

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY



T.G.H. Strehlow's  
*Journey to Horseshoe Bend*

The re-publication of an Australian Classic  
A Symposium

30 October, 2015  
State Library of New South Wales



### **Convenor**

→ Associate Professor Hart Cohen

### **Co-convenor**

→ Dr Rachel Morley

### ***Thanks to:***

#### **Western Sydney University**

- Professor Scott Holmes, DVC Research and Innovation
- Jennifer Dunston, DVC's Office
- Professor Peter Hutchings, Dean, School of Humanities and Communication Arts
- Jenny Purcell, School Manager, School of Humanities and Communication Arts
- Robyn Mercer, Travel Officer, School of Humanities and Communication Arts

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- Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian and Director
- Monica Galassi, Project Officer, Indigenous Services
- Dr Rachel Franks, Coordinator, Education and Scholarship
- Anika Nichols, Venue Hire Manager

#### **Museums and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory**

- Marcus Shutenko, Director
- Pierre Arpin, former Director

#### **Giramondo Publishing**

- Ivor Indyk
- Alice Grundy

#### **Handbook design**

- iMedia, Western Sydney University

## Welcome Note

We are pleased to welcome you to this Symposium in conjunction with the launch of the republication of T.G.H. Strehlow's *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* (Giramondo, 2015). The book has inspired works of art, ceramics, music, film and critical writing. We are delighted to have scholars researchers and artists who have engaged with the book for this program of presentations.

*Journey to Horseshoe Bend* was first published in 1969 by Angus and Robertson. The book was the culmination of Strehlow's obsessive engagement with a childhood journey he took through Central Australia in 1922 that culminated in his father's death. The book is regarded as an autobiographical memoir, but it also engages with far more than Strehlow himself. It criss-crosses an Aboriginal cultural and historical landscape as well as a physical one and, in this way, pre-empt certain kinds of experimental writing that would later be found in literary modulations of ethnography and biography. The re-publication of this classic Australian book by Giramondo is an opportunity to celebrate its re-appearance after a lengthy absence.

Following the symposium, a critical companion of essays emerging from the event will be developed for publication. Should you wish to contribute to the critical companion to *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*, please contact

**Hart Cohen** [h.cohen@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:h.cohen@westernsydney.edu.au) or

**Rachel Morley** [r.morley@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:r.morley@westernsydney.edu.au).

I wish you a terrific day and hope you enjoy the program.

**Associate Professor Hart Cohen**

Western Sydney University

# Symposium Program

## Welcome to Country

### Uncle Allen Madden

Board Member, Metropolitan  
Local Aboriginal Land Council

## Opening remarks

### Professor Brett Bowden

Research Director, School of  
Humanities and Communication  
Arts, Western Sydney University

### Richard Neville

Mitchell Librarian and Director,  
Education and Scholarship

### Professor Ivor Indyk

Publisher, Giramondo

**8.45am-9am**  
**Macquarie Room**  
*Registration*

**9am-9.15am**  
**Metcalfe Auditorium**  
*Welcome to Country*  
Uncle Allen Madden

**9.15am-9.30am**  
*Opening remarks*  
Brett Bowden,  
Richard Neville,  
Ivor Indyk

**9:30am-10.30am**  
*Session 1: Critical Perspectives*  
Philip Jones and  
John Morton

**10:30am-11.00am**  
**Macquarie Room**  
*Morning tea*

**11:00am-12.00pm**  
**Metcalfe Auditorium**  
*Session 2: The Strehlow Research Centre and Hermannsburg/Ntaria*  
Brett Galt Smith and  
Adam Macfie with  
Baydon Williams

**12:00pm-1.00pm**  
*Session 3: The Cantata*  
Anne Boyd and  
Andrew Schultz

**1:00pm-2.00pm**  
*Lunch*  
**Macquarie Room**  
*Launch of Journey to Horseshoe Bend (Giramondo, 2015) with Ivor Indyk and Philip Jones*

**2.00pm-3.00pm**  
**Metcalfe Auditorium**  
*Session 4: The Mission and Hermannsburg*  
Tim Rowse and  
Martin Edmond

**3.00-3.30pm**  
**Macquarie Room**  
*Afternoon tea*

**3:30pm-4.30pm**  
**Metcalfe Auditorium**  
*Session 5: Visualising Horseshoe Bend*  
Peter Dallow and  
Jason Ensor

**4:30-5pm**  
*Closing remarks*  
Hart Cohen and  
Rachel Morley

**5:00pm**  
*Closing drinks*

During the day you are also invited to view and listen to materials in the Macquarie Room related to *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* including the *Journey to Horseshoe Bend Cantata* (CD), *Mr Strehlow's Films* and *Cantata Journey* (films) and the *Journey to Horseshoe Bend Database*.

