte in particular, occupied the centre of this anthropological discourse. Through Spencer and Gillen's work they had attained collective celebrity on the international anthropological stage

\(^{137}\) Baron von Leonhardi's library survived World War II. It is still in Gross-Karben. However, the ethnological publications were integrated into the library of the Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt which holds a large amount of early anthropological publications.

\(^{138}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 10.4.1907.

\(^{139}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 15.12.1907.

\(^{140}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 7.8.1906.
(Morton 1992). The Horn Expedition report and *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (Spencer and Gillen 1899) had intrigued and fascinated von Leonhardi like the rest of the anthropological world. Indigenous Australian religion became particularly worthy of study. Von Leonhardi perceived the need for further empirical research among the Arrernte. The existing material in particular on mythology and language was not sufficient or adequate to give an idea of the Volksgeist of the Arrernte or any other central Australian people. Still, in mid 1908 von Leonhardi complained to Strehlow on what was linguistically available, as it did not satisfy his standards in the slightest:

I did not think that you would be satisfied with Basedow's work. Our periodicals always accept such work; because – with incredibly few exceptions – we have no other vocabularies. The vocabularies in the 3-volume work of Curr are not much better and yet we have to work with them. And that is really depressing. In regard to phonetics, there are no correctly recorded Australian languages at all in the existing literature, even Threlkeld, Günther, Meyer are inadequate.

This German intellectual background and its conditioning determined how von Leonhardi guided Carl Strehlow's ethnographic research and formed their methodological and theoretical approaches. His comments on methodology to Carl Strehlow reveal his commitment and desire to see indigenous peoples described in their own right without considering any theories and making hasty inferences. This intention is clearly reflected in the style of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*. Carl Strehlow's monograph is pre-eminently descriptive and factual rather than theoretical, thus belonging to the tradition of German ethnography which was interested in source material rather than premature theoretical insights.

Moritz von Leonhardi's dedication and persistency kept Strehlow to the task and provided Strehlow with the intellectual support and recognition he needed to sustain his research into the culture and literature of the Arrernte and Luritja peoples of

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141 Basedow published in 1908 a vocabulary of Arunta in the German journal *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*.
142 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 29.8.1908. However, even today the vexed question of Arrernte orthography has not been solved (Kenny & Mitchell 2005:5; Breen 2005:93-102).
central Australia. Strehlow’s development as an anthropologist was furthered by von Leonhardi who supplied him with current articles in the emerging discipline, asked relevant questions, provoked thought and sent him back into the field to verify his findings when he was sceptical of Strehlow’s results (see Chapter IV).

When Carl Strehlow started to work with Baron von Leonhardi, all conditions for successful research were in place: he had already lived with the Arrernte and Luritja for over ten years, he was part of the community at Hermannsburg, and was fluent in the Arrernte and Luritja languages. He had also collected ethnographic data for some years with a publication in mind\textsuperscript{143} including myths and songs.\textsuperscript{144} Strehlow had already collected over 50 Arrernte myths in April 1906\textsuperscript{145} (and had investigated the concept of tywerrenge) as well as recorded ‘300 Tjurunga’\textsuperscript{146} songs.\textsuperscript{147} A few months later he informed N.W. Thomas that he had 500 songs.\textsuperscript{148} These numbers are somewhat ambiguous, because the Arrernte songs amount to 59 and Luritja songs to about 20 in his publication, unless he included all individual verses as well as the verses within the prose versions in his first two volumes.\textsuperscript{149} His interest in indigenous language and through language in culture was not unusual for a German missionary in Australia or at any other oversea’s posting. But this interest in ethnography and in particular in mythology was reinforced and encouraged by Baron von Leonhardi. On the 9 September 1905 von Leonhardi explicitly articulated the linguistic agenda and the collection of indigenous text that would make Carl Strehlow’s work unique for its time in Australia:

Myths in the Aranda language with interlinear translations would be of great value; and a dictionary and a grammar would provide the key to them. A dictionary outlining the meaning of words as well as short explanations of the

\textsuperscript{143} Carl Strehlow to Kaibel, 30.8.1904 (LAA).
\textsuperscript{144} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 30.7.1907 (SH-SP-17-1).
\textsuperscript{145} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
\textsuperscript{146} Tywerrenge modern spelling, usually means today ‘sacred object’ and not often spoken about (Breen 2000:60). The term Tjurunga (Carl and T.G.H. Strehlow’s spelling) is a very complex term referring to sacra and depending on context means different things. Here of course it does not refer to the objects.
\textsuperscript{147} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi (SH-SP-2-1).
\textsuperscript{148} Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1). The end of this quote echoes his editors language programme, articulated in 1905.
\textsuperscript{149} Or are they part of T.G.H. Strehlow’s Songs of Central Australia?
meaning of individual objects, characters in the myths etc., is highly valued in
science.\textsuperscript{150}

Von Leonhardi's suggestion was based on Wilhelm von Humboldt's view that there
were two steps in language research which needed to be undertaken to be able to
make statements about a people's culture and language. The first step was to describe
the structure of the language (grammar and dictionary) and then its use (Gebrauch)
(Humboldt [1820]1994:16), with which he meant oral literary text (Foertsch
2001:113). He repeated this view, again in reversed order, after he had read a
transcription of an Aboriginal song by R.H. Mathews (Martin 2007:127):

We are still lacking good texts in the original language with interlinear
translation; of course the texts would have to have been recorded with the
greatest precision. Such texts, though, would be more pertinent at the moment
than grammars and vocabularies, which the scholar in the end – if the texts are
only somewhat extensive – could derive from them himself.\textsuperscript{151}

However, von Leonhardi repeatedly emphasised the importance of a publication of a
comprehensive grammar and comparative dictionary of Arrernte, Luritja and Diyari
as he regarded it as essential. According to von Leonhardi and Carl Strehlow,\textsuperscript{152}
the dictionary was going to be part of their publication on Arrernte and Luritja culture,
literature and language. A language study was to provide the key for the interpretation
of the extensive collections of Arrernte and Luritja text materials.\textsuperscript{153} The language
study would have been published separately from Strehlow's ethnographical material,
which von Leonhardi thought would be the culmination of Strehlow's work:

As the coronation of the total work, you must finally write a language study\textsuperscript{154}
of Aranda and Luritja.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{150} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 9.9.1905.
\textsuperscript{152} Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
\textsuperscript{153} To illustrate certain theoretical points made by the emerging Kulturkreislehre in regard to language
comparison which should have shed some light on historical movements and migration of peoples.
\textsuperscript{154} German word: Sprachlehre.
\textsuperscript{155} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 23.12.1908.
This language study would be the last piece to unlock the inner most and secret thoughts of the Arrernte and Luritja and reveal their Volksgeister. Even before the first volume of the *Die Aranda- und Luritja Stämme in Zentral-Australien* was published at the end of 1907, Strehlow had collected over 6000 Arrernte and Luritja (Kukatja)\(^{156}\) words and derivations as well as hundreds of Diyari words and a number of Narrinyeri words. His dictionary contains extensive references to kinship terms, ceremonial vocabulary, mythology and material culture,\(^{157}\) as well as historical incidents.\(^{158}\)

The ‘coronation’ of his masterpiece never came to be. Carl Strehlow’s dictionary is still an unpublished handwritten manuscript, bound and sewn together by hand, based on work commenced during the 1890's.\(^{159}\) It is not exactly clear when Carl Strehlow started this dictionary. It predates his contact with von Leonhardi, who strongly encouraged him to work on it from 1905. T.G.H. Strehlow\(^{160}\) suggests that it was compiled between 1900 and 1907. However, this does not coincide with dates within the pages of the dictionary where Carl Strehlow writes: ‘Beendet am (finished on) 23. Aug. 1906’ in fine ink strokes and ‘Korrectur beendet am (corrections accomplished on) 15. Dec. 1909’ in darker and thicker ink strokes. Thus, it seems, the bulk of the dictionary had been collected by 1906 and its corrections had been accomplished by the end of 1909, before Strehlow left for Germany with his family mid 1910. This dictionary probably represents the largest and most comprehensive dictionary of

\(^{156}\) From letter L on, Luritja was called Kukatja, the self-label of the people whom the Arrernte called Luritja.

\(^{157}\) Aratjagata (A), tukarurulata (L), toa (D): Zeichen-Stöcke, die in die Nähe des Lagerplatzes gesteckt werden, Richtschild, Zielscheibe, Wegweiser. (Sign-sticks, which are stuck into the ground in the vicinity of the camp, directional sign, target, way-sign (Carl Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary1906/1909).


\(^{159}\) Different kinds of paper suggest that some parts of the unpublished dictionary are older than others. Some of the paper is the same as the handwritten manuscripts of the *Die Aranda- und Luritja Stämme in Zentral-Australien*, other paper seems to be older and is more fragile.

\(^{160}\) His son seems to have started to use this dictionary from the late 1920s on; little notes stuck in it and some annotations within the manuscript indicate the time frame. This dictionary was, according to a note accompanying it, found on the desk of T.G.H. Strehlow when he died in 1978. From his father’s four original manuscripts, the dictionary seems to have been the most used as it is very worn compared to the others. All manuscripts require urgent conservation work. I imagine that these manuscripts must have been of unimaginable value to T.G.H. Strehlow, as professionally they gave him an immense head start and emotionally – they contained the intellectual spirit of his father.

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indigenous Australian languages compiled around the turn of the century and to date. It is a unique documentary record in Australia.\textsuperscript{161}

Strehlow’s linguistic and philological discussions on language and indigenous text were very detailed when he responded to his editor; his own observations range from pronunciation\textsuperscript{162} and grammatical, etymological to semantic interpretations of key terms like Altjira – aljerinda etc. reflecting Carl Strehlow’s intimate knowledge of Arrernte and Luritja intellectual concepts. Strehlow even tried to systematically and consistently employ (Breen 2005:94) an orthography of the indigenous languages he was documenting at a time when spelling systems and the study of language were not well developed in Australia (Moore 2003). He remarked on his system:

When you compare my work with Spencer and Gillen’s, you will immediately notice that our spelling of names is completely different, because the two gentlemen choose the English spelling, I in contrast use the continental one. It is a pity that Spencer and Gillen did not use the latter as well, which Mr. Spencer as professor in Melbourne must have known.\textsuperscript{163}

Carl Strehlow’s interest in language which according to German thought contains the Volksgeist of a people came as second nature to him; and coming from a deeply Christian background, all people before God were equal. For missionaries this was proven by the fact that the bible could be translated into all known languages of the

\textsuperscript{161} Carl Strehlow also compiled a separate ‘Deutsch-Aranda Wörterbuch’ (German-Arrernte dictionary), which was possibly compiled when he arrived in 1894 at Hermannsburg [or it may stem from the period between 1905 and 1909], and a draft Arrernte grammar. This grammar indicates that it was “Beendet am 18. April 1910” not long before he and his family left for Germany. The Strehlow Research Centre also holds a manuscript of a preliminary Diyari wordlist (circa 1893/04) presumably collected during his first placement at Killalpinnia Mission. Carl Strehlow seems to have produced a second extensive Arrernte, German and Luritja wordlist, which seems to have been compiled for mission use after he returned from Germany in 1912 and was typewritten around 1919 when Carl seems to have acquired or had access to a typewriter. It is likely that he started to put it together during his work on the translation of the New Testament into Arrernte which he accomplished in 1919. This second word collection is not a dictionary like his handwritten dictionary of Arrernte, Luritja, German and Diyari terms of 1909 which usually gives explanations of each term. It is a wordlist of single glosses of Arrernte, German and Luritja (held at the LAA) with an Appendix of additional words (which is also in the FitzHerbert-Strehlow Papers, Item 2 called 21 typescript pages of Aranda words. Page 1 headed ‘Anhang zum Wörterbuch von Missionar Strehlow, genannt ‘Neue Woerter’ with c. 1536 words). I am not completely convinced that this second typewritten manuscript is really by Carl Strehlow. To verify this an analysis of the typescript and dates are necessary.

\textsuperscript{162} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 23.9.1909.

\textsuperscript{163} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 13.12.1906 (SH-SP-7-1).
world. Among Jesuit missionaries and scholars, and there were many, this had been common knowledge (Foertsch 2001). Protestant clerics had made a similar experience by translating the bible into a variety of mother-tongues in Europe and overseas since Luther’s Reformation. Strehlow’s work had to be by definition anti-evolutionistic and homogenetic, a position in line with the genesis. The result was a work of the German humanistic style that emanated directly from eighteenth and nineteenth century German philosophy and a particular style of Lutheran theology.\textsuperscript{164}

The Lutheran linguistic tradition and ethnographic mission work were compatible with Herder’s philosophy on language, Volksgeist, and historical particularity, which all had become at that stage part of German mainstream thinking. A number of principles of the Lutheran mission work on language overlapped with some of the main principles of the German anthropological tradition emanating from Herderian and Humboldtian philosophy, in particular thought on language, which were explicitly expressed by Bastian, Virchow and their anthropological circle, and by Boas in North America.

Carl Strehlow’s background in a Lutheran language tradition and von Leonhardi’s background in the German anthropological tradition of the nineteenth century, both emphasised the significance of language for understanding other people and had at that point been part of mainstream intellectual life in Germany for over 100 years. Their approaches to language studies differed initially in so far, that in Strehlow’s mission studies the use of language and knowledge about the other was used in applied ways for bible translation, education and ultimately for conversion and to make the word of God accessible to people without the mediation of other humans. It is possible that Strehlow’s initial view on the purpose of ethnography was similar to Reuther’s, whose motivation was ‘to discover points of contact with the Christian faith and thereby destroy their pagan concepts’.\textsuperscript{165} If this was ever Strehlow’s approach, it would have been buried by his field experience and the reading of Warneckian works, or the very latest by von Leonhardi’s influence. I suspect that Reuther also moved away from this view, when he became seriously interested in

\textsuperscript{164} Carl Strehlow had left his home country in the early 1890s as a 20-year-old exporting these traditions, as it seems, undisturbed by later historical developments in Germany.

\textsuperscript{165} L.G. Reuther’s Diary (Scherer translation 1970:10) cited in Jones & Sutton (1986:49). Diary held at the SA Museum Archives AA266.
Diyari culture, if not earlier, which according to Reuther’s son, was Strehlow’s influence from 1892 onwards. In 1894, Reuther made some very important and lucid anthropological remarks on the Diyari in the *Kirchliche Mitteilungen*. Siebert’s mission approach towards ethnography shows that ‘destruction’ was not part of the agenda (Nobbs 2005).

For Moritz von Leonhardi ethnography had a wider scope. Language and culture studies were primarily to further human knowledge about the world. Language was not only a research tool, it also had a crucial philosophical dimension; it showed how other people thought and different modes of perception. He understood the particularity of a culture and saw language and its literature as a reflection of its specific Volksgeist. Thus, von Leonhardi was interested in the exact description and recording of language and transcription of original Australian indigenous text; it gave insight into people’s worldviews and their true spirit.

Language also had an historical dimension in von Leonhardi’s methodological and theoretical framework, which he discussed with Carl Strehlow. He was exploring the use of comprehensive descriptions and documentations of languages to help explain some hypotheses of the infant theory ‘Kulturkreislehre’ of the German-speaking world. Von Leonhardi’s understanding of language in the Kulturkreislehre was informed by close reading of the limited amount of existing material in the first decade of the century and his correspondence with P.W. Schmidt. Von Leonhardi makes first explicit mention of the *Kulturkreislehre* in relation to language to Strehlow in early 1908. At the time a number of very basic wordlists and grammars of Arrernte, Luritja and Diyari were being published and Schmidt was studying and comparing Australian languages.

Over the years von Leonhardi would often remind Strehlow of the importance of language and indigenous text. He would ask him to make really sure that he recorded one or the other myth in its original language and place above every word its German translation and meaning, as it was the best, if not the only way/method, to grasp the ‘Geist’ (spirit) of the language and ‘Anschauungen’ (views), particularly if the

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166 Tindale interviewed Reuther’s son in the 1930s. Tindale Collection Acc No 1538, SA Museum.
167 Reuther (1894:57) in *Kirchlichen Mitteilungen*. 126
researcher was unable to undertake studies on the spot; even then he thought it necessary to provide a translation in correct German as well.¹⁶⁸ Still at the end of their research project, von Leonhardi continued to emphasise research into mythological text,¹⁶⁹ and to collect more Luritja narrative texts to be able 'to ascertain by comparison that Luritja and Aranda were two distinct languages, in structure and vocabulary'.¹⁷⁰ There could never be enough empirical data.

Overall, von Leonhardi viewed language as the embodiment of a people's mind and spirit, its Volksgeist. Language and culture could not be separated. Language was method and phenomenon. His language project echoed in many ways German linguistic traditions and often sounded Boasian. Text collection was paramount in Boas' ethnography; it was its methodological centre and foundation for all future researches (Jacknis 1996:196). Boas understood the study of language and its literature as a help to unravel the history of indigenous peoples and traditional worldviews. Through language, phenomena like myths and social institutions as well as material culture that seemed similar, related or identical, could be established as specific within their own cultural and linguistic context. Both nineteenth century German anthropological tradition and Lutheran language tradition saw language as the embodiment of peoples, reflecting its Volksgeist.

Clearly Strehlow's ethnographic oeuvre stands in the German fin de siècle anthropological tradition that was language based and through language, which implied understanding, tried to document cultures in their own right, avoiding deduction and preconceived theories. Ultimately language was not only method for Carl Strehlow, but actually final evidence that the Arrernte were part of the universal plurality of one humanity, Herder's Volksgeister that composed his one Humanität. After 27 years studying the Arrernte language and culture, Carl Strehlow's last remark on language on the 7 December 1921 in Adelaide's newspaper *The Register* makes this clear:

¹⁶⁸ Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.6.1906.
¹⁶⁹ Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 23.12.1908.
¹⁷⁰ Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 3.4.1909.
If you see in the present type of the aborigines the missing link, you require 11 more links from the present type of the aborigine to the common ancestor of man and ape, because the greatest difference between an ape and an aborigine is not the bodily structure, but the wonderfully structured language of the aborigines, and their religious beliefs.
CHAPTER IV

The Making of a Masterpiece

Carl Strehlow’s Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien was to a certain degree a collaboration between himself and his editor and friend, Moritz von Leonhardi (1856-1910).\(^{171}\) Although his editor understated his contribution in the making of the masterpiece, his contemporaries like N.W. Thomas (1909), P.W. Schmidt (1908) and Marcel Mauss\(^ {172}\) were aware of his involvement. Von Leonhardi carefully studied Carl Strehlow’s manuscript, compared it with all other literature available on the subject, compiled long lists of questions, added references, had Australian animals, insects and plants classified, inserted their Latin names into the text and, finally, went yet again through the arduous work of reading the final proofs. But most importantly he never tired of emphasising empiricism and displaying scepticism when the field results did not seem coherent. The research at Hermannsburg was driven by von Leonhardi’s never-ending desire for empirical data and the precise questioning of what it really was that Strehlow encountered daily at his mission station. Armchair-researching the culture of central Australian Aboriginal people in Germany, he had noticed gaps, inconsistencies and broad generalisations in the existing material. He was very keen to know what the different researchers had exactly observed in different parts of the continent and why their research yielded different results. Thus, he was keen on further field investigation to verify or reject the existing assumptions on Australian indigenous cultures.\(^ {173}\)

Through his editor’s never-ending interest in empirical observations, Carl Strehlow wrote his seven volume monograph in a five year period, an impressive achievement considering his many other duties and difficulties he faced on his lonely mission in central Australia. Although he had been side-lined in the English-speaking anthropological world even before he had written the first volume of his monograph (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985; Veit 1991,2004b; John Strehlow 2004), in Germany the

\(^ {171}\) Other classics of this era were also collaborations (Jones 2005:6-25, Nobbs 2005:26-45).
\(^ {172}\) F.C.H. Sarg to Carl Strehlow, 20.9.1912.
\(^ {173}\) See Kenny (2005:54-70) for discussion on von Leonhardi and Strehlow’s collaboration.
research was driven forward and elsewhere read and celebrated (Preuss 1908, van Gennep 1908, Schmidt 1911, Mauss and Durkheim 1913).

Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!
On the 10 of September 1901, with Spencer and Gillen in mind, Baron Moritz von Leonhardi was sitting at his desk on his land seat, writing to pastor Carl Strehlow at the central Australian mission Hermannsburg, who was at this stage unknown to him. Von Leonhardi had by chance read, during his extensive research into the religion of the Australian peoples, a letter written by the missionary in the church newspaper *Kirchlichen Mitteilungen* of the 15 May of the same year. He had been struck by a sentence in it, namely “Their God is not at all concerned about human beings, just as they are not with him.” This remark induced him to write:

Gross-Karben, d. 10/IX 1901.
Grossherzogthum Hessen.

Esteemed Sir!

In Mission Inspector Deinzer’s *Kirchlichen Mitteilungen* of the 15 May of this year I saw a letter by you,\(^1\) which described the situation on your Mission and also contained a few remarks relating to the natives of your station. I read in it: “Their God is not at all concerned about human beings, just as they are not with him.” This indicates that some kind of concept of a divine being exists among the natives. As I have studied for many years the religion of primitive people, I have of course endeavoured to collect everything I could find on the religious-ethical views of the Australian peoples. The information on the natives in the vicinity of your mission – they are called Arunta by researchers; is this name correct? -, is scanty, although, as you may be aware, in the past years two large and very important publications on the natives of your area and its surroundings have been published. I am referring to Horn’s *Scientific Expedition to Central Australia Vol. IV Anthropology and Gillen*

\(^1\) Carl Strehlow’s letter had been written on the 8 January 1901.
and Spencer’s Native Tribes of Central Australia. Both publications are densely packed with information, in particular on initiation ceremonies and mythology of the tribes studied; however, the material also raises a number of questions. For example, little or nothing can be gathered on the existence of one or more divine beings or spirits who created the world and human beings, and taught them the sacred ceremonies (circumcision, male youth’s and men’s initiation etc) from these publications. However, I suspect, in analogy to other tribes of the continent, that such a concept cannot be completely absent. Your remark referred to above as well as a statement (“Children are a gift of Altjira (God)”177) in an older scientific journal by one of your predecessors, Missionary Kempe,178 confirm my inference and leads me to ask you for a great favour, if you had the energy and time. I would be very thankful if you could answer a few questions.179

Baron von Leonhardi was addressing an empirical problem. It seemed to him that there were gaps in the existing literature caused by lack of attention to particularities. His initial queries related mainly to the Arrernte concepts of Ulthana,180 Twanyirika,181 and ‘two beings who were Ungambikula (out of nothing, self existing)’ and had come ‘to Earth in the oldest Alcheringa time’ (Spencer and Gillen 1899:388). And off course he added that ‘It goes without saying that I would be very thankful for any other information about the natives, their lives and intellectual concepts’.182 The letter travelled overland from the Leonhardi family seat in Gross Karben to Frankfurt and then north to one of the ports in Germany (Bremen or Hamburg) to embark on a ship to one of the remotest areas of the known world. It is likely that about six weeks later the letter disembarked in Port Adelaide, where it was loaded on a train going north to Marree (Herrgott Springs) and Oodnadatta in remote Australia. At Oodnadatta the railway ended. Cargo going any further into the inhospitable interior of this still

175 Von Leonhardi’s order.
176 Report on the work of the Horn Scientific Expedition to Central Australia Vol. IV (1896); Spencer and Gillen’s The Native Tribes of Central Australia (1899).
177 Kempe (1883:53).
178 Kempe was one of the missionaries who established Hermannsburg in 1877. He wrote in 1883 Zur Sittenkunde der Centralaustralischen Schwarzen and in 1891 A grammar and vocabulary of the language spoken by the Aborigines of the MacDonnell Ranges.
179 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 10.9.1901.
180 Spirit being documented by Gillen (1896:183).
181 Spirit documented by Spencer and Gillen (1899:264,654).
182 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 10.9.1901. See appendix for complete translation.
largely unknown part of the Australian continent was transferred with much needed food supplies and other essentials by Muslim camel drivers on to their camel caravans, which would trek for another few weeks northwards through central Australian desert regions. The Muslim camel drivers, called Apagana or Matawalpala by the Western Arrernte people at Hermannsburg (Strehlow 1915:58), had serviced the settlements of remote Australia since the 1860s. The camel trains were always greeted with great joy when they finally arrived at their remote destinations; not only would they bring much needed flour, tea and sugar supplies, but also news from the outside world, - mail, books, magazines, and newspapers.

On the 20 December 1901, Carl Strehlow answered the German aristocrat’s queries about his little Arrernte congregation. Only extracts of Strehlow’s letter, copied by others, have survived in a number of archives in Australia and England. Strehlow answered and explained the concepts of ‘Twanyirika’ and ‘Ulthana’, and wrote that ‘according to the view of the Aranda there is a being of the highest order called Altjira or Altjira mara’ and that the Arrernte did not know anything about ‘reincarnation’. He also mentioned some other Arrernte beliefs at Hermannsburg which deviated from the ones Spencer and Gillen (1899) had recorded. The major factor that seems to have made Strehlow’s work so controversial was that he commented on the semantics of ngambakala (‘surely the Ungambikula of Gillen-Spencer’) and altjira which did not ‘agree’ with Spencer and Gillen’s concept of Alcheringa and made clear that they had not understood some key concepts due to the lack of language skills. They had maintained, for instance, that Alcheringa meant ‘dreamtime’. According to Strehlow it was a linguistic mis-interpretation that lead to Spencer and Gillen’s translation ‘Dream-times’ (Spencer 1896:111; Strehlow 1907:2). These religious concepts of the Arrernte would emerge a number of times again in the following years in Strehlow’s and von Leonhardi’s correspondence.

Carl Strehlow’s reply reached Moritz von Leonhardi sometime in early 1902; he probably could not have imagined what kind of journey this letter and for that matter

183 Rowan Private Collection (Melbourne), W.B. Spencer Papers (Melbourne Museum) and E.B. Tylor Papers (Pitt Rivers Museum).
185 See Chapter V, pp. 212-218.
his own as well had survived. What von Leonhardi read satisfied him, Streloew's comments were sent to no other than Andrew Lang in England, who had set himself against the whole tendency of Tylorian anthropology (Stocking 1995:60; Hiatt 1996:103). Lang received Streloew's findings on a superior divine being amongst the Arrernte in late 1903. They were a welcome contribution in the controversy surrounding high gods, which Lang seemed to be losing.

The high god debate that began in the mid 1800s (Swain 1985:34) was about the emerging view that evidence of primeval or early forms of monotheism existed in indigenous beliefs. In Australia, the reports even threatened to place 'the blackfellow on a par with his white supplanters' (Hiatt 1996:100). Although according to E.B. Tylor, religion was universal to humans, he defined religion simply as 'the beliefs in spiritual beings' (Morris 1987:100). Tylor and his circle could not accept a high being or monotheism among Aborigines because it would place them on a higher level in their evolutionistic schema that moved from animism to monotheism and would have thrown their theory into disarray. Frazer, whose evolutionistic chain of events did not even allow religion among Aboriginal people, also opposed people such as Lang, who postulated the existence of a supreme being amongst indigenous people, which in Frazerian terms proved that Aborigines had religion. For people like Lang and Frazer having religion was tantamount to having a high god (Swain 1985:94,96). There was a shared assumption embedded in their thought, namely that having a high god had a uniform significance throughout all religions - which it clearly did and does not. This made Streloew's observations particularly acute.

Thus, Lang showed Streloew's notes to Tylor and wondered if Spencer knew the Arrernte language, *Native Tribes of Central Australia* did not have 'philology in it', and Lang remarked in letters to Tylor, that 'I had my suspicions of Twanyirika', although Spencer and Gillen 'are excellent', and that:

I hold it also not only for possible, but in the highest degree for probable, that the myths and legends of the arunta should by different persons differently

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186 See also Lawrence (1987:18-34) on Tylor and Frazer.
187 A. Lang to E.B. Tylor, 19.10.1903 in E.B. Tylor Papers, Box 6 (2), Pitt River Museum.
188 A. Lang to E.B. Tylor, 28.10.1903 in E.B. Tylor Papers, Box 6 (2), Pitt River Museum.
reported. The accounts according to Spencer and Gillen make quite too much the impression of a universal widespread determined metaphysical system ... I hope certainly further communications on the Arunta through the German missionary to receive [Lang’s wording].

Lang could not resist, and sent ‘the original German to Prof Spencer in Melbourne’. Lang’s main motivation in spreading word on Strehlow’s highest being was to back his thesis that high gods and thus an early form of religion existed among indigenous Australians that many of his colleagues denied.

Therefore, there was a difference between Lang and von Leonhardi’s understanding of the underlying issues. Lang’s assumption of a universal widespread system (i.e. proving the origin of religion) stood in contrast with German empiricism and particularism as well as diffusionism that were an alternative to evolutionistic theory (Swain 1985:105). Von Leonhardi had simply been making the point that field observations could contradict theories, and deviate or complement other field observations. However, he was well aware of the ‘controversy’ and is likely to have tried to show that even in English theorising the Arrernte had ‘religion’ and hence might contest evolutionism.

‘Temper and bias have set in like a flood’

The impact of Carl Strehlow’s first letter dated 20 December 1901 on the British anthropological establishment and Baldwin Spencer has been discussed a number of times in contributions by Mulvaney & Calaby (1985), Veit (1991, 2004b) and John Strehlow (2004). The exact events and dates of the ensuing “controversy” are still not quite clear. What really transpired between Australia and England after Strehlow’s letter hit the anthropological scene is hard to say. However, a number of letters give a flavour of what might have transpired. Without doubt, Spencer felt troubled by Strehlow’s research and set out to discredit and side-line him.

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189 A. Lang to E.B. Tylor, 2.11.1903 in E.B. Tylor Papers, Box 6 (2), Pitt River Museum.
190 A. Lang to E.B. Tylor, 19.10.1903 in E.B. Tylor Papers, Box 6 (2), Pitt River Museum.
After Carl Strehlow's information on a supreme being or a 'high god' amongst the Arrernte, had been handed around to key players of the British anthropological establishment, Spencer, who was just about to publish another volume on the Aborigines of central Australia, wrote angry and defamatory letters about Strehlow's observations to Lang and Frazer.

Spencer wrote to Frazer, who was proof reading his and Gillen's forthcoming book *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, on the 9 December 1903, that he had to write a long letter to Lang in reply to 'a short paper by a Lutheran missionary named Strehlow' that had 'more utter misleading nonsense packed into a small space that I recollect having come across before' and 'remarks (hostile in tone to Gillen and myself) are appended by some one' (Marett and Penniman 1932:96). Von Leonhardi had added these remarks, and they could hardly have been called 'hostile'. For example, one stated in regard to 'Altjiramara':

Here again one finds the influence of the missionaries or imagines it, unjustly as I believe. In mode of expression one may trace Christian influence. "He is the creator of the world & the ruler of mankind" — such an expression is taken from "the almighty creator of heaven and earth" of the Apostles' Creed. But in actual fact there is no need to attribute anything to Christian influence. As early as 1882 a case was noticed by Miss. Kempe in his report.191

Spencer furiously pointed out that the early missionaries had been teaching the 'poor natives that Altjira means 'God' and that Strehlow had seized upon this doing the same and now was making the claim that his informants were telling him that Altjira meant 'God'. He told Frazer that Strehlow's linguistic explanations of the word Altjira and its compounds were naïve and that 'Strehlow is talking rubbish when he speaks of Twanyirika as the leader of the ceremonies'. He had to tell 'Lang that, after spending months watching the natives preparing for and performing their ceremonies, to meet with this rubbish from a man who not only has never seen a ceremony, but spends a good part of this time telling the few natives who frequent the station that all their ceremonies are wicked, is rather too much of a good thing' (Marett and

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191 Excerpts of C. Strehlow's first letter with von Leonhardi comments, Rowan Private Collection (Melbourne).
Penniman 1932:95-97). Lang reported Spencer’s reaction to Strehlow’s notes on the 13 January 1904 to Tylor:

Dear Tylor,

(...) Today comes a long tirade of Spencer against Strehlow. Is it proper to send it to you? If you think so, I will add, typed, my reply, which, at all events, I may send, and from it you would gather what Spencer said.

It comes to this, Strehlow is a beast of a missionary, not admitted to ceremonies, and would not go if he got a ticket. But Spencer adds that he and Gillen have not worked Strehlow’s district at all, so how can they know what he found there? He does not explain why Gillen in Horn Expedition (IV 182, I think)\(^{192}\) has “a great being of the heavens”, with an emu foot, as in Strehlow. Any being with a wife and child, (as Zeus, Apollo) is borrowed from missionaries.

I understand that Howitt recants his remarks on great beings, but how the deuce was I to know that, and why, 20 years after date, does he recant what he published in initiation. He never told me, though I think I sent him my book.

Spencer thinks Strehlow wants to discredit him, whereas he only answered inquiries. I sent you what he said. Temper and bias have set in like a flood, and if Howitt and Gillen disclaim their published words, how can we trust any body’s reports ... Of course I shall not print a line on Strehlow just now. I enclose Strehlow, which please return.\(^{193}\)

Frazer raised Carl Strehlow once more with Spencer in 1908 after he had read the first instalment of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* (Strehlow 1907):

‘I wish you would tell me what you think of it and of Mr. Strehlow as an anthropologist’ (Marrett and Penniman 1932:106). Spencer replied with indignation, ‘I don’t know what to do in regard to Strehlow. He is so uneducated that he can’t


\(^{193}\) A. Lang to E.B. Tylor, 13.1.1904 in E.B. Tylor’s Collection, Box 6 (2)), Pitt River Museum. Transcription held at the SRC.
write publishable German' (Marrett and Penniman 1932:109). He again made similar
disseptive remarks on Strehlow's understanding of 'Altjira' and his biases as a
missionary that disqualified him as a reliable source (Marrett and Penniman
1932:110-111).

On the 19 April 1908, Frazer responded to Spencer's assessment of Strehlow and also
mentioned his 'new book on Totemism' in which he was intending 'to describe all the
principal facts of totemism so far as they are known at present in geographical or
ethnographical order' beginning with 'Central and North Central Australia, drawing
my materials, of course, exclusively from you and Gillen; then I take up south-east
Australia, using chiefly Howitt's facts. (...) So you see I am making the
'Geographical Survey' pretty full' (Marrett and Penniman 1932:116). Then he turned
to the missionary living in central Australia:

From what you tell me about Strehlow, it seems to me that I cannot safely use
his evidence; so I intend to make no use of it. I wish you would publish your
reason for distrusting his evidence, such as you have stated them to me, so that
I could refer to them. The shakiness of Strehlow's facts ought to be known
here in Europe. (Marrett and Penniman 1932:116)

Spencer did not publish his views on Strehlow until 1927, well after the missionary's
death, and even then he could not find a fault in Strehlow's research. Indeed, he
incorporated linguistic explanations of some key terms that seem closely related to
Strehlow's material. Nevertheless, Frazer ignored Carl Strehlow's research in his
*Totemism and Exogamy* of 1910 on the grounds that he was a missionary and
therefore, biased. The Director of the Frankfurt museum, Bernhard Hagen, remarked
in von Leonhardi's obituary (Strehlow 1911:1): 'Unfortunately, an intended preface,
in which Frazer's critique was going to be rejected, remained unfinished.' While von
Leonhardi had managed to edit the fourth volume (1911) before he died, he did not
get around to writing the preface intended to respond to Frazer's allegations that
missionary Strehlow's sources and information were 'deeply tainted' (Frazer
1910:186-187), and thus, not scientifically reliable sources. Instead, Pater Wilhelm
Schmidt launched an attack on Frazer in his journal *Anthropos* (1911:430-431). He
criticised Frazer for dismissing information provided by missionaries and in particular by Carl Strehlow, who had been very able to extract ethnographic and linguistic material from his Christian mission context to use it in a ‘scientific’ discourse with his editor. Strehlow mentions, for example, the work of Missionary Spieht among the Eweer in Africa.¹⁹⁴ Although the article relates to bible translation, Strehlow uses only its ethnographic data commenting how the Eweer personify the celestial elements and how this correlates to the Arrernte views of altjira and the sky. Schmidt pointed out that Frazer had used the information of at least 46 missionaries if not more in Totemism and Exogamy;¹⁹⁵ and that there was no reason to believe missionaries any less than agnostic ‘professionals’ (Marchand 2003:297). Frazer’s stand against Carl Strehlow also met with disapproval from Haddon (Veit 1991:114) and other Cambridge scholars,¹⁹⁶ and from the French quarters. Marcel Mauss and Emile Durkheim (1913:101-104) wrote in L'Année sociologique that Frazer’s and Spencer’s resistance to Strehlow’s work was unwarranted.

What was problematic about the high gods amongst central Australians was that they did not fit into Frazer’s sequencing of evolutionistic events. They were not a problem per se. The existence of Strehlow’s ‘highest being’ Altjira meant that the Arrernte had ‘religion’ in Frazer’s evolutionistic framework. He rejected this, because he classified Arrernte beliefs as ‘magic’. It stood in opposition to Frazer’s view that belief systems moved from magic to religion and then to science (Morris 1987:104; Hiatt 1996; Frazer1922). He had taken the idea of uniform progress in human religious development up from Tylor, but had reduced Tylor’s parameter: animism, polydaemonism, polytheism and monotheism (Tylor 1871) and also disregarded Tylor’s broader definition of religion. Spencer and Gillen followed Frazer’s lead integrating central Australian Aboriginal people at the beginning of a simple line of development. Thus, they were exemplary for the lowest stage on this linear development:

¹⁹⁴ Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 23.10.1907 (SH-SP-14-1).
¹⁹⁵ Frazer had not been able to abstain completely from Carl Strehlow’s work, he uses it in his fourth volume of Totemism and Exogamy (1910:59) in a footnote. He also relied heavily on information of Missionary Christian Keysser, Carl Strehlow’s brother-in-law, in his The Belief in Immortality. He wrote in his section on New Guinea: ‘Mr. Ch. Keysser, who has laboured among them for more that eleven years and has given us an excellent description of their customs and beliefs’ (Frazer 1913:262).
Frazer believed that magic precedes religion in the social evolution of mankind. In his view the Aranda were proof of this because they were obviously the most primitive people in existence and their totemic ceremonies were magical fertility rites. (Peterson 1972:15)

A final note on high gods

In this context it seems necessary to comment briefly on the ‘high god’ debate of the turn of the century, because its recent discussion in Mulvaney (1985), Veit (1991, 2004), Hill (2002) and John Strehlow (2004) has evoked again the impression that Carl Strehlow gave prominence to a high god amongst the Arrernte and Luritja and participated in this controversy.

For the German researchers the debate was not about the existence or non-existence of a high god that would prove ‘religion’. The Arrernte, according to Strehlow and von Leonhardi, had religion regardless of whether or not they had a high god. It was about empirical observation. Von Leonhardi had simply noticed that the generalisations in Spencer and Gillen’s publications did not seem uniformly applicable to all Arrernte peoples. Clearly Strehlow’s observations suggested that the Western Arrernte at the Hermannsburg mission had different or at least additional views and outlooks. And for that matter even Spencer and Gillen had found a ‘high god’ among Kaytetye (Kaitish) myths.197

Von Leonhardi did not believe in high gods in the same way as Pater Schmidt, who was trying to prove that monotheism existed among all peoples in one way or another.198 Von Leonhardi stated to Strehlow that he was ‘not of the opinion that these represent calls from a primeval revelation’199 but rather that high gods or supreme beings were a common feature of Australian belief systems. On the 28 August 1904 Baron von Leonhardi wrote:

Most tribes in the South East of the continent have such a belief: A big/large with supernatural powers endowed Black (eia grosser, übermächtiger

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197 Kaytetye is an Arandic language spoken to the north of Alice Springs. See Appendix C.
198 During his long academic life Pater W. Schmidt was bent on proving this.
199 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904.
Schwarzer) lives in the sky now, previously he also lived on earth. He is immortal, created people and everything else, taught customs and ceremonies (Kult) (sometimes also morals); he is good. However, no one is troubled by him, only at the initiation of young men does he play a role, women and children do not know about him etc. (Baiame of the Kamilaroi or Munganjaur of the Kurnai, for example). This concept may also exist amongst the Aranda and according to you, it exists untouched by white people’s beliefs. Further examination would be at any rate very desirable. Possibly the old men do still know more about it. For instance, is thunder, the voice of Atjira mara? Further I would like to point out that Spencer and Gillen – I am sure you will soon get hold of it yourself – found a Kaitish myth on a supreme being, but do not comment on it (p. 498). It is exactly these kinds of myths that I suspect to exist everywhere in various modifications.  

In my view, von Leonhardi was only provoking the English establishment. He used the high gods to make a point against unwarranted generalisations and selectiveness of material to justify evolutionistic sequencing in culture development (see also Swain 1985:93). He remarked later on to Strehlow:

I share your impression that Howitt is completely under the influence of Spencer and in many ways it is not a good one; in any case it is biased. That Howitt does not mention Mura in the sky, although Missionary Reuther certainly told him about it, is not acceptable. He should have expressed his doubts, as he was not entitled to simply suppress the matter. The Dieri – and for that matter the Aranda too – in contrast to the natives of SE Australia, are to be classified at all costs on the lowest stage of development. Thus, certain views and beliefs are not allowed to be found! A further reason for classifying the Dieri, Urabanna etc as representatives of the lowest stage of development is the supposition that they practice group marriage of primeval times (analogy to the Piranguru relationship?). Hopefully this fairytale will soon be laid to rest; even in England, no one less than Mr N.W. Thomas is fighting against it.

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200 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904.
For most English and in particular Australian scientists group marriage of the Dieri is still a dogma.\(^{201}\)

N.W. Thomas who briefly corresponded with Carl Strehlow and participated in the 'high god' debate on the side of its existence, wrote that it was naive to get the Christian god and indigenous 'high god' mixed up, because it was evident in Strehlow's description that he had emu feet and many wives that could only qualify him as an indigenous god. He even made a cynical remark that one could see if one wanted to elements of Mohammedan beliefs in altjira's description (Thomas 1906). Ironically this may not have been such an absurd idea. After all, Muslim cameleers had been present in central Australia since 1871 and had supplied the mission since 1877 with all goods and carrying mail and wool back south towards the coast. They had not only interacted with the new settlers, they had also formed relationships with the indigenous population. N.W. Thomas made the first published comment in _Folk-Lore_ on Strehlow's work and description of Altjira and his many wives:

> Immortal virgins, it is true, are hardly a savage conception; but it seems hardly likely that such an idea would be derived from a Lutheran missionary; if anything they rather recall the houris of Mohammedanism than any Christian idea. (Thomas 1906:431)

High beings are not unusual in indigenous Australian religion. Independent reports on the 'high god' phenomenon have been present in the anthropological literature since material on Aboriginal religion has been recorded (Swain 1985). Hiatt (1996:100-119) has shown that high being beliefs did exist in Australian indigenous religion and are not necessarily an import of Christian provenience. Many peoples have had 'high gods' positioned, though, quite differently from Judeo-Christian or Islamic schemes. They often do not figure as the major creators or as an ultimate source of a moral order. Indigenous Australian high gods were, rather, beings with more power and significance who coexisted with the rest of the ancestral beings, and assumed prominence due to variable circumstances in particular context and ceremony. Hiatt indicates that Aboriginal beliefs were far more resilient than many researchers have

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\(^{201}\) Von Leonhardt to Carl Strehlow, 10.4.1907.
maintained and remarks in a footnote that 'No modern Australianist, to the best of my knowledge, denies change as a fact of history, but we do affirm the existence of a pre-contact structure of cult belief and practice strong enough to survive the immediate impact of colonization' (Hiatt 1996:199).

Neither Carl Strehlow nor Missionary Reuther, a Lutheran ethnographer at Lake Eyre and Strehlow’s contemporary, attributed overwhelming importance to a ‘high god’ or a supreme being among Aboriginal people. 202 Only the first one and a half pages of the first volume of Strehlow’s publication Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien contains a brief account of a supreme being called Altjira or der Unerschaffene/Ewige (the unmade/eternal one) and the remaining hundreds of pages of the work deals with the mythological ancestral beings, the altjirangamitjina, in contemporary literature referred to as dreamings or dreaming beings. Also the second volume on Luritja myths dwells only in the opening page on Tukura.

Carl Strehlow’s perception of Arrernte, Luritja and Diyari high gods and other indigenous religious concepts was complex and differentiated. The high gods he called Altjira, Tukura and Mura were only a part of indigenous cosmology and indeed they were not the main creators of the world. Strehlow wrote that ‘highest beings’ and the dreaming ancestors co-existed:

The Loritja also know of a highest being in the sky, called Tukura; which is differentiated from the Tukutita, the totem gods, like the Altjirangamitjina of the Aranda, they turned into trees and cliffs, or into Tjurunga. This view seems to be quite common amongst Australian peoples, the Dieri have a similar tradition. Among the peoples mentioned the totem gods are differentiated from the highest god. The Dieri call their highest being Mura and the totem gods or divinities, Muramura; the Aranda call the highest being Altjira, the Totem Gods Altjirangamitjina (die ewig Unerschaffen/the eternal unmade ones; Altjira: unerschaffen/unmade, ngamitjina: die Ewigen/the eternal) or Inkara, the immortals (the ones who never die). The Loritja call the highest being

202 Reuther maintained that among the Diyari the ancestral beings, called muramura, played a prominent role in cosmology and not Mura (the high being).
Tukura (der Unerschaffene), the Totem Gods, Tukutita (from Tuku: unerschaffen and tita: der Immerwährende/the eternal one).\textsuperscript{203}

Although Carl Strehlow found that a ‘high god’ called Altjira, existed in the cosmology of the Arrernte as well as of the Luritja, called Tukura, and Mura among the Diyari, he maintained that the ancestors, called altjirangamitjina, tukutita and muramura had overriding importance in indigenous mythology and were the ones that determined the belief system and the shape of the world. He understood this supreme being as existing beside the ancestors and not as an overarching powerful being that brought about a biblical genesis. In fact, as his research into indigenous cosmology progressed he qualified and adjusted the concept of this supreme being.

Strehlow even seems to have had some doubts on the concept of a high god all together; he had started to realise that it had no similarity with the concept of a Christian God and monotheism. He wrote to his editor that ‘the blacks do not think of their God as an absolutely sacred, sinless being, not even as the creator of the universe’.\textsuperscript{204} However, he published the Altjira and Tukura accounts because his senior informants reassured him that this being in the sky existed and they believed in him. In one of his footnotes in 1908 some reluctance is discernable:

Although I have to accept as certain that the Aranda and LoriJa believe in the Highest Being in the sky and that they held this belief prior to their contact with whites, it is nevertheless beyond question that the traditions pertaining to it are far less important than the myths concerning the totem ancestors. (Strehlow 1908:2)

It only remains to be mentioned that at the end of his career, Spencer went full circle. When he republished his and Gillen’s data in *The Arunta* (1927:355-372), he added an extensive section on ‘the supreme ancestor, overshadowing all others’ known as Numbakulla, but did not feel the need to correct any earlier impression he may have

\textsuperscript{203} Carl Strehlow to von Leonardi, 19.9.1906 (SH-SP-3-1).
\textsuperscript{204} Carl Strehlow to von Leonardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).
given' (Hiatt 1996:106). Numbakulla\textsuperscript{205} was conspicuously similar to Carl Strehlow's Altjira as well as to Gillen's early account of Ulthana, a powerful being in the sky, in the Horn report *Anthropology* (Gillen 1896:183). At the time Carl remarked in a footnote:

> In the 'Report of the Horn Expedition' IV. p. 183, Gillen states this about the Arunta [Aranda], "The sky is said to be inhabited by three persons - a gigantic man with an immense foot shaped like that of the emu, a woman, and a child who never develops beyond childhood." Obviously, what he is referring to is Tukura and his wife and child, and I suspect that Gillen obtained his story from a Loritja and not an Aranda. (Strehlow 1908:1)

With this discussion, I hope the high god debate in connection with Carl Strehlow has been sufficiently conceptualised and for the moment can be laid to rest. Three factors seem especially important: (i) the relation between pre-contact indigenous knowledge and that of newcomers, Central Asian as well as European; (ii) the role of 'high gods' in critiques of nineteenth century evolutionism; and finally, the challenge that empirical methods face in the context of competing theories, institutions and nations.\textsuperscript{206} This said, discussion of Strehlow's masterpiece on the earth-dwelling and place-bound ancestral beings can finally move beyond the two first pages of the first two volumes.

'Our publication of your manuscript'

Although Strehlow's first letter of 1901 made a significant impression on its recipients, the German collaboration really only began after Spencer and Gillen's second book *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* had been published in mid 1904. It triggered, nearly three years later, von Leonhardi's second letter to Carl Strehlow because he had again detected inconsistencies, over-systematisations and generalisations in Spencer and Gillen's celebrated publication. He wrote to Strehlow:

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\textsuperscript{205} See also Spencer and Gillen (1899:388-390). This being appears later as Ungambikula (Spencer and Gillen 1927).

\textsuperscript{206} In this light it is not at all a mystery that Frazer ignored Strehlow. He could not have missed that the German's work was outstanding, himself being a classicist and knowing a number of languages including German.
The big mistake of the books by these two researchers, seems to me, is that they systemise too much and try too hard to show universal views existing in a large area, where there may be no more than individual myths, local views and customs etc. and not a coherent, well-ordered system of mythology and custom. Only by providing individual stories and customs is it possible to tease out by comparison general aspects, this however needs to be done in the study.\textsuperscript{207}

The critique of the attempt to systematise and generalise social and religious frameworks of indigenous peoples lies at the heart of von Leonhardi's studies and inquiries. As with the high gods he was not interested in proving any kind of theory but wanted to know what was really out there and what were the particularities. Towards the end, Strehlow would also express this view:

I believe that Spencer and Gillen commit the same error in this case as they have in others, in my opinion they do it often, by generalising information and observations of individual culture traits and then by imputing the deduction to the blacks, or perhaps to have it confirmed by them, something that natives are quite willing to do. (Strehlow 1910:7-8)

Von Leonhardi was convinced that different Aboriginal groups could not possibly have such a homogenous culture as Spencer and Gillen were proposing again in their new book. Thus, at the end of his second letter he offered to have everything printed that Strehlow would write. Strehlow immediately accepted the challenge; he had already been contemplating a scientific publication on central Australian indigenous culture,\textsuperscript{208} and had already begun collecting ethnographic material.\textsuperscript{209} He had just published the Arrernte service book Galtjindinjamea-Pepa Aranda Wolambarinjaka, and was in need of a new intellectual challenge. He sent a copy of this service book to von Leonhardi on the 9 February 1905\textsuperscript{210} as well as some answers to his queries.\textsuperscript{211}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[207] Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904.
\item[208] Carl Strehlow to Kaibel, 30.8.1904 (LAA).
\item[210] Excerpts of this letter were published in Globus in 1907.
\item[211] Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
During this letter exchange a remarkable friendship gradually developed between two men from diametrically opposed backgrounds. This intellectual friendship brought von Leonhardi, a wealthy aristocrat with poor health and an insatiable curiosity, as close as one could ever get in an armchair to a vastly different place and people’s Geistesleben (spirit and mind) compared to his own. Beside the detailed ethnography of the Western Arrernte and Luritja peoples, von Leonhardi would receive over the years plants, animals, insects, photographs and objects from his collaborator in central Australia. In his private hothouse in Gross Karben he created his own central Australian landscape from seeds Strehlow had sent him. Von Leonhardi dedicated the last years of his life to Carl Strehlow’s research and ‘our publication of your manuscript’.²¹²

Carl Strehlow’s motivation to embark on this time-consuming intellectual journey is far more difficult to comprehend. A number of reasons spring to mind for his immediate willingness to collect ‘for science invaluable data’.²¹³ Firstly, the Neuendettelsau Seminary, where he had been prepared for his mission, encouraged their students to pursue linguistic and to a certain degree ethnographical studies to understand the peoples with whom they were involved (Veit 2004a) and to be able to spread God’s Word in vernacular. Secondly it was a way to contribute knowledge to his homeland, Heimat. The significance of Heimat should not be underestimated as Strehlow’s motivation to form an intellectual relationship with von Leonhardi. Heimat as a concept is both emotionally highly loaded and essential to a German sense of belonging.²¹⁴ Thirdly, von Leonhardi’s offer was compelling as an outlet for his intellect. Not only was it an escape from the isolation of Hermannsburg and a link to the outside world, but the recognition and respect of a very well situated and educated man must have been enticing. His editor’s interest did not wane once during their entire correspondence.