The 2015 Giramondo edition of *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* will be officially launched at 1pm by Ivor Indyk and Philip Jones in the Macquarie Room during lunch.

## Session 1 Critical Perspectives

### Approaching the bend: How to read T.G.H. Strehlow's last book

Philip Jones

*Journey to Horseshoe Bend* was written at a pivotal moment in Strehlow's life, almost half a century after the events it relates. To a straightforward, if searing narrative, of his father's death journey, Strehlow added layers of historical fact, accountability, and revelations of Arrernte mythological drama, keyed to the Finke River landscape. In separating and accounting for those layers, this paper throws some light on the making of a flawed masterpiece.

**Dr Philip Jones** is a historian working in an anthropological milieu at the South Australian Museum. He curates and writes on the themes of Aboriginal history, art and material culture, and has a particular interest in the histories of collecting, photography and anthropology.

### That's where Dad completely failed' or, what's wrong with *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*

John Morton

'That's where Dad completely failed' was a statement made by Ted Strehlow's son, John, about the way Ted depicts Frieda Strehlow in *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*. The way Ted tells the story of his father's death has long been controversial and, in John Strehlow's estimation, a great deal of the book 'is actually fiction'. It seems to me, however, that, beyond mere error, failure is intrinsic to the book. I have never been able to read *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* without experiencing a strong feeling that the narrative is flawed and unconvincing, if not in literary style, then at least in structure and design. In this presentation, which builds on papers I published earlier (in 1995 and 2004), I look into the book's structure and design in order to expose what I see as the work's great defect - the combination of tragedy with a happy ending negatively correlated with events in Ted's life after the publication of the book.

**Dr John Morton** is an anthropologist who has worked in Aboriginal studies for the past 35 years. He taught anthropology at La Trobe University for more than 20 years and is now a research associate there, in the School of Social Sciences. He has also worked as a museum curator and independent consultant in the field of land rights and native title. He has published widely, including two earlier papers about the life and work of Ted Strehlow - "'Secrets of the Arandas": T.G.H. Strehlow and the course of revelation' (1995) and 'Krippendorf's lesson in the Centre: The shaping of the Arrernte through T.G.H. Strehlow's "Family Romance"' (2004) - both of which also critically engage with *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*.

## Session 2 The Strehlow Research Centre and Hermannsburg / Ntaria

### **Journey as vehicle: *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* – the Trojan horse in Strehlovian politics**

Brett Galt Smith

The Strehlow Research Centre was not a popular institution in which to work from its opening in 1991. It had many local critics including Central Australian Aboriginal people and land councils. It also had critics in far away tertiary institutions around Australia and even overseas. By 2002, mainstream newspapers still spoke of 'material hidden in the SRC vaults' and of T.G.H. Strehlow as 'hero of Central Australia or seller of secrets' (*Review Magazine, Weekend Australian* 14-15 September 2002). In reality, by 2002 the SRC had become well and truly open for business with requests from Aboriginal men to store their sacred objects for safe keeping; regular visits by Aboriginal people to view objects, films and photographs and to listen to sound recordings. For a broader audience there was a conference of cathartic proportions; the SRC's facilitation of Hart Cohen's documentary on SBS Television (*Mr Strehlow's Films*); a multi award-winning biography by Barry Hill (*Broken Song*); and a cantata (*JTHB*) by Andrew Schultz and Gordon Kalton Williams, commissioned by Symphony Australia and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, featuring the Ntaria Ladies' Choir. *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* played a critical role in the opening up of the SRC and what Dr Mike Smith of the National Museum of Australia described as its transformation (in museum terms) from "a kind of North Korea to a Switzerland". This paper describes how *JTHB* was deployed to help reconcile the SRC's content with its critics in order to maximise access and use of a rich and multifaceted cultural and historical collection of continuing national relevance.

**Brett Galt-Smith** was Director of the Strehlow Research Centre from 1998-2003. He had previously worked at the Centre from its opening in 1991 until 1994 working across both research operations and tourism. Since leaving the NT in 2003, he has worked extensively in Indigenous affairs in the Australian Government in a range of roles including as Director negotiating the return of Indigenous remains from overseas collecting institutions, and most recently Director of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children. He currently directs the Stakeholder Team in Early Childhood and Child Care in the Australian Government in Canberra. In his spare time, Brett (with his wife Mary) is a civil celebrant conducting weddings, same-sex unions and funeral services.