²¹² Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 23.4.1907.
²¹³ Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904.
²¹⁴ See Applegate (1990) for an extensive treatment of the concept Heimat.
Carl Strehlow’s empiricism

Although all observations have some implicit theory, researchers can reduce their assumptions by striving for awareness of their own limitations. So while all observation is theory laden to a degree, there are differences in the extent to which an investigator’s assumptions flow into a work, depending on how constantly they examine and question their records. Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien was understood as source material. The ethnography was Herderian and Humboldtian, particularistic and linguistic, and through von Leonhardi’s attempts to explain Graebnerian Kulturkreislehre with Boasian ethnographic source material on language and literature and refined diffusionism, historical. Therefore, von Leonhardi’s and Strehlow’s aspiration, simply to observe and record, could never be entirely realised as such, but it did guard against premature generalisation and systematisation. Their approach was far from an explicit and systemised comprehensive theory that late nineteenth century evolutionism had become. As it was, von Leonhardi would constantly advocate to ignore theory and remind Strehlow as well as himself, that the current theories were all still ‘problematic’, ‘hypothetical’ and ‘speculative’.215

Moritz von Leonhardi sent many lead questions to Strehlow, which gave the research project at Hermannsburg its general bearings. Religious beliefs were the centre of his inquiries, thus questions on totemism, ceremonies, ritual paraphernalia, spirit concepts and individual myths dominated his letters and questionnaires.216 He sent precise questions on ‘Altjira’, ‘Twanyirka’, ‘guruna and Itana’ (see below) and of course wanted to know exactly what the tywerrenge concept was all about and requested lists of totems, and exact descriptions of flora and fauna. Queries on Altjira, a divine being, and its possible influence were of initial interest, but soon the earth-dwelling ancestors moved centre stage, as it became clear that ‘the word Altjira would not only be a proper name, but would also be used for the totem ancestors’.217 This research also raised questions indirectly related to land tenure because subjects such as mother’s dreaming, the possible collective symbol of mother filiation through the

215 This is not to say that types of ‘theory’ involving evolution or world-wide diffusionism has generated no useful ‘middle-range’ theories in modern anthropology.
216 Most questionnaires are missing (Strehlow inserted the answers and sent them back); they are believed to have been lost in WWII.
217 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 7.8.1906.
wanenge (wonniga) and conception sites affiliation emerged. The initial interest in high beings broadened and scepticism was always close. Even when he was very pleased to hear that Strehlow’s research was progressing well, and fine results were obtained, he never seemed to be completely convinced or satisfied:

The discovery of the relationship of each person to the maternal totem beside the one received through conception, is a very fine result. Thus, the Aranda can clearly inherit a totem and for that matter from the maternal side. This result places the totemism of this tribe among other known totemic relationships and takes it out of its previous isolation. Possibly, the totem acquired through conception is secondary and came into existence only in the course of the development of the tribe; or emerging basically from personal totem (called Nagual in America; also shown to exist in Australia)? I will have to consider the issue further and wait for your upcoming reports before I can form a final opinion. I cannot quite follow your deduction of tmara altjira from Altja. It seems to me that here too altjira equals ‘divine being’. The totem is altjira because it is connected to the ancestors who are worshipped as gods. However for the moment this is only an assumption. Linguistically I cannot make a judgement on whether altjira may be derived from altja.

The concepts of soul and spirit, in Arrernte lthane (Itana) and kwerrene (guruna), and what happens with these entities caused von Leonhardi lots of ‘headaches’. He struggled over a long period with the ‘Itana and Guruna’ concepts and the beliefs connected with them. Answering yet again an inquiry about the soul, Carl Strehlow wrote:

Personally I agree with you, that the guruna is the ‘Körperseele’ (body soul?) and the Itana could be called the ‘Geist’. However, I do not want to impose these interpretations of the words on the blacks, because they surely would simply agree with my opinion. The question is what becomes of the guruna when the Itana has left the body? Does it stay forever at the grave? Not

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218 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi (SH-SP-11-1, SH-SP-12-1).
219 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 26.11.1906.
220 See von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 5.9.1907; Strehlow (1908:77); Kenny (2004a).
according to the natives. They think that the Itana (ghost) stays at the grave until .... And then it goes north, after it has picked-up its tooth at its tmara altjira which had been knocked out in his youth. This stuff I got to know about, when I was investigating the custom of knocking out teeth. I will investigate further the relationship of guruna and Itana.221

It was enormously difficult for the researchers to grasp these concepts that were new to them. They sometimes tried to find related concepts to be able to understand and articulate these indigenous ideas adequately. When yet again discussing tywerrenge, von Leonhardi asked if it was possible to say 'that a person's life is in the tjurunga; this would be similar to a commonly held belief found in German and Nordic fairy tales'. Von Leonhardi struggled for years with the concept of tywerrenge and other issues of their research project. He repeatedly asked Strehlow to reinvestigate subjects surrounding tywerrenge:

The nature of tjurunga is still not quite clear to me. You think, it is not the seat of the second soul, (called soul box by English ethnographers), but a second body. Is it possible to say that a person's life is in the tjurunga? This would be similar to a commonly held belief found in German and Nordic fairy tales. A person's life is magically connected with a particular object and has to die, when it is destroyed. However the latter does not seem to apply to the tjurunga. Or is it a misfortune for the Aranda when a person's tjurunga is stolen or destroyed? Your statements about the relationship between the tjurunga and the bullroarer meet my expectations. One idea is dependent upon the other. From that follows conclusively, in my opinion, that the initiated old men too believe in a being connected to the visible bullroarer, to the extent, that there must be a belief in the existence of Twanjiraka. My main concern here is to determine if Spencer and Gillen's report on a particular aspect of the initiation of young men is valid. Namely, is it true that initiates are told that Twanjiraka is fiction and all had been humbug, used to deceive women and children to keep them in check; in reality it was only a piece of wood that makes a sound. Thus, it is the rational proof for the origin of religion out of

221 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 23.10.1907 (SH-SP-14-1). Carl Strehlow's data on Itana and guruna deviates from contemporary perceptions of these concepts (see Kenny 2004a).
priesthood. Examples from the SE of Australia in the latest book of Howitt, prove that it is certain that the bullroarers and its eerie sound are for the old men and magicians the object of reverence (Ehrfurcht) and fear/shudder. Daramulun is seen to be somehow present or connected with it.\footnote{222}{Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 26.11.1906.}

Strehlow matched von Leonhardi’s inquisitiveness and never tired of reinvestigation or seemed to be ever satisfied with initial impressions. In 1907, for example, Strehlow was still not satisfied with his understanding of the underlying concepts of the tjurunga. And when he finally thought that he had cornered it, he only discovered that there was more to it and his inquiries lead into new areas:

However, this investigation had rather the benefit, that it clarified the relationship of an individual to his totem ancestor. The totem ancestor is seen as the guardian, the second I, …\footnote{223}{Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, possibly 6.4.1907 (SH-SP-11-1). ‘the second I’ is the spirit-double of a person, called by Carl Strehlow ‘iningukua’ and by his son, ‘ataua naitja’.

The research seemed never ending, results had to be adjusted, reconceptualised and rearticulated. The investigations went ever deeper as the questions became more relevant and detailed. While von Leonhardi was impressed by Strehlow’s research, he thought that observations should be continued, and that Spencer and Gillen had left some open questions. He seems to have pushed, in particular, questions relating to terms and concepts that were obvious to Strehlow or taken for granted by him. Carl Strehlow may have been so deeply immersed in Arrernte and Luritja life, that issues completely clear to him, were not at all obvious to von Leonhardi or any other outsider. His editor typically wrote another letter laden with queries, hints and reminders in such situations:

… in your description of the circumcision and subincision ceremonies you will presumably delve deeper into the matter. I take that you will record the detailed myth of the Rukuta men, which I consider as very important. What does Rukuta and Tuanjiraka mean? Thus, the small bull-roarers are the bodies of novices. Is the bullroarer, given to a certain young man, the body of an
Iticua\textsuperscript{224} of the same totem as the young man? It would be important to establishes this. (...) And now to ntantantja (nurtunja Sp. and G.). Thus, the kauaua is the feather-bush on the ntantantja. It is, or better, it represents the bundle of spears of a particular "totem god". It is therefore not the representation of the "totem god" itself? (...) As the taking down of this pole seems to be particularly diligently performed and all the other proceedings associated with this ceremony (the totem images on the bodies) are different to the ones already described, it may be justified to ask about the special and particular meaning of this event.

It always seemed unlikely to me that this could be a sun cult, however, Foy stays with it and has based a whole theory on it. That's how theories come into being!\textsuperscript{225}

Very pleased to have been able to deflate yet again a theory, as the conclusion was that the ceremonial object represented objects of ancestors or ancestors, and were not a sun cult (Strehlow 1910:23, f.2), von Leonhardi rounded his letter off with 'By the way what is actually the proper name of the Engwura?'

As the religious concepts started to shape up in their minds, marriage-order and kin terminology, which was generally the focus of turn of the century research into classificatory kinship,\textsuperscript{226} started to emerge in connection with myths, songs and ceremonies, and became increasingly an important subject of discussion. Carl Strehlow recorded, for example, that only certain kin could perform in particular ceremonies held by particular individuals (see Strehlow 1910, 1911). By late 1907, they started to discuss this subject regularly, with the main focus on the 'marriage-order', 'marriage classes', descent and how the subsection system looks into the kinship system.\textsuperscript{227}

\textsuperscript{224} Possibly he meant 'iningukua'.
\textsuperscript{225} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 10.4.1907.
\textsuperscript{226} See Chapter VI.
\textsuperscript{227} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 5.9.1907; Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi (SH-SP-12-1, SH-SP-13-1, SH-SP-14-1).
During the research into social classification and marriage order, von Leonhardi again emphasised that ‘What is of real importance is how the natives group the classes; everything else is marginal in comparison’.\(^{228}\)

Right to the end of their research his editor continued to point inconsistencies out, so Strehlow could adjust his conclusions or reinvestigate. For example, he wrote on the kawawe (kauaua):

> In your last letter you write that Kauaua means high. However, I thought at some earlier time you had written – I do not have the relevant letter at hand right now, but I can check it when I get back home – that Kauaua was supposed to mean the feather bush of a tnatantja.\(^{229}\) I am sure that in future a lot more mischief will still be caused in science about the Kauaua which is supposed to have originally been a sun symbol (of course today’s Aboriginals would no longer have any knowledge of that). The thought is just too enticing as that the gentlemen could let go of it!\(^{230}\)

With his editors ‘Fingerzeiger’\(^{231}\) (indications) Carl Strehlow’s field research became increasingly professional and anthropological, as far as that was possible at a time when in Australia all researchers who pursued anthropology were from other disciplines. In this sense they were all amateurs. As Carl Strehlow was conducting field-work he was also reading all Australian anthropological literature he could get hold of which included Spencer and Gillen, Stirling, Howitt, Taplin, Roth, Kempe, Schulze, Schmidt, and Mathews.\(^{232}\)

Von Leonhardi’s main methodological advice was to keep to the old men and what they had to say. He never tired to ask, implore and repeat ‘to reinvestigate with the old men’,\(^{233}\) ‘In general old magicians would be the best informants’\(^{234}\) and ignore

\(^{228}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 26.2.1909.
\(^{229}\) Tnatantja means ‘tall pole’. A tnatantja with a feather bush at the top of it, is called kauaua (Strehlow 1910, 1913).
\(^{230}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 26.2.1909.
\(^{231}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, probably 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
\(^{232}\) References to these works can be found in Carl Strehlow’s letters, von Leonhardi’s letters and footnotes in Strehlow’s handwritten manuscripts.
\(^{233}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904.
theories. This he still repeated in his second last letter to Carl Strehlow on the 16 November 1909, and indeed it sounded superfluous at that point repeating 'have the old men dictate the texts to you'. Von Leonhardi was not interested in the opinions of the researchers or their interpretations of foreign cultures. He wanted to know what people of particular cultures say and what they say about their traditions and customs, if they make conscious reflections on these. He had a particular aversion to theories that picked-up on an isolated element pressing it into moulds or putting them through a particular biscuit cutter, like Foy's sun cult projected on to the Ingkwere ceremony due to analogies in a north American ceremony that 'are quite striking' (see above).

Strehlow's editor was able to channel the research project in central Australia towards a form that went beyond philology and mission ethnography; he showed Strehlow how important it was to produce primary source material based on solid empirical research, sometimes by demonstrating mislead or rash inferences by armchair anthropologists or even by himself. With von Leonhardi the work went towards an inductive and descriptive research project which had the purpose to document the languages and cultures of the Arrernte and Luritja in their own right, attempting to avoid Christian and other theoretical biases. This approach it was believed would allow an objective analysis of material in the future. Without von Leonhardi's guidance Carl Strehlow may very possibly have been drawn to making unwelcome parallels with Greek mythology or other ancient worlds known to him.

In the third volume on Arrernte song and ceremony, the German researchers addressed the methodology of their ethnographic project and noted its limitations, especially due to the fact that the missionary did not attend ceremonies believing it would jeopardise his credibility as a Christian evangelist (Strehlow 1910). They had a commitment to transparency which they thought was not apparent in Spencer and

234 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 9.9.1905.
235 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 16.11.1909.
236 Inkura in Carl Strehlow's work and Engwura in Spencer and Gillen.
237 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 7.8.1906.
238 His youngest son's Songs of Central Australia, in contrast, became impregnated with references to European mythologies. This is likely to have been an influence of his father's instructions in his childhood and later reading of his father's work as well as his literary background. Maybe it was also a reflection of how he, his father and the German tradition valued other cultures, like their own, not inferior.
Gillen’s publications. Thus, the missionary’s context had to be made apparent and explained. Von Leonhardi wrote to him:

I think we will have to make a few comments on how you conducted your research on the tjurunga songs and performances. What do you think? We will have to say that you due to missionary work, have never actually taken part or have been present at performances, i.e. that you therefore describe the performances only from what the men have told you about them, but that you wrote down the songs after their recitation, exactly as the men performed them for you. I believe it is necessary to make such a statement so that it could not appear as if you withheld anything which might be of interest for the assessment of the material provided.

Another motivation to do this was that Baron von Leonhardi had discovered through R.H. Mathews that Spencer and Gillen had set up a depot of food in Alice Springs and invited ‘the natives promising them all these lovely things if, in return, they would perform ceremonies’. He asked Strehlow if he had heard about this as well and commented:

It is possible, that these days this is the only way to see ceremonies -- similar approaches have been taken in other countries -- but in these instances researchers have mentioned this fact quite openly and indeed have a scientific obligation to do so. Spencer and Gillen, however, give the impression that the performances were being performed as they were arriving; that is dishonest! The scientific value of such performances on demand is of course of less value; the use of data and photographs has to be far more cautious.

Von Leonhardi was aware that Spencer and Gillen had created an artificial context for the performance of ceremonies in 1896 and was aware of the interference of the

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240 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 26.2.1909.
241 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 24.9.1908.
242 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 24.9.1908.
photographic equipment in the circumstances of ceremonies. He in contrast had asked Strehlow to describe the historical context:

If I may express a further request for the manuscript, it would be a brief history of the mission work among the Aranda, as well as of the white settlement of the area. It would be lovely if photographs of the area (mission station) and of the natives, maybe of your main informants, could be shown in this chapter.

According to Middendorf (2006:22-34) Spencer and Gillen’s photographic compositions were manipulated by the limitations of photographic technology and their views of the Arrernte. He maintains that the presentation of the Arrernte was the one of the Australian Aborigines as doomed ‘gothic figures’ (Middendorf 2006:26). I agree that Spencer was trying to create a remote and ancient time in his photography, but it was rather an earlier evolutionistic stage of human development that he was trying to evoke, or the ‘alcheringa’ that became Spencer and Gillen’s famous ‘Dreamtime’. Jones (2005:14-17) remarks that Spencer employed an ahistorical style in the text of Native Tribes of Central Australia where historical incidents in Gillen’s original text had been edited out; a similar process occurred with the published images in which shadows of the photographers (Gillen’s and Spencer’s) were retouched, for example, because they were a clear indication that the Aborigines were not in this timeless space or ‘on the cultural level of men of the Stone Age’ as Spencer (1927:vii) contended. Von Leonhardi was not so much bothered by the fact that the Arrernte were not in ‘their natural state’, because he acknowledged it might nearly have been the only way to get to see ceremonies, but that Spencer and Gillen were trying to make their presentation seem more authentic by manipulating the situation and withholding the context. He asked Strehlow to point this fact out:

Somewhere you should also mention the fact that Spencer and Gillen asked the aboriginals to come together and that without artificial feeding it would just be impossible for a larger gathering of Aboriginals to stay together in

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243 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 24.9.1908.
244 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 7.8.1906.
245 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 24.9.1908.

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Central Australia for weeks, or even months. Also the misconception of Spencer and Gillen's absolute credibility will need to be addressed publicly.  

Strehlow's approach differed from Spencer and Gillen's (and seemed on the surface less authentic). He had never been present at ceremonies as he believed that it would have compromised his position as a missionary (Strehlow 1910). However, it is not true that he did not see or hear them.

Strehlow’s great advantage over the English researchers was his intricate knowledge of the languages Arrernte and Luritja (including the secret-sacred languages) as well as Diyari and his long term residency at Hermannsburg. This enabled him to collect myths and songs in vernacular, and discover that his informants were well aware of the meaning of their myths and songs. In contrast, Spencer and Gillen (1904:xiv) had contended that the songs were not understood by their performers. Strehlow remarked after he had recorded hundreds of songs that they have a meaning and are understood in particular by the old men, he called ‘knaribata’. He wrote:

The Tjurunga-songs, I have already collected over 300, provide the desired clues on their religious views. I will try to give a literal translation of them in German and in footnotes I will indicate as far as I can when the meaning of words in the old songs deviate from current language use. In some of the songs there are some words from other dialects, which the blacks are not quite sure about. Thus, I am unable to guarantee their rightness. However, the meaning of most words are completely clear, though it is sometimes the

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246 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 26.2.1909. Von Leonhardi’s comment is not accurate. Although large-scale ceremonies that lasted some months were rare, they did occur. T.G.H. Strehlow (1970:102) remarked that while each group had to stage at some point the complete ceremonial cycle, these were rare occasions.

247 It is not quite true that he never saw ceremonies or the performers in outfit. Ceremonies were sometimes performed only a stone's throw outside of the mission in the dry riverbed of the Finke from where the chanting must have floated occasionally to the mission precinct. In 1896, for example, he came upon an emu ceremony (Carl Strehlow to Kaibel, 10.7.1896 (LAA). Later, he complained that public and restricted ceremonies were performed around Hermannsburg (Albrecht 2002:347) and in 1910 he wrote that ‘Aranda and Luritja today still regularly hold the cult rituals according to the instruction of their altjirrangamitjina’ (Strehlow 1910:1). Carl’s jurisdiction did not go beyond the immediate boundaries of the mission precinct itself.

248 Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
translation that is very difficult, as the natives do think very differently and express themselves very differently to a European.\footnote{Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).}

Carl Strehlow sat down with his informants who dictated and sang word for word their myths and songs in Arrernte and Luritja prose and verse to him in countless sessions. His informants described and explained to him the choreography and meaning of the sacred ceremonies, and the material culture used on these occasions in their own languages and words. Von Leonhardi emphasised that it was a very wearing methodological process ‘not only on Strehlow’s part, but also on the part of the blacks’ (von Leonhardi in Strehlow 1910:i).\footnote{His son, T.G.H. Strehlow, as well as other researchers critiqued his approach. T.G.H. Strehlow had decades later the advantage of hindsight, and was able to combine knowledge of language and eyewitness report in his work.} Thus, Carl recorded the descriptions, explanations and interpretations of Arrernte and Luritja people of their own cosmology. It was not an eyewitness description of a monolingual English observer who saw ‘naked, howling savages’ who were ‘chanting songs of which they do not know the meaning’ (Spencer and Gillen 1899:xiv). Carl Strehlow’s method, transcribing over years in indigenous languages the reports of the actual performers of the events, stood in opposition to eyewitness reports of people who did not understand the languages of the performers and stayed around for only a matter of weeks.\footnote{157}

Problems in the Field

Strehlow’s ethnographic research was stretched over a long period of time as he was proceeding very carefully revisiting subjects he had discussed a number of times with his informants. The questions on the same subjects changed over time. The departure points were sometimes abandoned, as they had to adjust to the result that the field yielded. Observations raised new questions and he was constantly reminded to pay great attention to what elements were ‘original’ and what elements imported. In 1904 his editor had already written:

I assume that these beliefs/concepts, just like amongst other peoples, are determined by very uncertain, often even contradictory ideas; often a more recent concept has overlaid an older one, without replacing the older one
entirely. This causes a great confusion among the relevant ideas which, however, does not disturb the peoples themselves in the slightest. Local variations may also play a role.\textsuperscript{251}

Carl remarked, for example, 'this is a newer view' when he rediscussed mythological aspects of the moon and sun and discovered variations.\textsuperscript{252} He even observed that Christian teachings had altered some indigenous beliefs.\textsuperscript{253} Von Leonhardi kept on asking new questions as well as posing old questions over and over again, finding more details and pushing Strehlow to delve ever deeper into the subjects. Carl Strehlow had also been from the very beginning of his research acutely aware that his position as a missionary might be viewed as biased. He wrote even before he started working with von Leonhardi to Kaibel:

I will proceed very carefully with the publication of my research, as that only what will withstand scrutiny will be printed. One cannot be careful enough, as we are predominantly dealing with blacks who have been exposed to Christianity and its teachings since their youth.\textsuperscript{254}

Strehlow was aware that the Christian teachings of his predecessors had already, after only 15 years, influenced some cosmological beliefs and concepts of the Arrernte. Sometimes he had to make detailed and persistent inquiries, to the point, that he had to convince and nearly argue with his indigenous informants that Christian beliefs had made their way into their cosmology:

That God created humanity by dropping a Tju.-Stone on earth during a visit, I read in Kempe; some Christians who grew up on the station confirmed this. This is definitely a skewing of biblical\textsuperscript{255} and heathen beliefs; for this reason I retreat from this view. In the meantime, I had to concede that this view is

\textsuperscript{251} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904.
\textsuperscript{252} Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
\textsuperscript{253} Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi; possibly 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1). This was almost certainly Loatjira.
\textsuperscript{254} Carl Strehlow to L. Kaibel, 30.8.1904 (Lutheran Archives Adelaide).
\textsuperscript{255} Although the word is not quite readable, the context makes it clear that it is biblical.
wrong, after consulting heathens, who have grown up in heathenism and have been in influential positions (one of them is a famous Zauber-Doctor). 256

Another problem Strehlow faced was that his informants seemed sometimes to deliberately make their cosmology look more Christian, because they were considering his missionary position. He was at times suspicious that they were not giving him accurate information:

Here it means to check and recheck. Towards a missionary the blacks like to show themselves in a better light and thus give their myths a Christian tinge. In this regard missionary Kempe was not careful enough; I thought initially, that I was able to follow his lead on Altjira, as some of the Christian blacks had confirmed, that Altjira had created everything, even the totems. However, on further investigation with some heathens and Christians who have not absorbed Christianity completely, I found a lot different. A researcher can simply not develop his own view and then ask a black: is it like this. (...) The right question is: What did the old people say about this story? 257

He was cautious about what he collected often remarking that he was unsure, needed some further investigation, or did not want to push an issue as he may not receive the right answer and ‘they would agree with my view’. 258 For example, when he was trying to get to the bottom of the high god concept in Arrernte and Luritja belief:

In order to clarify this issue I have put some precise questions to the old men of both tribes. They emphatically assure me that they themselves believe in the reality of the Highest Being and that they teach the young men the concepts related to it as truth. They maintained this assertion even though I told them that I would rather correct an error in order to learn the truth than to write down something that was false. (Strehlow 1908:2)

256 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi; possibly 8. April 1906 (SH-SP-1-1). This was almost certainly Loatjira.
258 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, H. 23. X. 1907 (SH-SP-14-1). See also SH-SP-2-1.
It seems to me that Carl Strehlow had compromised his status as a missionary, and his attempts to convert the indigenous people at Hermannsburg with his intense study of their cultures, even though he did not attend ceremonies. According to his own accounts the overall success rate of Christianisation during his period was modest.\(^{299}\) He had only baptised 46 adults by 1920.\(^{260}\)

Carl Strehlow is likely to have spent as much time talking with senior Arrernte men about their own beliefs as he was about the gospel. The recording of the myth, song and language data was extremely time consuming, as was the interlinear and free translations and annotations of his data,\(^{261}\) and required long consultations and discussions on semantics.

What kind of impression did it make on his Arrernte and Luritja informants (who all appear in his genealogies and lists with ‘totem affiliation’) when he was trying to explain to them that Christian teaching had affected their cosmological beliefs? Vice versa Strehlow had observed that Christian teachings were affected by indigenous religion, reflected in his slightly annoyed remarks in the *Lutheran Herald* (1921) when he described how Arrernte people saw Jesus and angels in their dreams, and that songs were communicated to them through these dreams. In the course of the twentieth century, the Arrernte even emplaced Lutheran/Christian law in the Arrernte landscape (Austin-Broos 1994; 2004).

Strehlow’s behaviour must have appeared ambiguous to his informants. On the one hand he preached the gospel (in their languages), but on the other hand he spent years meticulously recording their languages and talking and learning about their religious beliefs. Through his thorough studies of indigenous cultures he had developed a deep appreciation of their human achievements. Many missionaries who had been sent around the globe developed a relativistic worldview (Veit 1991:129-130), including the protestant pastor and missionary Maurice Leenhardt (1878-1954) who became the

\(^{299}\) It is interesting to note that during a survey Carl Strehlow compiled for the census authorities in 1921 from the grand total of 176 Aboriginal adults at Hermannsburg, 66 were labelled as ‘Lutherans’, the rest clinging to their own religion. From these 29 were men and 37 women (Strehlow’s Handbook of Central Australian Genealogies. 1969-70:119-150). It would be his successor Albrecht who would have a breakthrough.


\(^{261}\) Carl Strehlow. H. 19.9.1906 (SH-SP-3-1).
chair after Lucien Lévy-Bruhl at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Clifford 1980).\textsuperscript{262} Jesuits, for instance, sometimes refused to translate their Christian materials back into the original languages, as to many unpredictable surprises could have emerged (Foertsch 2001:93-94).

So what was the motivation of these senior Aboriginal men to go to so much trouble and effort to tell Strehlow their stories in such detail and to spend countless hours teaching and explaining to him their myths, songs and ceremonies? It has been suggested that it may have been a religious exchange (Gent 2001:463) and that the men felt that they had to preserve this knowledge for the future because there were no young worthy men to give it to (T.G.H. Strehlow 1971; Völker 2001). Although these reasons may have been part of the motivation, none of these seem forceful enough to have facilitated this extraordinary transmission of indigenous knowledge to a single non-Aboriginal person. It is, for example, nearly impossible to imagine what Loatjira’s motivation could possibly have been to tell Carl Strehlow, who, as an ingkarte, had taken over his dreaming place Ntaria.

While this transmission was linked to exchange there was another crucial factor that made it possible. Austin-Broos (2003) makes an important observation which gives a very likely explanation on why these senior men worked so hard with Carl Strehlow. She discusses pepe, a new Arrernte word, used for everything connected to Christian belief and which assumed a related meaning to tywerrenge:

This rendering of God’s law as a form of Western Arrernte law was known as pepe, the Arrernte word for “paper” and one that is deployed with a range of references similar to the Arrernte term tywerrenge, used for the sacred boards or stones that carry men’s ritual designs. Just as the latter refers not simply to the boards or stones but all paraphernalia and practices involved in Western Arrernte rite, so pepe refers to the bible but also to the Lutheran liturgy generally – to all the books, buildings, calls to prayer and services that are part

\textsuperscript{262} Maurice Leenhardt had studied for decades myth, kin and language on New Caledonia, similar to Carl in Australia. Leenhardt became a relativist by the end of his ethnographic studies. His career ended very differently to Strehlow’s; he became a professor at a secular institution. It is curious to think what would have become of Carl Strehlow if Marcel Mauss, who had offered to continue the correspondence with him after Baron von Leonhardi’s death, had become his collaborator.
of Lutheran practice. This similar naming of different laws is indicative of the
way in which the Arrernte became Christian by rendering Christianity in an
Arrernte way. (Austin-Broos 2003:312)

It seems likely that Carl Strehlow’s senior informants ‘hoped that this form of
inscription might be more enduring than their revered tywerrenge, which were abused
by settlers and some of their own, and then de-legitimised by missionaries’ (Austin
Broos 2003:314). It seems then that the Arrernte men were making with Strehlow a
new type of tywerrenge called pepe. By transferring their own cosmology into this
new medium which the bible used, they may have hoped to give their own beliefs new
power. Like the Diyari, Arrernte people were literate in their own language by the
1890s. They wrote letters, postcards and short essays. Literacy took hold at
Hermannsburg and Arrernte people had an understanding what the medium of the
written word could achieve (Kral 2000).263

An incident occurred in the 1890s that may have demonstrated the power of pepe in
the Lake Eyre region and is likely to have been known at Hermannsburg, because a
fair amount of traffic occurred between the two Lutheran inland missions. Reuther
had barged into a meeting and started to argue in Diyari with an Aboriginal man who
finally asked him if he was armed. Reuther had kept one arm in his pocket and slowly
withdrew his hand and produced not a firearm, but a pocket bible. With the suspense
of the situation he managed to sit everyone down in front of him and read a text from
the bible (Stevens 1994:125).

A senior man of Hermannsburg once said to me that the book that the old man
Strehlow had compiled of their dreaming stories was ‘like the bible’.

Towards Refined Diffusionism

As mentioned above, although all observation has some implicit theory, observers can
be more or less disciplined in their application of theory to data and keep their
assumptions largely out of their empirical material.

263 See Kral (2000) generally on Arrernte literacy between 1879 and the present.
Carl Strehlow was methodical, consistent and precise (not to say pedantic), going over and over the information and asking his informants - senior members of the community - to dictate the texts to him. As a result his work became descriptive rather than theoretical. It is practically devoid of any kind of theory. I believe that this is mainly von Leonhardi's influence, because he never ceased to emphasise the need to avoid preconceived ideas and reminded Strehlow to ignore theories and to describe what he heard from the old men as faithfully as he could. This did not stop them from privately discussing theoretical approaches to Strehlow's anthropological data. The material was so suggestive of certain theories, hypotheses and assumptions that both made theoretical inferences and interpretations in their letters, but they managed to keep these opinions largely out of the publication itself. Von Leonhardi's constant probing and scepticism and the results of Strehlow's fieldwork kept them in line.

Strehlow's myth collection seemed to be a perfect case study for diffusion and borrowing of myth elements and language, because some of his material related to the territorial and linguistic boundary area of the Western Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja peoples. His work detailed differences as well as communalities between these two cultures. Strehlow maintained that the cultures of the Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja were similar, despite of their different language affiliation, but at the same time had also marked differences (Strehlow 1907-1920), in particular in the content of myths. Von Leonhardi was very keen to establish links or their lack thereof between these different cultural areas, based on language and myth comparison,\(^\text{264}\) which seemed to show evidence of small-scale diffusion.

Baron von Leonhardi's approach to diffusionism was a combination of Boasian 'refined diffusionism' and Graebner's broad Kuturkreislehre, a theory on general large-scale diffusion across continents. He was testing with this Boasian small-scale approach Graebner's desk-top theory. His approach indicates that he had read Boas in American Anthropologist and other journals he subscribed to. He suggested diffusion and the incorporation of borrowed elements into local myths. In a footnote, for example, he made an interesting comment on particular elements of the Luritja myth 'The rainman and the rainbow' (Strehlow 1908:10):

\(^{264}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 12.2.1909.
Many motives ... of this very strange myth remind of the Jonas-myth, which is dispersed over the whole world. This wandering tale (Wandermärchen) is also known in Melanesia, Polynesia, on the island of the Torres Straits and has been recorded in North Queensland by W.E. Roth in a particular variation. L. Frobenius (Zeitalter des Sonnengottes 1 pag. 16) claims to see this myth also in New South Wales and Tasmania, which seems to me rather doubtful. In this case, if one wants to admit a connection at all, one has to assume that this wandering myth has fused with a genuinely Central Australian rain totem myth and the view of the dangerous water-snake, which is distributed Australia-wide. (Strehlow 1908:10)

Although his analysis was carefully formulated and tentative, von Leonhardi seemed to consider this myth to be the result of diffusion and borrowing in a Boasian vain. But he also may have been playing with a Frazerian approach to myth, and hinting at a universal, human mythical theme. Strehlow’s editor had a tendency to test all theories and methods of interpretation on the material he had available.

Language was also understood to give clues on change in a society and historical movements of peoples. Like Pater W. Schmidt, who wrote extensively about Oceanic and Australian languages to underline his version of diffusionism (Kulturkreislehre), von Leonhardi was also interested in linguistics. For example, he wrote ‘there are interesting questions regarding the culture circles (Kulturkreise) in central Australia connected to comparison – within the Loritja area, it is apparent that two such culture circles meet, the northern one and the Dieri area connected to the south coast’.265 The comparison of vocabulary, he speculated one year later, would possibly give a clue from where the central Australian Aboriginal peoples had come from:

Thank you for completing the word-glossary. I expected a greater correlation between Loritja and Dieri. Thus, Loritja belongs to the Western Australian languages. The isolation of the Aranda vocabulary [and surely also their grammar] – or more precisely – their isolation in regard to other Australian

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265 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 8.3.1908.
languages and link to the northern tribes and possibly to New Guinea
languages and cultures, which we assumed, shows up quite clearly.\textsuperscript{266}

To be able to make further supporting statements on this fact he needed more
evidence and thus more empirical data. He asked Strehlow for additional original
texts in indigenous languages so they could be compared with the Arrernte texts
collected earlier, because ‘It would be of great importance to establish if the Luritja
and Aranda languages are distinct in structure and vocabulary’.\textsuperscript{267}

Von Leonhardi wanted to know if there were any correlations between the language
and culture of the Centre and the South Coast of Australia. He understood some of the
linguistic material as possible proof or evidence that the Arrernte had come from the
north (Papua New Guinea) and that the Luritja seemed to belong to an earlier cultural
layer of people from the south. It seemed to him that due to their affiliation to
Western Desert language, the Luritja belonged to another culture circle than the
Arrernte. This approach reminds of an early view held by Boas in 1888:

The analysis of dialect enables us to follow the history of words and of
concepts through long periods of time and over distant areas. The introduction
of new inventions and migration into distant countries are often indicated by
the appearance of new words the origins of which may be ascertained. (Boas
1940:631)

Boas retreated from this view as he developed his understanding of cultures, and
limited this possibility to small-scale diffusion. Because only in small areas diffusion
could be empirically proven and conclusions made, which were not necessarily
applicable to other areas where the same phenomenon appeared; there it could be
based on other reasons or caused by other events. Although it seemed to von
Leonhardi that Strehlow’s material showed a certain degree of diffusion and exchange
of cultural elements between two distinct groups, he remained sceptical and reserved
about his opinion because he believed that ‘analogies deceive only to often’.\textsuperscript{268}

\textsuperscript{266} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 12.2.1909.
\textsuperscript{267} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 3.4.1909.
\textsuperscript{268} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 15.12.1907.
Von Leonhardi further speculated that very ancient elements of culture may have been preserved on the southern coasts of Australia where apparently no boomerangs, shields, marriage classes and no real totemism existed and it 'would be the very oldest population of Australia, probably the Tasmanian one, which may had been pushed by migration waves with a slightly higher culture and differing language to the South and South East and possibly South West coast where they seem to have survived'. However, he concluded, 'this is all still very problematic' 269.

Like evolutionism, diffusionism would be abandoned, as it never became an unquestioned paradigm. Diffusionism had been used to critique evolutionism but itself was soon supplanted by functionalism (Swain 1985:101-105). Culture circles would never be properly defined, it was impossible to find exactly the denominators of such a circle. Particular situations made it impossible to make final judgements on the cultural and linguistic make-up of an area. Such situations occurred for example on language borders. In the boundary area of Kukatja-Luritja and Arrernte, for instance, a special situation occurred which defies the category ‘Western Desert culture bloc’ coined by Berndt (1959). Linguistically the Kukatja belong to the Western Desert peoples, but when considering their traditional laws and customs, they are also clearly allied to the Arrernte, their eastern Arandic neighbours.

T.G.H. Strehlow observed that although these groups identified with different languages, due to communalities in their religious beliefs and close kin ties they shared principles in land tenure. He wrote that the Kukatja (often called Western Loritja by his father) were not a typical Western Desert group. The cultural boundary occurred further to the west, where the landscape became more arid, and, thus the land tenure model more fluid. He remarked (Strehlow 1965:143; 1970:99-100, 109-110) they had virtually the same land tenure system as the Arrernte, their immediate neighbours:

The Kukatja, whose territory stretched from the western border of the Western Aranda territory westwards as far as the westernmost outcrops of the

269 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 12.2.1909.
MacDonnell, a little beyond Amunurknga (Mt Liebig) and Putati spring, has a local group system closely similar to that of the Aranda; and the description of the Aranda njinanga sections in the following pages is applicable to the Kukatja local groups. Ritual authority in the Kukatja local groups was vested in the ceremonial chief (atanari) and his assistant elders (tina or tjilpi) – the Kukatja terms atanari and tina (or tjilpi) corresponding to the Aranda ingkata and kngaribata respectively. (Strehlow 1970:110)

The exact description of language and transcription of original indigenous text had various uses and motivations. It gave insight into peoples worldviews and their true spirit, their Volksgeist, and could give possible clues on historical movements and particularity of peoples. Indeed, the collection of indigenous literature was one of von Leonhardi’s earliest requests to his Australian colleague,276 and without doubt the linguistic publication, a comparative grammar and dictionary of Arrernte and Luritja would have gone ahead had it not been for von Leonhardi’s premature death.

Von Leonhardi’s health was failing by the end of 1909, when he wrote his last letters to Strehlow in central Australia. He was desperately working on the third and fourth volume of ‘our publication of your manuscripts’ as well as on the remaining parts on the social life of the Arrernte and Luritja. Although sometimes unable to work, he still wrote to Strehlow and sent lists of questions relating to social life and material culture, because Carl Strehlow was about to leave Hermannsburg with his family to visit Germany and it was not clear if he would return. Von Leonhardi not only asked for clarification of some issues in the manuscript, he also sent a long wish list of objects, tools, animals and plants. One desperate question, demand and request after the other poured out of the ailing scholar. Thus, in the last few months of 1909 Carl Strehlow was working frantically on the conclusion of his oeuvre, which was on material culture and language including sign language. After five years of intensive research he finished his ethnographic inquiries on the 24 November 1909 and copied the last pages for von Leonhardi on the 16 February 1910.

276 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 9.9.1905.
On the 11 December 1909 von Leonhardi sent his last Christmas and New Year’s wishes. In it he thanked Carl Strehlow for the continuation of the manuscript and expressed his delight that six additional Luritja myths had been recorded. It is the last letter to Strehlow in Australia, who was due to leave Hermannsburg mid 1910 to visit his homeland. In his luggage to Germany Strehlow took many of the requested items with him including an emu egg and a kangaroo skin which were going to be his personal presents for von Leonhardi when they finally met.271

However, just before Carl Strehlow was to visit Gross Karben his editor’s health gave way altogether. Baron Moritz von Leonhardi died from a stroke late in October 1910, only days before Carl Strehlow was to visit him, a meeting he had for years been hoping for. They never met.

271 From a letter by Auguste or Hugo von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow we know that Carl gave these items to his siblings. (Letter 1910 by Auguste or Hugo von Leonhardi.) Moritz did not marry or have any descendants (Telephone conversation on the 6 May 2004 with Peter von Leonhardi, grandson of Hugo von Leonhardi, Moritz’s brother).
CHAPTER V

Geist through Myth:
Revealing an Arrernte and Luritja Ontology

It is a given of contemporary Australian anthropology that at the heart of Aboriginal ontology lies the person-land-ancestral inter-relationship (Rumsey 2001:19), and that this system of belief, glossed in English as 'the dreaming', encompasses all dimensions of life (Stanner 1956, 1966; Berndt 1970). These elements of Aboriginal cosmology and ontology are taken for granted. Most land claim or native title claim reports, for instance, dedicate a chapter or a substantial section to the dreaming, outlining its main features and key terms, such as tnengkarre or tywerrenge, and their translations. They summarise how the landscape was created and imbued with meaning by ancestral beings and how, at the same time, this landscape represents ancestral connections to the land and the mythical beings that created it, as well as furnishing central narratives, including travelling and local dreaming stories. Further sections of such reports outline how land described in these myths are held or owned by certain people or groups of people thereby conferring on those owners rights, responsibilities and duties.

The Western Arrernte term tnengkarre, in Luritja tjukurpa, encapsulates this key concept in contemporary Western Arrernte and Luritja cultures. It explains how the world came into being and is the source of traditional laws and customs that provide codes by which people abide. Western Arrernte people translate tnengkarre often with the word 'dreaming' which is a polysemic expression. Dreaming can mean mythological ancestors, the travels and actions of the ancestral beings and their deeds, or their marks and physical representation in the landscape (trees, rocks, etc.). It can also be used to connote spiritual power, religious laws and objects, ritual, design and songs and ceremonies although there are other indigenous terms that describe these

272 These are Western Arrernte terms.
273 In other Arandic languages and dialects altyerre is used for this concept.
274 Tjukurpa is also used in Pintupi and Pitjantjatjara.
concepts more accurately. 'The dreaming' can also refer to a past era in which the supernatural ancestral beings created the physical and spiritual world of people living today.

Yet what we take for granted in rehearsing this Aboriginal ontology is the product of a long process. It led to an understanding of the dreaming only after decades of ethnographic writing. Carl Strehlow stood at the beginning of this process and he came surprisingly close to understanding its unusual particularity. His approach to Aboriginal mythology still contributes to our empirical knowledge of the Arrernte and Luritja's engagement with the land and its natural species. In this chapter I propose to show how Carl Strehlow's study of myth, although characterised by European assumptions and some distance from approaches of professional anthropology in the mid-twentieth century, realised a Boasian ideal: to pursue the Geist or logic of a people's culture through attention to their myth. To understand what Carl Strehlow achieved through his empirical approach, I will draw on insights from Lévi-Strauss regarding 'savage' thought and 'primitive classification'. It was Carl Strehlow's recording of the intimate relation between nature and social-cultural life among Arrernte and Luritja people that would lay the ground for T.G.H. Strehlow's work. Although Carl's corpus of myth lacked a modern sense of symbolism, or comparison beyond its region, it allowed his son to conceptualise the person-land relationship which led to a contemporary view of Arrernte and Luritja ontology.275

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275 My point here is different from the one made by Hiatt when he calls Stanner's approach to myth 'ontological' (Hiatt 1975:10-13). Hiatt describes Stanner's approach in terms of isolating, through the study of myth and rite, a certain structured (and moral) order that Stanner describes as 'good-with-suffering' or 'order-with tragedy'. It is grounded in the social world of kinship, sexuality and rite. By contrast, I have the human specifying view and experience of environment (person-land and -species relations) in mind that were constituted through Australian hunter-gatherer life. My focus relates more closely to Heidegger's observations on nature: that far from being a given, the 'Things of Nature' are always constituted through a particular practice of life and in turn confer on that life particular forms of experience, a particular 'World' (see Heidegger 2002:288-289). For this reason, my ideas draw rather on Lévi-Strauss's The Savage Mind than from his structural analyses of myth as such (cf. Hiatt 1975:12-13). These ideas are more at home with contemporary phenomenology in Australian anthropology than with the work to which Hiatt refers (see, for instance, Redmond 2001). This contemporary writing was foreshadowed by Strehlow (1947, 1970) and Munn (1970). One form of insight does not obviate the other. It is of some interest though that, in his 1975 discussion of myth and ontology, Hiatt did not judge either T.G.H. Strehlow's magnum opus, Songs of Central Australia (1971) or his path-breaking essay on the 'totemic landscape' (1970) worthy of direct discussion. The former is cited only for its view on Röheim, the latter, not at all.
In sum, this chapter's main focus is the substantial record of a cultural logic that Carl Strehlow produced in his studies of central Australian myth and song. The value of his work lies here rather than in his framework which I contextualise briefly at the outset. I then show how a particular sense of Aboriginal ontology grew as Carl recorded in extraordinary detail an indigenous engagement with environment (with species and the land itself). T.G.H. Strehlow in turn connected these data with issues of identity, authority, sentiment and ownership, issues that were further explored by Róheim, Munn, Peterson, Myers and Morten to produce a contemporary account of indigenous ontology.

Frameworks for studying Myth: Modernist Approaches and Carl Strehlow’s

Others have sought to discuss the types of approach to myth produced by twentieth century, 'modern' anthropology (see Turner 1967; Fox 1967; Maranda 1972:7-20; Hiatt 1975:1-23). For my purposes here, I propose to isolate four methods which I shall designate functional, structural, social symbolic and psychoanalytic. To a greater or less extent, all these approaches allow comparison between the myth-complexes of different cultures, and also some degree of specification. To link these four categories to the world of Australian ethnography, I will intersperse my remarks with comments drawn from Hiatt’s discussion of approaches to Australian myth. This brief account built from some general sources and a more particular one will help position Carl Strehlow’s early twentieth century study of myth among Arrernte and Luritja people.

Malinowski was the most explicit about a ‘functional’ approach to the analysis of myths that counted them as charters for ritual and social life. Speaking of the rites and myths that informed the Kula, he remarked:

... myth possesses the normative power of fixing custom, of sanctioning modes of behaviour, of giving dignity and importance to an institution. The Kula receives from these ancient stories its stamp of extreme importance and value. The rules of commercial honour, of generosity and punctiliousness in all its operations, acquire through this their binding force. This is what we could call the normative influence of myth on custom. (Malinowski 1979:237)
Malinowski comments further that a role of myth is to present in idealised form, the practices and realised aims of the living. Its message is that ‘the best of all possible worlds’ is attainable. These ideas are made more real by the fact that myths and the ancestral heroes that they describe are owned by particular groups:

... members of a sub-clan, or a local unit, can claim a mythical hero as their direct ancestor, and members of a clan can boast of him as of a clansman. Indeed, myths, like songs and fairy stories, are “owned” by certain sub-clans. This does not mean that other people would abstain from telling them, but members of the sub-clan are supposed to possess the most intimate knowledge of the mythical events, and to be an authority in interpreting them. (Malinowski 1979:238)

Likewise Ronald and Catherine Berndt have maintained that Australian myth acts as a charter for moral behaviour. Their proposal is that frequently wrong behaviour is punished in myth or singled out for moral comment by narrators or an audience in the process of performance (cited in Hiatt 1975:6). The repertoire of Arrernte myth recorded by both Strehlows, renders this proposal somewhat implausible. Murders of fathers by their sons and vice versa occur without the orderly moral accounting that the Berndts imply. As Hiatt observes, the quite high incidence of ‘bad examples’ in Australian myth suggests that it acted ‘to undermine morality as much as to safeguard it’ (Hiatt1975:7).

This approach to myth was revolutionised by structuralism (see Lévi-Strauss 1963). Lévi-Strauss shifted the focus of the analysis of myth from the domain of explicit rule to the implicit and rational unconscious. He argued that the myths of a region, and indeed around the world, should be seen as (logical) transformations of each other. Far from relating mainly to the contingent present or to an imagined past, myths are timeless:

... a myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place long ago. But what gives the myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described
is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future. (Lévi-Strauss 1963:209)

Among the human minds (‘primitive’ as much as the ‘modern’) around the globe, Lévi-Strauss sought to demonstrate ‘the invariant human mind coping with variant environments and trying to reduce them to manageable systems’ (Maranda 1972:12). Through forms of transformation and inversion, the cognitive oppositions of the mind work to define the problems of existence and especially those that devolve on the distinction between nature and culture, including the getting of fire, the problem of incest and humankind’s distance from the sky. Lévi-Strauss’s view of myth was closely related to his view of totemism and received heavy criticism from Australianists (see Hiatt 1969; Peterson 1972). Even Maddock, who saw some virtue in structuralism, was tempered in his use of Lévi-Strauss’s ideas when it came to myth (Maddock 1982:137-8). Nevertheless, the impact of Lévi-Strauss’s abstract and cognitive approach was to stimulate other forms of symbolic analysis, grounded in social life, the social treated as text, or in intra-familial relations interpreted through psychoanalysis (see for instance Turner 1968:13-24).

The social symbolic in Australia soon became a particular genre of phenomenology – the type of account of subject-object transformations that in Munn’s work spoke equally about belief, semantics, environment and experience. Influenced by the Africanist, Victor Turner, Munn sought to address a symbolic experiential world in which ancestors and their descendants were embedded in the landscape. She wrote:

The purpose of this paper is to push our attempts to understand transformation beyond the artificial boundaries of “mythology” into the domain of socialization or, more generally, the problem of the relationship between the individual and the collectivity as mediated by the object world. (Munn 1970:141)

She took as her focus the travels of people and mythic heroes across the land, and transformations that were not cognitive and abstract but, rather, embodied - as subjects went into the land, imprinted the land, or else drew objects from their bodies
to be transformed as they lodged in the landscape. These intimate and transforming subject-object relations were foreshadowed by T.G.H. Strehlow (1947) and in ‘Geography and the totemic landscape in Central Australia’ he wrote:

In a land where the supernatural beings revered and honoured by their human reincarnations were living, not in the sky, but at clearly marked sites in the mountains, the springs, the sandhills and the plains, religious acts had an immediate personal intimacy ... The human reincarnations turned into living symbols during the impersonations of the supernatural beings at the sacred sites. The visible totemic landscape was considered to be an integral part of reality of eternity. ... each major sacred site was the geographic fountain of authority for the territory that surrounded it. (Strehlow 1970:133-4)

Like Munn, T.G.H. Strehlow emphasised that the makers of this myth-rite complex were people who travelled across the land. Contemporaneous with Strehlow junior, and just prior to Munn, Géza Róheim established a psychoanalytic rendering of these travels (1925, 1934, 1945). Guided by Freud’s Totem and Taboo, Róheim, as Hiatt observes, formulated at least three different positions, concerned at the outset with an historically or personally encountered ‘primal scene’, the father in coitus with the mother, and later with the ‘separation anxiety’ for which travel and return to the land become the master symbol. Hiatt summarises Róheim’s mature intent:

The central theme of The Eternal Ones of the Dream is that Australian religion acts both to widen the gap created naturally by parturition and to compensate the offspring for the loss of his mother. Within this general scheme, myths play three important functions. First, by celebrating phallic heroes and libidinising the countryside that they created and wandered over, myths counteract the deprivation felt by maturing youths ... Second, myths help to effect an eventual transfer of libido from the mother to the father (or, in social terms, the removal of the boy from the domestic group into the all-male cult group) by offering a heroic and supernaturally conceived dual unity of Father and Son in place of the natural dual unity of mother and son. Finally, myths keep alive the dream of an eternal union with the mother. (Hiatt 1975:9)
Both Hiatt (1975) and Morton, in his discussion for instance of the symbolic significance of the tyelp or native cat hero (western quoll), ‘a provocative image of prolific reproduction through loss’ (Morton 1985:224), provide accounts of the manner in which indigenous myth and rite re-genders parturition and creates a solidarity among men. In his treatment of mainly Arrernte and Luritja myth, Morton (1985) integrates these symbolic insights with an analysis of opposition, fragmentation and reconstitution between earth and sky marrying Lacan to Lévi-Strauss. Later, as I show below, he uses this approach not only to libidinise Munn’s indigenous landscape, but also to place within it active male agents driven by desire.

In this ontology, Morton would synthesise Freud, Lévi-Strauss and the Dukheimian tradition foreshadowed by Hiatt (1975) in his discussion of Stanner and Röheim. These Australianists sought to integrate analyses in ways advocated by others. One was Robin Fox who argued that the sociological and psychological in the study of myth and rite can be used to complement each other without resort to reductionism (Fox 1967). Similarly, Turner described Ndembu rite and myth as stretched between two poles, the one referencing social norms, the other, ‘organic and physiological phenomena’ (Turner 1968:18). Turner remarked, ‘it would seem that the needs of the individual biopsychical organism and the needs of society, in many respects opposed, come to terms with one another in the master-symbols of Ndembu society’ (Turner 1968:19).

These various insights on myth drawn from different types of approach, not always mutually exclusive, were one of modern twentieth century anthropology’s more significant achievements. What made these approaches different from those that had preceded them is that they were based on direct observation of the manner in which peoples used myth as genres of knowledge and ritual performance. The ‘present’ of myth, as Lévi-Strauss described it, was directly apprehended. However, most myth, including Arrernte and Luritja myth refers to a distant past which led many nineteenth century interpreters to render it either within the domain of history as legend, or in that of imagination as fable or fairy-tale. As Hiatt relates, even Ronald and Catherine Berndt in their early formulations classified Aboriginal myth in terms of types of
history either factual or imagined. Based on their 1958 account, Hiatt constructed the following diagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sacred</th>
<th>Unreal events</th>
<th>Secular</th>
<th>Universal themes</th>
<th>Spirits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myths---------</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secular----</td>
<td>Universe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal literature------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legends</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Legends and myths that were sacred or secular involved a classification that was not too distant from Carl Strehlow's own categories, myths (Mythen), legends (Sagen) and fairy tales (Märchen). The important feature of Strehlow's work is the juxtaposition of a European perspective on types of oral literature that clearly predates modern anthropology, and a fieldwork-like empirical record of people's accounts of ancestral life and its natural environment. Carl Strehlow was transitional not simply for the lack of modern theory, but also for the way in which his empiricism made his approach feasible.

Carl Strehlow's Framework in Context

Strehlow's framework for the study of myth, evident in the structure of his published myth collections, derived from German intellectual life. It was a common form of classification in nineteenth century German anthropology and ethnography, invoking the German Romantic Movement and its orientation towards folklore and philology.

Well-known representatives of this genre, the Grimm brothers, coined the terms 'Mythen, Sagen und Märchen' (myths, legends and fairy-tales). They established myth as a form of story told in traditional oral societies and distinguished by its reference to matters of 'collective, usually sacred, importance' (Von Hendy

276 The German terms do not correlate exactly with their English translations. The English term legend, for instance, does not correspond precisely with the German Sage or Legende. Thus, Sagen can be translated as myths or legends.
2002:xiii). The Grimm brothers developed their triple distinction over a generation. A brief sketch of its generic criteria appears in Jacob Grimm’s preface to the 1844 edition of *Deutsche Mythologie*:

Looser, less fettered than legend, the Fairy-tale lacks that local habitation, which hampers legend, but makes it more home-like. The Fairy-tale flies, the legend walks; the one can draw freely out of the fullness of poetry, the other has almost the authority of history. ... The ancient mythus, however, combines to some extent the qualities of fairy-tale and legend; untrammelled in its flight, it can yet settle down to a local home. (Grimm 1883, vol3, xv in Von Hendy 2002:63)

According to the Grimm dictionary, *Mythen* (myths) are narratives of sacred events that are held to be true by their tellers, and may have features of both Sagen and Märchen. The term is usually applied to the myths of ancient Greece or Rome. Sagen are a genre of stories that are locally rooted in true events; typically used for Nordic myths. Märchen (fairy-tales) are narratives that are not bound to a specific landscape, place or true events. Their content can draw from fiction and imagination. The Grimms saw it also as a ‘sunken myth’ (Schweikle 1990:292).²⁷⁷

Strehlow realised that the brothers Grimm’s three-fold classification ‘Mythen, Sagen und Märchen’ did not describe Arrernte and Luritja cosmology adequately. In his handwritten manuscript titled *Sagen* he used ‘traditions’ to label the different types of stories he had collected. The two main categories of Arrernte myths were ‘The oldest traditions of the Aranda’ and ‘The specific traditions of the Aranda’. The second category was split into four sub-categories: ‘Traditions about celestial bodies and natural phenomena’, ‘Traditions about the most ancient time’, ‘Traditions about totem-gods, who travelled in animal shape’ and ‘Traditions about totem-gods who travelled usually in human shape’. He also used the word ‘traditions’ to describe Luritja myths, trying new categories and headings like ‘The highest being (Tukura)’, ‘The Tukutita, the first people’ and so forth.

²⁷⁷ This Grimmian model is still an accepted taxonomy in folklore studies and often taken for granted.
On the title page of Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien, however, the classification Mythen, Sagen and Märchen appeared. It is not clear if this was Strehlow’s or von Leonhardi’s decision. Possibly it was an editorial decision to make the content obvious to potential buyers. Within the publication the classification was not consistently followed; it is not explicit which narratives are to be understood as Mythen or Sagen, and only a small number of stories are clearly labelled, namely those called Märchen. Carl Strehlow made a comment on the difference between fairy-tales and myths:

The difference between these Märchen and the Sagen is that the latter may only be told to people who have been accepted by the men as members of their society, and who accept the veracity of these stories. The Märchen, however, may be told to women and children. They serve to divert from the secrets of the men (see the Märchen of Tuanjiraka) or to instil into the women and children a fear of the pursuits of the evil beings (bankalanga). Other Märchen, like the one concerning the arinjamboninja, are simply told for entertainment. (Strehlow 1907:101)

The last two narratives in Carl Strehlow’s Luritja myth collection are also labelled as fairy-tales. It is hard to see, as with the Arrernte Märchen, why he called these stories fairy-tales, other than to differentiate them from restricted stories.\textsuperscript{278} The distinction foreshadows the Berndts’ effort at distinguishing sacred and secular myth (Hiatt 1975:1–2). Yet both categories draw their content from the happenings in a mythological past, which blurs the boundaries between the sacred and the mundane—a typical feature in traditional Aboriginal Australia (Berndt 1970:216).

The classification of indigenous narratives was an issue for von Leonhardi. In a response to a critical remark on Strehlow’s categories made by W. Foy, the director of the museum in Cologne, in the Kölnische Zeitung in 1908,\textsuperscript{279} von Leonhardi discussed in a letter to Carl the terminology and classification of indigenous narratives and proposed that in Volume II a justification was required. He remarked in a preface:

\textsuperscript{278} Today unrestricted stories are sometimes referred to as ‘children’s stories’. In Strehlow’s view, this might have made them ‘fairy stories’ as well.

\textsuperscript{279} Kölnische Zeitung, 26 April 1908.
The critic in the Cologne newspaper further regrets the term "Märchen" used for some of the stories told. He is of the opinion that "they represent serious concepts of belief, also for men." I do not wish to debate the word "Märchen". It does not stem from me, but from the author. I completely agree with the meaning it conveys. There is indeed a great difference between the sacred Sagen, known only to the men, and these "Märchen". The stories that are found on p.101-104 of the first instalment count on the women and children's fear of ghosts; though it must be admitted that the men themselves believe in the bankalanga and their evil deeds. In this way they are not Märchen in the true sense of the word. (Strehlow 1908:Preface)

Although von Leonhardi did not like Carl Strehlow's narrative classification, as well as the terminology used to describe the mythical ancestors, namely 'gods' and 'totem gods', he did not change them when he edited the manuscripts. He maintained that the author's meaning was clear. He seemed to accept that to a degree, classification and terminology were arbitrary affairs, often not a precise 'fit' for a narrative corpus. Von Leonhardi grappled with the issue but found no real solution. In the same period, in 1906, Arnold van Gennep commented that European classification of mythological narrative was not adequate for indigenous mythology and admitted that he used 'mythes' and 'légendes' interchangeably (Hiatt 1975:185) and 'that each of the assumed classes overlaps the others' (van Gennep [1906] 1975:193). In his Songs of Central Australia (1971), T.G.H. Strehlow resolved the classification issue by defining how he used 'song', 'poem', etc. in the central Australian context. He made it explicit that they were place bound and pertained to cosmology.

Today the Arrernte and Luritja narratives that Strehlow called Mythen, Sagen and Märchen are generally labelled in English as 'myths', some restricted to gender or age.280 Many of Strehlow's myths were male versions of particular stories. All of his main informants were men and in Aboriginal society this type of knowledge is gender

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280 Aboriginal people in Central Australia label today their stories in Aboriginal English: Olden time stories, bush tucker stories, dreaming stories ('proper', 'true' story). Within the category of dreaming stories, Western Arrernte people distinguish 'inside' and 'open' stories. The general public, including children, may hear outside or open stories, which are often public versions of restricted dreaming stories.
specific. He does not seem to have made a remark on the existence or non-existence of women’s-only myth, to which he is unlikely to have had direct access.\textsuperscript{281} Nevertheless, there is some suggestion of women’s sacred stories in his collection. These narratives may be a public version of women’s myth in the event told by men (Mavis Malbanka 2004:14) or are a male version of a restricted women’s dreaming. An example is the Luritja myth of the Pleiades:

The Pleiades are many girls (okarála) who once resided in the west at Okaralji [place of girls], a place to the north of Gosse's Range, where they lived on the fruit of a climbing plant (ngokuta = (A) lankua). Some time later they ascended to the sky and, after many journeys, returned to Okaralji, where they once more gathered ngokuta-fruit and performed the women’s dance (untiíní = (A) ntaperama). During this time the Pleiades are not visible in the sky. (Strehlow 1908:9)

Just as he used the categories Mythen, Sagen and Märchen, to organise his data, which denoted in a German intellectual context particular genres, Carl Strehlow was also drawn to compare Arrernte and Luritja myth with the European corpus:

But as in the Greek mythology, the Supreme God Zeus receded in the background, and the greatest interest, was bestowed on the semi-gods just the same thing happened in the religious traditions of the Australian aborigines. They neglected the Supreme Being, and turned their main interest to the demigods, half-animals and half-men, and endowed them with supernatural powers. The Aranda call these demi-gods Altjira-ngamitjma (the eternal uncreated); the Luritja, Tukutita; the Dieri, Muramura ... These semi-gods wandered from place to place, instructed their novices and performed ceremonics by which the Totem animals or plants were produced.\textsuperscript{282}

\textsuperscript{281} Much of the mythology and ceremony belonging to Arrernte women has been watered down in the course of the last century mainly due to mission life. The basic story lines as well as place names, however, are often still known, and some song and dance is still held by Arrernte women who have close connections and ties to Pertame and Luritja women. These ceremonies relate to some of the female ancestors as well as to other stories which have a ‘woman’s side’. Other beliefs in spirits have survived in modified forms.

\textsuperscript{282} Carl Strehlow, The Register, 7 December 1921.
The structure of his myth accounts seems to indicate that he tried to present indigenous mythology as a whole, internally connected, like Greek or Nordic mythology or like biblical myth. These corpuses unfold in a well-defined realm in which the protagonists interact and events intertwine. These myth collections start usually with setting the general scene and describing what was at the beginning of time and where the protagonists dwelt: Olympia and Hades, Asgard, Midgard and Jötenheim, or Heaven and Earth.

Both Arrernte and Luritja myth collections begin with general descriptions of 'primordial times'; where the ancestral figures would live, travel, interact and end their journeys. These introductions are summaries of the narratives Strehlow collected from a number of people which usually begin with particular ancestors emerging out of the earth or commencing a journey. Read together they are indeed connected, because the same places and ancestors appear often in a number of narratives; and the main motives and themes in these myths are the travels, petrifying, naming, actions, and interacting of ancestors. They can create the impression that the mythic whole was shared knowledge in society.

However, knowledge about myths was and is not evenly distributed in Arrernte and Luritja society. The transmission of knowledge generally, and in particular about country, was and is gradual. The entire body of information about a particular site or story is never conveyed all at one time. Learning about traditional laws and customs was a long process that could last a lifetime. Dreaming stories involve layers of knowledge, and the sum of these layers may be transmitted over several decades. In the case of male initiation, which took place between ten and thirty years of age, Morton (1987:110) writes, 'Throughout the cycle of initiation, perhaps lasting as long as twenty years, a youth constantly absorb[ed] knowledge and ancestral powers into his body'. No single Arrernte or Luritja person would have known the entire body of mythology pertaining to Arrernte and Luritja countries, because myths played and still play a very important role in land ownership. Therefore, considering a myth complex from different ownership positions gives it a different orientation. Rights and interests in land in central Australia were and are usually articulated through knowledge of particular dreaming stories, segments of dreaming tracks, songs, ceremonies, and
sacred designs that describe the country and places created by the ancestors of a landholding group (Pink 1936; Strehlow 1965; Morton 1992).

As a result of presenting Aboriginal mythology like European mythology and organising the myths in terms of a creation story, and a descent from the heavens to the earth, the modus operandi of Arrernte and Luritja myth was masked. These European pre-conceptions made it difficult, even for von Leonhardi, to address why the Grimm brothers’ classification seemed only partly to fit. At the same time, and in the spirit of Herder and Boas, these ill-wrought tools of a transitional anthropology allowed Carl Strehlow to make a start. He embarked on the collection of raw material, which left his corpus open to subsequent interpretation because he tried to document the myths in their own right – notwithstanding his presuppositions. This type of work contrasts with attempts like Frazer’s monumental The Golden Bough, which looks for universal myth themes and rules applicable around the world. Owing to Carl’s reluctance to analyse, it is difficult to evaluate what he derived from his investigations. It seems however fair to say that his research led him towards an understanding of the normative order he saw reflected in Aboriginal religion. In this his views were both like and unlike the Bemdzs. In addition, indigenous knowledge of the natural environment became a matter which he recorded assiduously. Finally, as his attention turned to the Luritja he also gained a sense of regional diffusion and borrowing.

What Strehlow saw: Normative Order, Natural History and Regional Diffusion

In 1906 Strehlow remarked to N.W. Thomas that the tywerrenge songs he collected gave ‘valuable clues on the religion of the blacks, because they tell of the wanderings and the deeds of the ancestors, their totems’\(^{283}\) and to von Leonhardi that these ‘Tjurunga-Songs, of which I have already collected 300, give the desired insight into the religious beliefs’.\(^{284}\) Berndt’s remark that in Aboriginal Australia ‘Morality and religion are not conceived of as being separate spheres of experience’ (Berndt 1970:219) is likely to approximate Carl Strehlow’s view. Christianity is a moral

\(^{283}\) Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
\(^{284}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).

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religion, and in German intellectual life mythology was understood as reflecting normative aspects of a people’s culture. This position on issues of the social-moral order in myth may be seen as a harbinger of the later functionalist view ‘that the narratives constitute a conservative, socialising force’, a ‘normative influence … on custom’ (Hiatt 1975:5; Malinowski 1979:237). The lives of the ancestors reflect issues of everyday life and ‘[i]n the majority of situations it is taken for granted that the majority of people will follow the socio-cultural patterns laid down in the creative era’ (Berndt 1970:219).

The myths of the earth-dwelling beings and their activities explain how the world was created and reflect many aspects of the lives of the Arrernte. Strehlow believed that they represented the indigenous understanding of the world and their perception of how the laws of life came into being. This interest is evident in the first sections of his myth collections (see for example Strehlow 1907:8,9-11) in which he chose to call some of the ancestral beings ‘teachers’ (‘Lehrer’) who establish and pass on ‘laws’ (‘Gesetze’). On September 12, 1908, his life-long friend and mentor Seidel wrote:

> It was a great pleasure to receive your book and letter, - thank you very much - I was particularly pleased about the book. I haven’t read it yet cover to cover, but I can glean already now, that the myths (Sagen) contain what one can call the religion or the teachings of the natives.285

The conundrum of myth as charter – how to regard bad examples – is evident in Strehlow’s work. The following myth presents an obvious case that a wrong doing, theft, has major consequences for the perpetrator:

Soon after this, the inhabitants of Mulati went off to avenge the theft. They travelled via Arambara, Tnolbutankama, Taraia, Jinbaragoltulta, Ruckana and Ratata to Iwopataka. When the inhabitants of the latter camp saw the approaching group of avengers, they said to the ngapa-chief, "You have stolen the latjia, that is why the inhabitants of Mulati are coming here." When the group of avengers had come close to the camp, the inhabitants of Iwopataka

285 Carl Seidel to Carl Strehlow, 12.9.1908 (SH 1908-2-1).
said to them, "Here is the man who stole your latjia. Kill him with your sticks (tnauia)." Although the raven-man took flight, the latjia men threw their tnaulia at the nape of his neck and he fell down dead. Then all the raven-men and latjia-men entered the local stone cave and everyone, including the gathered latjia-roots and the thief, became tjurunga. (Strehlow 1907:76-77)

However, moral statements in Arrernte and Luritja myths are usually less obvious. An example is provided in a mythic incident concerning the ancestral tyelpe/kuningka (A/L: native cats), important both to the Arrernte and the Luritja (Strehlow 1907; 1908:24-26). Luritja native cats, coming from the south (Luritja country), were stopped from proceeding into Arrernte country. The Luritja kuningka arrived at a place just south of Gilbert Springs, a main Arrernte tyelpe place, where the tyelpe chief Malbunka was residing at that time. Malbunka was angry to see them there and furiously uttered an Arrernte spell on them which made the Luritja native cats blind and they could not go on. They metamorphosed into trees and cliffs.

There are also more mundane and prosaic instructions on how to prepare or do certain things, such as cooking game and distributing it correctly to kin. The following are some common examples on the subject of cooking:

Lakalia, who had meanwhile come near, lifted big grey kangaroo Lurknalurkna with ease and laid it on the coals. After it had roasted a little, he took it from the fire, scraped off the singed fur and with a stone knife lopped off the legs and the tail, which he kept for himself, while giving the legs to the young fellows. Then he laid the rest of the meat back on the coals. When this had roasted sufficiently, he spread tree branches on the ground, cut up the meat and laid the individual pieces on the cushion of branches. While leaving most of the meat for the young fellows, he took for himself the spine of the kangaroo (toppalenba), the tail and the fat, and returned to Irtjoata, where he sat down near a stone cave. (Strehlow 1907:42)

This typical myth, on how to do things the 'proper way', often includes how particular laws and customs came about. For example, in the beginning, two 'indatoa'
("handsome" men) lived with their blind aunt, Kaiala, at Umbañi, a place in the far south-west. Every day the men went hunting in a different direction, killing many emus and cooking them in a particular way. They gave their blind aunt enough meat, but very little fat. One day they accidentally gave her a very fat female emu and she noticed that they had not done the right thing by her. As punishment she gave eyesight to all emus. The myth goes:

Every day the two indatoa went hunting in a different direction, killing many emus with their sticks, digging pits in the ground and roasting the emus in them. After they had first eaten the entrails, they plucked (bailkikuqak) an emu, broke its legs (lupara mbakaka) and spine (urba ultakaka), placed the cooked meat on green twigs and consumed it. The remaining emus they tied together, put a circular cushion made of woven grass (nama ntjama) on their heads and carried their prey home on it. They gave Kaiala sufficient meat, but very little fat. One day they were delayed while hunting and returned home after night had fallen. They accidentally (balba) gave the goddess a very fat female emu. After she had eaten the meat, the goddess went away from the camp but returned very soon because she had poked a twig into her blind eye, causing it to water a great deal (alkolja = tears). She rubbed the fat into her eyes and - she regained her sight. When she saw all the fat emus in the camp she said to the two men, "You have always withheld the fat emus from me, therefore all the emus will receive their sight from now on." (Strehlow 1907:30-31)

Aboriginal people in central Australia today still say that something done in their landscape should be done in the 'proper way' or 'right way', implying that it is done according to the rules set down by the ancestors. It can apply to virtually anything: cooking traditional food, hunting, approaching a sacred site or performing a ritual or ceremony. As Berndt noted, 'Aboriginal religion was, and is, intimately associated with social living, especially in relation to the natural environment and its economic resources' (Berndt 1970:219). His remark echoes Herder's view that 'the mythology of every people is an expression of the particular mode in which they viewed nature' (Herder cited in Von Hendy 2002:20).
Carl Strehlow understood myths not only as reflecting normative order, but also as reflecting an indigenous engagement with environment. Arrernte and Luritja mythology represented for him indigenous natural history, 'as the totems of the Aranda belong usually to the animal and plant world, their knowledge of the natural is here underlying; thus, they contain the popular natural history of the blacks.'

He wrote:

The tjurunga-songs in their totality therefore present the blacks, who grew up without education, with a fine popular study of nature. They frequently show a transition from the narration of the exploits of the altjirangamitjina to a description of the totem animals or plants. Even the actors who perform the cult rituals are mentioned in them. (Strehlow 1910:5)

With great enthusiasm, he recorded in detail the flora and fauna of central Australia as perceived by Arrernte and Luritja people. While doing so, he admired their empirical knowledge of the species and the land. He not only collected the precise description of species and their behaviour in myth, he also collected additional practical information on them. From the end of 1906 he started to send animal and plant specimens to his editor who distributed Australian flora and fauna to leading German scientists for classification. Von Leonhardi, who loved to cultivate these exotic plants in his hothouse on his land seat in Gross Karben, had as many classified as he could and inserted these new data in the publications. As a result, descriptions of animal and plant behaviour abound in the prefaces, and footnotes throughout the text. Both men were interested in systematisation, and to a certain degree their research became a cosmographic project. Von Leonhardi remarked, for example, that often he was amazed about 'the fine nature observation of the various bird species' in the 'Tjurunga songs'. In this way, Strehlow's data testified to the Arrernte and Luritja's intimate relations with their natural environment. What his data also show is the manner in which the life of the species in this environment became the medium for narratives that also concerned human normative order. In fact ancestors were part as were flora and fauna of the environment, each of these with their attributes specified meticulously. A section of an Arrernte fish myth exemplifies these features:

286 Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
287 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 31.10.1909.
During a great flood, which had begun at Tnenjara a tributary of Ellery Creek situated in the northern part of the McDonnell Ranges, a great shoal of fish came swimming down the Ellery Creek. All types of fish were among them. These fish were being pursued by a crayfish (iltjenma) who kept driving them onward, while a cormorant (nkebara)-totem god stood at the banks and speared some of the passing fish with a short spear (inta). He threw them on the banks, roasted them on coals and ate them. When the fish had swum past him, the cormorant ran ahead of the flood and came to the place Tolera. There he threw a big heap of grass into the water in order to detain the fish. However, he could only catch the small fish, for the big fish pushed the barrier aside. After he had devoured the captured fish and spent the night at this place, he again ran ahead of the flood on the following morning. He positioned himself at a particularly narrow spot, threw a large amount of grass into the oncoming water and speared a few fish. (Strehlow 1907:46-47)

Predators of the fish, and their strategies, are described in equal detail with the strategies, technologies and practices of humans. The passage of a flood, its impact on a waterway as well as the detailed features of that waterway that may help both human and animal ancestors, are all described. Parallels are drawn between the techniques of a species and ancestor whom fish may avoid in similar ways. In the myths, human and animal experiences can merge in a shared space. They interact and respond to a topography in both practical and moral ways. Along with these extended accounts come a multitude of singular details and great specificity:

A big grey kangaroo, named Lurknalurkna [sinewy one], used to live a long time ago at Irtjoata, a place to the north-west of the Finke Gorge. It ate the stems of the porcupine grass (juta wolja) and slept in a cave (intia) at night. (Strehlow 1907:40)

Listening to these forms of myth, Carl Strehlow was able to compile a list of Arrernte and Luritja totems containing 442 totems, of which 411 were animal and plant totems (Strehlow 1908:61-74); of these 312 were used as food or as stimulants. Additionally
he listed 20 plants and animals that were not totems for various reasons, remarking that this was not a comprehensive list. In the following issue on songs and ceremonies, Strehlow (1910:XIII-XVII) presented a list that showed which totems had friendly relationships to each other. In a number of cases, for example, animals are matched up with other species that are their food or shelter. The relationships are usually very immediate. The species which have been filled with significance ‘are seen as exhibiting a certain affinity with man’ as well as with each other; intimates in the environment (Lévi-Strauss 1966:37; see also Austin-Broos 2003).

Carl Strehlow’s text conveys an enthusiasm with this ‘World’ that anticipates the type of excitement contained in Lévi-Strauss’s account of the concrete logics and classifications of indigenous people in The Savage Mind (1966). To convey his point, Lévi-Strauss cited case after case of early ethnographic accounts of the intimate relations between indigenous people and their environments. On Hawaii ‘the acute faculties of the native folk’ was noted, as they described ‘with exactitude the generic characteristics of all species of terrestrial and marine life and the subltest variations of natural phenomena such as winds, light and colour, ruffling the water ...’ On the Philippines it was observed that the Hanunóo ‘classify all forms of the local avifauna into seventy-five categories’, ‘distinguish about a dozen kinds of snakes’, ‘sixty-odd types of fish’ and ‘more than a dozen ... types of fresh and salt water crustaceans’ (Lévi-Strauss 1966:3-5); and about a people of the Tyukyu archipelago it was observed that:

Even a child can frequently identify the kind of tree from which a tiny wood fragment has come and, furthermore, the sex of that tree, as defined by Kbiran notions of plant sex, by observing the appearance of its wood and bark, its smell, its hardness and similar characteristics. (Lévi-Strauss 1966:5)

Lévi-Strauss famously concluded that ‘Examples like these could be drawn from all parts of the world and one may readily conclude that animals and plants are not known as a result of their usefulness: they are deemed to be useful or interesting because they are first of all known’ (Lévi-Strauss 1966:9). From this he drew conclusions about the rational propensities of peoples and the logic of their
concreteness. For Strehlow, and his interpretation of Australian religion, the impact was more specific. This intimacy both with the animal and plant world as well as with place contextualised the propensity of ‘totem gods’ to become earth bound either as tywerreng or as natural features in the landscape. As I discuss below, Strehlow would remark that ‘These totem gods are associated with certain localities where they had lived and generated their totem animals’ (Strehlow 1907:4).

Strehlow’s interest in myth as shaping normative order, and reflecting the species and landscape of an Arrernte world, was also marked by his interest in particularity. As he collected terms and myth from two different cultures, naturally both similarities and differences emerged. His initial impression was that the belief systems of Arandic groups were similar, although he had observed differences, obvious in individual myths, which were ‘local-myths that refer to particular places’. 288 He made a related remark again when he started research on Luritja mythology:

I am now researching and recording the traditions of the Luritja and have discovered that the views of the Luritja are in their basic structure similar to the ones of the Aranda, however, the individual myths are very different. 289

The mythologies of the different Arandic groups and Luritja were specific, despite some basic common features. In his Luritja account of ‘primordial times’, for example, he points to a number of differences to the Arrernte version. Arrernte ancestors tended to change more often into tywerrenge, and Luritja ancestors into natural features, such as rocks and trees, which he wrote, would lessen the importance of the tywerreng among the Luritja. And among the Diyari living in the south-east he observed that, ‘all the bodies of the Murra-murra are changed into rocks, trees, etc. and the tjurunga do not occur at all any more’ (Strehlow 1908:3-4).

The main marker of differences was language and dialect variation; his comments on these particularities showed that he had a sense of the changing nature of cultures. 290 As indicated in Chapter I, he started cross-referencing differences, changes and

288 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, possibly on the 6.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
289 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 19.9.1906 (SH-SP-3-1).
290 See Strehlow (1910:6) and Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
similarities. He documented the incorporation of myth motives and expressions as well as whole sentences or verses in foreign languages (like Warlpiri, Anmatyerr, etc.). This is evident in his remarks on the languages of the myths and his explicit comments in his Luritja collection. Unlike his first volume, which is predominantly descriptive, in his second volume he started pointing out differences and influences from other language groups such as the Warlpiri, Anmatyerr and Arrernte, on Luritja myth and song.

Strehlow’s myth collection shows that the interaction between different cultural and linguistic groups resulted in ‘borrowings’. In Luritja myths one finds Arrernte words, sites and dreaming beings as well as Warlpiri words and sentences woven through the narratives (Strehlow 1908:32-33). He collected evidence of amalgamation and assimilation of foreign cultural elements which produced variations.291 He and his editor were aware of different cultures influencing each other and that changes took place. He found, for example, similar motifs in myths of different cultural or linguistic groups and evidence for change in the language use in myths which contained expressions and speech of language not found in the vernacular and were clearly older (see Strehlow 1910:6). This was one of the reasons he was ‘intending to write a short grammar and a dictionary of the local language, so anyone can independently translate the Tj-songs, and see, in how far the older language deviates from the current vernacular’.292

Although the comparison led to the observation of small-scale diffusion, Carl Strehlow did not point this out explicitly. He simply remarked on the importation of cultural elements from other regions into his study area, as his work was about precise ethnography and not theory. (For von Leonhardi, however, it was also about testing ‘refined diffusionism’ in a Boasian style.) Most of his examples and comments relate to the Western Arrernte-Luritja border area. His precise recording showed particularities setting itself against generalisations. At the same time, it showed similarities that were understood to be diffusion through close and immediate interaction between peoples of different cultures. His son, T.G.H. Strehlow, remarked in the 1930s that these communalities were the result of the ‘constant intercourse

291 See, for example, Strehlow (1907:79, fn. 9).
292 Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
between the two tribes' and that 'Western [Arrernte] religion has been deeply influenced in many respects by Matuntara and Kukatja [Luritja] ideas; and Aranda beliefs, in turn, have set their stamp unmistakably upon Luritja traditions' (Strehlow 1947:66). He observed that 'in Western Aranda ceremonial chants, a great percentage of the verses are composed in the Luritja language'. About half of the verses of the tyelpe dreaming of the Lthalaltweme landholding group, for instance, were borrowed from the Luritja songs (Strehlow 1947:66-67). His father had already observed a similar situation and wrote that in the Luritja songs a large amount of Arrernte existed (Strehlow 1910). His son also maintained that shared dreaming tracks, that link people together, had similar features due to 'diffusion' or close interaction. The dreaming of the Dancing Women, called in Luritja kungka tjuta and in Arrernte nthepe, for example, traverses a number of Luritja and Arrernte countries (estates):

One of the Western Desert mythical tracks that go across the Aranda-speaking area is delineated in the myth of the Dancing Women of Amunurkngga. This trail begins in the country west of Mount Liebig; and I have traced it eastward as far as Love's Creek Station, near Altunga, in the Eastern Aranda area; but the trail goes even further. (Strehlow 1965:128-129)

T.G.H. Strehlow also found that these affinities expressed themselves in a number of ways 'particularly where the animals and plants form ceremonial totems' (Strehlow 1947:66). Based on his father's material he estimated that about 60 percent of the terms of dreamings were shared between neighbouring Arrernte and Luritja peoples. He wrote on Tuesday 12 April 1932:

From my father's A[anda] dictionary I compiled today as complete a list of Aranda names of plants and animals as possible together with their Kukatja equivalents. The result was very interesting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Common terms</th>
<th>Separate terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Names of animals</td>
<td>300 =</td>
<td>167 (=56%)</td>
<td>133 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names of plants</td>
<td>220 =</td>
<td>147 (=67%)</td>
<td>73 (33%)²⁹³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁹³ T.G.H. Strehlow's I. Diary (1932:2).
Premonitions of Ontology

The type of mythological material Carl Strehlow collected is the nucleus of Aboriginal belief systems and what today is referred to as the dreaming in English. Strehlow's material contains most elements that allowed - in hindsight - a concept of the dreaming. It supplies some excellent source material and empirical evidence. He himself did not have the tools of modern anthropology and linguistics at his disposal to formulate this concept, and did not experience the intimate relationship first hand that Aboriginal people have to their land. He did not have the opportunity to travel with his informants over their country. Nevertheless his work and data were suggestive of the 'subject into object' transformation (Munn 1970, Morton 1987) and to a certain degree the person-land relationship in indigenous Australian cultures (Strehlow 1947, Myers [1986] 1991). It would certainly help his son conceptualise and articulate it.

The conceptualisation of 'subject into object' was just lying under the surface in his collection. Ever recurring motives are the vast travels and the transformations of the ancestral beings into natural features or tywerrenge or kuntanka (objects) in both Arrernte and Luritja myths. He realised that these journeys and transformations, described in 'their religious traditions' and 'their sacred songs (Tjurunga songs)' recited by the old men during ceremonies, were essential features of Arrernte and Luritja cosmology. When discussing a marked difference between Arrernte and Luritja myth, he observed:

According to the tradition of the Aranda, most of the meandering altjirangamitjina were changed into tjurunga-woods or stones and only a few became trees or rocks. According to the tradition of the Luritja, however, the reverse is true. The bodies of the tukutita were mostly changed into rocks and trees. (Strehlow 1908:3-4)

294 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1). See also Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).
He remarked that at the end of their long travels the ancestors returned to their home (Heimat), very tired from their long wanderings, and usually turned into tywerrenge. Nearly all Arrernte songs end in this manner, in a letter to his editor on the 2 June 1906 he gave an example:

Letopetopa indapindama
Hingestürzt liegen sie am Boden
(Fallen they lie on the ground)

Iloaraala indpindama
Mit ihren Stirnfedern liegen sie am Boden
(With their frontfeders they lie on the ground).

The issues of growing tired, going to sleep or ‘going in’, and actually becoming part of the land, are implicitly all speaking about a particular way that landscape and species are linked to ancestors. The ancestors would ‘altjamaltjerama’ (altyemaltjiirreme) into the landscape at particular places, which are all named in Strehlow’s work, which means ‘become a hidden body, i.e. to assume a different form’ (Strehlow 1907:5) or ‘tjurungeraka’ (tywerrengirreke) which means change into wood or stone at the end of their activities:

For not only the whole body of the totem ancestor but also individual parts of it were tjurungeraka, i.e. changed into wood or stone, e.g. the fat of a totem snake (apma andara), the kidney of a possum ancestor (imora topparka), the heart of an emu (ilia tukuta), etc. Indeed, even some of the sticks belonging to the totem ancestors are regarded as tjurunga, etc. (Strehlow 1908:77)

There are countless examples of this process of becoming country, or being lodged in the country. In his first Luritja myth ‘The two brothers Neki and Wapiti on the mountain Mulati’ (Strehlow 1908:10) the ancestors Neki and Wapiti (synonyms for a

295 The German ‘Heimat’ carries strong notions of emotional attachment to landscape. Meggitt ([1962]1986:67) chose in his Desert People the notion of ‘die Heimat’ to describe ‘the affection that a man feels for his wider community and its country’.
296 Carl Strehlow to von Leonardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).
297 Carl Strehlow to von Leonardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).
type of edible root) end the story by turning into two cliffs on a mountain called Mulati, meaning twins. The events of this myth take place not far of Merini a place also mentioned in Arrernte myths. Or ‘Papa tuta. Knulja ntjara’ (reproduced in Loritja, Aranda, a German interlinear translation and a German free translation) ends at Rotna (a place with an Arrernte name). ‘Katuwara’, a short myth on the two eagles (Strehlow 1908:20), tells of an excursion of the eagles to a place called in Arrernte Eritjakwata (meaning eagle egg/s) and their flights to the north, which took them over Western Arrernte country. Like most of the ancestors, they petrify at their place of departure, Kalbi (meaning eagle feather) west of Tempe Downs. At the end of some of the songs he even notes where the ceremony and rites were performed. The herre (red kangaroo) ceremony takes place at Ulamba (Strehlow 1910:10-13) and the nguri (large tawny frogmouth) ceremony of the Loritja is, for example, held at Kumbuli in the north-west of Hermannsburg (Strehlow 1911:19). He wrote that the ‘mbatjalkatiuma’ ceremonies are performed at sites which are in one way or another connected to the relevant ancestor, because they are believed to be hidden at these places in rocks or underground and that they will emerge if the old men let their blood flow on these sites during the performance (Strehlow 1910:8).

The transformations are a main feature of Aboriginal ontology as ancestors externalise themselves in their environment. Carl Strehlow wrote to von Leonhardi, not quite sure of what to make of the phenomenon of place names and their creation:

Esteeemed Sir!

With this mail I send you again some myths. I have placed red brackets around the ones that are not worth publishing, as they usually only contain names that are important to the blacks, but for science would seem rather of minor value; however, you are completely free to publish an extract from these as well as from the others I have sent you. The myth of the ‘fish totem ancestor’, for example, is quite uninteresting, because it contains many fish totem places, and yet I do not want to miss them entirely. They show how the natives think the creation of the fish totem places have occurred.298

Naming, making and marking of places are important features of the creation process. The names like Rubuntja (Mt Hay), Irbmarkara (Running Waters) or Aroalirbaka (2 Mile in the Finke) and many others take obvious prominence in all mythological accounts. Carl wrote, for example, about the ‘altjirangamitjina’ (dreaming ancestors):

These totem gods are associated with certain localities where they had lived and generated their totem animals. Such localities are mostly found in the vicinity of a high mountain, a spring or a gorge where the totem animals that bear their names usually gather in larger numbers. For example, there is a lizard totem place near Hermannsburg, at Manångananga, where there are many lizards. Fish totem places can be found only in places where there is much water, e.g. in the Ellery Creek. Some of the totem gods remained in their original habitations; these are referred to as atua kutata, i.e. the men who always live in one place. Other altjirangamitjina, however, went on extended journeys and returned home in the company of several young men. (Strehlow 1907:4)

All narratives Carl Strehlow collected belong to particular localities of Arrernte or Luritja territory and take place during a mythological creation era. He wrote that Arrernte ‘myths are local-myths that refer to particular places’. As early as 1894 Missionary Reuther explained in the Kirchlichen Mitteilungen that the muramura (dreaming ancestors) had created the land:

There are many Muramura. Each one of them established something good, and created the earth; however, because there are so many of them, each made only a part of the land of which he is the patron guardian.

As a result of his empiricism and maybe an intuitive understanding of the significance of place for Arrernte and Luritja people, Strehlow collected and recorded hundreds of site names. He had grasped to a certain degree the importance of naming and metamorphosing, writing that their journeys ended with the ancestral beings fossilised or petrified into the landscape, from which spirits rose (Strehlow 1907:2). He even

299 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, possibly written on the 6.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1).
300 Reuther (1894:57) in Kirchlichen Mitteilungen

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wrote to his editor that it was unlawful to change or damage natural features of the landscape.301 But he did not get to the specific subject-into-object ontology as described by Munn (1970), expanded by Myers ([1986] 1991) and elaborated by Morton (1987) and Redmond (2001). Still, he came close:

The totem, the totem ancestor and the totem descendant, i.e. the actor, appear in the tjurunga-songs as a single entity. Some of the tjurunga-songs are simply beyond understanding unless one bears in mind the inseparable unity between the totem, the altjirangamitjina and the ratapa.302 (Strehlow 1910:5)

It was T.G.H. Strehlow who would travel on camel back with Arrernte men over their country mapping the exact places of events that had taken place in the mythological past. Travelling along tracks the like of which Spencer and Gillen identified but did not entirely grasp (see also p. 297 below). T.G.H. Strehlow understood the overwhelming significance of land as well as the emotional attachment of indigenous people to ancestral figures in place, as well as to their travels and acts as represented in performance.

... and it was an eye-opener for me ...

Ten years after his father’s last journey to Horseshoe Bend, T.G.H. Strehlow returned to Hermannsburg on the 5 April 1932. In his baggage he carried his father’s publication Die Aranda-und Lorija-Stämme in Zentral-Australien and dictionary. He was 23, only one year older than his father had been when he first arrived at the mission in 1894. Hill (2002) describes Ted’s feelings and his motives for his returning which were fraught with ambivalence. Yet he was very keen to learn everything he could about central Australia. Once he had familiarised himself again with Hermannsburg and its people, he started studying and checking his father’s data and brushing up his Arrernte with old friends of his father.303 Ted found it difficult to get back into the language of his childhood although he had an enormous head start and was equipped with his father’s myth collection and unpublished dictionary, that

301 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1).
302 Among other things ‘ratapa’ means in Carl Strehlow’s work spirit-child that enters a mother to be and gives a person a soul.
contained nearly 10,000 Arrernte and Luritja words, including secret-sacred men’s language.

Within a few weeks he was tracking the bush on camel back in the company of Tom Ljonga, an Arrernte man, collecting data for his thesis in linguistics. His fourth trip in November and December of 1932 took him onto his ‘father’s country’, Tyurretye country, the country that features prominently in Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien. When he got back to Hermannsburg he wrote that ‘The long-dreaded trip is over at last’ and ‘Now I am home.’³⁰⁴ After this trip – it had been an important one despite not having collected much linguistic data - he wrote to his supervisor, Professor J.A. FitzHerbert in Adelaide:

On my last trip I did not find many natives, except at Hamilton Downs and Napperby: since my July trip one of the Western stations has closed down, and the numerous natives have all dispersed, mainly to Hermannsburg. My own camel boy, however, had his original home in these parts. Accordingly, I had a splendid opportunity of getting an insight into the former life of this Aranda group – how their wandering depended on the seasons of the year and the failing or replenishment of their water supplies. I was shown many ceremonial sites and a sacred cave (Ulamba) with the last few tjurunga in it; and it was an eye-opener for me to see how the old legends fit in with the general geography of the tribal territory.³⁰⁵ It is only after a trip such as this that the old legends – which are usually told in an extremely terse style, an intimate knowledge of the locality described on the part of the listeners being presupposed by the story teller – really begin to live in one’s mind.³⁰⁶

This last trip in late 1932 made him realise how intimate the relationship between person, species and the land is. Hill (2002:175-176) writes that it is surprising that he had not realised the close connection of natural environment and people and that it was only taking shape now, despite his language skills and childhood milieu.

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³⁰⁴ T.G.H. Strehlow’s I. Diary 1932:130.
³⁰⁵ Emphasis added.
³⁰⁶ T.G.H. Strehlow to Professor J.A. FitzHerbert, 5.1.1933 (SRC Correspondence 60/32).
However, this is not at all astonishing because the specificity of an Aboriginal ontology, as we understand it today, had yet to be articulated.\footnote{This remark reveals that the impression that Ted evokes in his award winning \textit{Journey to Horseshoe Bend} that he was aware of the significance of landscape on his father's death journey is to a certain degree fiction. He may have been unconsciously aware of this fact.}

When T.G.H. Strehlow arrived back he was struggling with many aspects of central Australia. He was relearning Arrernte, acquainting himself with the indigenous and non-indigenous population of the Centre, acquiring survival skills and grappling with simple geography. It was hard going. An entry for Wednesday the 9 November 1932, camped near Ulamba on Tom Ljonga's father's and father's father's country, illustrates these difficulties which were met on many other days as well:

A warm day. We spent another morning, tjurunga hunting, and then had to give it up as all likely places had been exhausted. There is only one vague chance that the caves may be right at the Western extremity of Eritjakwata; but its no use messing around any more. For I discovered, when taking the camels down to the waterhole this afternoon that it will be quite dry in a day's time or so after that we'd have to carry the water down to the camels a long distance. Besides, Tom, instead of getting me a wallaby, went out in quest of kangaroos; "the wind reared around in all directions". And Tom returned late – without anything. He threw his own remaining bit of euro away as well because it had gone maggoty. He also informs me tonight that "Baby" is developing a tender left forefoot on the stones. Old "Ranji" is still limping and only this morning I had to pull out some more little splinters and spikes from the open sore on his sole. Such is life, and yes people would "give anything" to have my job – "it must be so fascinating the insight it gives you into the souls of such an interesting people". I climbed the mountain straight North from here today in desperation, in order to reconnoitre the leg of the country. I took angles galore, but nothing corresponds with any of the maps I have – which is a good thing. I got a splendid view right around – all high peaks of the McDonnell and all the ranges North, and the sandhills and plains and salt lakes between [only Karinjarra was hidden by another formation]; but everything was shrouded in haze unfortunately. This made it impossible to
gauge distances, and I am still quite in a muddle as to which peaks are Mt Chapple, Heughlin, Zeil and Razorback.\textsuperscript{308} – Well here’s another moon-light night. I suppose, I’ll have to shift tomorrow owing to lack of water – no rest for the wicked.\textsuperscript{309}

Two years after this crucial fourth trip,\textsuperscript{310} Ted wrote three seminal essays in 1934 that would be published as \textit{Aranda Traditions} in 1947; they are the beginning of the arduous work of conceptualising the Aboriginal ontology. Significantly the first essay starts with a fictional visit of the owners to Ulamba. This description is based on his visit to Ulamba with Tom Ljonga and was much influenced by the feelings of his ‘camel boy’, a man in his fifties who was disillusioned and deeply saddened by the loss of his country and the fate of his people. T.G.H. Strehlow (1947:30-33) captured what Ulamba meant emotionally to Tom. These feelings towards country, he also consciously noted when he was checking his father’s version of Tom’s ‘Atua Arintja from Ulamba’\textsuperscript{311} with Angus, Jonathan and Moses in January 1933 back in Hermannsburg:

I first gave the three men my father’s version of the legend, with which they agreed: according to Moses, Loatjira had been the original narrator. Angus could not tell, why the cult was ever performed – the erilkngibata had not given any explanation for it any more. (…)

Strangely enough, in those fragments of the song which are remembered by Angus, Jonathan and Moses and also in those which are recorded in my father’s works, the whole stress is laid not on the horrible cannibalism of the atua erintja, but on his longing for home, for his own green Ulamba, and on

\textsuperscript{308} Later he plotted these sites on a map as Eritjakwata, Emalagna, Ulatarka and Latjima (Strehlow 1971).
\textsuperscript{309} T.G.H. Strehlow’s I. Diary (1932:121)
\textsuperscript{310} T.G.H. Strehlow’s I. Diary (1932:118-130)
\textsuperscript{311} In his father’s work simply called Atua arintja, der böse Mann (Carl Strehlow 1907:90-92). Ted added ‘from Ulamba’ and nearly forty years later it appears in his \textit{Songs of Central Australia} as ‘The Arintja Song of Ulamba’ (1971: 577-584). Ulamba is also connected to an herre (kangaroo) dreaming (Carl Strehlow 1910:10-13) where its ceremony is performed.
his sorrow at finding that birds have desecrated his own cave at Ulamba. It sounds almost like an Aranda version of the lost son.\textsuperscript{312}

T.G.H. Strehlow was able to formulate the relationship and feelings of Aboriginal people towards country and what the stories of species-ancestors mean in these first essays, because he had experienced it first hand. He saw the parallels between the people’s relationship to land/place and the ancestors ‘Longing for home’ which is the motif that ‘lead[s] most of the weary ancestors of legend back to the place whence they originated’ (Strehlow 1947:32). Nearly 40 years later he still wrote about feelings connected to country and ‘that in the days of the totemic ancestors the landscape itself reciprocated these feelings of affection’ (Strehlow 1971:584). In the course of his long career T.G.H. Strehlow would gradually articulate explicitly the specific ontology of the Arrernte.

**Conceptualising the Dreaming**

Carl Strehlow rigorously described and reproduced what his informants told him, who took it for granted that their cosmology was intimately bound to landscape. Unable to travel freely for research, or avail himself of early models of social organisation, Carl would not articulate explicitly his informants’ relationship to country. Thus, while his father had documented what his informants told him about their dreaming ancestors emerging out of the earth, travelling over its surface during the creation period and metamorphosing into natural features or objects, T.G.H. Strehlow would be able to formulate explicitly what these big procreational movements and transformations meant. He would pull the threads together that would connect ancestor-person-land with each other. Already in *Aranda Traditions* (1947) T.G.H. Strehlow mentions the essential dimensions that would lead in the following decades to an understanding of the essence of Aboriginal religion by himself and other eminent anthropologists, such as the Berndts, Stanner, Munn and Myers. T.G.H. Strehlow writes about the significance of ancestral foundational acts and transformations, the person-land relationship, and also about the libidinal and procreational aspects of myth and rite that have been extensively discussed by Røheim, Hiatt and Morton. Finally, this sense of place and sentiment in Aboriginal culture would lead Hiatt (1969) and Peterson

\textsuperscript{312} T.G.H. Strehlow’s I. Diary (1932/33:145-146).
(1971) to reject the juggernaut of Lévi-Straussian rationalism. Morton (1985) would in turn temper the latter’s insights with those of Lacan and the emotional struggle against fragmentation, both in the landscape and within the self.

The foundational acts, the travels and actions of these ancestral figures that brought the world into being have been discussed numerous times. For central Australia, T.G.H. Strehlow (1947,1964,1971), Munn (1970) and Myers’ (1976, [1986] 1991) are the outstanding accounts. They describe the significance of ancestral singing, marking and naming places, embodying ancestral figures in performance, and transforming parts of themselves into natural features or sacred objects. They explain what the metamorphosing into the landscape at the end of their journeys where they are still believed to be resting or sleeping as part of the land, means to Aboriginal people and how the landscape is the symbol of the truth of this time and its system of order. T.G.H. Strehlow (1947:25-28) makes his first attempts in the 1930s to convey how Aboriginal people perceive and understand the dreaming (although he does not use this term) by using examples. In 1964 T.G.H. Strehlow emphasised again:

After emerging from their eternal slumbering places, these supernatural beings, commonly labelled “totemic ancestors”, moved about on the surface of the earth. Their actions and their wanderings brought into being all the physical features of the central Australian landscape. Mountains, sandhills, swamps, plains, springs, and soakages, all arose to mark the deeds of the roving totemic ancestors and ancestresses. (Strehlow [1964] 1978:16)

For example, many features of the western MacDonnell Ranges are attributed to the blows of ceremonial poles:

The terrible blows of these smiting poles have left their marks in countless valleys and chasms and gorges in every portion of the MacDonnell Ranges and elsewhere. They cleft gaps in otherwise inaccessible bluff slopes; they fashioned many mountain passes for the feet of wandering hordes at the beginning of time. (Strehlow 1947:25)
Sometimes just by camping at a place and eating, hunting, gathering or making tools, behaving and acting as their descendants would, the ancestors gave meaning to the landscape and a code for the people who followed to live by, because ‘all occupations originated with the totemic ancestors’ (Strehlow 1947:35). He clearly stated that the dreaming encompasses all aspects of Arrernte life, which was also observed by Munn (1970) among Warlpiri and Pitjantjatjara and by Myers (1976:158-160) among the Pintupi who see the tjukurrpa ‘as the ground of all being’. Other activities of course included the performance of ritual and ceremonial dances and songs, (which Stanner seems to have rated as more sacred).

The travels, activities and exploits of the ancestral beings were vast and complex. As they created on their wanderings the land and everything on it, - water, animals and plants -, they also populated the land with spirits and thus ‘throughout the Aranda-speaking area it was believed that the totemic ancestors and ancestresses had left a trail of “life” behind them’, a constituted world (Strehlow [1964] 1978:20). Spirits emerged from those parts of the ancestral beings, and the sacred objects representing them, which they left embedded in the land. Some of these spirits were child-spirits, who enter a woman and give human-beings their ‘soul’, and thus humans owe their existence to the dreaming (see also Morton 1985:118). People’s attachments to country are thus indestructible because they are derived from the ‘life-giving properties’ left behind by the ancestors at the beginning of time (Strehlow 1947:88).

In this way, they are part of the land and the ancestors who created the land and the people. T.G.H. Strehlow described the significance of the landscape for Aboriginal people:

A Central Australian Aboriginal community was thus made up of men and women for whom the whole landscape in which they lived represented the work of supernatural beings who had become reincarnated in their own persons and in those of living and dead forbearers, relatives, and friends. (Strehlow [1964] 1978:39)

Thus, land and things are imbued with notions of person. At the centre of Munn’s discussion lies the relationship between the subject and the (inanimate or non-
sentient) object world. The objectification of the ancestors in land through transformation symbolises the relationship that people have to land, because they originate from the ancestors who are still in their transformation features of the natural world present in country and objects. Generally, anything created in any way or left behind by an ancestor is thought to contain something of this being. Munn writes (1970:143) that ‘country is the fundamental object system external to the conscious subject within which consciousness and identity are anchored.’ Thus, human beings have unbreakable bonds with particular parts of the country (Munn 1970:145) because their spirits come from these transformations in the landscape. People treat the landscape like a relative, because it also represents their kin (Strehlow 1947, Myers [1986] 1991). Carl Strehlow, for example, wrote that the species-ancestor associated with a man is perceived to be his big brother and treated with great respect (Strehlow 1908).

As Munn (1970) remarked the transformations of subject into object involves a disappearance linked with a new appearance, in most cases parts of the landscape. It is thus the land that can tell about the noumenal world beyond immediate perception. Myers ([1986] 1991) writes that for the Pintupi the land reveals aspects of that past era that bear on the present and can explain phenomena in the lived experience of the everyday. The living are obliged to sustain this inheritance because these traditions are the basis for the continuation of life. Drought and illness may be thought to be a consequence of deviations. T.G.H. Strehlow wrote:

For in Australia the operation of the concept of the totemic landscape ensured that such things as the stability of tribal boundaries and of linguistic groups, the distribution of interlocking and intermarrying subgroups, and the firm establishment of authority - and hence of the agencies of social control, and of law and order - were all based on the geographic environment. (Strehlow 1970:92)

T.G.H. Strehlow, Munn and Myers' work on the specificity of Australian indigenous ontology can be juxtaposed with the way in which both Röheim and Morton adapt universal themes drawn from psychoanalysis to the specificity of dreaming myth. In
the process, they seek to link central Australian issues of sentiment and desire to themes that might be judged universal, just as Lévi-Strauss sought to establish a cognitive unity for humankind that linked his ‘primitive’ naturalists with ‘modern’ minds.

Based on field-research in the late 1920s at Hermannsburg, Röheim championed the psychoanalytical approach to Aboriginal religion by seeking general human dream patterns and wish dreams in Arrernte myth. His records include not only references to myth but also many dreams and mundane stories recounted by Arrernte people a few years after Carl Strehlow died. Some of these provide matter of fact corroborating evidence for the details of daily life that Carl recorded through his study of myth (see Röheim 1974, 1988). However, Röheim’s main concerns were the celebration of the phallic hero, male transition from child to adult and, finally, reparation of separation from the mother in a return to the land (Hiatt 1975:9). In The Eternal Ones of the Dream, Röheim wrote that myth represents repressed wish dreams, particularly daydreams that ‘hide a real difficulty, and offer a consolation. Instead of the mental picture of struggle for daily food or wandering on the scorching sand, the myth describes a state of perpetual erection, a perpetual state of lust’ (Röheim [1945]1971:10). This means ancestral is ‘necessarily’ libidinised, i.e., ‘as if it were a sexual act’ (Röheim [1945]1971:9). Hence, foot, tail and making tracks are all seen as euphemisms for sexual intents and acts.

In his work post-1985, Morton, like Munn, carried the study of myth into an analysis of how (male) agents filled with desire created a libidinised landscape (Morton 1985,1987). In Singing Subjects and Sacred Objects he develops the theme of mythic ‘procreation’ events as the substance of ancestral travels (1987:100-117). Morton focuses on ‘naming’ and ‘marking’ up, complex ancestral performances that are related ‘to ancestral singing as the creative outpouring of names’ (Morton 1987:110) that bring the world into being. He also notes Munn’s account of how women ‘lose’ boards (see Munn 1970:156). Morton argues for a double transformation wherein ‘men, at initiation, take corporal bodies from women and ultimately transform them into tjurunga bodies, [while] women appear to take tjurunga bodies from men and turn them into fleshy beings. It is these analogous, but also opposed, transformations
which I believe to lie behind Munn's discernment of a correspondence between the ancestral surrender of tjurunga and the giving up of boys by women at initiation' (Morton 1987:115). He suggests 'that the notion of alienation from The Dreaming's depths during the course of childhood growth may also be general' (Morton 1987:116), and that male children (at least) are taken from mothers to bring them back to the dreaming, guarantee of the human condition. As Victor Turner remarked, in this myth and rite the needs of 'biopsychical' beings (the boys) might here be reconciled with 'the needs of society' notwithstanding their apparent opposition (Turner 1968:19).

Other contemporary views by Myers ([1986] 1991) and Redmond (2001), for example, take closer account of the Lebenswelt (lifeworld) of Pintupi and Ngarinyin people. They describe how land constitutes and reveals the world by being able to 'speak' and 'explain' itself, and how people are active in interpreting these experiences.

Altjira, Altyerre and Tnengkarre

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that many rounds of observation, and myth interpretation, were required to specify a central Australian ontology. It was beyond Carl Strehlow's time and conceptual method to get to the essence of an Aboriginal world. Nevertheless, I would like to end this discussion by returning once more to the word 'altjira' and altyerre (contemporary spelling) and its semantics. The term has a certain magnetism, being revisited a number of times and stimulating many discussions on its meanings (Spencer and Gillen 1927:598-596; Röheim 1945; T.G.H. Strehlow 1971:614-615; Morton 1985:11-116; Veit 1991; Green 1999/2004:n.p.; Hill 2002). It was, for example, one of the first items that T.G.H. Strehlow checked with his father's informants when he arrived back at the mission after ten years absents, in April 1932.313 The trajectory of the word's interpretations also shows, in condensed form, the power of Carl Strehlow's work on myth.

Carl Strehlow's texts show that he did become aware that there were a multiplicity of altjira. He found numerous uses and meanings for the term. The pivotal remark for

313 T.G.H. Strehlow's I. Diary (1932:2-8); Letter to FitzHerbert 2.3.1933; Hill 2002.
subsequent debate was published at the beginning of his masterpiece and has been regularly re-visited (Strehlow 1907:2; see quotation on pages 45 and 207). Yet Carl Strehlow also wrote to his editor about the term when he completed his collection of Arrernte myths:

You will note in the part on Altjira, that I had to retreat from a number of points I had made earlier, because it does not hold together after further investigation. (...) What I say on page 2 about the derivation/etymology of "Altjira" = (altja era), is my opinion off course, which I cannot prove, but is an obvious and logical explanation which seems very likely. (...) However, the natives are very definite, that the current meaning of the word Altjira is the uncreated one (unerschaffene), the not-made one (der ungemachte) who has no beginning. Already Schulze (in Royal society etc. pag 242) wrote 15 years ago that the meaning of altjira is 'not made'.

This ambiguity led him to discuss a possible etymology of ‘altjira’. He wrote that according to his Arrernte informants the concept of the ‘non-created’ was central and that Spencer and Gillen’s (1904:745) view that ‘the word alcheri means dream’ was incorrect, because ‘altjirerama’ means ‘to dream’, and it is derived from altjira (god) and rama (see), in other words, ‘to see god’. Concurrently, he indicates that altjira and tukura can also refer to any mythical ancestor seen in a dream. Spencer and Gillen’s explanation and translation of ‘Alcheringa’, as ‘Dream-times’ (Spencer 1896:111, Spencer and Gillen 1899), Carl Strehlow considered as a misunderstanding of the concept:

The Aranda language does not render the word dream with alcheri but rather with altjirerinja, though this word is rarely used. The normal expression of the blacks is, “ta altjireraka”=“I have dreamed”. The word “alcheringa”, which according to Spencer and Gillen is supposed to mean “dreamtime”, is obviously a corruption of altjirerinja. The native knows nothing of a “dreamtime” as a designation of a certain prior in their history. What this

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314 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 13.12.1906 (SH-SP-7-1).
expression refers to is the time when the Altjiranga mitjina traversed this earth. (Strehlow 1907:2)

With the help of his editor, Strehlow became sensitive to the term’s polysemy. His editor seems to have realised before Strehlow that the expression ‘altjira’ had a wide semantic field and could denote a multiplicity. This was reflected in one of his first remarks to Strehlow. He expressed surprise that Strehlow would use ‘Altjira’ for God in his service book, *Galtjindintjamea-Pepa Aranda Wolambarinjaka* (1904):

Today I finally get around to answer your letter and to thank you for the book in Aranda. Your letter was very interesting; with the text, however, I unfortunately cannot do much, as long as a grammar and a dictionary are not available, - the only thing I could discern was that you translate God with Altjira; intriguing, that you after all think that this term contains sufficient meaning to convey the biblical concept of God.\(^{315}\)

He asked Carl Strehlow to investigate further:

Dream is altjirerinja (obviously Spencer and Gillen’s Alteringa). You wrote to me that no term exists for the abstract concept of dream. This needs clarification. I ask you to pay the utmost attention to any words related to the concept of Altjira; all are very important. Can the word Altjira also be used as an adjective?\(^{316}\)

Von Leonhardi’s subsequent reaction to Carl Strehlow’s discussion of the semantics of Altjira was:

Your explanation of the word altjirerama with the help of the corresponding term in Loritja appealed very much to me. Thus, the Loritja’s tukura means ‘god’. Hopefully you will have something to tell us about Tukura? In that case Spencer and Gillen’s Alcheringa = Altjira-ringga means “belonging to the gods”, “the divinities”. Therefore the word Altjira would not only be a proper

\(^{315}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 9.9.1905.

\(^{316}\) Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 17.3.1906.
name, but would also be used for the totem ancestors? Have I understood you correctly in this matter? Are the totem ancestors Altjira = gods as well? This is not an unimportant matter.317

Strehlow did investigate 'the different uses of the word Altjira and tmara and deba altjira'.318 Gradually, he realised the central term's polysemy and tried to conceptualise these new findings. By the time he published, he had noted and explained that altjira is also connected to mother's conception dreaming and place (Strehlow 1908:57; 1910:2). Von Leonhardi had alerted him to this by directing his attention to Schulze's work (1891). Strehlow also found that 'altjira' could mean 'the totem god who reveals the people's future in dreams [see I, p.2, Comment], and inkaama = to set up' (Strehlow 1913:6). Thus, he came to use the word in a number of different contexts. One attempt to solve the polysemy of 'altjira' was to use upper and lower cases, i.e. Altjira and altjira. Upper case 'Altjira' was used for Arrernte supreme being or high god; and in the Christian context of the mission, for 'God'. In lower case, 'altjira' was used in a vast array of contexts, assuming meanings in indigenous use and standing in stark contrast to the new meaning Carl and Kempe had tried to impress.319

Carl Strehlow also recorded a synonym for Altjira/altjira, - tnankara (tnengkarre). In Carl Strehlow's entire published work the word tnengkarre appears only twice, spelled tnankara (Strehlow 1913:29 and Strehlow 1915:48), for a very obvious reason. In his time, tnankara (tnengkarre) was the synonym for altjira used in 'the secret language that is taught to a rukuta, a novice or young circumcised man' (Strehlow 1913:29). Strehlow wrote:

Once the young Aranda men have been initiated into the secret cult they are taught yet another secret language ankatja kerintja, which is used only among befriended natives and is also partly known to the older women and spoken by

317 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 7.8.1906.
318 Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, 19.9.1906 (SH-SP-3-1).
319 Spencer had noted the use of Altjira upper and altjira lower case, but could not understand how and why this was applied (Penniman and Marrett 1932:110).
them. For example, a man will use this secret language in the presence of others when he addresses his mother-in-law, his brother-in-law and his wife. Members of other tribes and also the children cannot understand it. (Strehlow 1915:48)

Róheim typically emphasised altjira’s meaning ‘dream’ which is crucial for a psychoanalysis based on dreams. In The Eternal Ones of the Dream, Róheim claims that altjira does not mean god or ancestor as Strehlow maintained, but that its meaning covers ‘dream, beings seen in a dream and a narrative with a happy ending’ (Róheim 1945:210-211). He believed ‘that Strehlow, from the preoccupation with Altjira (God) in the Aranda bible, managed to miss the real meaning of the word, which is known to every Aranda both at the Mission and elsewhere’. Róheim ([1945]1971: 211) also remarked that ‘in the Luritja group of languages tukurpa is the universal word which, like the Aranda altjira, covers several meanings of dream, story and also of the oracle game’. Therefore he missed, in turn, that Strehlow also proposed that the term refers in a certain context to ‘a totem god which the native believes to have seen in a dream’ and that ‘every person is also connected with another particular totem which is called altjira. This is the totem of his mother. (...) This altjira appears to the blacks in dreams and warns them of danger, just as he speaks of them to friends while they are sleeping’ (Strehlow 1908:57). Róheim ([1945] 1971:211) too remarked: ‘Another Aranda word for dream, ancestor, and story, is tsankara. It is not often used, and as far as I could see it means exactly the same as altjira’.

T.G.H. Strehlow discusses the term ‘Altjira’ and his father’s view on it in Songs of Central Australia (Strehlow 1971:614-615). He wrote that ‘altjira’ is a rare word ‘whose root meaning appears to be “eternal, uncreated, sprung out of itself”; and it occurs only in certain traditional phrases and collocations’. Part of T.G.H. Strehlow’s examination of Altjira/altjira is reminiscent of a note his father wrote to von Leonhardi:

The word Altjira is a noun. By adding the suffix -erama to a noun a verb can be made denoting ‘to become’ in Aranda. For example: ... Thus, it is

320 This second ‘secret language’ is rather a ‘language’ that indicates the nature of restricted kin relationships.
grammatically correct to perceive the verb ‘altjiererama’ as ‘become God’. Rama however, also means: to see; Altjire-rama = see God (in dreams God reveals secrets to them). That this is the meaning of altjiererama = dream follows clearly from the comparison of the Aranda words with the Loritja (neighbouring tribe of the Aranda, who refer to themselves as Kukatja) ones; in this language too ‘to dream’ is: tukura nangani; tukura = god (altjira) and nangani = to see. Therefore to compose grammatically correct the word ‘dream’ (the natives very rarely do this and do not say: I had a dream, but I dreamed (altjireraka); thus, ‘dream’ is altjirérinja. So what does Gillen and Sp. Alcheringa mean?\[321\]

It is clear now that altjira covered a very complex issue and that its semantic field and syntactic range were vast. Without doubt ‘dream’ was part of altjira’s semantic field. The altjira discussion over time also indicates that language changes over time. Thus, Strehlow’s corpus of myth also allows some tracing of the history of key concepts and terms. This Western Arrernte term has undergone in the course of the past century some major semantic shifts. Carl Strehlow and von Leonhardi had observed a wide semantic field for the term altjira and Carl had discovered the secret synonym of the word - *tnankara*. In his time, T.G.H. Strehlow (1971:614) found that ‘altjira’ was rarely used. Decades earlier Röheim ([1945]1971:211) had noted a synonym for altjira ‘tnankara’ that ‘is not often used’. Today in Western Arrernte altjerre (altjira) is usually used to denote the Christian God and tengkarre (tnankara) is the preferred Western Arrernte word for the concepts relating to their spiritual beliefs (Kenny 2003,2004a).\[322\]

‘Altjira’, and the initial debate about it, distils in one instance the journey of interpretation through which Carl Strehlow’s corpus of Arrernte and Loritja myth has passed. Transitional or pre-modern in his ethnography, Carl Strehlow’s scholarly pursuit of a culture, propelled forward by von Leonhardi, opened doors to contemporary research on indigenous ‘Worlds’. In the process, within Australia, the study of myth became an account of a unique Aboriginal ontology.


\[322\] Green (1999/2004:n.p) has observed a similar development for the Anmatyerr words altyerr and anengkerr, that used to be synonyms.
CHAPTER VI

The 'Marriage Order' and Social Classification

At the turn of the century the inclination towards evolutionistic theory was prevalent in Australian kinship studies. Reflected in the work of Fisson and Howitt, Roth, and Spencer and Gillen, it led to a focus on 'marriage order' and kinship terminology. Strehlow's editor remarked that 'The views of Spencer and Gillen, as well as of other Australian researchers, on the meaning of kinship terms, as well as of the marriage classes, seem still hypothetical.'\textsuperscript{323} Questions of group marriage, primitive promiscuity, the transition from a four (section) to an eight (subsection) class system, and the origin of human society, were central in anthropological debate. The Lutheran missionary Louis Schulze, who had arrived in Hermannsburg in the late 1870s, was the first to report on the subsection system in Arrernte society (Schulze 1891:223–227). However, it was through Spencer and Gillen that the Arrernte and their forms of social classification became a seminal case. In particular, the Arrernte's eight-class system, today called the 'subsection-system,' was much discussed. Radcliffe-Brown even named the system and its attendant kinship, 'Arandic.' Frazer understood these aspects of Arrernte society as survivals of a past stage in human social development, from a distant past, like other facets of Aboriginal culture.

Morgan had put the classificatory kinship systems of indigenous societies on to the anthropological agenda, but his aim was to fit the kinship systems of the world into an evolutionary chain. Fox remarks:

At least half the anthropological literature on kinship has been largely concerned with the terms various systems employed in addressing and referring to kinsfolk and affines. Morgan saw in the study of terminology the royal road to the understanding of affines. He was the first to see that the terminology was a method of classification, and that what it told us was how various systems classified 'kin'. If we could understand this, we could

\textsuperscript{323} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.6.1906.
understand the system. ‘Understanding’ for Morgan, however, meant understanding the evolution of kinship systems, and what the terminology held for him was the clue to the past state of the system. (Fox 1967:240)

The study of kinship as social organisation in indigenous society was only slowly emerging at the turn of the century. W.H.R. Rivers had given it an impetus with his genealogical method which proceeded from the ‘concrete to the abstract’ (see Stocking 1992:32-40; Langham 1981). Rivers’ method involved collecting genealogies — a genealogical grid — and on it imposing the particular terms, or social classifications, of a particular people. The grid was constructed by requesting the personal names of a person’s ‘mother,’ ‘father,’ ‘children’ and the like and then the ‘native’ terms for these relatives were listed. Rivers recommended multiple sources as a methodological check. The same set of relatives with their personal names and kin term could be elicited from a range of linked individuals. Through this method, Rivers ‘rediscovered’ the phenomenon of kinship ‘classification’ common in Australia whereby parallel cousins, for instance, are designated by the same term, ‘sister’ and ‘brother,’ and by their children as ‘mother’ and ‘father,’ just as reciprocally these children refer to each other and are referred to as ‘sister’ and ‘brother.’ Rivers, however, took the further step of seeing in the genealogical method a means for studying ‘society.’ The codes for conduct (see Schneider 1968:29) or social rules attached to these terms provided a portrait of social order, or ‘social structure’ as Radcliffe-Brown would term it. According to Fox, ‘Radcliffe-Brown – also turning his back on evolution, but retaining the interest in terminology, produced a new and elegant comparative approach to kinship which sought to make generalizations about kinship systems, comparable to the “laws” of natural science’ (Fox 1967:21).

Carl Strehlow’s research lacked a framework that would have led him towards such a study of social structure. He did not integrate his data into a theory of how a society ‘functions’ as, afterall, the study of kinship as social organisation was just beginning. His collection provides, however, a starting point for the analysis of indigenous kinship systems, because it shows how people name their kinship universe and the manner in which they use kin terms as terms of address. What he did not do, in the fashion of Rivers, was superimpose his recording of kin terms on the genealogies that
he collected. Therefore his grasp of a kinship terminology as classificatory, and its implications for a marriage rule for instance, remained somewhat tenuous. Neither was he able to super-impose the Western Arrernte's subsection system over the kinship system in its entirety.

What he did do was to use his genealogical material, or family trees, as frameworks on which to record data concerning personal attributes of individuals - their 'totems' and their skin or subsection names. He also looked at family trees in tandem, interpreting the multiple relations between affines across a number of generations. He thereby indicated a sense of what it was to address a small-scale society through kinship and in this task von Leonhardi posed a series of scholarly questions. I will discuss three different aspects of Strehlow's data on Arrernte and Luritja kinship and individuals: the subsection system, kin terminology and genealogies. Although he did not employ his genealogies as Rivers and his followers would, we will see that his use of them had far-reaching implications for Arrernte and Luritja people, and for subsequent anthropologists.

Carl Strehlow's Data on Social Classification

Without doubt Carl Strehlow's main contribution to Australian anthropology was his myth collections and his language studies. Yet his ethnographic work includes some useful and important data on social classification. He collected a vast number of kinship terms that are still in use today. His collection provides a starting point for the analysis of indigenous kinship systems, because it shows how people classify their kinship universe and 'when we want to understand the kinship rules and behaviour of any people we must ask how they classify kin and on what basis they make distinctions' (Fox 1967:262).

Through his long residence at Hermannsburg, Carl Strehlow developed a sense of specifying different forms of Western Arrernte and Luritja social relations. He saw that they had a particular form of social life and moral arrangements. He documented this in regard to the class system (section and subsection systems) and by compiling impressive lists of kin terms that showed how Arrernte and Luritja people classified their kin in a kin universe, as well as how these systems connected with each other.
He did not treat kinship as a comparative study of social structures or systems. He did not develop it as a system of terminology that prescribes rules of behaviour, rights, duties and responsibilities in everyday and ceremonial life. He did not grasp the subsection system and the kinship system completely as two orders of classification one of which grouped relatives across the marriage moieties and across generations, (though through his consideration of individual cases, he did come close to this). He was supplying source material as with the mythology of the Western Arrernte and Luritja; his focus was on empirical data collection.

His kinship data were based on research he had conducted since 1892 with Diyari, Arrernte and Luritja people, and by living and participating in everyday life of Aboriginal people at Hermannsburg and Bethesda; he had compiled it for publication by 1909. Letters by Gillen (1896), Siebert (1899) and Mathews (1906/7) indicate that Carl Strehlow had systematically collected kinship terms and data on the subsection systems of the Arrernte and Luritja at least since 1896. Strehlow approached social classification initially through collecting section, subsection and kin terms, and seems only to have started to collect family trees in 1907 or 1908. Von Leonhardi sent some samples of family trees from Germany showing how they were best recorded from the point of view of an individual. His editor may have known the ‘genealogical method’, as he read Rivers, and this may have prompted his request. Carl Strehlow used these genealogies to illustrate how Western Arrernte subsection systems categorised people into groups whose members could or could not be marriage partners.

The following discussion is based on Carl Strehlow’s chapter five called *The Marriage Order* in volume five (Strehlow 1913:62-89) which explores not only ‘marriage rules’, but also the moiety division, section and subsection systems, classificatory kinship and family trees. At the time it was believed that at the core of indigenous kinship lay the function of marriage regulation and indeed the section

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325 O. Siebert to A. Howitt, 22.8.1899 (Melbourne Museum).
326 Carl Strehlow to R.H. Mathews, 1906-1907 (NLA 8006/2/4).
327 On the 18.8.1909 von Leonhardi confirmed in a letter to Carl Strehlow the receipt of 20 family trees.
328 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 8.12.1907.
system 'used to be called [a] "marriage-class system" and was believed to regulate
marriage' (Fox 1967:188). However, the section and subsection systems are not the
basis of marriage rules (Dousset 2005:15) and marriage calculations are not their only
function. These systems are mainly intra- and inter-language group devices to
facilitate interaction and communication, - often at ceremonial events. Nor is a
kinship system a marriage system. Rather, such a system contains a marriage rule.
Carl Strehlow did not distinguish clearly between a kinship system, a marriage rule
that complements the kinship system, and a subsection system which classifies people
according to kinship categories but is not a kinship system or a marriage rule in itself.

The Subsection System of the Arrernte and Luritja

Carl Strehlow's account of the 'marriage order' starts with the basic division that
organises Arrernte society into two groups: exogamous moieties. These patrimoieties
were called 'Nâkarakia' (our kindred or people)\textsuperscript{329} and 'Etâkarákia' (those people or
that kindred) or 'Maljanuka' (my friends) by the Arrernte. These terms were not
names for one or the other moiety but were reciprocally used by both groups
Strehlow 1913:62). Today people still refer—from an egocentric point of view—to
groupings that are malyenweke and ilakekeye. Malyenweke means 'them' or 'our in-
laws' while ilakekeye means 'us'. In one's own patrimoiet, that is ilakekeye, are
one's actual and classificatory fathers and their siblings, father's fathers and son's
children, and also one's mother's mother's patriline which is part of ilakekeye, 'us'.
In the opposite moiety, malyenweke, in addition to one's spouse and brothers-in-law
there are one's actual and classificatory mothers, mother's brothers and mother's
fathers and also one's father's mother. Like the Arrernte, the Kukatja-Luritja used
particular terms for the members of these groups reciprocally. All relatives of an ego's
group (own patri-moiety) were called 'Ngananukapitina' meaning 'all of us'; and all
relatives of the opposite moiety are called - 'Tananukapitina' meaning 'all of them'
Strehlow 1913:79). In societies organised in this way one should always marry
someone from the opposite group/moiety.

\textsuperscript{329} See Strehlow (1913:62,fn5) for an elaborate attempt on the possible etymology of these reciprocal
terms.

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Strong kinship ties exist between these two social groups. Some people in the opposite moiety, for example, play a crucial role in ceremonial matters relating to land. They create relationships which additionally serve to articulate ownership of land such that the 'patrimoietiy division broadly correlates with complementary roles associated with rights and responsibilities associated with country, sites and ceremonies' (Green 1998:11). Kwertengerle, the most important partners in matters of land management and ceremony, are usually recruited from the opposite moiety, and preferably, also from a particular patricouple.

The two exogamous groups are further divided into two or four classes, called sections and subsections today. Carl Strehlow recorded that the Southern Arrernte had a '4-class system' and the Arrernte 'living north of latitude 24 degrees possess 4 marriage classes in each moiety, they have thus, a 8-class system' (Strehlow 1913:62). He wrote that according to Arrernte tradition these divisions were established in a mythological past:

This division of the people into different marriage-classes is regarded as being of very ancient origin and is already hinted at in the legends concerning the people of primordial times. Even before Mangarkunjerkuja had formed the people, the undeveloped rella manerinja were divided into two strictly separated groups. While the members of one group lived on dry land and were therefore known as alarinja, the members of the other group, having long hair and feeding on raw meat, lived in water and were therefore called kwatjarinja. (Strehlow 1913:62)

According to the Arrernte myth the moiety called 'alarinja' was divided into Pwerrerle, Kemarre, Ngale and Mpetyane; and the other moiety 'kwatjarinja' into Penangke, Peltharre, Kngwarreye and Pengarte. And according to the myth of the Southern Arrernte with a section-system, the alarinja group was composed of Pwerrerle and Kemarre, while the kwatjarinja group was comprised of Penangke and Peltharre.
Northern/Eastern/(Western) Arrernte
(Subsections)
Alarinja: Pwerrle-Kemarre, Ngale-Mpetyane
Kwatjarinja: Penangke-Pengarte, Peltharre-Kngwarreye

Southern Arrernte
(Sections)
Pwerrle - Kemarre
Penangke - Peltharre.


Each moiety that Strehlow described included two generational pairs in father-child relationships. These pairs are called patricouples and in Arrernte nyenhenge (T.G.H. Strehlow 1947, 1965). The patricouples Kemarre-Pwerrle and Ngale-Mpetyane form one moiety and Peltharre-Kngwarreye and Pengarte-Penangke the other. Arrernte marriage rules prescribe that Kemarre marries Peltharre, Pwerrle marries Penangke, Ngale marries Kngwarreye and Mpetyane marries Pengarte. Carl Strehlow (1913:63) shows this pattern in the following way, A and B are parents and C their children:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group: A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purula m. + Pananka f. : Kamara</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamara m. + Paltara f. : Purula</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngala m. + Knuraia f. : Mbitjana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbitjana m. + Bangata f. : Ngala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group: B</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pananka m. + Purula f. : Bangata</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paltara m. + Kamara f. : Knuraia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knuraia m. + Ngala f. : Paltara</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangata m. + Mbitjana f. : Pananka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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This system, called by Aboriginal people in central Australia 'skin', has been chartered by the Institute of Aboriginal Development in the following way:

![Western Arrernte Skin Chart]


Strehlow wrote that the Western Luritja, i.e. the Kukatja-Luritja, had a 'marriage order' identical to the one of the Arrernte. They too divided their society into two exogamous groups and into subsections, (who lived in two separate camps and still inter-married according to their system at Hermannsburg). He made a brief remark on the Southern Luritja, observing that they did not have a section or subsection system. Nevertheless, they did use the reciprocal group terms 'Ngananu-karpitina and Tananukarpitina' for moieties, had the same kin terms as the Western Luritja, and the same basic marriage regulation as the Arrernte and Luritja (i.e. the grandchildren of different sex siblings, or the children of cross-cousins was a preferred marriage) (Strehlow 1913:87).

Further Strehlow described how the sections of the Southern Arrernte (he calls them Aranda-Lada and Aranda-Tanka) and the sub-section system of Western Arrernte could interlock, and that Luritja subsections are compatible with the ones of the
Arrernte. According to Carl Strehlow the Luritja subsection terms seemed to have been originally based on the Arrernte terms, however, adding the prefix Ta\textsuperscript{330} to indicate a male subsection name and Na to a female subsection name. Thus, the Luritja have differentiating subsection terms for their male and female members, which the Arrernte do not have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eastern/Central Arrernte\textsuperscript{331}</th>
<th>Western Arrernte\textsuperscript{332}</th>
<th>Luritja\textsuperscript{333}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angale</td>
<td>Ngale</td>
<td>Tja/Nangala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampetyane</td>
<td>Mpetyane</td>
<td>Tja/Nampitjinpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peltharre</td>
<td>Peltharre</td>
<td>Tja/Napaltjarri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kngwarreye</td>
<td>Kngwarreye</td>
<td>Tj/Nungarrayi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemarre</td>
<td>Kemarre</td>
<td>Tja/Nakamarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perrurle</td>
<td>Pwerrerle</td>
<td>Tju/Napurrula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pengarte</td>
<td>Pengarte</td>
<td>Tja/Napangati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penangke</td>
<td>Penangke</td>
<td>Tja/Napanangka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These observations on how the section and subsection systems interlocked, how people were shifted into different categories and from which areas they came as well as the time frame when this data was collected (1896-1909), are particularly interesting when placed in the context of comments on the diffusion of section and subsection systems across Australia. Among others Spencer and Gillen (1899,1927), T.G.H. Strehlow (1947, 1971, 1999), Bates (1925), McConvell (1985) and Dousset (2005), have observed that these systems diffused into the desert areas of Australia. McConvell (1985) suggests that the systems of the Arrernte had come from the Pilbara; it had diffused fanlike to the east and south-east as far as southern Arrernte territory. Dousset (2005:40) has shown that the section names Kemarre and Penangke (Elkin 1931:71) of the southern Arrernte had come from the Pilbara. As the western section system met in the north-east with a section system in the Victoria River

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\textsuperscript{330} Today 'Tja' is used.
\textsuperscript{331} Reproduced from Henderson and Dobson (1994:42).
\textsuperscript{332} Western Arrernte spelling deviates from Eastern and Central Arrernte spelling.
\textsuperscript{333} The spelling of the Luritja terms have been adopted from the Pintupi-Luritja kinship learning material (Institute of Linguistics 1979), for lack of available published linguistic material on Kukatja-Luritja.
Downs (VRD) area, it created a subsection system that facilitated marriage arrangements and probably ritual and social interaction. This subsection system then made its way south towards Arrernte country (McConvell 1985).

In 1896 Spencer and Gillen (1899:72; 1927:42; T.G.H. Strehlow 1947:72) write that the Central Arrernte had originally only a section system and that the additional terms for a subsection system had been a recent borrowing:

This division into eight has been adopted (or rather the names for the four new divisions have been), in recent times by the Arunta tribe from the Ipirra tribe which adjoins the former on the north, and the use of them is, at the present time spreading southwards. At the Engwura ceremony which we witnessed men of the Ipirra tribe were present, as well as a large number of others from the southern part of the Arunta amongst whom the four new names are not yet in use. (Spencer and Gillen 1899:72)

It is believed by anthropologists that the subsection system is a relatively recent borrowing or innovation in Arrernte culture. However, the cosmologies of the Western Arrernte and Luritja may indicate that the subsection system is an institution of 'ancient origins' (relatively speaking) in Carl Strehlow's study area (Strehlow 1907,1908, 1913). His data support Spencer and Gillen's statement and McConvell's hypothesis of the southwards movement of the subsection system, in so far as he described in detail how one system locks into the other and that it had been spreading southwards. However the narratives on Mangarkunjerkunja ancestors (Strehlow 1907:6-8), suggests at the same time that the subsection system was already on Western Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja territory when Spencer and Gillen were studying the Arrernte at Alice Springs in 1896.

Strehlow's myth data may indicate that the systems had possibly fallen into disrepair and had been 're-established' (Strehlow 1907:6-9). At two different times, different 'Mangarkunjerkunja' ancestors came from the north teaching the subsection system and the 'marriage-rule', and even later on a third ancestor called Katukunkara had to reinforce the system that had been abandoned. What this really means is impossible to
know. It may indicate that at different times in the past, regional meetings of people occurred that introduced new concepts or reinforced communication modes that had not been used for a while. The subsection system is very likely to have been one of them that cross-cut linguistic and social boundaries. He remarks that it is noteworthy that in Arrernte traditions all good laws come from the north and the bad spread from the south (Strehlow 1907:8).

On a more practical note, T.G.H. Strehlow’s material, recorded in the 1930s, suggests that the diffusion was not a straightforward process. Difficulties were encountered to fit one system into the other. He recorded a scathing remark about the subsection system from the north that the Southern Arrernte felt was being forced upon them:

The four-class system is the better of the two for us Southerners; we cannot understand the eight-class system. It is mad and purposeless, and only fit for such crazy men as the Northern Aranda are; we did not inherit such a stupid tradition from our fathers. (Strehlow 1947:72)

Still decades later in the early 1980s Ray Woods recalls his senior Pertame (Southern Arrernte) informants complaining about the subsection system:

The older Pertame generation I worked with in the 1980s told me that there was still only a 4-section system when they were young, and the 8-subsection system has been coming in since then. They said its introduction made for all sorts of complications, even splitting descent groups and sometimes siblings into different patricouples, due to e.g. different mothers, marriages, and/or its differing introduction at different places in the Pertame region, like Horseshoe Bend versus Orange Creek.

I often noticed that they themselves still struggled with the 8 system quite a bit, and sometimes told me a given apical figure was of this subsection, only to later revise it to another, told me it would be x if you figured it out through
Maryvale or through certain of their kin, but y if you figured it out another way etc.\textsuperscript{334}

Today most Pertame use the subsection system in regard to inter-group dealings and will readily supply the information of the existence of eight skin names. However, it seems that intra-group dealings may not rely entirely on the subsection system and may be the reason for the oversight of two subsection names that did not appear in a recent Pertame wordlist (Swan and Cousous 1993). T.G.H. Strehlow made another interesting observation on the transition from one into the other system in his family tree FT I. 28, which is based on his father’s family tree F.T. XXVIII (see also T.G.H. Strehlow 1999). He remarked that ‘C.S.’s class-names have been preserved throughout, so as to show the continual wavering and hesitation of his informants when assigning class names to the people in this F.T’.\textsuperscript{335}

The function of the subsection system is to facilitate inter-tribal interaction, ritual-exchange and marriage (Elkin 1932; Myers [1986] 1991; T.G.H. Strehlow 1999; Dousset 2005:78-80). They are convenient social labels and propose global categories for ranges of behaviour that are especially useful in inter-group and inter-language gatherings and communication. Dousset writes that the section system is ‘convenient in the context of contact’ and ‘that contact is indeed their vehicle for diffusion’ (Dousset 2005:82). What Dousset says about the section system may also be said about the application of the subsection system of the Arrernte and Luritja today:

Such contacts were either traditional – based on networks linking neighbouring groups for ceremonial, economic and marital exchanges and relations – or they were “new”, resulting from colonisation’s and settlement’s increasing effect on inter-group relations and modes of communication. In every case, sections are a lingua franca of kinship, which in turn propose a formal framework for interaction among humans. (Dousset 2005:82-83)

At Hermannsburg where people were forced together, the compatibility of Arrernte and Luritja subsections would have been of invaluable use, because many people

\textsuperscript{334} Ray Woods’ email 14 August 2006.

\textsuperscript{335} T.G.H. Strehlow’s FT I. 28.
were concentrated at the mission who under other circumstances would not have had to interact with the same intensity. It is likely that in this period the compatibility of Arrernte and Luritja ‘skins’ became firmly established, as they had to accommodate the new living conditions at the Lutheran mission settlement.

Arrernte and Luritja Kin Terminology
Carl Strehlow made a significant contribution in the area of kinship studies by collecting a vast number of kinship terms (Strehlow 1913:66-69,81-85). He described the kinship system as encompassing the whole society. Arrernte and Luritja kinship terms could be used for all members of the society without taking ‘blood’ ties into consideration, but at the same time there were ways to describe closeness of relatedness. He observed that every child is born into a particular subsection and thus enters into a certain kin relationship to all other subsections, regardless of whether or not blood ties exist. On the Luritja terminology, for example, he remarked that ‘The relationships between a member of a certain subsection and the members of all the other subsections is expressed in kinship terms in Luritja society, regardless of existing blood relationship or the lack of it’ (Strehlow 1913:79). In daily life, the presence or absence of known genealogical connections are not distinguished (Strehlow 1913:63), and each person stands in a set of relations to others described in kin terms. On both these counts this system differs from a European one.

In a classificatory system, certain kin terms are used to cover a wide range of relatives who are regarded as equivalents of one’s father, mother, brother, sister and so forth. For example, in Western Arrernte, karte, the term for father, covers all father’s brothers, who in English would be called uncles. The term for mother, meye, is used for all mother’s sisters, who in English we would call aunties. Meye also includes daughter-in-law, from a man’s point of view. Wenhe, the term for aunt, is applied to father’s sisters as well as mother’s brother’s wife, and from a woman’s point of view, it can also include her mother-in-law. The term for uncle, kamerne, includes mother’s brothers and father’s sister’s husband. From this it can be seen that the classificatory kinship system not only incorporates consanguineal, but also affinal relatives. Luritja classify their kinsfolk, including affines, in a similar way, although there are differences.
Where some relatives whom Europeans distinguish are classified together in the Arrernte system, others who bear the same European term are distinguished by Arrernte speakers. For example, Western Arrernte used and still use four different terms for one's grandparents. The terms are arrenge (father's father), tyemeye (mother's father), perle (father's mother) and ipmenhe (mother's mother). The grandparental terms are also used to cover one's grandparents' siblings as well as one's grandchildren on a reciprocal basis. The term for one's father's father (arrenge) for example, includes father's father's brothers and sisters and son's sons and daughters. Relationships with grandparents are of particular importance to the question of landownership. Carl's Luritja kin data records also four grandparental terms (Strehlow 1913:81-82), but today only two seem to be in use: tjamu for grandfathers (FF and MF) and kami for grandmothers (FM and MM) (see also Sackett 1994:31; Varzoon-Morel and Sackett 1997:36). However, there are ways to express which grandfather is spoken of, in particular when reference is made to landownership (Sackett 1994:31-32).

Strehlow explains the kinship classification of the Arrernte and Luritja via the subsection system which locks into the kinship system. He delivers an example of a Pwerrerrele. A Pwerrerrele not only calls his natural brothers kelye (older brother) or tyye (younger brother) but also calls all other Pwerrerrele belonging to the same generation as himself brother or sister. At the same time he calls all Pwerrerrele in the generation above or below him arrenge, which is the term for his father's father as well as his natural (and classificatory) son's son, who are both Pwerrerrele.

As an Arrernte who has been born into a subsection, (or allocated one by marriage), can be placed into three connections to the other subsections - on an equal, higher or lower generational level - it follows that just 24 classificatory kin-terms would be required. However, gender and age (whether older or younger than the person speaking), also bear on the kin terms used making for a larger number of terms (Strehlow 1913:63). To illustrate this point, Strehlow presents a long list in which the terms used for classificatory and 'blood' relatives are given (Strehlow 1913:66-70). He shows how close and distant kin are termed or labelled.
Carl Strehlow presented the kinship terms abstracted in some degree from social context. He did note that terms could be suffixed to indicate ‘blood-ties’ and more precise kin relationships between individuals. But he did not indicate that they may also contain ‘codes for conduct’ which include avoidance and respect rules, obligations and rights. He only makes a brief remark in a section called Marriage Customs (Strehlow 1913:89-94) on obligations and behaviour of spouses towards their in-laws:

The husband is obliged to continue to furnish his father-in-law, whom he calls antara tualtja, with food, particularly with meat. Should he kill a kangaroo, for example, then he has to give a large piece of it to his father-in-law. (...) He is further required to give his shorn-off hair to his father-in-law, who will make strings etc. out of it. At the death of his father-in-law he will let his shoulder be scratched with a stone knife (unangarala kalama, from unangara = shoulder, and kalama = to cut oneself) until the blood flows, as a sign of sorrow. Were he to omit this, he might conceivably be clubbed to death by his own relatives. Following the death of his father-in-law, he gives his own shorn-off hair to a brother of the latter.

The husband is not allowed to speak to his mother-in-law marra tualtja while she resides in the camp. Indeed, he may not even approach her. Should he encounter her outside the camp, he may communicate with her from a distance by means of the common secret language ankatja kerintja, or in the sign language to be described at a later stage. ... The mother-in-law on her part must avoid the hut of her son-in-law and is obliged to give him the hair shorn off her head, so that he can make himself a belt or other strings from it. At his death, the mother-in-law punctures her head with a stone so that blood gushes out of it. (Strehlow 1913:90-91)

Later, anthropology developed the study of kin terms into a study of social terms of address, and social inter-relations. Green's account of the use of kinship terminology in Arandic languages, for example, demonstrates how the terms work in their social
context and how kinship relationships contain behavioural patterns (Green 1998; see also Institute of Linguistics 1979; Centre for Indigenous Development Education and Research 1996). While Carl Strehlow described the regular use of kin terms, Green (1998) explores their actual application taking social context into account which determines the use of kin terms. She treats the irregular use of terminology which is determined by pragmatic factors (Green 1998:29). Also T.G.H. Strehlow (1999) shows that in reality irregularities were not out of the order. There was and is flexibility in a classificatory kin universe that allows variations.

Finally, following the explanation of how section and subsection systems interlock, how they related to a kinship system, and how kin terms are used in relation to close and distant relatives, Carl Strehlow addressed the Arrernte’s marriage rule. In their system it is the rule to marry ones second cross cousin: a MMBDD (Scheffler 1978:42) who is also a FMBSD (Fox 1967:196). Carl Strehlow’s investigation puts great emphasis on the fact of this preferential rule.

Its most important principle is found in the rule that the pallukua, the grandchildren of brothers and sisters (it is immaterial whether they are real brothers and sisters or regarded as siblings according to their class), should marry each other, and that according to their class they are in a relationship of noa = spouse to each other already from birth. The following two tables should demonstrate that this will often lead to the marriage of the grand-children of two natural siblings, and many more examples could be given. (Strehlow 1913:70)

Carl Strehlow includes here a discussion on patrilineal descent, although he considered that Spencer and Gillen’s work had sufficiently demonstrated that the Arrernte and other peoples in central Australia traced decent through the patriline and that subsection names were inherited through fathers or more correctly from father’s fathers in alternating generations. The discussion of patrilineal descent and that the subsection is inherited from father’s father, one’s arrenge (Strehlow 1913:71-72), was motivated by his disagreement with R.H. Mathews who was using material supplied
by him during their correspondence\textsuperscript{336} without quoting him and arranging it arbitrarily to support his theory on matrilineal decent in Arrernte society (see Mathews 1908). He opposed Mathews claim that descent is traced matrilineally and that Arrernte people and their neighbours have their subsections allocated through their mothers. Mathews' interpretation of Strehlow’s material had also annoyed von Leonhardi, and he remarked that ‘Mathews does not understand the marriage laws and classes, not that he would be the only one.’\textsuperscript{337}

In Arrernte society, Strehlow maintained, it is the father’s fathers who always give their grandsons their subsection, whether the mother is from the correct subsection or not, the children always belong to the subsection of their father’s father (Strehlow 1913:71-72). His son confirms his father’s view that descent is patrilineally reckoned (Strehlow 1999:23,29). To this day, Western Arrernte people allocate generally subsections according to father and father’s father’s subsections.

Carl Strehlow’s Genealogies

Although Carl Strehlow had recorded all births, deaths and Christian marriages at Hermannsburg from his arrival in 1894, he seems only to have started to collect family trees when researching social classification with von Leonhardi. He compiled 28 family trees\textsuperscript{338} of Arrernte families incorporating the Luritja people who were living at Hermannsburg at the time and had married Arrernte people (Strehlow 1913:85). Only a small portion of his genealogical material was published to illustrate the marriage-order of the Arrernte and only an ‘imaginary family tree of a Luritja belonging to the Takamara class’, because he believed that ‘one would have had to live among the Luritja for several years and have gained sufficient knowledge of the individuals in order to draw up a really reliable family tree’ (Strehlow 1913:85). His published genealogies were supplemented in 1920 with a remarkable index of all indigenous names appearing on them and what they meant (Strehlow 1920:15-39).

At the beginning of the twentieth century it was not clear in anthropology what ‘kinship’ should really mean, hence, sociocultural and biological aspects were not

\textsuperscript{336} Carl Strehlow to R.H. Mathews, 1906-1907 (NLA 8006/2/4).
\textsuperscript{337} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 2.6.1907 and 26.2.1909.
\textsuperscript{338} T.G.H. Strehlow’s FT I. 28 and Book of XVII p.118a bottom.
carefully distinguished or recognised. European notions of what constituted a family and marriage, what descent and kin terms like father, mother, etc. meant, were largely taken for granted or at least not well defined (see Schneider 1984:97-112). To make this point Schneider maintained that 'anthropology's whole enterprise of treating kinship as a genealogical grid laid over the assumed facts of biology was misguided; instead, it was the "core symbols" that defined what kinship was for a given culture' (Silverman 2005:289). During the 1970s he even rejected the anthropological concept of kinship itself, 'claiming it was nothing more than anthropologists turning their own, Western symbolic system into a universal theory' (Silverman 2005:320).

Clearly, the European concept of 'family tree' was for Strehlow's study of indigenous kinship inadequate. The notions of consanguinity, apical ancestors and patrilineal descent attached to a European family tree were not sufficient to describe the complexities of the classificatory kinship systems of the Arrernte and Luritja, that, for instance, included affines to a much larger degree and categorised close and distant kin not by the sole criteria of 'blood ties'.

A European family tree represents a particular universe of biological facts (ideally) which includes the same range of relatives that can be theoretically traced in every society. Descent is usually understood as consanguine and patrilineal, which suggests ancestry many generations deep with apical ancestors. Western Arrernte and Luritja people did not think of themselves and their relatives, or relatedness, in this way. In Aboriginal society these links are often assumed, putative, classificatory and can include 'consanguinity' under certain (ethno-scientific) aspects. The kin universe of indigenous people was more immediate and shallow, however, very differentiated and wide. The main direction of reckoning kinship would have been horizontally within two descending and ascending generational levels, not vertically. For instance, the descendants of older and younger brothers and sisters would have been of importance, not an apical ancestor who had lived before their time. Also a large number of affines would be included.

The fact that Aboriginal people generally do not remember the names of their great-grandparents, although there are ways to address them if they are still alive (Green
1998:29), and that the names of deceased people in central Australian cultures were (Strehlow 1915:17; Meggitt 1966:5), and are taboo (see also Samson 2006:156-7), indicates that a European mode of genealogy-taking would not capture Arrernte and Luritja kinship adequately. In addition, it was inappropriate in many situations to make inquiries about the deceased, and still is.339

Arrernte people still use Kwementyaye in place of the name of a deceased person (Breen 2000:27) or try to replace the name of a living person altogether finding a synonym. Only after an adequate amount of time has elapsed, is a name put back into circulation and will be associated with a living person. Hamilton (1998:102) remarked that 'the taboo on the names of deceased persons, and the desire to erase their memory as soon as possible, ensures that no precise genealogical knowledge can be maintained.' Also Meggitt ([1962] 1986:194) observed that Warlpiri 'men were rarely sure of details of genealogy in their grandparents' generation-level' and Peterson adds that 'young children often do not remember their genitor and this, combined with the prohibition on the mentioning of the names of the dead and the dependence of children on their mothers who are therefore likely to be the main teacher of the terminology, emphasises the tracing of social links through women' (Peterson 1969:29). Samson (2006:153, 2007) makes a strong point that in Aboriginal cultures there are mechanisms specifically to support 'forgetting'.

It is rather unusual to find an Aboriginal person even today who can reproduce their genealogical links beyond their grandparents without the help of archival records. In some cases the answer, when seeking names of great-grandparents, may be jukurrpa or tjukurrpa by Warlpiri and Luritja people – referring to the dreaming. I have, however, not heard this reply from Western Arrernte people. I suspect this may be the result of their sustained exposure to Lutheran culture and a 'family tree tradition', as well as their relative early sedentarisation at Hermannsburg. At any rate, Aboriginal

339 Often researchers have to describe in a round about way a person who has a tabooed name and has to ask if it is allowed to say that name. In June 2006 I was pulled up for using the Luritja word tjala (honeyant), it had been temporarily taken out of circulation in this particular family due to a recent death. On this occasion I was also informed that a common Arrernte word, apme (snake), had been replaced by amerenye (belonging to the earth/ground or living in the earth/ground) in the Hermannsburg area.
people did not have a tradition like the Pasthuns of Afghanistan, or Hawaiians, who incorporated their genealogies into oral traditions (Samson 2006:153,158).

Despite the short-comings of the notions of European family trees, Carl Strehlow's genealogies contain very valuable material. He did not present ego's descent as strictly patrilineal in his published family trees. He included a number of ancestors whose descendants had intermarried and shows their relatedness, rather than unilinear descent from one apical ancestor. His published family trees illustrated multi-lateral descent of a particular individual and his spouse. The couples Ipitarintja and Laramananka (1,1a), Loatjira and Ilbaltalaka (2,2a), Nguaperaka and Lakarinja (3,3a) and Erenkeraka and Kaputatjalka (4,4a) were placed in the centre of his published genealogies (Strehlow 1915:Stammbäume). His unpublished family trees, in contrast, traced patrilineal descent from an apical ancestor, which were the model that his son and the Finke River Mission would adopt.

The obvious data on Carl Strehlow’s genealogies include personal Aboriginal and sometimes European names, if they had been baptised at birth or had converted, subsection affiliations and ‘consanguine’ relatedness; this data has assisted in land and native title claims to identify appropriate claimants. He also included the ‘ratapa’ and ‘altjira’ of most people appearing in his family trees. Both terms are polysemic expressions. In the context of his family trees, ‘ratapa’ means the conception dreaming of a person which could be acquired in three ways. Baron von Leonhardi summarised in the preface of the first volume how this dreaming association could be acquired:

Either an embryo (ratapa), living in the metamorphosed body of an altjirangamitjina, enters the body of a woman passing by, in which case the child would be born with a narrow face, or a "totem ancestor" emerges from the earth and throws a small bulloarer at a woman, in whose body the bulloarer turns into a child which would then be born with a broad face. Apart from these two methods of conceiving a child some of the blacks also report rare cases of an altjirangamitjina entering a woman and thus be reincarnated. The old men, too, eventually admitted this. Such a reincarnation is possible only once. (Strehlow 1907: Preface)

In Carl Strehlow’s work the word ‘ratapa’ is not only used as another synonym of ‘totem’, but also for spirit child or ‘child-seeds (Kinderkeime)’. He wrote that this word derived from the verb ‘ratana’ meaning ‘coming from, originating’. These spirit children were said to be invisible, but fully developed children with reddish skin colour (Strehlow 1908:52). He writes that as soon as a woman knows that she is pregnant, i.e. that a spirit child has entered her, the paternal or maternal grandfather carves a small tywerrenge with the designs of the ancestor from whom it emerged and stores it in the rock cave where all the other objects are stored. When the baby is crying, it is said to be crying for the tywerrenge, that is lost when entering into the mother. The tywerrenge is called in the presence of women and children ‘papa’.

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340 At the mission generally only the Christians had European names.
341 T.G.H. Strehlow maintained that only the spirit children of Nturia were called ratapa (Strehlow [1964] 1978).
calm the child the relevant tywerrenge is taken from the cave, wrapped with strings, to prevent women from seeing it, and laid in the wooden baby carrying tray where it emanates secret powers into the child that makes it grow quickly (Strehlow 1908:80).

The word ‘altjira’ in this context\(^{32}\) references yet again another spirit entity. It is used for mother’s conception dreaming. Carl Strehlow describes the relationship that a person has generally to mother’s conception dreaming as follows:

However, every person is also connected with another particular totem which is called altjira. This is the totem of his mother. Every native sees this as the animal or plant, whichever might be the case, that belongs to him, and therefore calls it his garra altjira or deba altjira. The Aranda permit the consumption of these maternal totem animals or totem plants respectively. Although all the children of one family, i.e. of one mother, may each belong to a different totem (ratapa), they nevertheless share another totem (altjira) which may be viewed as their providing and protecting god, like a mother feeds and protects her children during the early years of their lives. This altjira appears to the blacks in dreams and warns them of danger, just as he speaks of them to friends while they are sleeping. (Strehlow 1908:57)

There are a number of remarks that indicate that also other words could be used to denote personal and mother’s conception dreaming and are polysemic. He noted, for example, that ‘A person’s specific altjirangamitjina is called iningukua; the altjirangamitjina of one’s mother is simply called altjira’ (Strehlow 1907:3). The word ‘iningukua’ means ‘spirit double’ and does not seem to be in use anymore. Western Arrernte people call this type of spirit pmere kwetethe (Kenny 2004a and 2004b). Thus, altjira can also mean spirit double of one’s mother; and one’s own spirit double is called ‘iningukua’. However, in a more general context von Leonardi remarked that ‘iningukua’ was an alternative name for ‘altjirangamitjina’ (Strehlow 1910:7) which means dreaming ancestor. Strehlow explains that ‘the specific altjirangamitjina, from whose metamorphosed body the ratapa emerges, is described as the iningukua of the person concerned’ (Strehlow 1908:53).

\(^{32}\) See Chapter VI for discussion on altjira’s semantic field.
Carl Strehlow does not mention in his entire work that a dreaming could be patrilineally inherited. This is rather intriguing, in view of later emphasis on patrilineal connections to dreamings in Australian anthropological literature, including his son’s work and among the Western Arrernte themselves. I will discuss this issue in Chapter VII.

Carl Strehlow’s Family Trees in the Present

Carl Strehlow’s use of family tree did not amount to the use of them as an instrument of social analysis. He used them as a matrix to show classification of kin, and as a vehicle for collating data on individuals. Nevertheless they influenced the family documentation of Western Arrernte people.

His family trees have determined in two main ways the perception and development of family documentation in Western Arrernte society. They provided a starting point for his son, T.G.H. Strehlow, and they seem to have initiated a practice of recording genealogical data at the Finke River Mission. Carl Strehlow’s family documentation seems to have established a practice of genealogical data collection at the Hermannsburg mission that went beyond the usual practice of the Lutheran church to record every birth, marriage and death. It continued for the better part of a century and has to some degree impressed onto the Western Arrernte themselves a concept of ‘families’ with apical ancestors and strong patrilineal emphasis. This was emphasised by the Finke River Mission in 1976 when they wrote that ‘the most important kin grouping in relation to land ownership is the patrilineal decent group, made up of people descended from a common male ancestor through the male line’ (Albrecht et al. 1976)."\(^{343}\)

T.G.H. Strehlow was in possession of his father’s family trees when he produced his own genealogies nearly fifty years later. He incorporated his father’s groundwork, only occasionally referencing them. T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogy I.6, for example, is nearly completely copied from his father’s work, only supplementing it with recent descendants. The group of this family tree traces its descent from a man called Teralta.

\(^{343}\) Emphasis added.
who also appears on Carl Strehlow’s published genealogy 1a (Strehlow 1913:1a) and his unpublished family tree of Teralta. Also genealogy I.33, obtained in 1958 from different informants, fifty years after I.6, uses his father’s work. During his own research T.G.H. Strehlow was often only able to get to the grandparental generation of his informants.

He compiled 150 genealogies, which usually begin with an ‘apical ancestor’ and his wife. About 50 of these family trees are based on his father’s work and thus, can be dated back to circa 1800, and further, and ‘from which all authentic facts can be extracted to substantiate theories of aboriginal land rights and law’.

In the land rights movement and native title context these family trees have been of enormous value. The ethnographic detail includes site names and dreaming affiliations of an individual’s conception site and have been able to show that named Aboriginal people have been definitely in the Centre of Australia before Sovereignty occurred in this region in 1825.

The information on T.G.H. Strehlow’s family trees is very rich, but it has to be understood in its particular theoretical and ethnographic context, which is not immediately apparent. The data on these genealogies are not clearly defined; he may have assumed that anyone interested in his family trees would have read his extensive oeuvre and would be able to contextualise them. Like his father’s work, his too presupposed an enormous amount of knowledge. Carl Strehlow, for example, included the ‘ratapa’ and ‘altjira’ of most people appearing in his published family trees of volume five (Strehlow 1913). It is not clear without having read volume two (Strehlow 1908) what the terms ‘ratapa’ or ‘altjira’ describe on these family trees.

Obvious data on T.G.H. Strehlow’s family trees include personal names, subsections and relatedness through apical ancestors, which evokes patrilineal descent and physical kinship. T.G.H. Strehlow included colour characteristics like ‘half caste’ (H.C.), ‘full-blood’, etc., indicating them sometimes with colour pencil lines, fractions, i.e. 7/8. This colour coding made the notions of descent and blood ties unmistakably clear.

Nearly every person has a footnote that is often cross-referenced to his diaries or to another family-tree. These footnotes contain an immense variety of historical, cultural, social, geographical (location of sites, sometimes the description is in Arrernte) and additional kin information as well as gossip.

He included the conception sites, called ‘pmara knganintja’ in his work (Strehlow 1971:596) and the conception ‘totem’, knganintja, of most people on his family trees. However, he does not declare them explicitly as such. They appear in this fashion: ‘from Emalkna, imora kng.’ This leaves them open to misinterpretation. The information on a conception site is often interpreted by descendants of this individual that this place is associated with them and that they have traditional rights to own it. Sometimes it is even taken as the name of an estate. The abbreviation ‘kng.’ stands for knganintja and ‘from’ refers to the place where the spirit-child entered the mother to be, i.e. the conception site of an individual.

According to T.G.H. Strehlow, conception sites and dreamings were acquired from the place where a woman felt for the first time the ‘quickening’, and theoretically could have been on any estate where a woman had the right to forage. In Western Arrernte society, conception sites were places where the spirit part of a person - left behind in the landscape by the ancestral dreaming beings - entered into the mother and she became aware of her pregnancy (Carl Strehlow 1908:53, 56; T.G.H. Strehlow 1947:87). The human soul begins its existence when the ‘spirit-child’ enters a pregnant woman giving the embryo a soul (Strehlow 1908:52–56; Strehlow 1971, 1978). They are said to be spirits of unborn children waiting in the landscape to enter a woman. These spirits are closely associated with and are part of the ancestors, as they are said to come from the dreaming.

T.G.H. Strehlow wrote that these spirits were part of the trails of ‘life’, left behind throughout the landscape by the ancestral dreaming beings ([1964]1978:20, 22). Human children could come into being at all places situated along these trails. In Aranda Traditions (1947:88), he used the word ‘ngantja’ for spirit child. He also

35 Unpublished dictionary K:92; see also Strehlow 1947
called them ‘life cell’ or ‘life giving property’, which entered a woman and developed into a human being. Pink (1936:288–290) wrote that baby-spirits gave the spirit part to human beings when entering the mother. Her Northern Arrernte informants maintained that baby-spirits were left behind by a dreamtime ancestor who had left some tywerrenge in the landscape.

While, according to T.G.H. Strehlow, the conception site of an individual was of great importance and prominent in that individual’s life, it did not confer automatically landholding rights to any of his or her descendants but they had the right to learn about it, if they were prepared to do so, which required personal engagement and effort. A conception site was individually associated with a particular person, unlike the dreaming places or country claimed through father and arrenge (FF) which would belong to a well defined group of persons.

17. Hesekiel Malbunca’s Family Tree drawn by T.G.H. Strehlow. Exhibited with the consent of the Malbunca family in the tourist facility of the Museum of Central Australia.

T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogies represent usually nyenhenge (patricouple) groups with a male apical ancestor; to a degree these genealogies were understood by him as one of the instruments for the analysis of land ownership. To most users of T.G.H. Strehlow’s family trees it is not clear that they are dealing with what he called a patrilineal ‘totemic clan’, i.e. a nyenhenge section. He wrote in Aranda Traditions that he had ‘attempted to introduce the term nyenhenge section to denote a group of men forming a local totemic clan’ (Strehlow 1947:143). Only the people of this group,
who are patrilineally affiliated, belong to the main dreaming associated with a particular key place (pmara kutata\textsuperscript{346} in T.G.H. Strehlow’s terminology) of the male apical ancestors on that particular family tree which is not necessarily his conception site either.

T.G.H. Strehlow’s interpretation of Arrernte land tenure with patrilineal emphasis stands somewhat in contrast to his father’s emphasis on mother’s dreaming and mother’s conception place. The personal details Carl Strehlow collected, among others, were ‘ratapa’ and ‘altjira’ which are both related to a person’s mother. T.G.H. Strehlow does not seem to have explored these mother’s connections in detail. His father’s ‘altjira’ would appear in someway in his son’s work in connection with the kwertengerle’s rights to mother’s tywerrenge ([1964] 1978:38). The conception dreaming of individuals he seems to have mainly understood as an individuating characteristic within the context of his nyenhenge group, as they were likely to be on arrenge’s country.

The lack of an explicit key to the Strehlow genealogies has caused much confusion and misunderstanding of what they represent. In particular when Aboriginal people access T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogical material at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs and mistake the conception sites of their ancestors, with a place they may claim as their own, believing that it confers primary rights to a place or country. The cultural significance and the appropriate interpretation of the information on these family trees can only be properly understood through close reading of the ethnographic works of both Strehlows. This means they have to be set in their theoretical and historical context. They are otherwise misleading, with the exception of obvious personal data. Once the genealogical information is contextualised within the Strehlows’ works and their intentions are made clear, a great wealth of meaning can be extracted and usefully applied.

Further implications of Carl Strehlow’s family trees is that they seem to have established a practice of recording genealogical data at the Hermannsburg mission that continued for the better part of a century and has to some degree impressed onto

\textsuperscript{346} See Kenny (2004a,b) for more on this term.
the Western Arrernte themselves a concept of ‘families’ with apical ancestors and strong patrilineal emphasis. As already mentioned this is not likely to have been the way Arrernte people perceived their relatedness. The reality of desert life with its particular social circumstances and traditions determined who was emphasised in a person’s kinship net. The memory of apical ancestors was not preserved. It is only with genealogical records like the ones produced by the Strehlows, Tindale and the Finke River Mission that Aboriginal people today are able to reproduce such ‘deep’ genealogies.

This concept of Western Arrernte families, resulting from a long influence of constant reinforcement of family trees produced by the Finke River Mission, T.G.H. Strehlow and the Central Land Council, may be seen as a paradigm for Sutton’s (2003:206-231) conceptualising his ‘Families of Polity’ as a modern kinship form among indigenous Australians that are not residential or local groups (Austin-Broos 2004:61). Generally these ‘families’ are today characterised by a patronymic identity and cognatic descent many generations deep. A different treatment of this phenomenon takes a view of kinship application in the contemporary social context of day-to-day living in which elaborate and complex networking by individuals takes place (Austin-Broos 2003, 2006 and in particular 2008: in press). Carl Strehlow’s treatment of kinship was still at a considerable distance from such a description and analysis of social organisation.

T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogies, by extension also his father’s and other family trees of the Finke River Mission, and more recently family trees generated by the Central Land Council during the land rights’ era, have assumed new meanings in the context of land-ownership. Genealogies are increasingly the way to claim affiliation or connection to Arrernte country rather than through esoteric knowledge of myth which is in decline (Oberscheidt 2005). Sometimes T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogical information is almost treated as secret-sacred material at Hermannsburg. There is a perception that once on a family tree one is ‘in’, even if the connection is marginal or affinal.\footnote{Affines can have contingent rights under certain conditions (see Sutton 2003:12-13).} T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogies are often perceived as the last word on traditional membership of a landholding group by some indigenous people, and used by them as evidence for membership. However, they do not define how kinship
confers particular rights and obligations in land or how kin networks function. In addition, taking these genealogical records too seriously can obscure other developments including fission, fusion, the end of patriline and political alliances of particular families.

Is there a Responsible Use of Family Trees?

In November 2007, Central Land Council anthropologists, Helen Wilmot and Rebecca Koser, presented at the conference of the Australian Anthropological Society a paper in which they addressed some of the problems in the context of land claim processes (that involve also mining issues and royalties), created by genealogical materials, that was not produced for the purposes that some Arrernte people are using them for, and raised the question how are anthropologists to deal with these problems, in particular generated by family trees. Wilmot and Koser are witnessing that written documents are used as evidence of descent based connections and ‘proof’ of ownership to land. People are gaining positions of power and influence in Aboriginal decision making with these documents that under traditional laws and customs they would not be able to gain, and are rejecting others. They discuss how some facets of identification are based on these documents that are perceived as ‘quasi-traditional authority’ and how this information is reified.

They have observed that fractions of these genealogies, such as a footnote, are internalised even by senior people. These snippets of genealogical information, which may or may not be wrong, are on occasions recited as if they were traditional knowledge. If a researcher is unaware of these pre-existing materials and as some anthropologists have remarked ‘that one is in actual fact talking with Tindale or T.G.H. Strehlow’, traditional ownership can indeed be misconstrued. Wilmot presents an example of such a situation. As an explanation for how their families were related to each other, various senior members of a particular group had repeatedly told her that ‘All our mothers were sisters from Bambi Springs’. Some time later she discovered that this sentence had been picked-up from a footnote of a Strehlow genealogy (the traditional owners had in the meantime lost their copy of this

genealogy), and after careful analysis of that genealogy it emerged that the connections claimed had been based on a misunderstanding. One of the senior men who had been uttering this phrase, for instance, was related to the relevant ancestor through his mother's mother's sister's husband's father.

Once such anthropological material enters the public domain it takes on a life of its own. It is not possible to control what Aboriginal people do with this material and how they interpret it and base some of their identity on it. As long as it remains a private matter, no harm is done, but when it is (ab)used, to make tenuous claims, it presents a problem. In particular for less articulate and literate Aboriginal people who have stronger connections to their ancestral lands and cultures, it is problematic, as well as for the unfortunate anthropologists who have to explain to a relevant person or persons that they have misconstrued the meaning of these written 'artefacts' and that it does not suffice to identify them as traditional owners or native title holders of a place or country under certain legislation. At the extreme lies an example in which a woman had identified herself as a traditional owner of an excision (Aboriginal land) and was intending to build a house there against the wish of the traditional owners of that area. She had to be evicted.

This misuse of written anthropological material does not apply yet to all Arandic regions. It has to be remembered that there are different degrees of urbanisation and westernisation in central Australia. There are Arandic people who barely speak English, and are embedded in their traditional laws and customs. These are unfortunately also the people who are vulnerable when the written artefact takes on a new life in the hands of their articulate relatives who know English and the administrative machinery. It is a difficult ethical question, which has to be increasingly addressed by anthropologists and institutions who hold this type of genealogical material because the material is in the public domain and the genealogy is on the rise in central Australia.

On the other hand Carl and T.G.H. Strehlow's family records are very valued today among many Aboriginal people in central Australia. For some descendants, to possess excerpts of T.G.H. Strehlow's genealogies of one's family is one of the most precious
and cherished possessions, giving some indigenous people a kind of sense of belonging, and the feeling of empowerment knowing 'who' they are and from 'where' they came.
CHAPTER VII

Arrernte Land Tenure

Although Carl Strehlow was not recording social organisation, and did not elaborate on Arrernte or Luritja land tenure, he made some explicit remarks about an individual’s rights to and affinities with his or her conception site and about mother’s conception site. He took these to be links to places and their dreamings. He also recorded, though less systematically, data on patrilineal descent, inheritance rights through fathers, and rights to ritual knowledge. These data give evidence of a number of pathways to connections to sites, land or place. They show how Carl Strehlow’s data are still relevant today, especially in the context of land and native title claims. They provide some of the earliest evidence for ways of being connected to country other than through patrilineal principles among Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja people. The data also allow us to canvas various dimensions of a land tenure system as it may have existed in traditional laws and customs at the time of Northern Territory sovereignty in 1825.

In the course of the twentieth century a number of researchers passed through the area and made observations that clarify Carl’s findings. Some of these were based on views of informants who were born before the incursion of white people into Arrernte and Luritja lands. These later records have expanded in a major way our knowledge of traditional ownership and the nature of contemporary landholding groups. I propose that Carl Strehlow’s material indicates that even the Western Arrernte, who are often viewed as the paradigm of patriliney in central Australia, had a system of land tenure

345 He seemed not to have payed attention to how people may have lived on or exploited a tract of land, i.e. he apparently did not make investigations into the distinction between the ritual and residential or local group, and the composition of a group that may have lived and foraged together. He was focused on Hermannsburg and viewed the areas around the mission as vacated or abandoned, but at the same time he wrote, contradicting himself, that his informants still viewed these countries as their property (1915). And as mentioned earlier the situation at Hermannsburg was not suggestive of any kind of particular social organisation, as people from many diverse groups came together at the mission who would not have stayed together permanently under other circumstances.

350 My focus in this chapter is on Arrernte land tenure, because the ‘Luritja’ Carl was mainly writing about, the Kukatja, had according to Carl Strehlow a similar structure in mythology and social institutions (Strehlow 1908, 1910:1, 1913). According to T.G.H. Strehlow Western Arrernte and Kukatja had virtually the same land tenure system (Strehlow 1970:99).
that offered ‘multiple pathways’ to ‘belonging to country’ (Myers [1986] 1991:138ff). This does not mean that these connections were not ranked, qualified or else proposed mainly as cultural norms, as can be the case today. It does mean that indigenous relations to land in central Australia were both elaborate and different from European modes. However, before I consider Carl Strehlow’s contributions, a brief outline of what a ‘country’ implies today in central Australia and a short overview of the twentieth century’s issues and debates on Australian land tenure are in order.

Pmere and Ngurra
Today, Western Arrernte people refer to countries that they may claim, usually through their grandparents and esoteric knowledge, as ‘pmere’, called ‘country’ in Aboriginal English. Luritja call it ‘ngurra’. The words pmere and ngurra can mean place, camp or country depending on context (see also Myers [1986] 1991:54-57). Pmere spelled by Carl ‘tmara’ appears in many combinations, defining different significant sites for an Arrernte person. Carl Strehlow recorded the term knanakala (‘totem place’ in general) and the terms mbatjita (grosse Totem-Platz, big totem place), tmarutja (ewiger Platz, eternal place) and takuta (immerwährender Platz, everlasting place) for the most important places of ancestral beings (Strehlow 1907:5). In his son’s work these places were called pmara kutata (everlasting place). Today Western Arrernte people use the term mekemeke for ‘sacred site’, which also means ‘dangerous place’ due to its spiritual powers. T.G.H. Strehlow’s unpublished material records mekemeke (his spelling is makamaka) as meaning ‘to be avoided’ or ‘sacred cave’; 351 he defines pmara makamaka as ‘asylum, a place whither men in danger of death can flee for safety, e.g. the area around an arknganaua, where nothing could be killed and within whose precincts not even a hunter could pursue an animal that already had a spear stuck into it’. 352

The country of a landholding group, pmere, referred to as an ‘estate’ in the anthropological literature, generally comprises a set of significant sites or areas which are associated with one or more dreamings. These countries were called ‘njinanga (nyenhenge: patricouple) section areas’ by T.G.H. Strehlow. Each country is usually associated with a particular nyenhenge (Ngale-Mpetyane, Peltharre-Kngwarreye,

Kemarre-Pwerrerrele and Pengarte-Penangke). It is also identified with predominant
dreaming tracks, sites and particular families or groups.

Aarrrente people usually think of their country in terms of sites and the dreamings
connected to them rather than as a bounded area. For this reason, boundaries are not
always clear. Pink observed during her work on Northern Arrernte territory that ‘on
the outer edges the boundaries of individual estates became somewhat indefinite’
(Pink 1936:283). However, T.G.H. Strehlow recorded boundary points between
countries called ‘arkngata’ or ‘barrier’ which:

... marked the limit beyond which a myth might not be told, a song not sung,
nor a series of ceremonies performed by members of a njinanga section area
who shared these traditions with neighbours. (Strehlow 1965:138)

T.G.H. Strehlow remarked that such sites could figure equally prominently in a
number of myths held by different people or groups of people (Strehlow 1947). In the
Palm Valley Land Claim Justice Gray found that definitive boundaries were rare
(Gray 1999:116) while Stanner noted that the ‘known facts of inter-group relations
simply do not sort with the idea of precise, rigid boundaries jealously upheld in all
circumstances’ (Stanner 1965:11).

Knowledge about country, that is the knowledge of the associated mythology of
country, is one of the defining principles for traditional Aboriginal land tenure.
According to T.G.H. Strehlow (1965:135), areas and the extents of a Western
Arrernte local group were defined geographically and validated by episodes
mentioned in the sacred myths. Pink made the observation among her Northern
Arrernte informants:

The songs, according to my Aranda informants, definitely establish a man’s
title, to use legal phraseology, for the site a man inherits has a song, or songs,
associated with it; to inherit the song is to inherit the estate. (Pink 1936:286)

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333 However, sometimes the notions of boundaries, ‘blocks of land’ (as used in a pastoral context) and
even the word ‘estate’ (as used in anthropological reports for legal proceedings) appear in
conversations with Arrernte people.
This knowledge was well-guarded and concealed - not freely transmitted - because rights to country hinged on it. Great effort was invested in the acquisition of knowledge which was not evenly distributed in the society, as Róheim too observed ([1945]1971:2). Claims to country are still commonly based on knowledge of the associated dreaming stories and places, about which members of a landholding group simply know more than others (Morton 1992:34). T.G.H. Strehlow in *Aranda Traditions* (1947) writes that his informants, even the best informed, would not know the entire body of myths, and Spencer and Gillen (1899:10) observed that 'Old age does not by itself confer distinction, but only when combined with special ability'. Carl Strehlow (1915:1-2) wrote in a similar vein that it was knowledge that made an 'inkata knara' (great chief), while 'inkata kurka' (little chief) was a title to father's country inherited simply through descent. People with knowledge are still respected in Western Arrernte society, and are frequently referred to, because ritual knowledge is and was a highly valued commodity – a singular basis of prestige. Knowledgeable people have the right and duty to be involved in the maintenance of stories and land. They are entitled to some kind of payment for the knowledge they transmit to others.

Although Carl Strehlow's myth collection has been effectively used in the context of land claims over traditional Arrernte lands and for Native Title issues, nowhere does he explicitly indicate that these narratives are owned by particular individuals or groups of individuals. He did not realise that ownership of myths played an important role in Arrernte and Luritja society connecting people to their countries and conferring rights and responsibilities both to individuals and groups. This creates a distance between Carl Strehlow's view of myth and the contexts in which myth is often canvassed today, as land ownership has been a topic of enduring debate within Australian anthropology.

A Brief account of Research into Traditional Land Ownership

Traditional land ownership has been a perennial topic of debate in Australian anthropology. The passing of the Commonwealth's Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 and Native Title Act 1993 intensified this debate. Following these legislations, many models, ranging from patrilineally-biased to fully-fledged cognatic
ones, have been observed and proposed for different regions of Aboriginal Australia. These models have been generated both from purely academic and land claim work.

Justice Sackville’s findings in the Yulara Native Title Compensation Claim of 31 March 2006 seems to have given new impetus to an enduring debate about patriliney in Australian anthropology. Justice Sackville determined that the landownership model of the Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara approximates the model of patrilineal descent advanced by Radcliffe-Brown (1930-31). He maintains that these Western Desert peoples inherit primary rights to country by way of patrilineal descent, rejecting the ‘multiple pathways model’ advanced by Sutton and Vaarzon-Morel, a model that has been widely accepted following Myers’ original account. Justice Sackville’s findings have been critically received by a number of anthropologists. In *Anthropological Forum*, for example, an interesting debate has been triggered by Sansom’s article ‘Yulara and Future Expert Reports in Native Title Cases’ (Sansom 2007:71-92), in which he argues that Sackville’s determination is likely to have future implications in native title matters. His views attracted swift responses from Burke, Glaskin, Keen, Morton, Sackett and Sutton, as well as from Dousset and Glaskin (2007:127-148). All maintain that Justice Sackville’s finding runs contrary to the experience of anthropologists in recent decades who have found that there are numerous ways to belong to country in the Western Desert cultural bloc.

This discussion on the ‘pros and cons’ of a patrilineal model began when Radcliffe-Brownian principles came under siege in the 1960s. Hiatt (1962) argued that the patrilocal band in Radcliffe-Brown’s sense did not exist as a contemporary group, and probably had never existed (see also Peterson 1970:9; 2006:16). Hiatt also suggested that the local band to which Radcliffe-Brown was referring was not a sociocentric group, strictly defined, or a group that exchanged women (Dousset 1999:49). In the same year, 1962, Meggitt also remarked:

Radcliffe Brown stated “everywhere in Australia the fundamental basis of social organisation is a system of patrilineal local groups or clans of small size”. This is merely his earlier generalization shorn of qualifications, and, to

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254 This claim was the first compensation claim for extinguishment of Native Title to go to trial.
the extent that is unqualified, it is even less applicable to the Walbiri data. Moreover, Elkin (1953, p. 417) has demonstrated that evidence from other tribes also invalidates it. (Meggitt [1962] 1986:71)

This departure from a unilinear model precipitated a re-evaluation of the composition of bands or local or residential groups and their relation to descent groups. Radcliffe-Brown did not distinguish between a landholding group that once might have been a ritual descent group, and a residential land-using group. He simply collapsed a notion of a patrilineal descent group and a residential group into a local group or band, resident on an estate. However, a residential group is not a jural landowning group or a ritual group. A residential group is one with variable membership over time that waxes and wanes according to various social demands. Members at any one time can have very different rights, obligations and reasons for being associated with the group. The ritual descent group, which Radcliffe-Brown also ‘saw’ in indigenous organisation, was a sociocentric or jural group with corporate rights in ritual knowledge, performance and authority in place (see also Barker 1976). Such a group very seldom would involve all or even most of its members residing together.355

Stanner contested Hiatt in his 1965 article ‘Aboriginal Territorial Organisation; Estate, Range, Domain and Regime’. He suggested that any examination of Aboriginal land tenure patterns (territoriality) should take the distinction between ‘estate’ and ‘range’ into account. He described ‘estate’ as ‘the traditionally recognized locus (‘country’, ‘home’, ‘ground’, ‘dreaming place’), of some kind of patrilineal descent-group forming the core or nucleus of a territorial group’ and ‘range’ as ‘the tract or orbit over which the group, including its nucleus and adherents, ordinarily hunted and foraged to maintain life’. The range normally included the estate, together called by Stanner (1965:2) a ‘domain’. The domain was the ecological ‘life-space’ of a group. He proposed that issues concerning ecology and season could be seen to influence the composition of a residential group at any particular point in time.

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355 The Australian literature is not always clear on what the various groups actually denote (see Barker 1976:227). Peterson (2006) shows, for example, the difficulties of understanding Radcliffe-Brown’s definitions of ‘horde’, ‘clan’ and ‘camp’ and that he got land-using and land-owning groups muddled.
He departed from a static model of a residential group strictly composed according to patrilineal principles by adding some flexibility which allowed the incorporation of other kin to join the group to hunt and gather on a certain stretch of country which belonged at its core to a patrilineal group. He concluded that a local or residential group was of mixed composition and that ‘visitations of cognates and affines’ (Stanner 1965:15) was common. However, he insisted that it was generally true to say that:

(1) Some sort of exogamous patrilineal descent-group was ubiquitous. (2) It had intrinsic connection, not mere association, with territory. (3) There was a marked tendency towards, though not iron rule requiring, patrilocality and virilocality. (4) The group thus formed was basic to both territorial and social organisation, however concealed by other structural groups (e.g. phratries, moieties, sections, etc.) or by dynamic emphasis. (Stanner 1965:16)

Stanner (1965:3) conceded that patri-virilocal residence on account of ecology was at best a hypothetical assumption. Male knowledge of a tract’s resources could easily be exaggerated. Moreover, foraging by women was just as if not more crucial to a group’s survival. Peterson (1970) affirmed that links through women were an important factor that determined the composition of residential groups in Aboriginal society. Both sociological and ecological considerations had an impact. It was quite common for a man’s first marriage to require uxori-patri-local residence so that he could fulfil obligations towards his in-laws. In Arrernte society, for example, Carl Strehlow (1913) recorded that young spouses had to supply food to their in-laws, and this would have had an impact on where and with whom the couple would live. Another reason why a newly married man might reside with his wife’s father’s group involved a senior man’s desire to keep his (female) labour force together, observed by Peterson in Arnhem Land (1970:14). Alternatively, in the Western Desert, a young woman may have wanted to remain close to her parents because she received meat from her mother and father (Hamilton 1987:41). These egocentric/individual choices of everyday life explain many aspects of group composition. Myers demonstrates that among the Pintupi individual choice determines often how people see themselves as part of a group (rather that socio-centric reasoning) and that there are multiple

In the eastern Western Desert, Hamilton (1987:38-39) suggested that an important tool used for grinding seeds by women, and exclusively owned and inherited by women, influenced the local organisation. This implement, a large grinding stone (22.5 kg), belonged to a group of uterine kinswomen and was left behind in countries affiliated to mothers. During male ceremonies, when the actors were dependent on the labour of women who produced much of their foodstuff, the location of this grinding stone determined where and who would have been present. She writes that ‘this aspect of women’s labour around a single scarce resource (the grindstone and mill) acted as a kind of perpetual opposition to the men’s desires to promote patrilocal residence…” (Hamilton 1998:40). These examples show that residence and group composition are influenced by factors other than patri-focal criteria.

Hamilton writes, that the ‘Hiatt-Stanner debate led to a crucial clarification – that is, the necessity to maintain a clear distinction between economic and ritual relationship to land - so that instead of a horde there is both a ritual and an economic group’ (Hamilton 1998:91). Notwithstanding, the ritual group also has economic roles (Hamilton 1998:94). In this context Hamilton cites T.G.H. Strehlow:

Each Aranda local group was believed to perform an indispensable economic service not only for itself but for the population around its borders as well ... the religious acts performed by the totemic clan members of all the inland tribes at their respective totemic centres were regarded as being indispensable for the continuation of all human, animal and plant life in Central Australia. (Strehlow 1970:103)

However, it is important not to confuse the ritual group with the residential/land-using/economic group. They are different groups whose composition may or may not overlap. The former represents a group that holds ritual authority over a particular area of land and the esoteric knowledge associated with it. The residential group is a
group that lives together and uses\textsuperscript{356} a domain, in Stanner's sense, in a variety of ways. The jural links that women have to their own patrilineal group, for instance, as well as residential arrangements just after marriage, determine a group's composition. According to Dousset (1999:49), T.G.H. Strehlow anticipated many points of the controversy surrounding the composition of the residential group in the 1950s. T.G.H. Strehlow (1999) indicated that such a group does not only contain patrilineal kinsmen, and showed that movement of men between groups was not completely absent and that class shifting occurred due to marriages between people of different groups which could even be irregular.

During the land rights era, the discussion on belonging to place and country, shifted its focus onto the 'descent group' that has a 'common spiritual affiliation' to a country as defined in the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 and onto a 'landholding group' as can be put forward under the Native Title Act 1993. Neither are a residential group.

Beyond the distinction between descent and residential groups, a further round of debate that brought Sansom's recent views into play, was initiated by Keen with his contrast between the 'Western Desert' and the 'Rest' (Keen 1997:66). This debate was focused on the nature and the significance of descent groups as such. Keen's research among the Yolngu in the 1970s and 1980s and strategies of belonging to country by individuals in the McLaren Creek Land Claim\textsuperscript{357} threw doubts on the existing assumptions regarding patrilineal dogma, in particular the clan system. In his article, 'The Western Desert vs the Rest: Rethinking the Contrast', he reinforced his view that in Arnhem Land groups were not as strictly patrilineally organised as portrayed in the literature, but that individual choice played an important role. Keen argued that rather than being clan-based, Yolngu society is more appropriately thought of in terms of a kindred (Keen 1997:66-67; Morphy 1997:130). He offered a re-analysis of the patrilineal identity of the Yolngu clan which he preferred to call 'group', and put forward that it would be more appropriate to use metaphorical expressions, such as 'strings' of connectedness, rather than the terms 'patrilineal

\textsuperscript{356} Hunting and gathering, for example.

\textsuperscript{357} See quotation of claim book (exhibit CLC 3) in Aboriginal Land Commissioner's report (Olney 1991:11-13).
descent group’, ‘clan’ or ‘corporation’ (Keen 1997:67) which he maintains do not capture the ‘Yolngu constructs related to identity, country and ancestors’ (Keen 2000:32). Morphy (1997) responded by offering a processual model that maintains the clan-based model taking individual behaviour that determines variation in a system into account and thus, aims ‘to transcend such divisions and to show how structural factors, such as an on-going system of clan organisation, can be integrated into a praxis-oriented framework in which the individual has a role in the transformation and the reproduction of the system over time’ (Morphy 1997:124).358 This seemed to a degree acceptable to Keen (2000) when also social change apart from ancestral law and politics are included; though he added that ‘the concept of the ‘clan’ is perhaps the last vestige of the Radcliffe-Brown synthesis to remain’ and that ‘it has long been unsafe to assume a fundamental uniformity in aboriginal social arrangements’ (Keen 2000:39).

Sansom (2006, 2007) also critiqued Keen and his ‘West’ is not all that much different to the ‘Rest’. He was not necessarily opposing Keen’s view that patriline did not have such an exclusive position, but he thought that Keen ignored underlying social structures and norms. Sansom writes:

Those (like me) who radically distinguish the contemporary desert West from the contemporary Rest, do so by pointing to normative difference. In The West there are nowadays ‘multiple pathways’ to land. Outside the Western Desert, specific rules of kinship traditionally prescribe that primary right-holders in land would be patrilineal inheritors of estates in land, and that holders of secondary (and mediated) rights constitute a limited set of persons who have particular and specified relationships that link them to those who hold the primary rights. Keen sets aside modelling that emphasises explicitly rendered ideological rules (or ‘normative norms’) by shifting the emphasis from normative norms to statistical norms. He then looks past ideologies to instances of behaviour and to rates that describe trends to actions. (Sansom 2007:79-80)

358 Myers’ emphasis on ‘multiple pathways’ and his re-rendering of kinship in terms of relatedness and identity have affinities with these more praxis-oriented approaches. Keen (1997) cites Myers.
Keen's response was that he clearly accords 'patrification rather more than mere rhetorical value', and while he had 'certainly questioned the usefulness of the concept of corporate 'clan' to Aboriginal relations to country and sacra' (Keen 1995,1997), he had not thrown into doubt 'the concept of social structure as a whole' (Keen 2007:170).

In general, in Western Arrernte land tenure patrilineal connections are strongly emphasised today, making it part of the 'Rest'. Western Arrernte people are disposed towards a tighter land tenure model than Western Desert peoples, partly due to environmental factors, as their country belongs to the better-watered area in central Australia which allowed them to have a much smaller range than peoples of the Western Desert. T.G.H. Strehlow (1965:143; 1970:99) wrote that due to harsher environmental conditions Western Desert peoples had a local organisation that was of much looser and fluid nature, but that the Kukatja-Luritja were an exception, because their social system was very similar to the one of the Arrernte, although linguistically they were a Western Desert people.

In his essays written in the 1930s, later published in Aranda Traditions, and in particular in his article 'Culture, social structure and environment in Aboriginal Central Australia' (1965), T.G.H. Strehlow maintained that the landholding group was strictly partrilineally composed (Strehlow 1947:139; 1965). This represents an ideal and a group that is largely determined by ritual links and not by 'secular' links which would have determined the everyday composition of an Arrernte residential group.

Although Hamilton observed in the Western Desert during 1970-1971 that there was an ideological preference for patrilineal and patrilocum structures amongst her informants, these were counterbalanced by women's labour organisation and female secret ritual life, as well as by the climatic and environmental conditions (Hamilton 1987, 1998). And Munn wrote about the residential foci of Pitjantjatjara that 'the men of the group ideally based themselves after marriage in their father's home country (even though at any given time they might actually have been living or hunting elsewhere)' (Munn 1970:146). In the Yulara anthropologists' report another factor is mentioned that determines the connection of a woman to an area. The authors write:
There is some tendency for men to have a special relationship to their fathers' and fathers' fathers' places, and for women to have a similar connection to those of their mothers and mothers' mothers, though this is not a uniform rule. It appears in some kin sets but not in others. (Sutton and Vaarzon-Morel 2003:para.7.55 cited in Sutton 2007:178)

It is likely that T.G.H. Strehlow’s informants, who were all male, stressed this patrilineal preference. However, his own work (Strehlow 1971, 1999) shows how men have ritual rights/links to country based on other claims to land. In fact connections to country through mothers are already indicated in his first essays written in 1934, as well as rights through conception at a particular place.

These people with matrilateral rights, he called kwertengerle. The role of the kwertengerle in central Australia is well understood now (See Pink 1936; Meggitt (1962) 1986; Peterson et al. 1978; Myers (1986) 1991; Morton 1992,1996,1997; Vaarzon-Morel and Sackett 1997; Elliott 1999:105-110, 2004:74-76). It became clear during the land claim era that claims to membership of a landholding group through matrifiliation were and are of great importance and that these people hold distinct and significant rights and responsibilities in relation to land. In the Palm Valley Land Claim under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth), Justice Gray recognised in addition to patriline and matrifiliation, cognatic descent as a basis for membership of the Western Arrernte landholding groups involved in the claim (Gray 1999:17–18). These connections provided the land tenure system with (strong) provisions for ways to claim places and dreamings other than through the patriline which is evident in a large number of land and native title claims in the Northern Territory.

These various pathways to ‘belonging to country’ find support in Carl Strehlow’s data. They suggest that around 1900 the Western Arrernte had beside patrilineal connections to country, connections to their own conception site and their mother’s conception place, (i.e. where mother’s mother conceived mother). This mother’s place
may or may not have been located on mother’s father’s country. Carl Strehlow wrote, for instance:

Every individual, then, is placed into a relationship with two totems. He belongs to one totem by virtue of his birth359 and is related to another because he inherits it from his mother. He may actively participate in the cult of both totems. (Strehlow 1908:58)360

In the following sections I will show how Carl Strehlow’s material does not support the Radcliffe-Brownian dogma though one might expect this from data collected from Arrernte during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is not my contention that Carl Strehlow’s true account is only now being discovered through land claim debates. Rather, the fact that he emphasised conception and mother’s conception place and not father’s father’s place suggests that systems may be dynamic over time, and subject to varieties of representation — what is said and to whom in the micro-politics of translation.

Rights to Country through Conception
The literature on Arrernte society shows consistently that conception was important in conferring rights in or ‘belonging’ to country in the first part of the 20th century (Spencer and Gillen 1899, Strehlow 1908, Strehlow 1947,1971). The conception dreaming of a person could be acquired in three ways according to Carl Strehlow (see Chapter VI, p. 231).

In traditional Western Arrernte society, conception sites were places where the spirit part of a person—left behind in the landscape by the ancestral dreaming beings—entered into the mother. This was her experience of the foetus ‘quickening’ in the womb (Carl Strehlow 1908:53, 56; T.G.H. Strehlow 1947:87). Carl Strehlow remarked on Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja conception beliefs:

359 He means here the dreaming from an individual’s conception site.
360 See also Strehlow (1910:2).
The totemic conceptions of the Loritja are very closely related to those of the Aranda. Every Loritja also belongs to two totems, a personal totem which he calls aratapi (= (A) ratapa), and a maternal totem which he calls altjiri (= (A) altjira). The manner by which children enter the womb of the mother is seen by the Loritja in exactly the same way as by the Aranda. Either an aratapi enters the woman or a totem ancestor emerges from the earth and throws a bulloarer at her, which changes to a child inside the woman. The Loritja say that the latter case is the more frequent. (Strehlow 1908:60)

He recorded that the conception site of a person, ‘tmara runga’ or ‘tmara rungatja’, is the place where a person entered ‘his mother as a ratapa, and where his tjurunga is kept’. The terms ‘tmara runga’ or ‘tmara rungatja’ mean ‘my own place’ (Strehlow 1908:57-58). He also used the general term for ‘totem place’, ‘knanakala’, for conception site (Strehlow 1907:5, 1920).

In his earlier work T.G.H. Strehlow seems mainly to have been interested in the significance of conception sites of individuals and in Aranda Traditions placed great emphasis on them, although he maintained that ‘the doctrine of the conception site is deliberately counterbalanced by the strong emphasis laid upon the unifying ties represented by the allegiance claims of the pmara kutata and by membership obligations to the local njinanga section’ (Strehlow 1947:139-140). On the other hand he contradicted this statement when writing that the conception site took ‘by far the most important place in all the complex arguments which centre around the possession of the myths, chants, ceremonies and sacred objects owned by any large local totemic clan’ (Strehlow 1947:87).

According to T.G.H. Strehlow, conception sites of individuals were of great importance to them. Their significance as personal totems for the Arrernte rested on a ‘mythopoetic, their experience of self in a world forged through hunting and foraging practice’ (Austin-Broos 2004:60). He called the conception site ‘pmara knganintja’ (Strehlow 1971:596). A conception site was a well-defined place which had special significance to an individual, as his spirit or soul was believed to have come from
there; one had the right to detailed knowledge about this place and conception bestowed on the owner a special connection to it (Strehlow 1947:87; 1971:158).

The probability of being conceived on one’s father’s father’s country was quite high (Austin-Broos 2004:62) when people resided on well-watered land, as did the Western Arrernte. This seems to be substantiated in T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogies (Austin-Broos 2008:in press). If a person’s conception site was on their arrenge’s country, they would quite likely have had a stronger connection to that site than to others. However, there were exceptions. A person conceived outside their arrenge’s country could also acquire detailed knowledge of their conception site which required great personal efforts. In ‘Agencies of Social Control in Central Australian Aboriginal Societies’ T.G.H. Strehlow ([1950] 1997) described how Rauwirarka, a Western Arrernte man, went to a lot of trouble to acquire knowledge about his Anmatyerr conception site.

Under certain circumstances people with strong connections to and knowledge of their conception site acquired rights and responsibilities in relation to the site and adjacent areas. In this situation, there was potential for a new landholding group to establish itself in a country, if the original group had reached the end of a patriline. This may have even resulted in a change in the patricouple associated with the country (Morton 1997:119), in situations where a person’s conception site was located on a country associated with the opposite patrimoieties.

However, knowledge about one’s conception site alone seems not to have been sufficient to entitle a person or group to make claims to hold rights and interests in the land concerned; other factors, such as long-term residence, intermarriage, and political negotiation skills also played a vital role in the process of establishing a new landholding group. Spencer and Gillen’s work seems to support this:

Once born into a totem, no matter what his class may be, a man, when initiated, may witness and take part in all the sacred ceremonies connected with the totem, but, unless he belongs to the predominant moiety, he will never, or only in extremely rare cases, become the head man or Alatunja of
any local group of the totem. His only chance of becoming Alatunja is by the
death of every member of the group who belongs to the moiety to which the
Alcheringa men belonged. (Spencer and Gillen 1899:126)

Writing about the northern neighbours of the Western Arrernte people, Pink said that
the country of one’s father’s father was of primary significance in relation to land
ownership, and the country on which one’s conception occurred was ‘only of personal
and secondary importance’ (Pink 1936:285). Indeed today, people sometimes refer to
it as one’s ‘own personal or little story’, to which individuals have an emotional
attachment.

Today the conception site is sometimes conflated with birthplace, a tradition imported
from neighbouring Western Desert areas, and has lost much of its significance as a
basis for rights and responsibilities in relation to land. Justice Gray suggested a reason
for the reduced significance of the conception site, when he said ‘Otherwise the large
number of people conceived and born at a place such as at Hermannsburg would have
the potential to swamp the land tenure system’ (Gray 1999:18).

However, settlement itself seems to be the main component for conception’s loss of
relevance. The multiple demographic and land use factors involved in settlement
seemed to undermine the imagination of a social world embedded in country, in
which conception had a central part (Austin-Broos 2004:6). Initially, movement over
Arrernte country was restricted by pastoral expansion into the region and the efforts of
both the church and state to settle Arrernte people at missions and in other permanent
settlements. More recently, settled community life and employment have resulted in
fewer opportunities for people to be permanently present on their country.
Christianity’s creationism as well as sedentary life and the attenuation of practical and
ritual knowledge it brought contested the Western Arrernte’s notion of conception

It is interesting to note that today Western Arrernte people speak in terms of a
‘conception dreaming’ rather than conception site. The place of conception is not
associated with a particular site, but rather with one of the dreamings found in an area.
A particular encounter with an animal or natural phenomenon ultimately confirms what kind of spirit or spirit child has entered a woman. An encounter with an animal that might determine the dreaming of conception can even be connected to an incident experienced by the father of a child while out hunting (Mavis Malbunka 2004:13). Western Arrernte people speak affectionately of their ‘dreaming mark’ or ‘birthmark dreaming’ and use the word tnengkarre when they refer to it (Kenny 2003:35). Munn (1970:146) found in the mid 1960s among the Pitjantjatjara living at Areyonga that such birthmarks were believed to be ‘marks left by the ancestors at their birthplace’.

Unless conception has occurred on one’s father’s father’s country, which is very rare in the contemporary context, it appears that today relatively little significance is placed on site of conception by Western Arrernte in regard to claims to land.

Belonging to Country through Matrifiliation
The first remark on matrifiliation to country in Arrernte society was made by the Lutheran Missionary Louis Schulze (1891:238-239). He recorded the term ‘tmara altjira’ meaning ‘the place where mother of the dead person was born’. Also Carl Strehlow mentions as one of his first encounters with connection to country, mother’s conception dreaming, called in Arrernte ‘altjira’. Moritz von Leonhardi wrote to him mid-1907:

What you write about the possibility of the Wonninga being connected to the Altjira (totem) inherited from the mother’s side makes me very excited about your further investigations.361

In his published work Carl Strehlow describes the relationship of an individual to mother’s dreaming, ‘altjira’, also called ‘garra altjira’ or ‘deba altjira’, and to mother’s conception site, called ‘tmara altjira or more precisely, tmara altjirealtja, i.e. the place of the totem associated with me’ (Strehlow 1908:57; 1910:2). Altjira is used in this context as meaning mother’s conception dreaming. He lists these in his family trees as ‘ara’, ‘jelka’, etc. He also mentions how to ask properly about this particular place:

361 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow. 2.6.1907.
The following question should be put to him in order to ascertain the totem place of his mother, Tmara altjira (or altjirolealtja) unkwanga ntana? i.e. Where is the place of the totem associated with you? (Strehlow 1908:58)

He observed that sets of siblings with the same mother share a dreaming and the associated site. There seems to be an emergent thought here that mother’s dreaming and place were collectively held, as all children of one mother had the same altjira, and that at different times, different ‘totem’ affiliations were more or less important. Unfortunately he did not develop these thoughts any further. Nevertheless, it shows, that the right questions, thoughts and concepts were emerging. This passage written on the 6 April 1907 to von Leonhardi indicates this clearly:

As the Tjurunga is the symbol of the personal totem, some blacks have told me, that the Wonninga can be seen as the symbol of the maternal totem or Altjira. However, I am not yet certain about this, and will make further inquires. While the Tjurunga of individuals are different (each individual has his own totem ancestor), the Wonninga as the symbol of Altjira would tie the members of a family together, because they all have the same Altjira, but all have different ratapa ancestors. It is hard to tell which of the two totems is older, the personal or the one inherited from ones mother.\(^\text{362}\)

The altjira, Strehlow wrote, had a providing and protecting role ‘like a mother feeds and protects her children during the early years of their lives’ and appears to a person in dreams to warn of danger but also appears to friends to tell about the person’s well-being (Strehlow 1908:57). He recorded some interesting details surrounding the ‘altjira’ and ‘tmara altjira’:

After the boy has carried his knocked out tooth about with him for several weeks, he tosses it into the direction of his tmara altjira. (Strehlow 1911:9)

After a person’s death, his spirit goes first to his grave where he remains until the completion of the second burial ceremony. Then he goes to the tmara

\(^{362}\) Carl Strehlow to von Leonhardi, possibly 6.4.1907 (SH-SP-11-1).
altjira to collect his tooth, which will show him the way to the Island of the Dead. From there he returns with the tooth and presses it into the arm or a leg of a former camp companion, causing him to become very ill. The magic doctor, however, is able to remove the tooth. (Strehlow 1911:9, fn. 4)

... he should now regard this tjurunga as the body of his altjira (mother's totem ancestor), who would accompany him on his lonesome journeys from now on. (Strehlow 1913:25)

Another aspect of its importance is expressed in death and burial customs and beliefs. At the death of a person, he is laid into his grave facing his tmara altjira ('maternal totem place') (Strehlow 1915:16). 363

Radcliffe-Brown, writing about the Arrernte type of social organisation, had also noted 'that there is an important relation between an individual and the totem and totem-centre of his mother' (1930:325). He obviously did not take this observation anywhere. T.G.H. Strehlow in contrast wrote in the 1930s that people connected to land through their mothers had rights to 'mother's tjurunga' and were called kwertengerle, but did not define this role precisely. He wrote of 'mother's tjurunga':

In Western and Southern Aranda territory claims are frequently put forward by the older men to a share in the possession of the tjurunga which were once regarded as the property of their own mothers. (Strehlow 1947:137)

A kwertengerle according to Pink (1936) was a father's sister's son or a mother's brother's son, who should be theoretically the same person, however, she wrote, 'they seldom are in these days of diminished numbers' (Pink 1936:303). At any rate these relatives are of the opposite moiety and of the same subsection. If a male ego, for example, is an Mpetyane, his kwertengerle is a Peltharre, who can also be classified as his mother's father. If close relatives are not available to deal with issues arising in relation to land and for this role then classificatory kinsmen from the opposite moiety

363 T.G.H. Strehlow wrote in 1964 that 'when a man died, he was buried (generally in a sitting position) in such a way that his face was turned towards the conception site of his mother: for that was his pmara altjira, his "eternal home"' (Strehlow [1964] 1978:39).
with appropriate subsections and knowledge or seniority will be recruited for this position. Myers observed among the Pintupi that this was ‘to fill the ranks of an estate group depleted of personnel’ (Myers [1986] 1991:149). Accordingly, the division into intermarrying moieties has the potential to create and establish alliances between particular members of two social groups even if no actual marriages or genealogical links otherwise exist.

This is also reflected in ‘reciprocal kwertengerleship’. It is quite common for people of neighbouring countries who belong to opposite patrimoieties to express their rights and interests in those countries by saying that they are ‘kwertengerle for each other’. This kind of reciprocity is based on the fact that one finds in the opposite patrimoiet, potential spouses, mothers, mother’s brother’s sons, sister’s sons, and mother’s fathers, all of whom can assume the important role of kwertengerle. The strength of any reciprocal rights is dependent on various factors, including the perceived closeness of kinship and personal relationships, intermarriage, shared dreaming stories or good understanding. In the course of the 1960s and 1970s the concept of kwertengerle became well understood, in particular through the land claim process under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth).

In Western Arrernte society today kwertengerle are usually said to be people who claim rights to land through their mother’s fathers, tyemeye, which is the other main way to claim country beside one’s arrenge (father’s father). Also people who claim country through their perle (father’s mother) and ipmenhe (mother’s mother) are often called kwertengerle, however, they may require the recognition and support of primary landholders to ascertain their rights (see Morton 1997b:26). Although kwertengerle who acquire rights and responsibilities in this way, have incontestable rights to country they are usually not as strong as rights derived through father’s father and mother’s father.

T.G.H. Strehlow wrote later that kwertengerle status was gained through ‘matrilineal inheritance’ and that ‘they did have the right at all times to be present at performances of the totemic acts that belonged to their mothers’ (Strehlow [1964] 1978:25,38). Nevertheless kwertengerle remains broadly defined in his work; it is not clear what

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matrilineal requirements were necessary to become a kwertengerle. He did not define precisely how the kwertengerle is recruited in kin terms, but rather recorded that this role involved ritual preparation and was crucial in the preservation of knowledge, calling them 'servants' and 'ceremonial assistants' (Strehlow 1947:123-5, 132,148-50, 164,170; 1971:248,752). It was not simply a kinship connection to country among the Arrernte (Meggitt 1966:30; Nash 1982:149). Morton (1992) also found that kwertengerle is not strictly defined among Western Arrernte people. Just as Arrernte in Alice Springs told him (Morton 1997b), I have been told by Western Arrernte that people who claim country through their mother's mother are called kwertengerle as well.\(^\text{364}\) It seems that in some Arrernte regions the concept of kwertengerle is more broadly defined than in others. Pink's data on kwertengerle is tighter than T.G.H. Strehlow's, for instance.

It should be noted here that kwertengerle seems to be a relatively recent introduction into Arrernte cultures; it is a Warlpiri word that diffused southwards (Nash 1982:149-151). This Warlpiri term, kurdungurlu, is composed of 'kurd' and -ngurlu. Nash suggests that kurd in this context is most likely to be understood in the sense of 'sister's child' (Nash 1982). The word does not seem to appear in Carl Strehlow's or in Spencer and Gillen's published work. In written records on Arrernte peoples it is first documented in the 1930s in Pink's and Strehlow junior's research. The recent importation of this term may also account for the various concepts of kwertengerle among people speaking different Arandic languages. Considering the concept under these diffusionist and linguistic aspects, it is no wonder that anthropologists have found a number of variations of the kwertengerle concept in Arandic areas. They explain to some degree why it has been difficult to find and describe the meaning of the term kwertengerle. It was and maybe still is evolving, and meanings from other terms moved to such new words and cultural acquisitions. It seems, for example, that some Western Arrernte meaning of altjira, in the sense of mother's dreaming, was shifted to this newly adopted expression (while other parts of altjira's semantic field moved to tnengkarre as discussed at the end of Chapter V).

\(^\text{364}\) Connections to country through one's mother's mother may be construed to pmerekwertye, because ego and his mother's mother are in the same patrimoity. However, mother's mother connections are usually understood as conferring kwertengerle status among Western Arrernte people, in my experience.
Carl Strehlow’s record of altjira meaning ‘mother’s dreaming’ provides one of the earliest comprehensive pieces of evidence that rights to country could be gained through mothers and determine a number of factors of social life, including ritual rights. There are hints concerning these ritual rights in his work. He writes that actors for certain ceremonies should be of the appropriate ‘ratapa’ or ‘altjira’:

During the mbatjalkatiuma the men selected as actors for the respective ceremonies must belong to the totem concerned, or at least it must be their maternal totem (altjira). For example, if a kangaroo cult ritual is to be held the actors may be chosen only from among those whose ratapa or altjira was a kangaroo-altjirangamitjina. In the case of the intitjiuama, however, men belonging to the totem concerned will be preferred, but men of other totems may also appear as actors. Hence, a lizard-man may play an active role in a kangaroo ceremony. (Strehlow 1910:1-2)

Altjira, meaning mother’s dreaming in this context, may indicate that Western Arrernte land tenure was somewhat differently orientated during Carl Strehlow’s time, although it still confers rights through mothers. These affiliations are now articulated though the concept of kwertengerle in Western Arrernte society. The rights to be a kwertengerle come mainly through mother’s father, and sometimes through father’s mother and mother’s mother. In other Arandic languages the term altjira denotes still today similar meanings to what Carl Strehlow elicited from his informants. Altyerre in North-Eastern Arrernte (Henderson and Dobson 1994:105) and althyerr in Alyawarr\(^{365}\) (Green 1992:29-30) which is often glossed as ‘dreaming’ in English, can also refer to the dreaming tracks, places and stories which are inherited through maternal ancestry, and can mean mother’s place. Green (1998:57) writes:

The compound from ALYERR-ANKETHENH (lit. ‘having Dreaming’) refers to ‘those related to a place or Dreaming through their mothers’.

\(^{365}\)Arandic language spoken to the north-west of Arrernte dialects.
Father's or Arrenge's Country

There are no explicit remarks on land ownership through a patrilineally inherited 'totem' (dreaming) in Carl Strehlow's work. However, belonging to land through fathers appears already 'at the beginning of time'. It is striking how the mythological account of primordial times on earth, that presents embryonic people slumbering under the earth's surface, also divides them into patri-moieties and patricouples (although at the time the subsection system was said to have been a very recent introduction into Arrernte cultures):

The rella manerinja, who lived on the slopes of the mountain, were divided into four classes: Purula, Kamara, Ngala and Mbitjana. Because these people lived on dry land they were referred to as alarinja [land dwellers]. However, there were other undeveloped people who lived in the water, called kwatjarinja, water dwellers. These people had long hair and their food consisted of raw meat. They were also divided into four classes: Pananka, Paltara, Knuraia and Bangata. More of these undeveloped people lived at Rubuntja in the north-east and at Irbmankara on the Finke River, now known as Running Waters. (Strehlow 1907:2)

However, it was only with Mangarkunjerkunja who had come from the north that the helpless rella manerinja's lot was improved as it was he who awoke them, explained to them how their subsection system worked and who should marry whom. In addition, he allocated patricouples to all areas in the Arrernte's landscape (Strehlow 1907:6-7; 1915:1).

Also according to the mythology of the Kukatja-Luritja, Carl Strehlow remarked that 'the undeveloped people matu ngalulba of primordial times were already divided into 8 marriage classes and lived in the vicinity of Unkutu-kwatji' (Strehlow 1908:4). Unlike the 'rella manerinja' of the Arrernte who were divided into land dwellers and water dwellers, the 'matu ngalulba' of the Luritja lived beside each; 'one group resided in the north and east and the other group lived in the south and west' (Strehlow 1913:79).
In a chapter called ‘The Constitutional and Legal Order’ of the Arrernte (Strehlow 1915:1-15) he refers again to the fact that country is allocated to subsections and talks about what can perhaps be described as estates, or at least, as forerunners of what his son would call the ‘njinanga (nyenhenge) section areas’:

According to the primordial legends, Mangarkunjerkunjua had already partitioned the vast territory of the Aranda among the individual marriage-classes (Aranda Legends, page 6,7). This division of territory, presented in detail in Part I, p.6f., is important to the extent that the individual marriage-classes still regard the tracts of land given to them at that time as their property and claim chieftainship over them.\textsuperscript{366} For example, in the first mentioned western territory of the Aranda the chief has to belong to either the Purula class or the Kamara class. In Alice Springs and the surrounding region he must be a Paltara or a Knuraia. In the Ellery Creek territory he must be a Pananka or a Bangata; whilst in the territory south of Rubula only an Ngala or Mbitjana may claim the honour of a chief. (Strehlow 1915:1)

He goes on to explain that the chief of an estate is called ‘inkata’ (father of all), but on a general level he is only a ‘primus inter pares’, and that his position is hereditary.\textsuperscript{367}

He wrote:

The Aranda and Loritja do not elect their chief. He is, as it were, born into that position. The chieftainship is always inherited by the next younger brother, and after the death of the youngest brother it passes to the oldest son of the oldest brother, should he still be alive. If that is not the case, then it passes to a younger son of the oldest brother, etc.

The greater or lesser esteem for a chief depends on his personal achievements. Although every larger settlement has a resident chief who presides at meetings, only those from among them who have distinguished themselves by their courage and strength would be called inkata knara (= great/big chief) and

\textsuperscript{366} Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{367} Inkata (A) = tîna, atunari (L) = Kapara (D): Häuptling, Herr (allg. Vater) (Carl Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary c.1900-1909).
held in higher esteem than the inkata kurka (= little chief), who holds this honour merely by virtue of his inheritance and does not exceed the other men of his camp in terms of personal achievements. (Strehlow 1915:1-2)

The old men were called ‘knaribata (kngerrepate)’ (pintulara in Luritja and pinaru in Diyari) meaning ‘der grosse Mann (the big man), der ältere Mann in angesehener Stellung (the older man of high status)’ in Carl Strehlow’s time and these men were highly esteemed according to their level of knowledge (see also Spencer and Gillen 1899:10). This term appears in volume I (1907), but is only much later explained and translated in Carl’s work (1913). T.G.H. Strehlow also uses the term kngerrepate which ‘always refers to an old man who knew all the sacred traditions of his clan or group, and is therefore fit to be a member of the council of elders of his group’.369

Carl Strehlow writes that the subsection ‘is passed on from grand-father to grand-child or, to put it in other words, that the class continues along patrilineal and not matrilineal lines’ (Strehlow 1913:71). He explicitly supports here the same findings of Spencer and Gillen (1899:115) that ‘so far as the class is concerned, descent is counted in the male line’ from one’s father’s father, arrenge. Spencer and Gillen make an interesting comment on the way in which a ‘churinga’ dropped by a spirit child is found, once it has entered the mother:

Sometimes it is found, sometimes it is not. In the former case, which is stated to occur often, we must suppose that some old man – it is most often the Arunga or paternal grandfather who finds it - has provided himself with one for the occasion, which is quite possible, as Churinga belonging to their own totem are not infrequently carried about by the old men, who obtain them from the sacred storehouse in which they are kept. (Spencer and Gillen 1899:132)

It is noteworthy, that Carl Strehlow very rarely recorded any explicit remarks on subsection affiliation of myths in either prose or poetic texts. Carl made only one explicit comment on subsection affiliation at the end of the myth about the two green

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368 Knaribata is composed of knara (big) and ata a contraction of atua (Mann). It was used for ‘old man’ (Carl Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary c. 1900-1909).
369 T.G.H. Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary K (n.d.):92a
'frog-men who belonged to the Mbitjana class' because it was the only myth in his entire myth collection in which his informants had made an explicit remark that it was about ancestors of a particular subsection:

It will be noticed that the marriage-class of the altjirrangamitjina concerned is mentioned in this legend only, while in the legends passed on by Spencer and Gillen they are almost always specified. However, the marriage-class was given to me only in this case. I suspect that Spencer and Gillen made it a practice to ask for the class to which the respective totem ancestor belonged. I have deliberately avoided this, the black cat, by means of simple deduction, state the marriage-class of a particular totem ancestor (iningukua) because every individual is born into the same class as his specific iningukua. Therefore, if one knows a person whose ratapa has emerged from a rock, tree, or tjurunga of a particular altjirrangamitjina, and if one takes into account the marriage-class of the mother, then it is easy to state the marriage-class to which the iningukua must have belonged. It should be obvious, however, that such a subsequent determination by the various black narrators is valueless. (Strehlow 1907:82)

The only other mention of a subsection in his volumes appears in the Arrernte and Luritja song versions of the frog myth (Strehlow 1910:72-73; 1911:37). Was it taken for granted by his informants that he knew, as they did, that a myth was about a particular country and ancestors with particular subsection affiliations? Or was it not important to know the subsections in a myth? In 1932 his son went to considerable trouble to find out to which subsections the protagonists of the myth 'atua arintja' of Ulamba belonged: the father, Toppatataka was a Purula (Pwerrerre) and his son atua arintja a Kamara (Kemarre). It may have been taken for granted and, thus, completely unnecessary to mention that a myth or an ancestor was of a particular subsection, as it was clear to everyone at that time that country had subsections.

In the 1930s, Olive Pink (1936) witnessed an emphasis on patrilineal descent as a main determinant of land ownership in Arrernte society. This was also corroborated

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70 T.G.H. Strehlow's I Diary (1932:145).
by T.G.H. Strehlow who wrote that every country on Western Arrernte territory is associated with one of the patricouples (nyenhenge) and is patrilineally inherited. Already in his early work, although it was not the centre of his attention, he delivered a definition of the landholding group as consisting of ‘all men, women and children of a given totemic clan who stand to one another in the relation of fathers, sons, brothers, sisters, and daughters, relationship being determined both by actual and by class ties’ (Strehlow 1947:139).

A tight reading of this statement and of T.G.H. Strehlow’s 1965 view on Arrernte land tenure appears in the ‘Summary Statement’ of a Finke River Mission report. The authors of this statement appear to be perpetuating and emphasising a patrilineal and patriarchal model, although they add the role of the kwertengerle, defined as ‘custodians or managers of the tjurunga, and so also the land’ who are the ‘male descendants from women belonging to the land-owning group’. They wrote that ‘the most important kin grouping in relation to land ownership is the patrilineal decent group, made up of people descended from a common male ancestor through the male line. Each patrilineal decent group belongs to a particular tract of land and its member are called the pmarakutwia (people belonging to the land, the land owners) for that particular area of land. A clearly defined system of leadership, and a recognised leader, exist within each of these groups. The female descendants from the male line are part of the patrilineal land-owning group, …’ (Albrecht et al. 1976). 371

T.G.H. Strehlow called the country of a patrilineal descent group the ‘njinanga (nyenhenge) section area’ and defined it by the sites and tracks marked by the dreaming ancestors. Rights and interests in such an area were and still are often articulated in terms of knowledge of particular dreaming tracks or segments of dreaming tracks and sites, as well as in terms of kinship links. Arrernte people affiliated with a landholding group and its country through their fathers and father’s fathers (arrenge) are today called pmerekwerteye (Morton 1992, 1997a,b; Kenny 2003:31). According to Morton, T.G.H. Strehlow’s ‘nyenhenge’ group more or less corresponds with what is understood under the term pmerekwerteye (Morton 1997:117). In land rights and native title claims this was found to be one of the

371 This summary statement has been reproduced in Albrecht (2002:80-82).
principle ways to become a member of a landholding group and thereby acquire rights and responsibilities in relation to land. The other principal way today is through mother’s father (tyemeye) discussed above. Pmerekwerteye means literally ‘country-owner’. It is a compound: pmere-ke-rtweye. The -ke is a dative suffix, which is very common, and -rtweye is the same as artweye (Henderson and Dobson 1994:286-287) in the Eastern Arrernte dictionary and means ‘owned or owner’. However in Western Arrernte it does not seem to be used as an independent word (as artweye can be, but isn’t usually); -rtweye is rare in other combinations, and so people do not think of it as a unit. 372 Gillen in 1899 mentioned the Arrernte words ‘Kartwia Quatcha’ to Spencer ‘meaning rain or water country and applied to the district occupied by a water totem group’ (Wilkins 2001:508). Wilkins continues:

It is not clear whether kartwia is really intended as a separate word or not. The form artweye means ‘custodian of, person having major responsibility for something and it typically follows a noun in the dative case –ke. For instance traditional owners of country are Pmere-k-artweye (country-DATIVE-custodian). Thus k-artweye could be a mis-parsing of some more complex construction. Kwatye-k-artweye would be the term referring to custodians of rain and water dreaming country. (Wilkins 2001:508-509)

The term pmerekwerteye seems to emerge in the context of land right claims in the Northern Territory. In written records pmerekwerteye appears for the first time in 1976 in a land rights submission of the Finke River Mission (FRM), spelled ‘pmarakutwia’ (Albrecht et al. 1976). However, Garry Stoll373 remembers hearing it in the late 1960s. This expression does not seem to appear in either of the Strehlows’ or Pink’s work. In some way however in 1899 it appears as ‘Atwia-atwia’ in Spencer and Gillen’s work said to be the ‘name applied to the men who operate at the ceremony of circumcision’ (Spencer and Gillen 1899:647). It appears that one of the two Atwia-atwia of the ceremony they witnessed in Alice Springs was the novice’s father (Spencer and Gillen 1899:241-248). According to Wilkins this Central (Mparntwe) Arrernte term artweye-artweye can be understood in the following way:

373 Garry Stoll worked for over three decades at Hermannsburg. Initially he worked as a mechanic and later became the executive officer of the Finke River Mission. He is a fluent speaker of Arrernte and was involved in most aspects of public Western Arrernte life, including the land rights movement.
The form artweye means the person/people who have the primary responsibility for looking after something; the custodians or ‘owners’ of something. This form shows up in the term for parents, the term for traditional owners of country and the term for the ancestors (‘the custodians of us all’). In Arrernte the term artweye-ke-artweye means related to one another in kinship. (Wilkins 2001:496)

Carl and T.G.H. Strehlow use ingkarte and kngerrepate. The suffix -gatuaia appears on T.G.H. Strehlow’s genealogies relating to Anmatyerr people; i.e. imoragatuaia. T.G.H. Strehlow had collected family trees in July/August 1968 at Alcoota and Laramba.\(^{374}\) Imoragatuaia translates as ‘possum dreaming owner’ or ‘belonging to possum dreaming’. The same dreaming affiliation would appear on a Western Arrernte family tree as ‘imora kng. (knganintja)’. The suffix –gatuaia appears in pmaragatuaia used in the Palm Valley land claim (Morton 1992 and Gray 1999).\(^{375}\) In the Land Claim by Alyawarra and Kaititja (Toohey 1978:5) and Utopia Land Claim by Anmatjira and Alyawarra to Utopia Pastoral Lease (Toohey 1980:5) some patriclans had the tendency to add the suffix –rinya (meaning ‘belonging to’) to their estate name.

The term pmerekwerteye that carries connotations of ownership has replaced some of the meaning that was covered by the terms ingkarte and kngerrepate which implied ritual authority and power.\(^{376}\) Austin-Broos (2004:63; 2008:in press) suggests that the impact of settlement life, pastoralism with its ideas and notions of ‘ownership’ and the state’s jural order shifted the focus from custodianship of rites and sites to ‘blocks’ and ‘bounded patrilineal estates’. A term such as pmerekwerteye with its affinity to notions of European ownership possibly was a convenient one in the land claim context and reinforced by its use in legal procedures.\(^{377}\) It appears that pmerekwerteye could be a construct for the times.

\(^{374}\) T.G.H. Strehlow’s diary 38 and Anmatjerra FT series IX.

\(^{375}\) ‘-gatuaia’ meaning ‘own’ or ‘self’ (Morton 1992).

\(^{376}\) The term pmererenye (A) meaning ‘belonging to country’ seems to give in the contemporary context some counterbalance to the notions of ‘owner’ in the word pmerekwerteye. (Ngurraritja (L) has been translated to me as pmererenye.) However, I have not discussed its translation and its underlying concepts sufficiently yet with Arrernte and Luritja people to make a conclusive statement here.

\(^{377}\) Austin-Broos also has noted the significance of the fact that claims to an indigenous identity before the state on the part of people such as the Arrernte have come through the specific legal procedures.
Change, Adaptation or Continuity?

Clearly there is a tension between Carl and T.G.H. Strehlow’s respective emphases concerning connections to country in Western Arrernte society. While both documented the conception site as important, their views diverge with regard to mother’s and father’s connections to place and dreaming. In fact Carl did not even mention explicitly a connection to a father’s ‘totem’, only to a patch of country that was inherited through patrilineal descent.

Carl Strehlow’s data on ratapa (conception dreaming) and altjira (mother’s conception dreaming) and associated places, present therefore a contrast when compared to the emphasis that his son and others have given to dreamings inherited through patrilineal principles. Carl’s altjira as well as ratapa were connected to a mother, both her own conception and that of her child. These personal details seem to give ‘mother’s side’ some significant meaning in belonging to country. In T.G.H. Strehlow’s work the patrilineal connections are of overwhelming importance followed by conception site connections which were individuating characteristics usually within the context of a patrilineal descent group. It may have given the ritual group balance within their estate, as ‘Those involved shared a ritual focus and also had their own personal identity’ (Austin-Broos 2008: in press).

One wonders if Carl’s Arrernte informants provided him with these personal details because that is what he seemed to ask for rather than for an account of a located social order. Or, was it that while subsections represented patri-couples, and were emplaced, the linking of these phenomena through dreaming ancestors with skins, and through patriliney, had not yet emerged? Austin-Broos suggests that ‘patriliney’ as it is among the Arrernte, may have emerged following the ascription of subsections to country and to ancestral beings. It is through these means that a form of mythic inheritance could have been assimilated to the bonds between fathers and their offspring (Austin-Broos 2008: in press). This may be one of the reasons why Carl Strehlow recorded conception dreamings rather than father’s dreamings on the one hand, and subsection
inheritance to land on the other. In view of the relative recent introduction of the subsection system into Arrernte territory, this is a plausible proposal.

Perhaps his style of questioning elicited personal details most readily, or perhaps the personal details where the most readily provided information. These seem to be egocentric principles, as described by Myers ([1986] 1991), that are operating in the nineteen hundreds. Or, possibly, Carl Strehlow’s informants took it as evident that every person is connected to a father’s dreaming, as it was obvious that all country on Western Arrernte territory does have subsection affiliations.

A tight and literal reading of T.G.H. Strehlow’s work and the ideologies he presented at different times in his long career as an anthropologist, have led to the view that he promoted a rigid patrilineal model (or gave too much prominence to conception sites). He was trying to understand and grasp a land tenure system which was undergoing shifts due to a number of events that had been occurring since the 1870s, and focused at different times on different aspects of the system.378 As Austin-Broos suggests, these changes over time were due to both endogenous and exogenous factors (Austin-Broos 2004, 2008: in press).

His complete work spanning four decades has to be considered in total, which then shows that he had found evidence for multiple paths to be included even in a system such as the one of the Arrernte (though the rights are not all equal) and was changing as he was researching it. It also has to be kept in mind that Strehlow junior worked with men and did very little research into the world of Aboriginal women. He made a remark late in his oeuvre about women and knowledge. In Songs of Central Australia, he writes briefly how little is known about the sacred life of Aboriginal women and how regrettable this is (1971:647-653). He remarked that women ‘were aware of all379 the landscape features associated with the various totems located in their area of residence’ (Strehlow 1971:648) as they were the ones who ultimately determined the conception sites of their children, and that there ‘is the undoubted existence of a body of unknown dimension of special women’s lore, which used to be kept jealously

378 At the time of Strehlow’s fieldwork the intrusion of colonialism and of the mission into the area, was well advanced.
379 Strehlow’s emphasis.
secret from the men’ (Strehlow 1971:649). His work depicts largely a male Arrernte world. His bias towards a patrilineal land tenure model is to a certain degree the result of the lack of consultation with women.

Another factor that needs to be taken into account when considering his writing is that he tried to capture the untouched, pre-contact world of the Western Arrernte people (or men), forgetting that there are always demographic and climatic accidents in a desert environment, like long droughts or the end of a patriline. Morton has argued that Strehlow attempted ‘to over systematise a dynamic framework of land tenure in which contradictions have been as historically significant as harmony and integration’ (Morton 1997:109). In an environment as unpredictable and harsh as that of central Australia, mechanisms to ensure the maintenance of knowledge and land ownership needed to be inherent in a land tenure system of a society that had to survive in a desert environment. T.G.H. Strehlow’s view represents an ideal view of the Western Arrernte world; they certainly do not always reflect what contemporary indigenous land holding groups regard as true.

Nevertheless, there seems to be little doubt that Arrernte society had a preference for the inheritance of knowledge through the patriline, which connects to father’s father’s country. While the patrilineal model was likely an ideal, also seemingly observed by earlier researchers in the Western Desert (Dousset and Glaskin 2007), even in a desert environment that was relatively well watered, such as the areas of the Arrernte, it would have been impractical, if not unrealistic. People moved around to survive - and to see their relatives, as they still do. Carl’s references on how country is associated to subsections and how the chieftainship position is inherited through the male line as well as his position on patrilineal descent, seem to point to this patrilineal model. However, he delivered evidence that matrilineation and conception were other pathways that were valid and very possibly emphasised by individuals, giving a powerful counterbalance to patrilineal models.

Peterson’s ‘Final Note on the Horde’ shows that Donald Thomson’s empirical data did not corroborate his mentor, Radcliffe-Brown’s, doctrine (Peterson 2006:16-26). Also Sackett (2007:173-175) indicates that earlier anthropologists, like Tindale, one
of the most diehard promoters of patriline, and others, who have found that Western Desert people acquired country (either mainly or wholly) along patriline, 'accepted and promulgated notions of patriline inheritance of country, when their data indicated otherwise'. He remarks:

It may very well be the case that much of the descent-based inheritance reported for the Western Desert involved not Aborigines and land, but descent of an idea about Aborigines and land. (Sackett 2007:175)

In sum, and in a legal context, we find that the group of Arrernte landholders of a country consists of pmerekwereteeye, who connect to their land through their father's father, and kwertengerle, whose rights and responsibilities are mainly derived through mother's father. They are the core members of a landholding group under traditional laws and customs. People who are connected to country and have rights and responsibilities in relation to it through their father's mother and mother's mother are also called kwertengerle and can acquire membership in a landholding group. Long-term residence, conception sites, responsibility of shared dreaming tracks, and knowledge and authority in relation to dreaming tracks and stories enhance the status of the latter kwertengerle and others. Morton described a comparable situation among Central Arrernte people:

While a person's connections to, and rights in, all four grandparental estates are held simultaneously, those connections tend to be more or less ranked in people's minds. One belongs first to the estate on one's father's father; second to the estate one's mother's father; third to the estate of one's father's mother; and fourth to the estate of one's mother's mother. However, there may be exceptions to this ranking system based on factors such as knowledge, seniority and long term residence. (Morton 1997:26-27)

This model based on traditional principles has validity in the context of land claims, native title claims and decision-making with regard to mining on Aboriginal land. It is determined by dreaming associations and certain kinship links, because many principles of landownership are based on kinship and who has a right to acquire
knowledge of the mythology associated to particular parts of the landscape. In fact, kin or rather descent-based connections to land are becoming in the contemporary setting increasingly more prominent in claiming rights and the accepted way to be part of a landholding group, in particular when the distribution of resources are involved. Sutton (1998:45; 2003:252) has observed that there is a tendency in more settled areas of Australia to move towards a cognatic model of inheritance to rights in land. Western Arrernte people seem to oscillate between a patrilineal ‘bias’ and a cognatic model depending on the social, economic and political context involved.

Carl Strehlow’s material, and its many imponderable dimensions, especially when it is placed beside that of his son, suggests something other than a mere developmental sequence. Western Arrernte and Kukatja-Luritja rights to sites and land tenure have involved a significant range of personal as well as socio-centric links. These have been ranked in a variety of ways, and can be made more or less prominent, according to context. This we may expect in view of the Arrernte’s twentieth century history.
CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, the words of Baron Moritz von Leonhardi that marked the beginnings of Carl Strehlow's work as it would appear in published form, bear quotation again. Von Leonhardi wrote:

Myths in the Aranda language with interlinear translations would be of great value; and a dictionary and a grammar would provide the key to them. A dictionary outlining the meaning of the words as well as short explanations of the meaning of individual objects, characteristics in the myths etc., is highly valued in science.380

Although Strehlow fulfilled all the components of von Leonhardi's request, only the record of myth was published along with Strehlow's recording of cults, social classifications (marriage classes and kin terms), genealogies, aspects of social life around the mission and elements of Arrernte material culture. T.G.H. Strehlow would produce a grammar and wordlists built on his father's work. This simple formulation that elicited a masterpiece nonetheless involved important implicit.

For a bright young man as Carl Strehlow was, trained in a German Lutheran tradition, von Leonhardi's request, and those for further clarifications that followed, made sense. This was the fundamental fact on which their collaboration was built. It was natural, it seems, to train his gaze on language and myth. This simple fact reflects that Strehlow's orientation to the world and the people he encountered in it was shaped by a cultural milieu, a component intellectual life, a theology and a missionary practice. It is important to note that beyond von Leonhardi's engagements with Andrew Lang, and Lang's engagement with James Frazer, not to mention Baldwin Spencer's jousts with the shadow of Strehlow himself, von Leonhardi and Strehlow opened up a correspondence in which the recording of myth and language was foundational for learning about central Australian life. This was their route to an empirical science that differed in quite radical ways from Spencer's route through developmental stages as

380 Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 9.9.1905

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reflected in biology. Though infinitely more engaged with ritual practice, Gillen and Spencer used their data on that practice to distance and subordinate Arrernte intellectual life to that of Europeans. This was reflected especially in their views on Arrernte nescience concerning human birth (see Hiatt 1996; Wolfe 1999). Possibly the true nature of Strehlow’s work was most evocatively rendered by Marcel Mauss when he remarked that the volumes represented a form of an ‘Aranda Rig Veda’ (Mauss 1913:103). This ancient collection of Hindu hymnal chants is also one of the earlier records of Indo-European language and thereby a philological treasure. Perhaps the same might be said of Carl Strehlow’s work on myths collected in Western Arrernte and Luritja language.

The singularity of Carl Strehlow’s work is underlined not merely by the contrast it presents to Spencer’s and Gillen’s texts but also by the contrast that the work on Aboriginal myth of the Strehlows, father and son, present to the rest of Australian anthropology. Save for the work of Röheim, also at Hermannsburg and in Carl Strehlow’s time, there is nothing in the Australian literature quite like their early attempts to specify an indigenous ontology. Yet the manner in which Carl proceeded, supported by von Leonhardi, seems to have been nothing more than a shared and self-evident method. In the first four chapters of this thesis I have sought to trace the context within which Carl Strehlow’s route may have seemed the natural course for a German missionary-scholar at the fin de siècle. In the first instance, he lived intimately over a long period with a group of hunting and gathering people who were gradually becoming sedentary. He learned their languages, good missionary practice. But as he learnt, and began recording myth from his informants Loatjira, Pmala, Tjalkabota and Talku, possibly it became evident to him that a culture was being revealed through its oral forms. So absorbing was this task, and illuminating, that less than a year before he died Strehlow confidently repudiated any suggestion that the Arrernte’s modest technology might reflect a limited intellectual life. ‘Never’ Strehlow said.

It is my proposal that this confidence was born of both extensive exposure ‘in the field’, and also of an environing intellectual milieu. This milieu was both secular and theological. It suggested the possibility of multiple cultures, once thought of as God’s
plentitude but, in Carl Strehlow’s time, increasingly identified with a multiplicity of languages that each carried a people’s Volksgeist but also the capacity to translate Euro-Christian truth. If the focus remained Eurocentric it was nevertheless equalitarian in the making and open to the project of communication. In Chapter II, I have explored the particular inheritance embodied in the rise of nineteenth century German anthropology. My point in this chapter is that through the line of thought initiated by Herder and developed in the work of the von Humboldts and then Bastian and Virchow, an appreciation of the psychic unity of humankind was fostered along with an active engagement with language work. This line of thinkers preceded Graebner and Boas who begin to shape a recognisably modern tradition within anthropology. Although Franz Boas entered the academy, while Strehlow remained a missionary-scholar in the field, my suggestion is that Strehlow’s opus would sit comfortably as an early field project in the Boasian tradition of anthropology.

In Chapter III my focus on Lutheran missionary training in Germany and missionary practice in colonial Australia demonstrates the types of tool and worldview that Strehlow brought to life in central Australia. To begin with, the German Lutheran tradition sustained at Neuendettelsau placed importance both on classical language study – Greek, Latin and Hebrew – and on the study of vernacular, the medium for worship in Lutheran churches. This emphasis on vernacular led at least some pastors to take an interest in the Weltanschauung (worldview) of the people they worked with. Clearly, Strehlow was one of them. In addition, both Johannes Deinzer at Neuendettelsau and Wilhelm Löhe, whose teachings Deinzer supported, placed an emphasis on the ‘outer mission’ to unbelievers as well as the ‘inner mission’ to those settlers in colonised areas already admitted to the Lutheran faith. This Lutheran emphasis on the vernacular and the fluid relation between an outside mission that might become an inside mission over time almost certainly informed Strehlow’s practice at Hermannsburg. It involved a Christian frame in which the Arrernte and Luritja people who camped around the mission became his Lutheran community. The mutual engagement between Aboriginal people and the pastor is reflected in Basedow’s comment cited in Chapter III. To reiterate, Basedow wrote (1920-22:22):
As a disciplinarian he has established himself at the head of the tribal group he manages, and even in quarrels and feuds of the bitterest nature his word is and must be final. Moreover the religion taught is sincere and not overdone.

This comment suggests that, possibly, the Western Arrernte word *ingkarte*, or ritual leader, was more readily applied to Strehlow than it might have been to other missionaries. Facilitated both by his language studies and his particular missionary persona, Strehlow’s engagement through research may have encouraged the Arrernte to provide him with a status that referenced their world.

These different types of intellectual context in which Carl Strehlow proceeded into the field also informed his collaboration with Baron von Leonhardi. The foci that von Leonhardi pressed on Strehlow were just the ones that Strehlow with his Lutheran background would likely have chosen for himself. In addition, it is pertinent to underline again that, as an armchair anthropologist, von Leonhardi subscribed to the full range of professional journals, especially in German and English, that otherwise would have been unavailable to Strehlow. This bore on Carl Strehlow’s work in two particular ways. First, it meant that von Leonhardi’s comments kept the ‘High God’ issue ever present for Strehlow. Through reference to Andrew Lang and others, von Leonhardi encouraged Strehlow to explore these matters as thoroughly as he could. As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis Strehlow’s view shifted over time as did his understanding of *altjira*. Whether or not a later ethnography would endorse all Strehlow’s positions, the dimensions of meaning concerning these issues that correspondence with von Leonhardi brought to the fore reveals the subtlety of Arrernte culture and belief in ways that are foreign to Spencer and Gillen’s work. Notwithstanding Strehlow’s position as a missionary, the fact that he could consult with his informants in their language and over time has allowed the building of an ethnographic record that still fascinates today. The correspondence between Strehlow and von Leonhardi had a second major impact. It reinforced Strehlow’s own propensity to focus on the empirical record and turn away from premature theory. Time and again, von Leonhardi enjoined Strehlow to check his facts and to record the precise meaning of particular terms and the nature of particular practices. This focus on empirical particulars may have encouraged Strehlow towards a limited
diffusionism that his studies of the Arrernte and Luritja involved. His recording of the ways in which forms of myth overlap and interpenetrate foreshadows the work of T.G.H. Strehlow and other subsequent field research in the context of land claims. Once again this particular focus contrasts with the work of Spencer and Gillen, much more prone to present central Australians as simply culturally homogeneous.

The foregoing comments summarise some important issues in the first part of this dissertation. They underline the different types of factor that led Carl Strehlow towards the prolonged empirical study of a culture, one among other cultures, produced by human beings contemporaneous with Europeans and able to address their truths. In sum, Carl Strehlow was almost certainly Eurocentric in his view of central Australian indigenous people. His expectation of what he would find among moral human beings, which he judged the Arrernte to be, seems to have been shaped by his Lutheran Christianity. He was not, however, an evolutionist or prone to the racism of his time. This gives his work a modern feel notwithstanding its transitional nature. In the second part of this dissertation, Chapters V to VII, I have sought to show the ways in which Carl Strehlow was not yet a part of modern professional anthropology, notwithstanding the fact that he produced immensely valuable data in central areas of research. I have argued in turn (i) that although his recording of myth lacked a truly comparative frame, his ethnographic record began in earnest the specification of central Australian ontology; (ii) that although Carl Strehlow collected genealogies as family trees rather than as data used to specify a social structure, his material make major contributions to our understanding of social classification among the Western Arrernte and Luritja people; and finally (iii) that although Strehlow did not quite connect the issues of social classification, knowledge and land in an understanding of ‘countries’ or land tenure, he recorded thought-provoking data on the different ways in which individual Arrernte people could be connected with place. Most important, these data suggest that in his time and subsequently, what today we call ‘land tenure’ was involved in endogenous change that would be intensified with the impact of settlement. His data make a major contribution to loosening even further the ‘straitjacket’ of interpretation imposed by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown.
Carl Strehlow's opus is a unique Australian work that allows us both to look back to a classical tradition not well represented or studied within Australia, and to a modern anthropology that carried the interests in multiplicity and diversity further. He wrote within a tradition that acknowledged that all societies are equal, despite their different moral values, and have individual features that cannot be rendered in terms of generalised stages of development. His work reflected the aims of this early German anthropological tradition, which was to document the plurality of peoples and their cultures. Boas' critique of evolutionism rested on this German historical particularism, an appreciation of the historically conditioned plurality of human cultures, and thus his 'notion of culture also called for a stance of cultural relativism, the idea that it is necessary to understand cultures in their own terms and their own historical contexts before attempting generalisations' (Silverman 2005:262).

In the remainder of this conclusion, I wish to position this study in two other ways that concern: its bearing on the work of Carl Strehlow's son, T.G.H. Strehlow, and on more general issues of intellectual history in Australian anthropology. The latter issue I also pursue in my Afterword.

Repositioning T.G.H. Strehlow

Without doubt Carl Strehlow's masterpiece furnished the foundation for the work of his youngest son, T.G.H. Strehlow. The myth and song collection in Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien provided a basic model for Songs of Central Australia – T.G.H. Strehlow's much celebrated mid-twentieth century work. Carl's genealogies gave his son the opportunity to construct family trees reaching back sometimes from the 1960s to the early decades of the nineteenth century. In both these domains of ethnographic work the achievements of the son far surpassed those of the father in volume and in acknowledgements. However, Carl Strehlow's unresourceful and lonely work, with only von Leonhardi's support, was equally remarkable in its time. Although as T.G.H. Strehlow was marginalised from academic anthropology, he had the support of the University of Adelaide and the Australian National Research Council for some of his ventures. Moreover, Carl Strehlow's massive handwritten dictionary that was intended to give 'anyone' the chance to know

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the significance of Arrernte and Luritja myths,\textsuperscript{381} sat for a lifetime unpublished on T.G.H. Strehlow’s desk as his personal reference work. Finally, the father smoothed the path for the son in personal as well as scholarly ways. Carl Strehlow’s standing among central Australian people conferred a privileged position on his youngest son that facilitated his collection of confidential and classified information from the Arrernte people.

It is beyond the scope of these remarks to explore the reasons why Ted allowed his father’s work to lie untranslated in obscurity throughout his own Australian research career. Why parts of Carl’s work were not deposited at the Strehlow Research Centre and some material only discovered in the 1990s at the house of T.G.H. Strehlow’s widow, Kathleen, are things that we may never know. Despite these discoveries of the 1990s, there are still a number of genealogies unaccounted for, and close to 300 songs collected by Carl, that have never been published.

T.G.H. Strehlow gained crucial insights from his father’s work, but also details such as his statistics on natural species in central Australia. He recorded these in his first diary (1932:2), and this record subsequently found its way into the second seminal essay of \textit{Aranda Traditions} (1947:66-67) - based on his father’s dictionary work.\textsuperscript{382} All the essays in this publication draw on data or comments from Carl Strehlow’s work and possibly from the letters of von Leonhardi’s as well, that were in Ted’s possession and not always referenced in his work.

One of von Leonhardi’s main concerns, unwarranted generalisations, was echoed by T.G.H. Strehlow when he rebutted Baldwin Spencer’s attack on his father (Strehlow 1947:68-69, 83). Spencer had alleged that it was nonsense to propose that tywerrenge were ever mentioned in the presence of women or that, wrapped with strings to prevent women from seeing them, these tywerrenge were laid in wooden baby-carrying trays to hasten children’s growth (Strehlow 1908:80; Spencer 1927:586). When Strehlow jnr. defended his father he did so using not simply his own

\textsuperscript{381} Carl Strehlow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1).

\textsuperscript{382} Quoted in Chapter V, p. 191.
observation but also the carefully worded observations of both von Leonhardi (1904)\textsuperscript{383} and Carl Strehlow (Strehlow 1910:7-8).\textsuperscript{384} Ted wrote:

... European writers have fallen into serious mistakes owing to their fatal habit of dumping together irreconcilable beliefs collected from different Aranda groups and then attempting to work out a coherent system of religious thought and ceremonial customs for the ‘tribe’ regarded as a coherent whole. (Strehlow 1947:69)

In making these remarks, my intention is not to disqualify T.G.H. Strehlow as a scholar - he was an excellent one - but rather to place the achievements of father and son in a more appropriate relation. He even himself acknowledged that his own research was not created \textit{ex nihilo}. Most great thinkers, he observed, have ‘certainly been greatly indebted to their own cultures’ and were not ‘altjiranga ngambakala’ (Strehlow [1967]2005:86). Despite a certain amount of unreferenced reliance on \textit{Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien} and his father’s language studies, he did take his father’s legacy further by conceptualising the specificity of an Aboriginal ontology (and in so doing arguably made Aboriginal culture an object of wonder for many non-indigenous Australians). The father’s work helped the son to write about indigenous relations to the land in a way that had not been done prior to the publication of \textit{Aranda Traditions} (1947).

It is therefore unfortunate that only late in his career did T.G.H. Strehlow start to look towards North America for ideas on how to integrate his thoughts on culture and language in a more explicit anthropological method. In 1967 he gave a talk entitled ‘Man and Language’ (Strehlow [1967] 2005:76-88) at the University of Adelaide. In comments that were conversational in style, he presents in an idiosyncratic and almost anachronistic way, his views on the importance of language study to understanding culture, such that anthropology should be seen to entail appropriate training in linguistics. The divergence of British social anthropology from the language and culture studies of German particularism had made it necessary for T.G.H. Strehlow to

\textsuperscript{383} Von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow, 28.8.1904. Quoted in chapter IV, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{384} Quoted in chapter IV, p. 145.
state in an awkward fashion matters his father had seemed to take for granted. Far from criticizing Strehlow, the son, this event reflects the limited representation in Australia at the mid-century point of the style of anthropology that Franz Boas founded and promoted in the United States. At that time in Adelaide, Ted’s talk was a plea for collaboration between the disciplines, an argument that the study of people must be accompanied by the study of language and vice versa (Kenny and Mitchell 2005:5). In these remarks the son seemed to respond, albeit unconsciously, to his father’s German intellectual and anthropological roots, as revealed in Die Aranda-und Loritja Stämme in Zentral-Australien.

Repositioning Australian Anthropology’s Intellectual History
Just before the first volume of Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien was published, Carl Strehlow wrote on the 30 July 1907 to R.H. Mathews:

I would not be able, to publish a book in the English language, because I could not express my results as well in it as in my “mother-language” [Mutter-Sprache].

It is tantalising to imagine the course of events in Australia had Carl Strehlow written and published in English. What if he had been taken seriously by the British anthropological establishment and if his humanistic thinking had been at the base of policy approaches to indigenous people? As Mulvaney and Calaby remark in their study of Baldwin Spencer, it was tragic that there was no real engagement between these two great early ethnographers of central Australia (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:125; see further in my Afterword). Since Carl Strehlow’s different, non-evolutionary view of Aboriginal Australians did not prevail in the first few decades of the twentieth century, one wonders if the course of policy would have changed had Strehlow persuaded Spencer to his views. Of course these would have included Carl Strehlow’s Lutheran Christian faith.

I speculate in order to underline as Langham has that old texts and old ideas can become the object of current debate and reflection in a discipline (Langham

385 Carl Strehlow to R.H. Mathews, 30.7.1907 (National Library of Australia).
1981:xxii). Most of all, Carl Strehlow's text promotes new forms of reflection on
contemporary Australian anthropology and especially on the way in which
professionalism can promote research but also narrow the history of a discipline.
There are other early anthropologists including A. H. Howitt, R. H. Mathews and W.
E. Roth from whom new insight might be gained concerning how anthropology was
shaped specifically in Australia across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
Using translations both from French and German, Martin Thomas (2007) has made an
impressive start on the work of R.H. Mathews. His tracing of the linguistic journey
involved in the publication of Mathews work, suggests that Australian anthropology
then may have been even more cosmopolitan than it is today. Again, Chris Nobbs'`
makes a start on showing underlying premises that lie outside an Anglophone
tradition of a modern anthropology and its field method. Once again, there is more
than one route to an empirical discipline. Silverman (2005) suggests national
anthropologies should be aiming towards a cosmopolitan discipline and Austin-Broos
proposes that to engage with anthropology's maturing path in the course of the 20th
century, it is paramount in the Australian context to consider traditions outside of a
British-Australian intellectual world, that takes the psychological and hermeneutic
traditions of European anthropologies into account which were alternatives to 19th

So finally, this study has implications for re-assessing Baldwin Spencer and Frank
Gillen, T.G.H. Strehlow and for re-assessing histories of anthropology bearing on
Australia which have been histories for an English-speaking world alone. My study
has been devoted to elucidating Carl Strehlow's work, both its strengths and its
limitations. Sometimes it has been hard to write about Strehlow's limitations because,
inevitably, he has become an 'inspiration' notwithstanding my motto for this research
drawn from Bertolt Brecht: 'Arm ist das Land das Helden braucht' (Poor is the
country that needs heroes). Perhaps it is fair to say that Carl Strehlow's masterpiece
and its context as described in this research demonstrate that every hero of past
scholarship is but one notable route among others to better understand contemporary
thought.
AFTERWORD

There are two forms of mainly Australian writing that frame Carl Strehlow’s work and my thesis-introduction. I propose to discuss each in turn. The first are comments, sketches and longer studies contemporaneous with *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* and produced by others interested in or engaged with Aboriginal people. These writings provide a further important background to *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*. In Section I of this dissertation, I have addressed the larger intellectual context in Germany and in Lutheran Australia that might have shaped Carl Strehlow’s ideas, either directly or indirectly. In Section II I have discussed Carl Strehlow’s legacy for today’s anthropology, and also the ways in which his intellectual method fell short of a modern anthropology. Ultimately, however, to place his work in perspective, and the work of Spencer and Gillen, it is important to compare and contrast what they achieved with other writers of the time and place; not just the ‘armchair’ anthropologists of Europe and Great Britain but also the other major regional works as well as the diarists, chroniclers and policeman-scribblers who shaped popular attitudes to Aboriginal people. It may have been some of this latter literature that most influenced settler society in its view of indigenous Australians. It is in comparison with this work that Australia’s transitional ethnographers need to be judged, for what they achieved in a nascent science rather than for ways in which they fell short. A history of how anthropology in Australia enlightened its readers, rather than reinforced colonial prejudice, is still to be written, although Hiatt’s *Arguments about Aborigines* (1996) read appropriately makes a start.

This brings me to the second set of literature I will address: some relevant discussions in the history of Australian anthropology that bear on this study and also differ from it. *From Missionary to Frontier Scholar* is unusual to the extent that it focuses on one major work, in this case of a missionary-scholar. It is the unique circumstance of Carl Strehlow’s work, largely forgotten in Germany and hardly known in Australia, that led me to this particular focus especially when I discovered the von Leonhardi correspondence at the Strehlow Research Centre. It seemed a fitting redress for Carl Strehlow’s opus that a dissertation should be dedicated to it. The contemporary writings that correspond most directly with this study are those by D. John Mulvaney

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and his various co-authors and co-editors in their works on both Spencer and Gillen. Although these are not the only writings on a transitional figure in Australian anthropology,\(^{386}\) they are certainly the most important. Possibly, the other major work to place besides these is Ian Langham’s study of ‘the “school” of Cambridge Ethnology’ in which the roles of W.H.R. Rivers and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown are central (Langham 1981:xxiii). Importantly, Langham tells us that his approach was deeply influenced by George Stocking and his history writing about anthropology. I will also make some remarks on Stocking and what there is to learn from him regarding the interpretation of early Australian anthropology.

**Early Contemporaneous Work**

In the 1860s and early 1870s accounts by J.M. Stuart (1865), W.C. Gosse (1873), P.E. Warburton (1875), E. Giles (1889), and other explorers record the presence of Aboriginal people in central Australia by making some occasional remarks on brief encounters and on indigenous terms they recorded. These accounts were followed by a number of books with contributions from a variety of people including surveyors, missionaries, policemen or telegraph masters. Examples of this genre which often came in the form of collations, are: G. Taplin’s *The Folklore, Manners, Customs and Languages of the South Australian Aborigines* (1879), J.D. Woods’ *The Native Tribes of South Australia* (1879) and E.M. Curr’s *The Australasian Race* (4 vols.) in 1886. These collections cover subjects such as the origin of the Australian race, their languages (usually wordlists and occasionally skeletal grammars) and their ‘customs, manners and habits’ in general. ‘Ethnographic’ writing by troopers, such as Gason and Willshire, were also published.

Samuel Gason, a mounted constable of the South Australian police force was stationed at Lake Hope in the early 1870s, and took an interest in the Diyari people of the region collecting ethnographic data on their social and religious life. In 1874 he published *The Dieyerie Tribe of Australian Aborigines*; in the same year he led punitive expeditions near Barrow Creek on Kaytetye country (Nettelbeck and Foster 2007:7). In 1888 William Willshire’s *The Aborigines of Central Australia* appeared which according to Nettelbeck and Foster, ‘is more tellingly a literary reconstruction

of his experience and opinions as a Mounted Constable in the Interior’ than an account of the ‘manners, customs and languages’ (Nettelbeck and Foster 2007:53).

Noteworthy also are Thomas Worsnop’s *The Prehistoric Arts, Manufactures, Works, Weapons, etc., of the Aborigines of Australia* (1897), a survey of Aboriginal art and material culture, and John Mathew’s *Eaglehawk and Crow* (1899). Mathew attached special importance to his linguistic studies and was interested in diffusionist thought. His data seemed to indicate that the distribution of language proved that settlement of the continent was first in the north east where the lines of language converged and not, as was put forward in an earlier hypothesis by Eyre and endorsed by Curr, that the first settlement was in the north-west, and that the distribution of population was effected by the original stream of people crossing to the south of Australia in three broad separate bands (Mathew 1899:ix-xi).

W.E. Roth, Oxford educated, published in 1897 *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines*, a classic in Australian anthropology. He was oblivious to both Howitt’s and Spencer’s work. Roth was a surgeon working in Boulia, Cloncurry and Normanton, where he made his own empirical investigations into the languages and traditions of the Aboriginal people of North-West-Central Queensland. He concluded that ‘his tribes lacked any totemic beliefs, a finding which Spencer condemned as heresy’ (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:209). Spencer set out to demonstrate its falsity and made derogatory remarks about Roth, as he did on R.H. Mathews (Thomas 2004).

Like other Australian anthropologists of the time, R.H. Mathews (1841–1918) was a self-taught anthropologist. Between 1893 and 1918, he published 171 anthropological reportages in English, French and German (Thomas 2007). Some of it was based on his own observations, but like most of his contemporaries, he also had to rely on the information supplied by others through correspondence. Among his prolific writings were a number of articles on Arrernte people (Mathews 1906, 1907, 1908) although he never visited central Australia and seemed to base his accounts at least in part on his letter exchange with Carl Strehlow.
E. Eylmann (1860-1926), a German doctor and adventurer, also had contact with Strehlow. In 1908 he published *Die Eingeborenen der Kolonie Südaustralien*. During his travels in remote Australia, he had been a guest of Hermannsburg mission in 1898. His account contains some interesting ethnographic and historical data on Aboriginal Australia as well as an account of the Lutheran missions of the inland (Eylmann 1908:464-482).

In the 1860s with a stream of protestant missionaries arriving in the Lake Eyre region the Diyari language and culture received a great deal of attention. One of the first missionaries at Killalpaninna Mission, Carl Schoknecht, wrote a Diyari grammar and wordlist within two years of his arrival (Schoknecht 1997:16,80). His successors, continued to collect data on the Diyari language and culture until the mission was closed in 1917 (see Kneebone 2001, 2005; Stevens 1994). The Lutheran ethnographers of this region are fairly well-known today. Among these, missionaries Siebert and Reuther made outstanding contributions (Völker 2001, Hercus and McCaul 2004, Nobbs 2005). Reuther left a monumental work behind called *Die Diari*. It remains unpublished despite Tindale’s efforts. In 1902 Siebert co-authored with M.E.B. Howitt *Some Native Legends from Central Australia* in *Folk-Lore* and in 1910 his article *Sagen und Sitten der Dieri und Nachbarstämme in Zentral-Australien* was published in *Globus* with the help of Baron von Leonhardi (Völker 2001).

Siebert’s unpublished correspondence with Howitt remains a valuable source for the cultures of the Cooper Creek area (see Hercus and McCaul 2004; Nobbs 2005). However, others also made records of the Dyiari. A.W. Howitt who had corresponded with S. Gason between 1879 and 1888 published ‘The Dieri and other kindred Tribes of Central Australia’ in 1891, which according to Nobbs (2007:3), is the first comprehensive ethnography about Aboriginal people in the Cooper Creek region.

However, among Aboriginal people in central Australia and in Australian anthropology generally, the Arrernte are now one of the best-documented Aboriginal groups. The Arrernte, as John Morton remarks, ‘need no introduction’ as they and their first significant ethnographers, Spencer and Gillen, were propelled around the nineteen hundreds to international celebrity (Morton 1985:3) and are one of the ‘best-
known Aboriginal groups in world anthropology' (Morton 1992:24; McKnight 1990). Their ethnographers and anthropologists are among the finest.

The documentation of Arrernte culture began, as with the Diyari, when the first Lutheran missionaries, A.H. Kempe, L. Schulze and W.F. Schwarz, arrived in 1877 at the site of Ntaria in central Australia where they set up a Lutheran mission. As soon as they had made first contacts with the indigenous population, they started to study the language of the local people and collected material on their customs. By 1880/81 they had produced a school primer and a book with bible stories, psalms, hymns and prayers in Arrernte. In 1883 Kempe published his first ethnographic account of the 'Aldolanga', as the people he had met at Ntaria called themselves, *Zur Sittenkunde der Centraustraliaischen Schwarzen*. In 1886 and 1887, F.E.H. Krichauff published *Customs, Religious Ceremonies, etc., of the "Aldolanga" or "Mbenderinga" Tribe of Aborigines of the Krichauff Ranges* which was based on data collected by missionaries Kempe and Schulze. By the time Kempe and Schulze left Hermannsburg Mission in the early 1890s they had also published *A grammar and vocabulary of the language spoken by the Aborigines of the MacDonnell Ranges* (Kempe 1891) and *The Aborigines of the Upper and Middle Finke River: their habits and customs* (Schulze 1891). Schulze had also corresponded with Howitt.387

After these early anthropological accounts on Arrernte people and language by the German Missionaries, they became the subject of scientific research during the Horn Scientific Expedition of 1894. E.C. Stirling, the expedition’s anthropologist and the director of the South Australian Museum, collected ethnographic data principally on the ‘Arunta’ (Stirling 1896:9) which was published as the fourth volume, *Anthropology*, in the expedition’s 1896 report. This volume also contains a piece on Arrernte beliefs by Frank Gillen. Baldwin Spencer, the expedition’s zoologist and editor of the reports, made some remarks on the Aboriginal people he had encountered in central Australia, which includes Gillen’s famous coining of ‘alcheringa’ as the ‘dreamtime’ (Spencer 1896:111). Gillen’s contribution was not his first anthropological or linguistic attempt. Previously, he had collected wordlists, and one of them had been published in Curr’s third volume of *The Australasian Race* in

387 Schulze’s letters to Howitt, 1887-1889 (State Library of Victoria, Howitt Papers MF 459, Box 1051/lcc).
1886. He had also made field notes which were published posthumously (Gillen 1968,1995). Other diaries are still held at the Barr Smith library of the University of Adelaide and the state library of South Australia.

Based on the observation of ceremonial cycles performed in 1896 for a number of weeks at the Alice Springs telegraph station, and Gillen’s previous and subsequent field research, Spencer and Gillen’s first classic *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* appeared in 1899. It was followed by *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* in 1904 which was the result of an extensive fieldtrip from Alice Springs north along the Telegraph Line in 1901. One year earlier Gillen read and published a Frazerian paper, called *Magic amongst the Natives of Central Australia* in Melbourne which Spencer had written (Morphy [1997]2001:28). Their work was ‘in no small measure sponsored’ (Morton 1985:12) and mentored by James Frazer (Marett and Penniman 1932). These books address both physical and social anthropology, but focus on religious beliefs and practices. After Gillen’s death in 1912, Spencer continued publishing and his oeuvre amounted to many more books and reports on Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory, culminating just before his death in two volumes called *The Arunta* (1927), which also included Gillen as co-author.

In 1904 another anthropological classic called *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* by A.W. Howitt (1830-1908) was published. It was based on his field-data and the data of dozens of others with whom he corresponded. In 1873 he had joined ‘Dr Lorimer Fison in investigating the classificatory system of relationships which obtains among these savages’ (Howitt [1904] 1996:vii). Their results had been published in *Kamilaroi and Kurnai - Group Marriage and Relationship, Marriage and Elopement* in 1880 and *From Mother-right to Father-right* in 1883 and were indebted to Morgan’s approach to kinship studies, which sought origins. These pieces maintained that they had found group-marriage, which, according to Hiatt, belongs to ‘one of the most notable fantasies in the history of anthropology’ (Hiatt 1996:56). Howitt understood wife-sharing between two brothers as group marriage, evident in a practice called pirlaru, by which an older brother granted access to his wife to a younger brother. In 1899 Spencer and Gillen reported a similar institution among the Urabunna giving Howitt’s finding powerful backing. Malinowski would seal the fate
of Howitt and Spencer in 1913 with his *The Family among the Australian Aborigines* that showed that their theoretical loyalties had led them to distort the facts of Aboriginal family life (Hiatt 1996:45,51).

However, not all anthropologists of the time found group marriage convincing. In 1906 N.W. Thomas took issue with group marriage in *Kinship Organisations and Group Marriage in Australia*, a summary on the existing Australian material on kinship study, but more importantly a critique of the absurdity of group marriage (Thomas 1906:123; Hiatt 1996:46-47). Generally N.W. Thomas belonged to those who did not accept many of the assumptions generated by evolutionistic thinking. He commented on Australian anthropology in German and English journals. In 1905, for example, he wrote *Über Kulturkreise in Australien* in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* and in 1906 Dr. Howitt’s *Defence of Group-Marriage in Folk Lore*. In the same year he also published *Natives of Australia*, a summary of the existing literature on the Aborigines of Australia, and an article called *The religious Ideas of the Arunta* which took issue with high gods. These works were not based on empirical observation. They were literature based and relied on information obtained from people in the field. For example, Thomas corresponded briefly with Carl Strehlow asking him to fill in some gaps left by Spencer and Gillen’s publications.\(^{388}\)

Among other reasons, his pursuit of critiques of group marriage theories led Andrew Lang to an interest in K. Langloh Parker’s work. He wrote a foreword to Parker’s *The Euahlayi Tribe, A Study of Aboriginal Life in Australia* (1905), in which he remarked that she had not found the custom ‘by which married men and women, and unmarried men, of the classes which may intermarry, are solemnly allotted to each other as more or less permanent paramours’ (Lang 1905:xi). In his foreword, he also took the opportunity to hint that Parker’s collections on certain beliefs may be styled as ‘religious’.

Some press notices on K. Langloh Parker’s earlier compilations of folklore *Australian Legendary Tales* and *More Australian Legendary Tales* remark that ‘the wild man of that land deserve to occupy a somewhat higher position in the scale of intelligence

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\(^{388}\) See for example N.W. Thomas to Carl Strehlow, 22 October 1904 (SRC 1904/39) and 27 April 1905 (SRC 1905/58).
than that which is generally attributed to them’ or ‘The poetic and imaginative quality of these tales will surprise readers who are chiefly impressed by the savagery and the degraded condition of the Australian blacks’ (Advertising space in Mathew’s *Eaglehawk and Crow* 1899). Folklore study was a serious branch of inquiry at the turn of the century. Scholarly interest in the nineteenth century was fuelled by concern that old ways and beliefs were disappearing with the changes of the Industrial Revolution. The Folklore Society was formed in 1878 and committed to the study of traditional music, folk customs, fairy tales and other vernacular traditions. The society published *Folk-Lore*, an internationally distributed journal, to which eminent intellectuals contributed, such as A. Lang and E.S. Hartland (Thomas 2007:125,127).

It is interesting to note that there were English intellectuals who were sceptical and did not support wide-sweeping generalisations made by evolutionists (who were mainly lawyers, natural scientists and others). The literature that related more specifically to peoples around the world was generated by people with clerical or humanistic backgrounds. As natural science was the dominant paradigm and a new era seemed to be dawning, it was able to dominate mainstream thinking - not least because it delivered some readily understandable generalisations such as progressive moves from ‘magic, religion to science’ attractive to the Victorian mind (see Stocking 1987, 1995).

Historical Writing on Transitional Australian Anthropology (circa 1890-1920)

Without doubt the most impressive corpus to consider in relation to Carl Strehlow is the body of work produced by John Mulvaney and his associates that celebrates the life of Baldwin Spencer and, to a lesser degree, that of Frank Gillen. These works include Mulvaney and Calaby’s biography of Baldwin Spencer, not only as anthropologist but also as biologist, public man of letters and administrator (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985). They also include the collection of Baldwin Spencer’s photographs selected and annotated by Geoffrey Walker and edited by Ron Vanderwal to which Mulvaney wrote an introduction (Walker and Vanderwal 1982; Mulvaney 1982). Interestingly, a second edition of Spencer’s photographs, this time edited by Philip Batty, Linda Allen and John Morton was produced in 2005. This
collection reflects the impact of historical perspectives in anthropology and a consequent effort in the selection to underline both the specificity of Aboriginal people, especially in their ritual life, and the colonial context in which Spencer constructed his photographs. For example, the latter collection includes photographs of body decoration and ritual acts not included in the earlier selection, and also photographs of living conditions, on the fringe of Darwin for instance, that help contextualise Spencer’s other images.

In his introduction to the first collection of Baldwin Spencer’s photographs, Mulvaney canvases the view of Spencer that he and Howard Morphy in particular would develop in their later work. The latter involved editing the correspondence of Gillen to Spencer and also other outback correspondence to Spencer especially from Constable Ernest Cowle who resided for some time south of Hermannsburg at Illamurta (see Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch [1997] 2001; Mulvaney, Petch and Morphy 2000). The position of both Mulvaney and Morphy has been not to deny Spencer’s strong evolutionary views but, rather, to give them less weight by emphasising their data collection through fieldwork that was produced by the Gillen-Spencer partnership. Mulvaney sums up Spencer’s evolutionary position quite precisely:

Spencer believed that biological evolution went along with mental development and material progress. He conceived of Aborigines as surviving fossil remnants from the remote past, whose social and belief systems reflected this pristine condition. (Mulvaney 1982:x)

At the same time, Mulvaney observes that Spencer was a ‘generous’ man who attended to the ‘individuality’ of his indigenous photographic subjects. He underlines that Spencer and Gillen’s research, due to its density, can be re-visited and has been by other anthropologists. Morphy goes further to propose that the partnership of Spencer and Gillen involved an example of the newly emerging ‘fieldworker theorist’ with one particular twist: ‘[R]ather than being combined in a single person [the fusion results from] their separate identities in joint research and co-authorship’ (Morphy [1997] 2001:43). Morphy seems to suggest that by over-emphasising Spencer’s evolutionary concerns, the partnership has been done an injustice in histories of social
anthropology (Morphy [1997] 2001:30,46). As a consequence, Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski have been given more prominence than Spencer and Gillen as trail-blazers of modern fieldwork and the ethnographic method. Morphy seems to propose that ‘theory’ in this work ultimately has been less important than the actual data, and he also seems to give Baldwin Spencer equal credit with Frank Gillen for the production of that data in *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*.

This argument is made more difficult to sustain when it is juxtaposed with Philip Jones’s preliminary research on the relative ethnographic contributions of Gillen and Spencer to *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*. His examination of correspondence and text reveals that, notwithstanding Gillen’s acknowledgements of Spencer, the latter more often acted as editor than as original contributor to the work. In addition, many of the original photographs in their first publication were Gillen’s rather than Spencer’s (see Jones 2005). If Spencer was mainly the theorist in this fieldwork-theorist fusion, then his contribution to this partnership needs to be carefully re-assessed for, as Mulvaney indicates, his theory was a radical evolutionary type that would soon be superseded by others.

Notable in these discussions is the absence of any sustained attempt to assess what was the impact of Spencer’s evolutionism on the ethnography and interpretations that the pair produced, whether it be their views on conception (but see Wolfe 1999), the controversy about *altjira* and the presence or absence of a High God, or their views on the inheritance of totems. Morphy focuses mainly on the production of fieldwork data per se and Mulvaney in his biography of Spencer authored with Calaby addresses a host of activities well beyond anthropology alone (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985) which included some foundational ideas and projects for future assimilation policies (Ganter 2005:124-129). However, Mulvaney and Calaby do suggest that the feuding relation between ‘Spencer and the Lutheran authorities’ was regrettable and detrimental to the advancement of anthropological research in Australia. Green (1999/2004) suggests that Gillen’s view of Strehlow contributed to and reinforced Spencer’s attitudes towards the Lutherans. Mulvaney and Calaby remark:
The fact that Strehlow was to publish significant studies of Aranda religion, the only other major anthropology of this area, was to compound the rancour which developed between Spencer and the Lutheran authorities, for they conflict with his own interpretations. (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:124)

Furthermore, the biographers also suggest that whatever his critiques of the Christian Strehlow, Spencer's own research methods were by no means beyond reproach. They note that in Spencer's *The Arunta* (1927), he virtually claims a 'monopoly of knowledge':

He [Spencer] disposed of Strehlow's conflicting evidence as unreliable, because his informants were not "unspoil'd" by culture contact, whereas he assumed that Gillen's elders were authentic "primitives". He felt confident that no future anthropologist "will ever be able" to add anything substantial to the Arunta testament according to Spencer and Gillen. Their record provided "as much insight as we are now ever likely to gain into the manner of life of men and women who have long since disappeared in others parts of the world". However, because their traditional informants were now dead, he had the comforting sense that their veracity was unassailable. This was, however, a sad reflection on his conception of scientific research method in anthropology. He disparaged Strehlow's informants, but his own were safely beyond questioning in this world. In this sense, Spencer was the classic example of the proprietorial anthropologist, who claimed a people as "his." (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985:379)

In the preceding study, I have sought to draw out some of the anthropological implications of Carl Strehlow's positions in relation to the work of Spencer and Gillen. In particular I have noted and discussed the role of language, the 'altjira' issue, European frameworks that impinged on and limited Carl Strehlow's anthropology, and his humanistic position that accepted cultural diversity and the gamut of human possibilities among the Arrernte and Luritja. The main difference between Strehlow's work and that of other Australian researchers is that he did not use ranked categories to position Arrernte or Luritja beliefs at the baseline of mental development.
Morphy proposes that it does ‘not matter what Spencer and Gillen labelled Arrernte rituals and ceremonies - whether they classified them as religious or magical practices’ (Morphy [1997] 2001:37). This underestimates a powerful underlying framework in both academic and popular life that, in Australia, has treated indigenous practices and belief as survivals of an earlier time, and thereby with contempt. Proposed misguided ideas have been seen to parallel social forms mired entirely in the past.

Austin-Broos has argued that although ‘Gillen’s knowledge of the marriage system and churinga led him beyond the issues of primitive promiscuity and totemic cannibalism as they had been posed by Baldwin Spencer,’ Gillen failed nonetheless to formulate either anthropological or historical questions to replace ‘these spurious evolutionary ones’ (Austin-Broos 1999:210-211). Thus, she argues, it is ‘inappropriate to compare, as Morphy does, Gillen’s historical interests with the interests of anthropologists today in their discussions of myth and historical transformations’ (Austin-Broos 1999:211). Rumsey also questions Morphy’s claims for Spencer and Gillen. Morphy argues that some of their ‘key concepts,’ ‘the network of ancestral tracks that intersect the landscape,’ actually specified an Aboriginal ontology (see Morphy [1997] 2001:37). In reply, Rumsey has argued that ‘the centrality of place in the people-totem-place nexus’ was a theme that Spencer and Gillen did not even closely apprehend (Rumsey 2001:42). These views suggest that the advances of theory in conjunction with ethnography that Morphy imputes to Spencer and Gillen would only emerge some decades later as a professional anthropology developed. Once again, this is not to diminish the real achievements of Spencer and Gillen as early field anthropologists of central Australia, but rather to locate them appropriately in terms of subsequent as well as previous work.

Beyond the status of their field research, it is Spencer and Gillen’s influence on public and political life that makes them a difficult case. It seems clear that they had a major impact on public opinion that shaped negative views of Aboriginal Australians (Mulvaney 1985, Mulvaney [1997] 2001:9; Ganter 2005). In the context of this opinion, functionalism for all its limitations was critical and almost revolutionary. In
arguing that all the elements of a people’s practice and belief are ‘functional’ in the present, it eschewed the evolutionary assumption of lower level survivals from the past in a superior present. As Morphy himself remarks, Spencer and Gillen were ‘by no means embryonic functionalists’ (Morphy [1997] 2001:50). In fact, they belong to a Victorian past that subscribed to evolutionism; one that W.E.H. Rivers, Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski had to reject as they developed the discipline. Therefore it is fair to conclude that their work, like Strehlow’s as well, requires very careful and dispassionate treatment concerning both its strengths and its limitations. Few would argue with the view that both Christianity and social Darwinism can impair ethnography (Austin-Broos 1999:214).

As Mulvaney and Calaby indicate, and as Hiatt (1996) would confirm, these types of anthropological debate have continued throughout the twentieth century. Understanding these debates requires biographies of scholars that involve more than simply their institutional context (see for instance Gray 2007). Forms of work are needed that integrate personal and institutional agendas with the particular intellectual issues and debates that engaged practitioners and shaped anthropology. In sum, more intellectual biographies that actually address the anthropology that these early writers produced furthers our understanding of ongoing issues in modern anthropology and helps to identify the shadows of early paradigms in contemporary thought. Austin-Broos writes, for example that ‘thorough assessment of Baldwin Spencer would require at least a careful comparison of his work with that of W.H.R. Rivers and Franz Boas, in addition to a comparative assessment of Frank Gillen’s regional ethnographic achievements’ (Austin-Broos 1999:215).

In his account of the early “school” of Cambridge Ethnology,’ Langham (1981) embraces this type of task. His study is not specifically a study of Australian anthropology but rather of a range of work done mainly in Oceania and the Pacific that forged the method of early professional social anthropology as a fieldwork discipline. However, central to Langham’s account are W.H.R. Rivers and his genealogical method, as developed in the course of the 1898 Torres Strait Expedition with Haddon, Seligman and others, and the innovations of Radcliffe-Brown following his West Australian fieldwork 1910-1912 and his writings on Australian social
organisation between the years 1913 and 1923. Langham stipulates very clearly the bases on which he distinguishes the discipline of social anthropology: First, it had some key terms, 'society,' 'function' and 'structure,' meaning in the latter case, for instance, 'the combination of behavioural options employed by the society' and reflected in further terminological distinctions such as 'patrilineal' and 'matrilocal' (see Langham 1981:xii-xiv). Second, this anthropology provided 'exhaustive treatment of restricted social groups' produced through 'intensive and prolonged fieldwork' (Langham 1981:xv). A third feature was that the discipline had 'close links with British imperialism,' being largely dependent on government grants for the intensive fieldwork pursued. Langham comments:

An anthropology with the avowed aim of uncovering the factors which kept societies in smoothly-functioning harmony, and a national colonial policy which imposed its will upon distant peoples by plugging into the indigenous political organization, could not have been innocent playmates. (Langham 1981:xv)

Finally, Langham notes the centrality of kinship studies as the major component of comparative work in forms of social organisation in British social anthropology. Namely, a style of study that focused on the concrete of real and directly reported forms of social relatedness, like Meggitt's Desert People, rather than notions projected from Europe.

With Radcliffe-Brown's appointment in Sydney, Langham also notes the beginnings in Australia of social anthropology as a professional discipline (see also Gray 2007). Once again, he is careful to stipulate the criteria: (i) that there exist the opportunity for rigorous training by practitioners; (ii) that an income is earned from 'contributions to the subject;'(iii) that scientific findings are propagated systematically;390 (iv) that institutionalisation occurs, most notably in universities; and (v) that the scientific output becomes sufficiently technical to command a specialist 'group of fellow practitioners' (Langham 1981:245).

390 A.R. Radcliffe-Brown was professor of the Department of Anthropology at Sydney University between 1925 and 1929 before he travelled to Chicago and thence back to England where he became Professor at Oxford.
390 The journal Oceania was first published in 1930.
These specifications of a particular anthropology that is also a professional discipline frame Langham's discussion of the various debates around kinship analysis that progressively marked out the parameters of a discipline. His study is important for historical work in central Australia because it helps to locate more precisely the phenomenon of 'transitional' anthropology exemplified by Carl Strehlow as well as Spencer and Gillen.

In Langham's terms, neither Spencer and Gillen nor Carl Strehlow were engaged in a modern and professional anthropology. And in fact he makes a further and pertinent observation on why he would consider this to be the case. Langham remarks that at the end of the 19th century, the agenda for research was very much set by comparative religionists so that James Frazer (Spencer's patron), outside anthropology, and E.B. Tylor within it, were both focused on issues of religion and evolution rather than matters of comparative social organisation (see Langham 1981:xviii, xx, 49). These were also issues that absorbed Carl Strehlow and Baldwin Spencer. While they collected data on class systems and Strehlow additionally genealogical data, these did not yet present analyses in comparative social organisation as such. Spencer and Gillen in particular took their lead from Lewis Henry Morgan (1871) and his interest in classificatory terminologies. It would not be until the impact of Rivers, and his genealogical method, that this interest would be refined in Australia and elsewhere.

Langham, of course, would designate Radcliffe-Brown as the anthropologist writing on indigenous Australia who took the next step. However, here Langham mirrors the mainstream of Australian anthropology that excluded T.G.H. Strehlow's work for a lengthy period, not least because he pursued his father's central interest in language and myth and augmented these with his seminal work on indigenous Australian ontology. Issues of social organisation were secondary to Strehlow jnr. and would remain so, due to the intellectual tradition in which he had been raised. Géza Róheim also pursued a tradition somewhat foreign to British social anthropology though Hiatt, with his interest in psychoanalysis, engaged with this work (see Hiatt 1971, 1975). However, where central Australian ethnography is concerned, it took the work of Nancy Munn and her interest in 'the problem of the relationship between the
individual and the collectivity as mediated by the object world' to begin the
contemporary re-integration of this tradition into Australian anthropology (Munn
1970). Recent interests in a contemporary phenomenology, or social phenomenology,
have redeemed Strehlow's work for an interested audience (see, for instance, Myers

These issues bear on Langham's proposal that his study of the British tradition is
intended to echo the work of George Stocking who, although his essays range widely
through many terrains of mainly 'Victorian' and early modern anthropology, tends to
take his standpoint from contemporary cultural anthropology as it is practiced in the
United States. This means that Baldwin Spencer, whom Stocking takes to be 'the
ethnographer' in the pair of Spencer and Gillen, figures fleetingly in some of his
essays, while Carl Strehlow does not figure at all, and his son T.G.H. Strehlow only
once in a footnote (see Stocking 1987, 1992, 1995:97). Langham suggests that history
writing in anthropology should take contemporary issues into account and use older
texts to interrogate present assumptions. He remarks that Stocking uses his histories to
craft 'argument[s]' that 'modern practitioners of the trade will find challenging'
(Langham 1981:xxii). In this respect, Langham's and Stocking's work differs from
that of Mulvaney and Calaby (1985) who produced a conventional biography of
Spencer, independent of specific anthropological reference points.

Like Langham, Stocking's Race, Culture and Evolution (1968) also provided a model
for my understanding of the way in which to situate Carl Strehlow's endeavours in
Australia, including his correspondence with von Leonhardi. Stocking's essays on
'Cultural Darwinism,' 'Philosophical Idealism' and his 'From Physics to Ethnology'
led me to a fuller appreciation of what empiricism might have meant to a missionary-
scholar like Strehlow. Also Stocking's essay on 'Franz Boas and the Culture Concept
in Historical Perspective' provided me with a sense of the forms of historical
particularism in Germany that may have influenced Carl Strehlow's method and
pointed it in the direction of a modern cultural anthropology. For just this reason it is
striking that the anthropology of both Strehlows does not really figure at all in the
writings of Langham or Stocking that focus on an English-speaking world.
Appendix A

Pronunciation Guide to Western Arrernte

a Basically long 'ah' when stressed; 'uh' when not stressed at the beginning of a word. ay like 'ay' in 'hay' in a few special words and endings, and sometimes before rt, rn, or rl; like 'ie' as in 'lie' when stressed in normal words. aw like 'ow' in 'how' when stressed.

e Basically like 'uh' or 'er' as in 'catcher'. Like 'i' in 'bit' before ty, ny or ly. At end of words it is either like 'uh' or 'er' as in 'catcher' or not pronounced at all. ey like 'ee' when stressed. we like 'oo' in 'wood' after another consonant; like 'woo' otherwise, except at ends of words. wey like 'wee'. ew like 'ow' in 'snow' when stressed.

h A bit like 'w' as in 'wonder', but without rounded lips. Not used by some younger speakers.

i Like 'i' in 'bit' or 'e' in 'bet; like 'ee' before rn, rt, rl, ty, ny or ly.

k Like 'k' or 'g'.

l Like 'l'.

lh Like 'l' but tongue touches back of upper teeth.

lth = lh+th

lty = l+ty or =ly+ty

ly Like 'lli' in 'million'.

m 'm'

n 'n'

ng Like 'ng' in singer, not as in finger.

nh Like 'n' but tongue touches back of upper teeth.

nth = nh+th

nty = n+ty or = ny+ty.

ny Like 'ny' in 'canyon'.

p Like 'p' or 'b'.

r Normal Australian English 'r'.

rl Like 'l' but tongue tip curled back up higher.

Reproduced from Henderson and Dobson (1994).
rn  Like ‘n’ but tongue tip curled back up higher.
rr  Hard or rolled ‘r’.
rt  Like ‘t’ or ‘d’ but tongue tip curled back up higher.
rtn = rt+rn
 t  Like ‘t’ or ‘d’.
th  Like ‘t’ or ‘d’ But tongue touches back of upper teeth.
thn = th + nh
thn = th + nh
tny = ty + n
 t  Like ‘ch’ or ‘j’.
u  Like ‘or’ when stressed; like ‘oo’ in ‘wood’ when unstressed.
w  Like ‘w’; also see ew and aw above.
y  Like ‘y’ in ‘you, not as in ‘city’; also see ey and ay above.
Appendix B

Glossary of some Western Arrernte (and Luritja) Terms

akeye  bush currant, *Canthium attenuatum*.
alkngarte  native pine tree, *Callitris glaucophylla*.
alknginere  cicada.
alperrantyeye  bush tomato, *Solanum ellipticum*.
altyemaltyirreme  the ancestors would *altjamaltjerama* into the landscape at particular places, which are all named in Strehlow’s work, which means ‘become a hidden body, i.e. to assume a different form’ (Strehlow 1907:5).
altyerrengametyene  *altjirangamitjina* used in Carl Strehlow’s work generally for ‘totem ancestor’, i.e. ‘ancestral being’. This word is a compound of altjira (altyerre) and -ngamitjina (ngametyene and ngampetyene in modern Western Arrernte). According to Carl Strehlow altjirangamitjina means ‘the eternal unmade ones’; Altjira: unmade, ngamitjina: the eternal. The Luritja call the ‘the totem gods’, Tukutita (from Tuku: unmade and tita: the eternal).
anpernentye  skin name, term of address or greeting.
anpernrrentye  subsection system, term of address or greeting, ‘family’ in everyday use (?). Anpernentye and anpernrrentye are derived from the verb

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392 Compiled by Anna Kenny, checked by Gavan Breen.

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anperneme ‘call someone by a kinship term or describe them as being a particular relation’. Replacing the ‘me’ with ‘nty’ turns it into a noun anpernentye that means something like ‘what you call someone’. Adding the irr makes it reflexive, ‘what you call one another’. So essentially anpernentye and anpernirrentye mean the same thing.

apme

snake (generic, probably includes also other legless reptiles: burrowing skink and legless lizard).

arrarre

bush lemon grass, *Cymbopogon ambiguus*.

arrenge

father’s father.

arretthe

native fuchsia, *Eremophila freelingii*.

arrtnurlke

mintbush, *Prostanthera striatiflora*.

arrkwetye

woman.

arrkwetye irrentye

evil female spirit.

artwe

man.

helherenyenye

alarinja in Carl Strehlow’s work. Meaning ‘belonging to the earth’.

herre

red kangaroo. Herre is not used by most people, only by a few of the oldest. Most people use kerarre, which is a compound of kere ‘animal’ and arre (coming from herre) ‘kangaroo’, or just arre. (Arre would often be preceded by kere anyway, but there is a clear difference in pronunciation between kere arre and kerarre.)

ilakekeye

‘us’, meaning the people belonging to one’s own patrimoity.

Iripere

Ilpara are said to be Warlpiri neighbours of Anmatyerr people; the Anmatyerr word is probably Arlpere.

imurre

**inarlenge**

echidna. *Tachyglossus aequipennis*.

**ingkarte**

**inkata**, in Luriuja **tina** or **atunari**, meaning chief, man (father in general) (Carl Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary c.1900-1909). According to Strehlow (1915:1) the chief of a traditional country (called in the anthropological literature ‘estate’) is called inkata or ‘father of all’, but on a general level he is only a ‘primus inter pares’, and his position is only hereditary, i.e. not necessarily achieved through knowledge or wisdom. - TGH Strehlow’s gloss for ‘ingkarte’ is ‘ceremonial chief’. - 2. Pastor. The word Ingkarte has changed its meaning significantly over the past century. It seems likely that the shift started to occur during Carl Strehlow’s period, because he seems to have been their first white **ingkarte**. Today it is used for pastor. Austin-Broos (2004:61) defines an **ingkarte** as ‘a man who realised a balance between knowledge at his own place and at other sites’. - The original meaning of ingkarte has been replaced by the concepts of pmerekwertye and kwertengerle in contemporary Arrremte society.

**ingkwere**

initiation ceremonies. **Inkura** in Carl Strehlow’s work and **Engwura** in Spencer & Gillen. According to Strehlow (1913) it is only one part of the initiation ceremony not the entire process.

**inke, kwerrene**

spirit or soul of a person. **Ltana** (lthane) in Carl Strehlow’s work (and Ulthana in Spencer & Gillen?). Comment: maybe you could just replace this second sentence with ‘See Lthane.’

**intaminte**

Species of fish found in Tyurretye waters. This is the same fish called **intamintane**. Alternative forms: intamintenhe and intamintame.
intetyiweme

intijuma (L. tintinpungani) meaning 'to initiate into something, to show how something is done' (Strehlow 1910). Initiation ceremony.

ipmenhe

mother's mother.

irleye

emu.

irrentye

evil, bad or devil

irretye

wedge-tailed eagle

irrpenge

fish (generic).

karte

father, father's brothers and SSS.

kawawe

kauaua. Tall ceremonial pole with a bunch of feathers at the top. See also tnatantja meaning 'tall pole' in Strehlow (1910).

dreaming (totem), father's dreaming, conception. According to Breen, it means today mainly 'father's dreaming'. In T.G.H. Strehlow's unpublished dictionary knganintja simply 'totem'. In the Eastern and Central Arrernte dictionary aknganentye's first meaning is given as 'the dreamings which are passed down through the father's side' (Henderson and Dobson 1994:69). In Carl Strehlow's work the word knanakala means 'totem place', 'generated itself', 'coming out of itself', 'conception place' (Strehlow 1907:5). According to Breen, 'knganintja' and 'knanakala' are related. They are both derived from the verb knganeme (in Eastern and Central Arrernte spelled aknganeme and defined as 1. originate in the Dreaming and exist forever, 2. be conceived in a place). The past tense form is knganekte. With the -ale ending it means 'the one who ...' or 'the place where ...'. So it could mean 'the one who was conceived' or 'the place where x was conceived'. With the ending -ntye it is converted into a noun
referring to the dreamings or the place. - It is interesting to note here that the notion of ‘father’s dreaming’ does not appear in any of the earlier records. If it had referred during T.G.H. Strehlow’s time in any way to ‘father’s dreaming’, I would have expected to have found it in his work.

big. The extensions to father, chief etc. are like calling the person 'the great one'. In Carl Strehlow’s work *knaritja* is used for father, chief, old man and totemic ancestor. – In T.G.H. Strehlow’s work *kngaritja* means 1. very large, huge. 2. totemic ancestor, may be translated as ‘sire’.

elder or ceremonial assistant, member of council of senior men. In Carl Strehlow’s work *knaribata* (zusammengesetzt aus knara (gross) und ata-atau (Mann): der grosse Mann, der ältere Mann, in angesehener Stellung, der älteste. (Knaribata is composed of knara (big) and ata a contraction of atua (Mann). It was used for ‘old man’.) – Loritja: puntulara, Dieri: pinaru. (Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary 1909)

*papa* (L). Dog.

water, rain

*kwatjarinja* in Carl Strehlow’s work. Means ‘belonging to water’ or ‘coming from the water’.

Always.

*bush plum, Santalum lanceolatum.*

*Kuralja* in Carl Strehlow’s work. Pleiades.

spirit or soul of a person. *Guruna* in Carl Strehlow.
kwertengerle
landholder or belonging through descent other than
father’s father to land. This is a Warlpiri term
written in the Warlpiri language: kurdungurlu.

larletye
conkerberry, Carissa lanceolata.

latye
yam.

lthane
ghost. Itana in Carl Strehlow. Ulthana, a spirit
being documented by Gillen (1896:183).

ittyarnme
freshwater crayfish found in Tyurretye waters.

lwengulpere
spangled grunter, Leiopotherapon unicolor
(species of fish found in Tyurretye waters).

malyenweke
‘them’, meaning the people in the opposite
patrimoicy.

? 
contemporary spelling not found; etymology not
certain. mbatjalkatiuma (L. kutintjingańi),
meaning ‘to bring about, make fertile, improve the
conditions of’ (Strehlow 1910). Ceremony held at
specific places for the increase and growth of
particular species. In the Pintupi/Luritja dictionary
kutinyijinganu is said to mean ‘caused to roll’. In
the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara dictionary
kutintjingańi is glossed as ‘turn over’ (transitive).
The Arrernte word for ‘turn over’ is
ikngarpiweme or kngartiweme.

mare
mother-in-law.

mekemeke
sacred site, dangerous place, place that should be
avoided. T.G.H. Strehlow’s unpublished material
records mekemeke (his spelling is makamaka) as
meaning ‘to be avoided’ and ‘sacred cave’ (T.G.H.
Strehlow Diary 38, 1968:39) and defines pmere
mekemeke (pmara makamaka) as ‘asylum, a place
wither men in danger of death can flee for safety,
e.g. the area around an arknganaua, where nothing
could be killed and within whose precincts not

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even a hunter could pursue an animal that already had a spear stuck into it’ (T.G.H. Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary M: 126).

mother, mother’s sisters, father’s brother’s wife.

Alice Springs. Carl Strehlow wrote that ‘Lately, Alice Springs has been called Kapmanta; kap is an abbreviation of kaputa = head, and manta = dense. Kapmanta literally means: dense head. What it refers to are the roofs close together (roof = head of the house) because here the natives had first seen roofs of corrugated iron’ (Strehlow 1907:42).

bush-orange, *Capparis mitchellii*.

‘bush potato’

Wild tobacco (generic).

**ngampakala** meaning eternal, everlasting, from always, from eternity. Carl Strehlow writes that ‘The Aranda language has four words to describe eternal = ngambakala, ngambintja, ngamitjina, and ngarra’ (Strehlow 1907:1). - Ungambikula (out of nothing, self existing) or Numbakulla in Spencer and Gillen.

healer, native doctor.

dance of women at time of boys’ initiation.

spinifex pigeon.

patricouple. Group of fathers, their sisters and their daughters and sons. The patricouples are in Arrernte: Ngale-Mpetyane, Peltharre-Kngwarreye, Kemarre-Pwerrrele and Pengarte-Penangke.

not eligible to marry someone, wrong skin for marriage.

dangerous hairy male spirit. Sometimes also used for a evil female spirit, also called arrkwetye irrentye.
perle
parent's mother.

pmere
land, place or country. Ngurra in Luritja.

pmerekwerteye
landowner through father's father. Pmerekwerteye means literally 'country-owner'. It is derived, via a minor sound change, from a compound: pmere-ke-rtweye. The -ke is a dative suffix, which is very common, and -rtweye is the same as artweye (Henderson and Dobson 1994:286-287) and means 'owned or owner'. In Western Arrernte it does not seem to be used as an independent word (as artweye can be, but isn't usually); -rtweye is rare in other combinations, and so people do not think of it as a unit (Gavan Breen email 17/9/2007).

pmererenye
belonging to land/place. Very occasionally used to mean 'traditional owner' by Kukatja-Luritja people. Ngurarija in Luritja and other Western Desert languages.

pmere kwetethe
spirits of the land.

pmere kwetethe pmererenye
spirits of the land.

rathepe
ratapa in Carl Strehlow's work meaning child spirit, offspring, baby, child, conception dreaming, 'totem'. - Mythical children or Twins of Ntaria (TGH Strehlow 1947:118; 1971).

renge
euro.

-renye
suffix meaning 'belonging to or in', 'coming from', 'out of' or 'originating from'.

rrweperrwepe
whirlwind.

-rtweye
-rtweye is the same as artweye in Central and Eastern Arrernte (Henderson and Dobson 1994:286-287) and means 'owned or owner'. In Western Arrernte -rtweye does not seem to be used as an independent word (as artweye can be, but isn't usually); -rtweye is rare in other
combinations, and so people do not think of it as a unit (Gavan Breen email 17/9/2007).

**rwekerte** in Carl Strehlow’s work, meaning ‘Young man who has been circumcised and has to keep himself hidden’ (Strehlow 1907:41).

**taye**

**?**

**Tmálbambaralénana** (CS): The Evening Star contemporary spelling not found; etymology not certain. CS gives an etymology but it doesn’t make much sense and doesn’t fit in with what I know (e.g. he says that tmaiba is ‘flame’).

**tnengkarre**

dreaming, dreaming ancestor, mythological past, birthmark, dreaming mark.

**tnwerrengatye**

species of caterpillar living on the emu bush. Came from Mt Zeil in the dreaming.

**tnwerrenge**

emu bush, *Eremophila longifolia*.

**twakeye, mpeltyarte**

bush orange, *Capparis mitchellii*.

**Twanyirreke**

Carl Strehlow’s **Tuanjiraka** referring to an ancestral being, but also meaning ‘large bullroarer’. **Twanyirika** in Spencer and Gillen (1899:264,654) referring to a spirit being.

**tyape**

witchetty grub, edible grub (generic)

**tyelpe**

western quoll, native cat, *Dasyurus geoffroii*.

**tyemeye**

mother’s father.

**Tyurretye**

The MacDonnell Ranges.

**tyurretyerenye**

people belonging to the western MacDonnell Ranges.

**tywerrenge**

**tjurunga** in Carl Strehlow’s work. This term has a number of very complex meanings depending on its context. Tjurunga can mean songs, stories, dances, paraphernalia, sacred object, etc associated with the ancestral beings. The term tjurunga is a very complex term and depending on
context means different things. (See also Carl Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary in which ‘heilig (sacred)’ is part of its meaning, and T.G.H. Strehlow 1947:84-86, 1971:770-771). Tywerrenge usually means today ‘sacred object’ and is not often spoken about (Breen 2000:60). Kuntanka is its Luritja equivalent (Carl Strehlow’s unpublished dictionary 1909). According to Carl Strehlow kuntanka describes to a lesser degree a sacred object, but rather particular features of a landscape that represent dreaming beings or parts of them. Choringa in Spencer & Gillen.

tywerengirreke

ure

urrempele

Choringa in Spencer & Gillen.

tjurungeraka which means change into wood or stone at the end of creative activities (Strehlow 1908:77).

fire.

this word is the name of a very important type of ceremony which travels great distances. I was not able to find an exact definition of this word in Roheim or the Strehlows’ work yet. I have however not yet exhausted these sources. ‘urumbula’ has been described to me as ‘really big Aboriginal University’. In Eastern/Central Arrernte urrempele (Henderson and Dobson 1994:603) and in Alyawarr urrempel is the name of men’s ceremony connected with travelling men (kwekatye; kwekathy) dreaming. It is a trans-continental dreaming track travelling from Port Augusta to the northern coast. See Alcoota/Waite River Land Claim Book (Elliott, Green, Vaarzon-Morel 1995:91).

wanenge

wonniga, a sacred object used during Western Arrernte ceremonies, according to Carl Strehlow.

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yeperenye

Item made of hairstrings stretched over a wooden cross.
species of caterpillar found on the tar-vine (*Boerhavia* spp.). Came from Mt Zeil in the dreaming.

yerrampe

honey ant, *Camponotus inflatus.*
Appendix C

Maps

18. Route of Mail-Steamers from Germany (1904)\textsuperscript{393}

\textsuperscript{393} Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (ed.) 1904 (Kleiner) Deutscher Kolonialatlas. Berlin: Reimer.
19. Carl Strehlow Map (1910)
24. Map of Western Arrernte Country (Breen, 2000)

Western Arrernte country (within shaded area)
Appendix D

A Timeline for Strehlow’s Life

23.12.1871  Carl Friedrich Theodore Strehlow was born in Fredersdorf.

31.3.1888  Entry to the Neuendettelsauer Seminary.

31.8.1891  Graduates from the Seminary.

30.5.1892  Arrives in Australia to take his first posting at Bethesda near Lake Eyre on Diyari country up.

1894  Finishes translation of New Testament into Diyari with Missionary J.G. Reuther. It was called Testamenta marra.

12.10.1894  Arrives at his second posting, the Hermannsburg Mission in Central Australia.

1895  Frieda Keysser arrives in Adelaide

25.9.1895  Frieda marries Carl at Light Pass.

5.11.1995  Frieda and Carl reach Hermannsburg.

24.3.1897  Birth of first son Friedrich.

1897  Publication of J.G. Reuther and C. Strehlow’s Testamenta marra.

1899  Birth of their only daughter Martha.

1900  Birth of Rudolf.

15.5.1901  Carl Strehlow’s letter printed in Kirchlichen Mitteilungen.

10.9.1901  Moritz von Leonardi writes first letter to Carl Strehlow.


1902  Birth of Karl.

1903/1904  Family Strehlow leaves Hermannsburg for a one year holiday in South Australia.

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1904  Publication of *Galgjindintjamea-Pepa Aranda Wolambarinjaka*, an Arrernte Service Book including one hundred German hymns translated into Arrernte.

1905  Birth of Heinrich.

1907  Publication of first volume of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Germany.

6.6.1908  Birth of Ted Strelohw.

1908  Publication of second volume of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Germany.

24.11.1909  Carl finishes his ethnographic research.

11.12.1909  Leonhardi’s last letter.

June 1910  Family Strelohw departs Hermannsburg for Germany. Strelohw and von Leonhardi are planning to meet in October 1910 to discuss their scholarly future.


1910  Publication of third volume of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Germany.

1911  Publication of fourth volume of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Germany.

5.4.1912  Carl Strelohw returns to Hermannsburg with his wife and youngest son. The other five children remain in Germany to be educated; he does not see them again.


1913  Publication of fifth volume of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Germany.

1915  Publication of sixth volume of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Germany.

1919  Finishes first Arrernte translation of the bible.

1920  Publication of seventh volume of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* in Germany.

20.10.1922  Carl Strelohw’s tragic death at Horseshoe Bend.
1925 Part of the Arrernte bible manuscript published posthumously as *Evangelia Lukaka* without mentioning the translator.

1928 Part of the Arrernte bible manuscript published posthumously as *Evangelia Taramatara* without mentioning the translator.

1928 Publication of *Pepa Araquitinja*. Arrernte school primer written by Carl Strehlow.

1943 Duplicates of Carl Strehlow’s manuscripts of *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* and his scientific letters destroyed during the bombing of Frankfurt.
Appendix E

Some Letters by Baron von Leonhardi in Translation

1. Letter

Gross-Karben, d. 10/IX 1901.
Grossherzogthum Hessen.

Esteemed Sir! (Sehr geehrter Herr!)

In Mission Inspector Deinzer’s *Kirchlichen Mitteilungen* of the 15 May of this year I saw a letter by you, which described the situation on your Mission and also contained a few remarks relating to the natives. You wrote the following words: “Their God is not at all concerned about human beings, just as they are not with him.” This indicates that some kind of concept of a divine being exists among the natives. I have studied for many years the religion of the lowest (or primitive) people, and have endeavoured to collect everything on the religious-ethical views of the Australian peoples. The information on the people in the vicinity of your mission — they are called Arunta by researchers; is this name correct? , is sparse, although, as you may be aware, in the past years two large and very important publications on the natives of your area and further surroundings have been published. I am referring to the Horn’s Scientific Expedition to Central Australia Tom IV *Anthropology* and Gillen and Spencer’s *Native Tribes of Central Australia*. While both publications are dense, in particular in regard to initiation ceremonies and mythology, the material also raises a number of questions. For example, little or nothing can be gathered from these publications on the existence of one or more divine beings or spirits who created

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394 Although the SRC holds preliminary translations, I have made my own translations of Baron von Leonhardi’s letters.
395 The *Kirchlichen Mitteilungen* was a monthly church newspaper informing on mission work in North America, Australia and New Guinea since 1868. However, it also published letters and some times even brief accounts on indigenous languages, beliefs and customs. It was edited by the University-educated mission inspector Deinzer, the head of the Neudetelsau Seminary where Carl Strehlow had been educated and prepared for his calling.
396 Carl Strehlow’s letter had been written on the 8th January 1901.
397 As research moves on Leonhardi concludes by 1908 that they are not ‘primitive’.
398 Horn’s Scientific Expedition to Central Australia Vol. IV (1896); Spencer and Gillen’s 1899 publication.
the world and human beings, and taught them the sacred ceremonies (circumcision, male youth's and men's initiation etc). However, I suspect, in analogy to other tribes of the continent, that such a concept cannot be completely absent. Your comment which I referred to above as well as a remark ("Children are a gift of Altjira (God)"\textsuperscript{399}) in an older scientific journal by one of your predecessors, Missionary Kempe,\textsuperscript{400} confirm my inferences and leads me to ask you for a great favour. If you had the energy and time, I would be very thankful if you could answer a few questions. I shall first mention the passages from the above-mentioned publications which relate to my topic and is all I could gather from them:

"Ulthana, a giant man, lives in the sky and has a large foot, just like an emu; Ulthana means spirit. He has a wife and a child which remains a child forever." (Horn Exped. T. IV p. 183)

"In the western sky (Alkira aldorla) lived (at the beginning) two beings who were Ungambikula (out of nothing, self existing), they came to Earth in the oldest Alcheringa time. (Gill and Spencer, p. 388)

Ibid pag. 246 in footnotes (?), a great spirit Twanyirika is mentioned, whose voice is produced by a bull roar to frighten women and children during the circumcision ceremony, who believe in his existence. Furthermore, Gill and Spencer mention the strange idea that children are reincarnated spirits of deceased people who lived in certain places in the ground and entered into women. Conception is supposed to have nothing to do with man.

I would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions:

I. What can you say about the above details? Are they correct?

II. Can you add anything else to the concept of the spirit Twanyirika? Is he possibly the founder and originator of the circumcision ceremony?

\textsuperscript{399} Kempe 1883:53

\textsuperscript{400} Kempe was one of the missionaries who established Hermannsburg in 1877. He wrote in 1883 'Zur Sittenkunde der Centralaustralischen Schwarzen' and in 1891 'A grammar and vocabulary of the language spoken by the Aborigines of the MacDonnell Ranges'.
III. Are there any beliefs in a superior being? How is it imagined? Did it once live on earth? Was it father and begetter of the human beings? Creator of earth and all objects on it? Does he live in the sky or elsewhere? Or did this being live from the very beginning in the sky? Is it imagined to be a big, strong, black man? Is it compassionate (gütig)? Or does the native predominantly fear it?

IV. What happens to the human soul after death? What about the reincarnation of the previously deceased as stated by Gill and Spencer. The reports about the reincarnation are so very new and exotic, that any other communication on this subject would be most welcome. Also any further comments on the ignorance of fathering by man would be highly appreciated.

It goes without saying that I would be very thankful for any other information about the natives, their lives and intellectual concepts (Vorstellungskreis). However I do not dare to take up any more of your time. There is only one more thing I would like to ask from you; be very careful with what you are collecting and only record truly original indigenous views which have not been influenced by whites. This is of particular importance. I ask you to forgive me my liberty of approaching you with my questions, and please pardon them with my interest for this difficult, yet so fascinating subject. There is no other way to obtain any accurate information, as the missionary is practically the only one who can provide answers to such questions due to his close relationship with the natives. It may possibly give you some pleasure to know, that far away at home (Heimath), there is interest in and appreciation for your arduous and yet so beautiful work. May God give you continued enthusiasm and fulfilment in your work!

I have the honour to sign most obediently/faithfully/sincerely,

M. von Leonhardi
2. Letter

Gross Karben 28/8/1904
Principality of Hessen

Esteemed Sir! (Sehr geehrter Herr!)

In 1901 I was very thankful for the detailed information on the natives you so kindly provided. Your communications were of great value to me. In the meantime I have undertaken further extensive research on the Australian Aborigines. Spencer and Gillen's book has had an incredible impact on the scientific world. Thus, your warning comments were very interesting; I admit that I had from the very beginning reservations towards their findings, in particular because no research into the language of the Aranda was apparent, and therefore the authors must have received their information in deficient English from the natives, - a great flaw indeed! It stands in stark contrast to Roth's beautiful book, N.W. Centra. Queensland Aborigines, where one feels reassured of its accuracy! 401 Just recently another substantial book by Spencer and Gillen (The Northern Tribes of Central Australia) 402 has been published in London. Once again it is packed with the strangest details, which are read with amazement and are certainly as individual observations overall correct. The authors also repeat and assert with great confidence again particular systematic concepts from their first book. However, it is exactly these assertions, which are according to your letter of the 20/XII 1901 not entirely correct or even wrong. Namely the following points:

I. the soul of a child is the one of a reborn ancestor,
II. after death the souls of the deceased return to the totemic centres to be reincarnated at a later stage,
III. the concept of a higher or supreme being does not exist,
IV. the spirit Twanyirika does not exist for the initiated; it is only a bogey (scary spirit) for children and women. (NB the latter claim had not been asserted in their first publication.)

Currently my research focus is on these important aspects, and I would like to ask you, if you could again be so kind to provide me with some information.

I and II. You wrote to me: "The natives do not know of any transmigration of the soul; that the soul of a child is the one of a deceased ancestor is alien to them." This contradicts assertions made by Spencer and Gillen in their second book. That is on page 145 of their second book: "In every tribe without exception there exists a firm belief in the reincarnation of ancestors." The whole theory is most clearly summarised on page 512/13 and 515 of Spencer and Gillen first book. In their new work these views are repeated in regard to the Aranda and also asserted for other tribes, who have the same views with local variations. As you know the first book of Spencer and Gillen, I shall simply refer to the relevant passages. The least clear to me is the concept of the Arumburinga spirits. Because the issues at stake are of fundamental importance, I ask you in the name of science to reinvestigate these matters with the old men. It is simply inconceivable that Spencer and Gillen would ascertain again these points with such great confidence, if there really was nothing they could fall back on. One of the gentlemen has lived for 20 years (in which capacity?) among the Aranda. (Is it possible that he does not know the language?) The whole result of Spencer and Gillen's research would become questionable with such misunderstandings!

I assume that these concepts, just like amongst other peoples, are determined by very uncertain, often even contradictory ideas; often a more recent concept has overlaid an older one, without replacing the older one entirely. This causes a great confusion among the relevant ideas which, however, does not disturb the peoples themselves in the slightest. Local variations may also play a role. Hermannsburg is far enough from Alice Springs and I believe Spencer and Gillen collected only at the latter place.

The big mistake in the books of these researchers, seems to me, is that they systemise too much, that they try to hard to show universal views existing in a large area, where there may be no more than individual stories and local views and customs etc.; not a

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403 Insert by von Leonhardi: 'Here they refer to the Urabana, Aranda and all tribes north of the tropic of Capricorn. As the Urabana are closely connected with the Dieri of Lake Eyre, such a view is likely to exist among the latter; however the research of your mission brothers does not mention this. Mr Missionary Siebert who visited me one and a half years ago, did not know anything about it, as far as I can remember. With impatience the new book of A.W. Howitt Native Tribes of south East Australia is expected in the close future, in which the research of Missionaries Siebert and Reuther are to be published'.
closed well ordered system of mythology and custom. Only by collecting individual stories and customs is it possible to tease out by comparison general aspects, this however needs to be done in the study room. Spencer and Gillen present whole chapters (eg X and XI Alcheringa myths) on Aranda myths and concepts as common ordered property of all tribes. That cannot be correct to such a degree. Hence, your view on this subject would be again of greatest interest to me.

III. Spencer and Gillen’s new book contains a whole chapter about beliefs in beings endowed with supernatural powers. On p. 491 the authors conclude: “The Central Australian Natives have no idea whatsoever of the existent of any supreme being, who is pleased if they follow a certain line of what we call moral conduct and displeased if they do not so.” The second half of the sentence could be true and yet, the belief in the existence of such supreme beings or of such a high being may nevertheless exist. According to your information such a belief exists and is in accordance with your predecessors, missionaries Schulze and Kempe. (Unfortunately, I have not seen their contribution in Transact. Royal Society of South Australia 1891 vol XIV.)

Most tribes in the South East of the continent have such a belief: A big with supernatural powers endowed black being lives now in the sky, previously he also dwelt on earth. He is immortal, created people and everything else, taught customs and ceremonies (Kult) (sometime also morals). He is good; though, no one is troubled by him, he only plays a role at the initiation of young men. Women and children do not know about him etc. (Baiame of the Kamilaroi or Munganjar of the Kurnai, for example). This concept may also exist amongst the Aranda and according to you, it exists untouched by European beliefs. Further examination would be very desirable. The old men may still know more about it. Thunder, for instance, may be the voice of Altjira mara? Further I would like to point out that Spencer and Gillen – I am sure you will soon get hold of it yourself – found a Kaitish myth on a supreme being, but do not comment on it (p. 498). It is exactly these kinds of myths that I expect to exist everywhere in various modifications. (However, I am not of the opinion that these represent calls from a primeval revelation, but I am unable here to further expand on my thoughts on this matter.)

IV. Finally, to the spirit Twanjirka. According to Spencer and Gillen’s Native Tribes of Central Australia (p. 246 footnote) and your information, I (like Spencer and Gillen)

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404 In the course of the 20th century Pater W. Schmidt would be bend on proving this during his long academic life. Von Leonhardt is alluding here to Schmidt’s view.
perceived this spiritual being as identical to spirits in South East Australia (e.g. Daramulun of the Kaniloroi and Wiradjuri). However, now Spencer and Gillen claim in their new book on p. 497 that the initiated men do not believe at all in the existence of this being; it is only used to frighten women and children. This apparently is told to the young men during initiation. They are shown the buzzing wood (bull-roarer) and are told: "This is Twanyirika." Certainly, this may be true, but it does not necessarily imply, that Twanyirika does not exist at all. Darmulum and the buzzing wood have a magic connection; the novices learn that the sound comes from the bullroarers, but Darmulum remains nevertheless a sacred and feared being. The Aranda may have the same perception. Clarification of this matter would be of great value. (The Kurnai too show the buzzing wood and say: this is grandfather.)

Enough now! If you only knew how precious every single and precise communication on the natives is to us, you would certainly excuse my presumptuous queries. I would be delighted to edit all myths and customs you collect and get them published. It is paramount to collect now to secure it for science, before it is too late. As this goes hand in hand with your missionary work, I ask you not to hold it against me, that I urge you to this work. Ethnology already owes missionaries an enormous amount!

With greatest gratitude in advance and God be with you!

Yours most (faithfully) obedient,

M. v. Leonhardi.
3. Letter

Gross Karben, Grossherzogtum Hessen, 9/IX. 1905

Answered on the 8. April 1906.\footnote{Strehlow answered this letter on the 8. April 1906. His note.}

Esteemed Mr Strehlow! (Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!)

Today I finally get around to answer your letter and to thank you for the book in Aranda.\footnote{This is probably Galtjindjimajea-Pepa Aranda Wolambarinjaka [Arrernte Service Book including one hundred German hymns translated into Arrernte] published in 1904. Strehlow sent him presumably on the 9. February 1905 a copy of the Arrernte Service book and some answers to his queries.} Your letter was very interesting. I unfortunately cannot do much with the text, as long as a grammar and a dictionary are not available. The only thing I could discern was that you translate God with Altjira. Intriguing, that you after all think that this term contains sufficient meaning to convey the biblical concept of God. I was particularly pleased about your intention to continue collecting language, myth and customs for science; I am greatly looking forward to all of your communications and shall try to publish them appropriately. The more the better!

I would like to raise a few issues again which are important for further research. I assume that in the meantime you got hold of Spencer and Gillen’s recent book. Have you? In the following I will be referring to this publication.

As previously mentioned all stories about Altjira, Twanjiraka and similar spirit beings are of great interest, i.e. myths about the sun, the moon, the stars and all kinds of natural phenomena. The individual stories are certainly always going to vary. You wrote in your first letter, that Altjira created the first human beings. In your last letter you stated that it was Mangakunjurkunja and that it was he who had placed the human seeds into the mistletoe branches. However, according to your first letter, Altjira did this – such contradictions do not seem unlikely to me. It is unlikely that a coherent mythological system exists.

Research into what Spencer and Gillen call Aljerina myths: The Aljerina half animal, half human [like the Mura-mura of the Dieri] lived before the present human beings and left a large number of ceremonies behind which are still performed. Spencer and Gillen’s accounts give no indication of the purpose of these ceremonies. Is it a kind of cult? Possibly old men converted to Christianity and medicine men may be able to provide some precise information on this subject. This is a very important
issue. According to Spencer and Gillen these ceremonies connected with the totems are different to those they call Intichiumpa ceremonies. Information on this matter would be very desirable. For example, clarification on the eating of the totem animal or plant during these ceremonies would be great, as their consumption is usually forbidden to the members of the particular totems.

Detailed inquiries into the so-called Churinga stones and woods: do they have any mystical-magical relationship to individuals (this seems likely according to Spencer and Gillen’s accounts). Very important: Is it connected to the alleged reincarnation of individuals. The concept of the human seeds in the mistletoe etc. needs further research. It seems likely that different tribes and medicine men would have different concepts. What is the Nanja tree in Spencer and Gillen (p. 755 et al.)? Maybe human beings have 2 souls. Thus, besides Itana another spirit being? Very likely; the Dieri, for example, have such a belief.

It would be interesting to know whether the Aranda, like other Australian tribes, have individual fights as ‘Sühne’ for wrongdoings, and whether they too surrender voluntarily to punishment by exposing themselves to spearing. (I believe this occurs amongst the Dieri.) Any other similar primitive law enforcement practice would be of interest.

What do the Aranda associate with the term Arungguintha = magic power (p. 746. in the first book p. 548). This very important term should be accurately described. I deliberately will not write what is scientifically believed about other peoples - this not to prejudice you. In general old magicians would be the best informants. They may also be able to perform individual examples of such magic acts. In which objects (in humans as well?) can such magic power be imbued? Permanently or temporarily?

Myths recorded in Aranda with literal interlinear translations would be particularly valuable; a dictionary and grammar would have to provide the key to them. In scientific circles a dictionary, which provides the meaning of the word as well as a short explanation of individual objects, mythological characters etc., is very popular and valued.

Did Twanyirka introduce the young men’s initiation (circumcision, subincision, fire ceremony etc.) or Altjira? Or is there no founder of such initiation ceremonies?
Do children and women play thread games with their fingers in which all kinds of figures are generated and interpreted as animals etc? (Known in Australia; German youth plays this too.) The English call the game 'cat cradle'.

[Insert at the margins: It would be interesting to know how far the sense of sexual shame is developed. Going completely naked, private part coverings or decoration worn on the private parts? Performance of the coitus in secrecy? Or in front of others? Here, differentiation between the coitus in normal life and the disgusting customs during the initiation ceremonies of the young girls and during big public celebrations would have to be made. Lending and swapping of women. Etc etc – Information on the nature and method (art und weise) of burial, death mourning and widow’s mourning would be of importance too.]

Now enough of these questions. I would like to thank you again for your information and for you willingness to continue research! Hopefully a lovely collection will come together!! How delighted I would be.

With best wishes yours sincerely,

M. von Leonhardi

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407 Some of these questions Carl Strehlow seems to have ignored. On one occasion he replied that it was rather unpleasant to inquire into these subjects. He probably also found them improper for inquiry.
4. Letter

Gross Karben, Grossherzogtum. Hessen. 17/III. 1906

Answered on the 2. June 06\textsuperscript{408}

Sehr geehrter Herr!

A few days ago I received the newest issue of the English journal Folk Lore and discovered in it an article by Mr. N.W. Thomas: The religious Ideas of the Arunta. The value of his article lies with the excepts from your letters to Mr. Thomas, who by the way, is a reputable scientist. I was very pleased about this essay, because it introduces your work to the English audience, who are under the spell of Spencer and Gillen’s books, and prepares them for your upcoming publications. I have sent Mr Thomas some excerpts from letters you send me and have left it up to his discretion to use them in English journals, I hope you do not disapprove. Once you have collated all your material – I am not pushing you in any way to hurry your research – we will have to discuss how this material shall be scientifically used. As this is still another 1-2 years away, I am very pleased that there are already hints to your future publications.

The more I study the work of Spencer and Gillen and compare them with other publications on the blacks of Australia, the more I am convinced, despite all my admiration, that their results are biased. It is simply impossible to penetrate the heart of the beliefs of the Australian Aborigines without the thorough knowledge of their language.

Since I last wrote to you, I have read the essays by the missionaries Kempe and Schulze (Transact. R. Soc. of SA. Vol 14, 1891) who lived amongst the Aranda. Your research will complement theirs seamlessly. Do you know, by any chance, if the gentlemen are alive and if so, where they live? Differences in details will exist, as obviously a coherent system of ideas amongst such a primitive people as the Aranda cannot be assumed. The views of such peoples tend to vary and are very fluid, even if

\textsuperscript{408} Carl Strehlow’s note.
a certain basic concept within one tribe may exist. Often the apparent or actual contradictions are caused by insufficient language proficiency of researchers. Sometimes, also through deliberate lies from the natives who do not want to reveal their inner most being.

Here are some further research topics.

You wrote to Mr. Thomas: ‘The tjurunga is not the abode of the soul, but the body of the dead person.’ I still cannot quite grasp this concept properly and ask you to be as precise as possible on this very important matter.

“Dream is altjarerinja” (obviously Spencer and Gillen’s Alteringa) you wrote that no term exist for the abstract concept of dream. This needs clarification. I ask you to pay the utmost attention to any words related to the concept of Altjira. All are very important. Can the word Altjira also be used as an adjective? In Schulze’s essay the term tmara (=camp) altjira = the place where mother of the dead person was born) appears a number of times.

What is the correct name of Spencer and Gillen Alcheringa ancestors (related to the Mura-mura of the Dieri), that is a race imbued with magic powers who lived before the humans on earth? There are obviously many myths (like those collected by Mr. O. Siebert about the Mura-mura) about these Preadamites, if one may say so. All of these myths are of course very interesting. Did Altjira exist before the Alcheringa ancestors? Did it?

What you call ratapa is called in science totem. You say that all ratapa are called after animals or plants. According to Spencer and Gillen however there are also sun, water, etc totems. Is it really true that Altjira is the creator (I would rather say ‘maker’) of the sun, moon, stars? Are sun and moon in the myths a woman and a man? When one says: “Altjira is the creator of the sun”, the reader invariably thinks that the sun etc. is a object, an unanimated thing.
Finally I would like to direct you attention to Spencer and Gillen's remarks in North Tribes (1904:502) and ask you to find out when and which moral instructions are indoctrinated into the young men and whether these transmitted tribal moral codes may be, after all, somehow under the sanction of Altjira or maybe of Twanjiraka?

I hope you are well and that your arduous and sacrificing work yields some tangible results. I know that such work is done in the name of God and may be fulfilling even without success. However, it must be satisfying and a joy, when one has been able to be something to the poor blacks!

With best regards (I remain) yours most faithfully,

M.v.Leonhardi
5. Letter

Sehr geehrter Herr!

Thank you very much for your letter of the 8.IV. of this year; have you received my letter of the 17.III. of this year?

Your letter contains very interesting material; in particular about Tjurunga. Your findings are clearer than the ones of Spencer and Gillen who seem often to get entrenched in contradictions. Tjurunga are therefore fossilised and petrified totem gods, like the cliffs and trees (the latter corresponds completely with the Dieri Muramura myths). It seems to me important that Altjira does not have a tjurunga. It is still unclear to me, if every living person has a Tjurunga, as Spencer and Gillen write. If this is the case, the existence of this person, even after death, would still be associated with the Tjurunga until it was destroyed? In addition what is the relationship between tjurunga and bullroarer, which is used at initiations and on other occasions? It seemed to me that it may be possible to deduce the bull-roarers belief from the Tjurunga belief. Is the bullroarer a representation of Twanjiraka or in NSW of Dharamulum? When the initiates are told: “This is Tw. or Dh.” (…)

Spencer and Gillen write that during the Intichiuma ceremonies totem animals or plants are eaten, which are usually taboo. Is that true? I have had some doubts about this since I read a report by Mrs. J. Gunn on the Roper River, her book is scientifically not sound. (…) I think I have already asked you on another occasion about the difference between Intichiuma ceremonies and ceremonies which are said to be just dramatic representation of the ancestral myths (Spencer and Gillen’s ‘Sacred ceremonies connected with Totems’).

For the moment I do not want to ask anything else. I am looking forward to your research findings you have promised.

I was very pleased to hear that you included the Luritcha, or as you write the Loritcha, into your research. As far as I know there is still no detailed account on this tribe available. And, please send all the myths you have, even if you intend to exclude some from publication. One can never know when a seemingly irrelevant detail becomes significant when it is added to the already know facts.
It is very thoughtful of you that you want to send me also Tjurunga, weapons, etc. It may be possible to have photographs taken of the best pieces.

In addition, I would like to ask you to certainly record one or the other myth in its original language and place above every word its German meaning. It is the best, if not the only way, to grasp the Geist (spirit) of a language and views, when one is unable to undertake studies on the spot. Even then it is often necessary to provide a correct German translation.

From your chapter index I can gauge that we may expect extensive information (Belehrung). Concerning the marriage classes, I would like to ask you to be as accurate as possible on kinship relationships, including the Loritcha's. The views of Spencer and Gillen – like those of most Australian researchers – on the meaning of kinship terms, as well as of marriage classes, are still hypothetical. It is best to ignore theories during field research, as all of them are speculative, in particular in regard to the difficult issue of marriage laws etc. It is likely that it will take us still a long time before we will be able to explain, with comparison with other peoples, the especially difficult relationships in Australia. I do not see any reason why the Aranda and Dieri relationships should be more primitive than those of Narringeri, for instance, however distinct the three may be. Which one of these is then now the oldest??

With best regards,

yours M.v. Leonhardi
9. Letter

Esteemed Mr Strehlow! (Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!)

Thank you very much for your letter of the 13.II. of this year, the manuscripts, the laitija berries and Cyerus rotundutus bulbs. Since the latter were still able to germinate, I gave some of them to the botanical garden of Darmstadt, and the remainder I will try to grow in my hothouse. Hopefully it will be successful!
I have worked once through your entire manuscript. I have enclosed some comments on a separate sheet. Please write the answers next to my questions, so they can be inserted into the manuscript where required.
What you have supplied up to now exceeds by far my expectations, the myths are very interesting and the interlinear translations are excellent! That you incorporated so many Aranda words I can only approve of. I don't see any reason to delete them. I am very much looking forward to the next segment of your manuscript which hopefully will be soon!
The box, I was informed, has arrived in Bremen and will be delivered in the next few days. I am awaiting it with great anticipation!
I share your impression that Howitt is completely under the influence of Spencer and in many regards it is not a good one; in any case biased. That Howitt does not mention Mura in the sky, although Missionary Reuther certainly told him about it, is not acceptable. He could have expressed his doubts, but he was not entitled to just suppress the matter. The Dieri - and for that matter the Aranda too - in contrast to the natives of SE Australia, are to be classified on the lowest stage of development at all costs. Thus, certain views and beliefs are not allowed to be found! A further reason for classifying the Dieri, Urabanna etc as representatives of the lowest stage of development is the supposition that they practice group marriage of primeval times (analogy to the Piranguru relationship??). Hopefully this fairytale will soon be laid to rest. Even in England, no one other than Mr N.W. Thomas is fighting against it. For

409 Here Leonhardi used the word 'legends'.
most English and in particular Australian scientists group marriage of the Dieri is still a dogma. –

I am pleased that you have weakened Spencer and Gillen’s fairytale about the bullroarer. In your description of the circumcision and subincision ceremonies you will presumably delve deeper into the matter. You will record the detailed myth of the Rukuta men, which I consider as very important, won’t you? What does Rukuta and Tuanjiraka mean? Thus, the small bull-roarers are the bodies of novices. Is the bullroarer given to a certain young man, the body of an Iticua of the same totem as the young man’s? This would be important to establish.414

You are right that it is disgusting to investigate pederasty and closely. Unfortunately in science it is sometimes not possible to get around certain aspects. I believe that the Aranda know of this sexual perversity, but not to the same extent as other tribes in the North and North-West. If really every young man had a young boy of the right marriage class allocated to him (before he can marry) for this purpose, you could not have missed it.

And now to tnantantja (nurunja Sp. and G.). Thus, the kauaua is the feather-bush on the tnantantja. It is, or better, it represents the bundle of spears of a particular “totem god”. It is therefore not the representation of the “totem god” itself? We can assume then that (as kauaua) the spear bundle or the pole in the Engwura ceremony represents an ancestor respectively his spears. As the taking down of this pole seems to be particularly diligent and all the other proceedings associated with this ceremony (the totem images on the bodies) are different to the ones already described, it may be justified to ask about the special/particular meaning of this event.

It always seemed unlikely to me that this could be a sun cult. Foy stays with it and has based a whole theory on it. That’s how theories come into being!

(...) The conclusion here is that the ceremonial object represent objects of ancestors or ancestors, and are not a sun cult.

In regard to Mbiljiraka (Ambilyerka in Sp. and G.), the question why this object is lifted up and down during the night still remains open. I understand that it is not only

411 Rukuta in Carl Strehlow’s work, meaning ‘Young man who has been circumcised and has to keep himself hidden’ (Strehlow 1907:41)
412 In Carl Strehlow’s work Tuanjiraka refers to an ancestral being, but also means ‘large bullroarer’.
413 Iningukua?
414 Insert of shorthand by CS: Tuanjiraka von atua nach u. njinka kurz, der ... (remainder not discernable).
this particular object that is called Mbiljiraka, but also any two matching tjurunga sticks which are used together on other occasions. However, it is still justified to ask about the special meaning of this ceremony during the Engwura as it does not occur during any other event.

Spencer and Gillen seem to maintain in Native Tribes (561) that Ambilyer. means 'newly born child'. The English ethnographer Frazer has based another theory on this. As you can see, there is no shortage of theories. A pity that most of them are useless. To deflate this theory, you may want to investigate the meaning of the Mbiljirkara at the Engwura? By the way what is actually the proper name of the Engwura?

With best regards, yours sincerely

M.v.Leonhardi
13. Letter

Gross Karben 10.7.1907

Sehr geehrter Herr Streholow!

I recently received the final part of the manuscript on Aranda myths. I think I will have to give in to the urging of some of my colleagues and will have to publish the Aranda myths as your first publication in a museum’s series which will also publish the sequels of your research. However, I do not plan to include the chapters on tjurunga, totem and the island of death yet, because I would like to wait for your answers to my queries. Independently from the complete myth collection, I am placing four myths in ‘Globus’ which will appear at the end of August.\textsuperscript{415}

What you describe as fairy tales seems to me quite characteristic for the \textit{Geistesleben} of the blacks in their naivety, in particular in regard to the last fairy tale. It would be nice if you could record more of them. I am looking very much forward to the Loritja myths and even more to the descriptions of the totemic cult acts/rituals/ceremonies. On these matters I expect many revelations about aspects I have not understood so far. Please describe them as detailed and precise as possible.

In the next few weeks an Aranda Grammar by Dr. Planert will be published in the \textit{Zeitschrift für Ethnology} in Berlin based on Missionary Wettengel’s information.\textsuperscript{416} I will send you a copy once it is published.

It has come to my ears that German researchers may or will be seeking information from you. I would like to ask you not to hand any written material or ethnographic objects to these gentlemen. I request this in the first place in your interest, as it certainly would harm the value and uniformity of the material you have given to me so far and the publication based on it. In addition, ethnographic objects just cannot be handed around without appropriate documentation. I believe it would be better if all of your objects and written material be distributed by me only. It is really not self-

\textsuperscript{415} Leonhardi, M.v. 1907 Einige Sagen des Arandastammes in Zentral Australien, Gesammelt von Missionar C. Streholow, Hermannsburg, Süd-Australien. In: Globus 92 (1907), S. 123-126
interest that drives me to this suggestion, but the wish to deliver to science everything you have researched in a continues and coherent form.

Best regards, yours sincerely

v. Leonhardi

Carl Strehlow penned in shorthand some comments on this letter, which he probably sent to Leonhardi on the 30.7.1907: "I think that our views regarding the tjurunga are somewhat different. The Blacks see in the tjurunga the body, if one wants to put it like that, the embodied totem, while many scholars prefer to consider the tjurunga rather as something similar to the soul – as our soul. This is however, not correct. (...) I do not have any objection to the publication of the manuscripts that has already been undertaken. I am not at all afraid of Missionary Wettengel’s research, but rather surprised that he dares to write an Aranda grammar at all, having his weak grammatical knowledge in mind. My intention had been to send you my manuscript bit by bit and then to proceed to the publication of the manuscripts, after the corrections, that would have become necessary in the meantime, had been undertaken. If missionary Wettengel’s research satisfies all scientific needs and make my research superfluous (which I do not believe), you can simply send my manuscript back to me. … I am very anxious to see Wettengel’s grammar. I understand that your warning regarding the possible inquiries of three researchers, was intended in a general sense and was therefore acceptable and appropriate. Warm regards."

417 The transsscriber and translator of this shorthand note is unknown. Source SRC.
17. Letter

Gross Karben on the 11.12.1907

Esteemed Mr. Strehlow!

I had just send you a letter, when I realised that I had forgotten a few questions on totemism and tjurunga, which are important for the complete conceptualisation of the subject. So I enclose them here.\textsuperscript{418} On the other hand one of my earlier questions has been answered; namely the one concerning the protection provided by the proximity of the arkananana and the inna patta ngarra. However, it still remains to be established if these places provide refuge for people and therefore may be regarded as an early right of asylum?

I also send you a copy of the Aranda myths today.

With best regards, yours sincerely

v. Leonhardi

I. May I ask you again for a complete list of all totems (ratapa) as far as that is possible, and to mark with an asterix the animals and plants that are eaten. In addition it would be interesting to know, which of the more obvious animals and plants are not considered to be totems. I.e. the mole? And other animals? - and how are they perceived; eerie, demonic?

II. Since sexual cohabitation is not seen as the reason for conception, as what do the Aranda regard it then? According to Spencer and Gillen (I cannot find the relevant passage at the moment) cohabitation is seen as preparation or something along those lines.

III. Do the Aranda and Loritja see the connection of cohabitation and conception in animals? According to Roth tribes in North Queensland have such a concept, although they have similar views to Central-Australian beliefs in regard to the conception of children.

\textsuperscript{418}In a three-page document (it is an undated draft written in pre-Sütterlin German Script) Carl Strehlow answers a few questions of Leonhardi letters of the 11.12.07 and 15.12.07. It probably was drafted in late February or early March of 1908. (SRC Reference number 19/1 in Folder 'Miscellaneous')
VI. To learn about the hair colour of the Aranda, hair samples of different individuals – also of reddish colour - would be very welcome. Prof. Klaatsch claims, that children in Australia often have fair hair which only gradually darkens. He also claims that the bodies of children are covered with gold blond fluff, that later on disappears (why).

V. Mr J.G. Reuther send me illustrations of dog figures.\textsuperscript{419} Probably made out of clay or wax; painted white, red and black. According to Reuther, these dog-figures represent the dogs of a Mura-Mura. When the dog of a man has gone missing, he is said to place the figure representing the dog of his Mura-Mura onto his hut and sings a spell, which brings the dog back.

Do the Aranda and Loritja have something like it? Plastic figures seem to be very rare in Australia. From the literature, (with exception of rock sculptures) I only know two examples: two wax figures of women of unknown usage from Queensland and a carving (representing a bird) from the Flake River in Worsnop’s Prehistoric Arts etc on the Aborigines of Australia (p. 46 plate 25).\textsuperscript{420} This carved bird is said to be the top\textsuperscript{421} of a stick, however, it seems to me that it was made according to the designs by white people.\textsuperscript{422}

\textsuperscript{419} The substance of the exchange between Leonhardi, Reuther and Strehlow on the dog figures was published in Globus 94: ‘Über einige Hundefiguren des Dieristammes Zentralaustralien’.

\textsuperscript{420} Worsnop, T. 1897 The Prehistoric arts, manufactures, works, weapons, etc. of the Aborigines of Australia. Adelaide: Government Printer.

\textsuperscript{421} Strehlow placed a question mark beside the word “Spitze”.

\textsuperscript{422} Answer by Strehlow: There are neither carved dog figures nor carved birds amongst the Aranda; I too believe that the carved birds are made according to the designs of whites. The local blacks here deny emphatically the production of such figures, as I have not seen before. (SRC 19/1/2 Para)
20. Letter

Hochgeehrter Herr Strehlow!

I was away and just got back a few days ago. For this reason it is only now that I get around to answering your letter of the 10.XII of last year and at the same time I will also answer your letter of the 14.I. of this year. I received the manuscripts on ceremonies. So far, I am very impressed by them and have already gained a much clearer picture on this subject. However, I will probably have a number of questions after I have worked properly through them. Please send everything; obscenities please translate into Latin.

I am currently preparing the second volume of your research which should be ready no later than June. In 1909 the third issue (last one already?) should follow.

Your linguistic work could be published at a later stage – possibly separately. I think it is very important that a comprehensive grammar and dictionary of Aranda, Loritja and Dieri is published together; worthwhile alone for the comparison of the vocabulary. Comparison raises interesting questions concerning culture circles (Kulturkreise) in Central Australia – obviously, within the Loritja area, two such culture areas meet, the northern one and the south coastal one which is connected with the Dieri.

I suspected that you would not be impressed by the Wettengel-Planert grammar. It appeared immediately thin to me. The same is likely to apply to the Dieri grammar which will soon be in print.

Mr Basedow, who has travelled a number of times in Central and Northern Australia and is studying at the moment in Breslau, announced in the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie the publication of an Arunta vocabulary and of another tribe unknown to me. I shall send you a copy when it has been published.

When the occasion arises I shall ask Father W. Schmidt in Mödlingen about the causalis or sublative. At the moment I do not want to make any comment on your judgment of the Plannert Aranda grammar which you would like to publish as a response. However, protest in one or another form will have to be voiced. My comments on the soul reaching heaven or the sky are now obsolete off course since it was a translation error.
Are you sure that you want 20 copies of the Aranda myths. It may be too expensive. It cost me 12.50 Marks; 20 copies would be thus 250 Marks. I can get them cheaper as a member of the Anthropological society of Frankfurt (15 Mark retail price) and would get them for you. However, maybe I will just get 10 copies for the moment. You can always request another 10 copies later. I sent copies of the first volume to Australia: the museum in Adelaide (Dir. Stirling), the museum of Melbourne and to Mr Reuther.423

I am hoping to receive soon notice that the two boxes with ethnographica have arrived. I am also hoping to receive your power of attorney for sale and distribution of the objects. Otherwise I fear that I shall have to fight with Mr Foy from Köln. This somewhat strange gentleman is still claiming, that I have to give him everything you send me. However, I do not feel the slightest inclination to do so. Not least because the Frankfurt museum would like some more things; Basel is asking too, and I could easily also give some tjurunga to Hamburg, Leipzig, Stuttgart and like that I could get a better price for you. 3000 Mark at least, I should think. Thus, I shall fight Foy’s claims with all my might!!

Unfortunately I will not be able to include a complete list of all totems that are known to you – we can always add it in a later publication. In any case such a list is essential. You mention tjurunga (in the list of the two boxes) of Eritja-ilbala, eagle feather; Ininja-tj. (.....); Tniniamb tj. Tnima juice (saft); Worra tj. boy; Inkua tj., dark (earth-) cave; Ara-palla tj K(angaroo) fat; Wonkara-alkna tj. Eagle) Auge. My question here is: Are there totems of the e(ritja?) eye? Kangaroo fat? Innge? Dark cave? Etc. Please send precise information on this.424 You have already written in Aranda myths of the venom gland totem. How do you explain this? The ratapa tjurunga are obviously human totems (which means that the two mythical twin boys are the totem carriers) as well as Atna nitija; this is also the place where the totems of the moon, evening star, sun, etc. belong. These human totems are of particular importance. Is the mythological water serpent a totem of the Aranda 425 as well. (This is the case for the Loritja and the serpent Wothurgua of the Warrmunga obviously too.)

423 Thus, we know that Spencer saw the first volume not long after its publication. Spencer wrote on the 10th March 1908 to Frazer that Carl Strehlow was not a reliable source.
424 There are some shorthand notes on this letter by Carl Strehlow about atua tjilpa and how ratapa are supposed to be created; how a feather of an eagle created out of tjurangeraka the embryos of children.
425 Here Carl Strehlow inserted “Ja”.

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Unfortunately there are no children tjurunga (papa) and Loritja tjurunga among the objects you are intending to send – and they would be of such interest! Have you not been able to obtain Loritja tjurunga yet? Or are some among the sent ones?

I read in the newspapers of terrible heat waves in southern and eastern Australia. I fear greatly that you, too, are enduring much hardship!

Best regards, your most obliged (or yours sincerely),

vLeonhardi
Sehr geehrter Herr Strephlow!

Thank you very much for your letter of the 16.12.1908 and your answers, I received them in the past days. I send you the issue of the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie containing the Dieri grammar the day before yesterday. Missionary Siebert wrote recently to me about this grammar: ‘The Wettengel Dieri grammar is too good for Wettengel. He used already existing material (not his) and it was good he did so.’ However, I still think it is rather poor. It is obvious from Siebert’s letters – and you confirm it – that a Dieri grammar by Flierl and his successors exists. It has not been published, has it? Would it be possible to obtain a copy? I would have it copied and send back. The same would apply for an Aranda grammar if it existed. This would have the advantage that I could pass them on to a professional linguist who could draw our attention to shortcomings which could then be corrected. To prevent the loss of the manuscript, it could always be sent by registered mail.

Thank you for completing the wordlists. I had expected a greater correspondence between Loritja and Dieri. Thus, Loritja belongs to the Western Australian languages. The isolation of the Aranda vocabulary [and surely also their grammar] – or more precisely – their isolation in regard to other Australian languages and their connection (Zusammenhang) to the northern tribes and possibly to New Guinea languages [and cultures], which we suspected, shows up quite clearly.

I am unable to provide you with any information on Dr Eylmann’s person. In his book he portrays himself as a doctor, anthropologist and ethnologist. If he knows as little about medicine as he knows about ethnology, I would not want to put myself into his hands as a patient! (…)

I would be very thankful if you could send some specimens of the tnurungatja butterflies for classification. The beautiful caterpillar was among the animals you sent recently. (…)

I spoke with Professor Schenk. He would be very grateful for some more images of vegetation, for later publication. It is important to indicate on a landscape picture what kind of trees and bushes are on it. [Possibly with dried samples of the plants for exact classification.] (…)

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I do not see why I should not sell the ethnographic objects at the highest possible price!

What is the Lتها performance? I cannot recall you having used this word in the past, unfortunately I cannot look your manuscript up (as I am in Darmstadt at the moment). I am looking very much forward to the papa-tjurunga. Surely no museum has those yet.

I will write to Missionary Wiebusch in Koonibba; and see how he reacts. I wonder if he is willing to provide some information? I am very interested in establishing the links or their lack between the languages and cultures of the Centre and the south coast. Possibly to show that very ancient forms of culture (apparently there are no boomerangs, shields etc on the South-West coast, probably also no marriage classes and no real totemism either) have been preserved there (just like on the south east corner and the south coast of Australia: Kuranai, Narringeri, Naranga etc etc). The very oldest population of Australia (identical with the Tasmanian one?) seems to have been pushed by later migration-streams/waves with higher culture and different language to the South and South East [and south West?] coast and seems to have survived there. However, this is all still very problematic.

Hopefully, you and your family are well and the heat has eased. Here, we are having awful windy and cold winter weather which is physically not doing me any good.

All my best wishes, yours sincerely,

vLeonhardi
Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!

I had just sent you my latest letter, when I received the enclosed article from its author. Since I have the particular issue of the Zeitschrift für Ethnologie already, I shall send you this separatum. The author is Professor Schmidt of the Catholic Mission Institute St Gabriel in Mödling near Vienna. He is a fine ethnologist and definitely the most thorough German authority on Australian and Oceanic languages today.

In the enclosed essay I consider the origin of the Aranda (and of the north-west tribes) culture to have been successfully proven. I had been for a long time convinced that the Aranda culture is not 'primitive'. You may not be familiar with all details referred to in the essay, so I shall make some comments.

A number of scientists, like Gräbner, Foy, Thomas partially, and also Schmidt, believe that the population of Australia is not homogeneous, but composed of about 3 strata of peoples and cultures. The oldest is said to be the Tasmanian one that is thought to have occupied all of Australia at some stage and has survived in rudiments in the southeast. On top of the Tasmanian strata, there are another 2 layers with new cultural elements/components (totemism, boomerang, spear thrower, etc). As a fourth layer Schmidt wants to produce evidence that it originated in New Guinea. The details are still rather unclear. However, in its basic premise I consider the hypothesis as quite probable. What is difficult is find is the provenience of the 2 layers and waves of migration overlaying the original Tasmanite stratum!

You may want to comment on some of the details of the essay. Schmidt has made a few mistakes. For example, he did not understand the iningukua = individual altjirangamitjina; not a special totem spirit! You probably will not agree with his description of the Aranda’s conception either.

It is also important that you assert that the constantly repeated view on the compulsory eating of the totem animal and plant among the Aranda and Loritja is incorrect – I asked you already in my last letter to take position on this matter - so that

I still have a chance to incorporate it in the next volume. It will not be possible to commence printing before autumn. The Frankfurt museum just does not have the required funds at its disposal and the next issue will be expensive.

I have marked with a cross all passages in Schmidt’s essay which seemed to me doubtful (zweifelhaft) and I would be interested in your opinion on them.

With best wishes yours sincerely

vL
Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!

Please find enclosed a very long questionnaire on initiation ceremonies. There are just so many question, because your accounts and Spencer and Gillen’s deviated a great deal.

Enclosed a pleasing review in Globus. Another very favourable one was published by v. Gennep in a French journal. I will send the issue of Man with two essays by Lang as soon as I receive them.

Should I receive further information on Spencer and Gillen’s research methods and their view on the uniformity of basic beliefs among all Aranda as well as details on the inaccuracy of their translations, I think it will be appropriate to say something about it in the foreword of our next volume.

With best regards,

Yours, M.L.
Sehr geehrter Herr Strehow!

About four weeks ago I received the first section of your manuscript on Social Life etc., and yesterday the second section as well as your letter from the 9. II of this year. Thank you very much.

As you do not make any comments on the chapter 'tjurunga and totem concepts' I assume to my delight that you are happy with the way I have published it and that I have not made any mistakes. The printing errors will have to be corrected in the third volume, of course 'Ueblichkeit' is incorrect. Unfortunately, that is a lapsus calami on my part. It is inconceivable to me how I missed that during proofreading!

Today, I again send you a questionnaire, which I had completed, before your manuscript arrived yesterday. I immediately included a few more questions on Inkura. However, before I go into any more detail regarding the fascinating descriptions of the initiation ceremonies, I will first read Spencer and Gillen's account again. The Tingara pole is nothing else but a "Kultbild" (an image of a deity, that is altjira as gods??).\textsuperscript{428} Spencer and Gillen call it Kauaua, the Tingara seems to have been described to them as a 'high pole'.

Is it possible to determine where the word koorditcha (and similar spellings) originally came from. Spencer and Gillen did not invent it nor were they first to use it. It appears already in Curr, Australian Race I page 148 and is said to come from a tribe to the west of Lake Eyre (?)

The wordlist of the secret language is very valuable; it would be interesting to trace all or at least one or the other word to other languages. I am however afraid that the vocabularies may not be available.

In the coming days I shall send you two issues of \textit{Man} with essays by Andrew Lang which may provoke a few responses from you: e.g. What happens with the births out of wedlock? Some of Lang's comments indicate that he did not understand your descriptions properly. - More details about this in my questionnaire.

\textsuperscript{428} It is not quite clear what he means in this bracket.
I also would like to ask you to record one or the other Loritja narrative in its original text (Urtext). We have no Loritja texts yet, except for that one single tradition. It is very important to establish that the languages Loritja and Aranda are distinct in structure and vocabulary.

Your account (p. 731) on the trumpet blowing is rather brief. In particular: Are on these occasion the magnificently ornamented trumpets (karakara) used? Do women and children actually see the trumpet-blowing man? The karakara is therefore not a sacred, secret object, is it? The Dieri seem to see this differently.

What does 'to arouse desire for the performer' amongst the women mean? If the ceremony in question, just as the previous one, originated in the North (from the Ilpara and Inmatjera as the songs indicate) then it may only be a remnant that may have been of more significance elsewhere. Somewhere else the trumpet may have been the spirits voice.

With best regards, yours sincerely

M.v.L
Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!

A few days ago I received the continuation of the manuscript on law, death and burial. I immediately read it with great interest and have included a few questions on the enclosed sheet. There is always so much more I would want to know and if communication was easier you would be saying so much more. I am afraid that more often than not the native’s conditions are seen in the wrong light. I always have the feeling that I still cannot grasp the essence of the life and being of the blacks. I was particularly interested in what you wrote about the burials of the North-West Loritja and the western tribes. To just leave the dying and the corpses behind is very rare in Australia. I am only aware of two such reports. One refers to the south coast. Also the killing of the critically ill has rarely been observed in Australia. Helms, who was part of the Elder expedition, mentions such a case in Western Australia – the Murchison gold fields. It possibly occurs more often in the interior of Western Australia - an area we know very little about.

Yesterday, I received notification from the shipping company that the two boxes with ethnographic objects should arrive with the next mail steamer. I am looking very much forward to them.

I have realised that I have been mispronouncing Aranda and Loritja words. I was doing this with Dieri until Mr Siebert corrected me. Thus, now I am quite unsure about the other languages. It might be advisable to indicate the pronunciation with symbols like ‘ in your dictionary. I think ‘ is sufficient in most cases.

I enclose a list of words and would be grateful if you could mark them with accents and return them when you get around to it. Even with such common words like Paltara, Iabalpa, coroa, etc., I believe that I am mispronouncing them. I have been saying: Palta’ra, Iaba’lpa, coro’a.

I did not receive a letter from you or any of the questionnaires which refers to the initiation ceremonies with this mail. I am not saying this to pressure you, but to establish if anything has been lost. I certainly hope not.
Mr Fölscher in Port Darwin wrote recently to me and was also going to write to you. Unfortunately, he will not be able to provide anything new as he is already 79 years old.

I have enclosed a short essay by me, which may be of interest to you.

With kind regards, yours very obliged,

v. Leonhardi.

Very thankfully I return the Aranda grammar!
Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!

Although my last letter left only a few days ago I am already writing again, because I have a question to ask and, taking into consideration that you will leave Hermannsburg this spring, there is not much time to lose for further enquiries.

On page 464 of your manuscript you talk of a ‘friend’ of various animals. They are obviously identical to those mentioned by Spencer and Gillen in Native Tribes page 447. It would be very interesting to learn more specifics about them. Which animals have such ‘bird friends’? Are the ‘friends’ always birds? Do the totem companions of the animal in question show any consideration for the friend (as claimed by Spencer and Gillen)? Are there any myths about these relationships? And if, which ones? The matter may possibly be connected to the so-called linked-totem of New Guinea, or else to the multiplex totem of South-East Australia.

According to the myth, Altjira has ‘fair’ hair. Does the same apply to Tukura? Is the word ‘fair’ also used for ‘fair red haired’ people? And what is it called? Are fair-haired people an unusual rarity? Is the hair straight or fuzzy? Hair samples requested!

In your letter of the 18 August you asked whether I would like new Loritja myths in original text? Of course I would prefer new myths, however, one or two of the myths already published would be sufficient in original text. An Aranda text for comparison is not necessary. I am in the first place interested in additional Loritja texts, because they are disappearing. If possible, have the old men dictate the texts to you.

On p. 493 of your manuscript, you talk of very small ants who presumably carry honey into the argankunba. They are unlikely to be ants. As flying ants are nothing but male ants and they certainly are not collecting honey. It is likely to be a different insect all together. It would be marvellous to see the iwunji-wunja. Please send as many specimens as possible. Other ants in spirits would also be welcome.

According to the classification of the Berlin zoological museum, and as I had classified it myself, the Jeramba is a Camponotus inflatus Lubb. However, there must
be more species of honey ants in Central Australia. What do the females and female workers who live in the same nest and the swarming males look like?

The Berlin zoological museum was very grateful for the 40 bees, wasps and ants I had given to them. They told me that Australian insects are not well represented at their museum. Maybe, I could give Berlin a further 80 beetles which I held back.

With best regards,

yours sincerely,

v.L
Gross Karben on the 11.12. 1909

Sehr geehrter Herr Strehlow!

Thank you very much for your letter of the 12 October and the continuation of the manuscript. I am very pleased that you have recorded six additional Loritja myths, which hopefully will soon arrive. After having only read once through the manuscript, I have to make this comment: the men’s secret language – as well as the one of the novices – is something completely new to me and I doubt that anything like it has been published anywhere else. Are there any other tribes who may have it? Or is it a special feature of the Aranda?

Regarding page 1082, I have a question on the appearance of the fish spear. Does it have several prongs? Is it possible to get hold of one of them? Australian fish spears from other areas have usually 3-4 prongs.

Are the freshwater mussels (Unio species) eaten? (according to Eylmann they are eaten)

Would it be possible to obtain a kanta or ranta (Kreuz:cross)? I ask and beg for these objects because you are leaving Hermannsburg, and I do not know if you will return there and, thus, in the future, it would be impossible or at least very difficult to acquire these items.

A grinding-stone (tnama) would also be welcome, as well as the matching pounding stones.

Now, let’s turn to the ‘honey’ in the arganka tubers. (...)

Page 1096 Pregnant women are not allowed to drink hot water. How is the water heated? Is the water heated in wooden dishes?

Page 1104 One of the Queensland boomerangs is called mulunga which is said to mean: he who cuts life off. Is mulunga an Aranda word? Or was the word mulunga adopted with the boomerang. Mulunga is also the name of the Queensland magic dance. Its purpose is the destruction of all whites (according to Siebert). Mulunga equals Molong in Roth.
Your last collection of stone knives attracted great interest. These objects are much sought after, in particular the lilara.

I cannot recall if you already sent the very small dish, bakala, which you have called 'cup'. I may be wrong.

Do the Aranda and Loritja make and use blue and green paint? It seems that there are blue dyes in Western Australia.

I understand that in the process of fire rubbing the split piece of tnima (titija etc.) wood is rubbed with the mera or the boomerang or, more precisely, that sawing movements are lengthways or across the piece of wood or the gap in the wood.

Thank you very much for the Fölsche letter excerpt; I was very interested in it and it confirmed my scepticism towards Spencer and Gillen.

The animals you sent were received with great excitement. Some of the insects were sent to the Berlin museum. It has not yet been possible to classify the lizards and snakes because Professor Böttger in Frankfurt is sick and nobody else dares to have a go at it. Also the plants have not been classified yet.

The printing of the third journal is very slow, I am not sure whether it will be ready by the end of January and if I should send it to you in Australia. If it is ready by the end of January, I will send it, as it will reach you before your departure. This issue will look good due to the images. It will be better than the last one. The printers are really trying hard, and the gentlemen at the Frankfurt museum, in particular Consul Sarg, are very supportive.

Even if my Christmas and New Year’s wishes will not reach you in time, I shall express them anyway, and will be thinking of you on those days.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

M.v.Leonhardi
PRIMARY SOURCES AT THE STREHLOW RESEARCH CENTRE


Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, probably 8.4.1906 (SH-SP-1-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, 2.6.1906 (SH-SP-2-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, 19.9.1906 (SH-SP-3-1)
Carl Strehow to Dr. W. Foy, late 1908 (SH-SP-4-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, 13.2.1907 or earlier (SH-SP-5-1)
Carl Strehow to N.W. Thomas, mid to end of 1906 (SH-SP-6-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, probably 13.12.1906 (SH-SP-7-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, probably on 3.12.1906 (SH-SP-8-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, n.d. probably 1907 (SH-SP-9-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, n.d. probably 1907 (SH-SP-10-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, possibly 6.4.1907 (SH-SP-11-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, n.d. probably 1907 (SH-SP-12-1)
Carl Strehow Letter to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, n.d. (SH-SP-13-1)
Carl Strehow Letter to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, 23.10.1907 (SH-SP-14-1)
Carl Strehow to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, probably 10.12.1907 (SH-SP-15-1)
Carl Strehow Letter to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, 14.1.1908 (SH-SP-16-1)
Carl Strehow Letter to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, 30.7.1907 (SH-SP-17-1)
Carl Strehow Letter to Baron Moritz von Leonhardi, n.d. (SH-SP-18-1)

Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehow on the 10.9.1901 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehow on the 28.8.1904 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehow on the 9.9.1905 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehow on the 17.3.1906 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehow on the 2.6.1906 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehow on the 7.8.1906 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehow on the 26.11.1906 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 10.3.1907 (from Darmstadt)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 10.4.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 23.4.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 29.5.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 2.6.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 10.7.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 5.9.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 30.9.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 8.12.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 11.12.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 15.12.1907 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 10.1.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 8.3.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 9.4.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 1.6.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 7.6.1908 (Gross Karben)\(^{429}\)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 29.7.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 29.8.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 24.9.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 23.10.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 23.12.1908 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 28.1.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 12.2.1909 (from Darmstadt)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 26.2.1909 (from Darmstadt)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 2.3.1909 (from Darmstadt)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the Easter Monday 1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 3.4.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 1.5.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 19.7.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 18.8.1909 (Gross Karben)

\(^{429}\) Von Leonhardi wrote this letter on the letter Karl von den Steinen had written him on the 3.6.1908 in regard to C. Strehlow's article in the Zeitschrift für Ethnology.

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Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 31.8.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 23.9.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 31.10.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 14.11.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 16.11.1909 (Gross Karben)
Baron Moritz von Leonhardi to Carl Strehlow on the 11.12.1909 (Gross Karben)

Carl Seidel Letter to Carl Strehlow, 12.9.1908 (SH 1908-2-1)
Karl von den Steinen Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 3.6.1908
Prof. Fincke Letter to Moritz von Leonhardi, n.d.
Sarg Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 20.9.1912
Sarg Letter to Carl Strehlow on the 18.11.1912
Hagen Letter to Strehlow on the 10.9.1913
Bogner Letter to Carl Strehlow, Bethesda, 8.5.1900 (1900-21-2)
Christian Keysser Letter to Carl Strehlow, 4.9.1905 (SRC 1905/26(a))
Von Leonhardi Letter to R.H. Mathews on the 9.6.1908 (from Gross Karben)
Von Leonhardi Letter to R.H. Mathews on the 27.9.1908 (from Gross Karben)
Von Leonhardi Letter to R.H. Mathews on the 23.7.1909 (from Gross Karben)
Von Leonhardi Letter to R.H. Mathews on the 22.6.1910 (from Gross Karben)


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