### **In conversation: The journey continues: The significance of Strehlow's memoir for Ntaria**

Adam Macfie with Baydon Williams

Many of the themes found in T.G.H. Strehlow's *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* resonate among the Aranda community to this day. The general narrative of the book is well-known to the Aranda people by being passed down among families from one generation to the next. As such, *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* is representative of a continuation of the ancient tradition of oral storytelling. Special attention is often given by the Aranda families to those characters in the text with whom they share an ancestral relationship. The totemic landscape and the affinity that people have with their country is another theme that endears this story to the Aranda. Many Aranda still feel that T.G.H. Strehlow belonged to them and this book gives us all an insight to their shared story.

**Baydon Williams** is a Western Aranda man from Hermannsburg (Ntaria) who shares a special connection with *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*. He is a descendent of Hezekiel (great grandfather) as well as sharing a kinship link to several of the characters in the book. Baydon is a community leader and a culture man amongst the Western Aranda and has a deep knowledge of the country through which this journey takes place.

**Adam Macfie** is the Strehlow Research Centre's Anthropologist and has worked with the Collection since 2004, where he started as a field researcher on the ARC funded *Reimagining TGH Strehlow's Journey to Horseshoe Bend* project. He has built close ties with the Aranda community over the years by travelling with traditional owners and engaging them with the Collection. Together they have visited sites, recording their stories and mapping the Strehlow Collection across the cultural landscape. Adam has been a primary agent in developing the repatriation program of sacred objects and knowledge held at the Strehlow Research Centre in collaboration with the Aranda community.

## Session 3 The Cantata

### Landscape, myth, music: Finding an Australian voice in Peter Sculthorpe's *The Song of Tailitnama* (1974)

Anne Boyd

T.G.H. Strehlow's monumental collection *Songs of Central Australia* (1971) was published as Peter Sculthorpe was contemplating the composition of his opera *Rites of Passage* originally commissioned to open the Sydney Opera House in 1973. Following Jung's philosophy that humankind needed religious belief to harmonise inner light and darkness, Peter, who as a declared nature pantheist, thought of himself as a religious composer, was at the height of his search for material that could form a genuinely Australian musical language; he was looking to the sun drenched deserts as a source of inspiration. He was excited to find in *Songs of Central Australia* an opening to an inspirited landscape. Believing, along with Strehlow, that the Aranda cultural heritage represented in these song materials was at least as significant to humanity as literature of the Graeco-Roman Classical Age, in making his opera, Sculthorpe combined verses from Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* with Aranda song texts. A year later, he turned once more to this source, specifically to some verses from *The Song of Tailitnama* concerning a totemic site in Central Australia associated with the rock wallaby. Written for soprano, six celli and percussion, this music was to become an *ur-text* providing the composer with material for many later compositions, most significantly *Earth Cry* (1986/2003). My paper aligns Sculthorpe's musical processes with imaginary metaphysical space as deepened engagement with landscape inspirited by Aranda myth: a complex and highly problematic cultural process that was nevertheless to yield richly creative and original Australian musical treasures. In this process, T.G.H. Strehlow can be viewed as a highly significant intermediary.

**Professor Anne Boyd AM** is one of Australia's most distinguished composers and music educators. Peter Sculthorpe was her earliest and most influential composition teacher. In 1990, she became the first Australian (and the first woman) to be appointed Professor of Music at the University of Sydney. Her most recently commissioned works include *Ganba* for Baritone Saxophone and piano (2011), *Kabarli Meditation* for solo piano (2012) *Daisy Bates at Ooldea*, a chamber opera (2012) and String Quartet No 3 (2015). She is currently exploring a collaborative 'Two Ways' approach in a trilogy of music theatre works on significant Australian women, all of whom worked closely with Aboriginal people (Daisy Bates, Olive Pink and Annie Lock). She was honoured with an AM in the Order of Australia in 1996, an Honorary Doctorate from the University of York in 2003, the Distinguished Services to Australian Music Award at the APRA-AMC Classical Music Awards in 2005 and the Sir Bernard Heinz Award in 2014.

### Journeys with musical space – real and imagined

Andrew Schultz

The memorable physical journey down the Finke River, depicted in T.G.H. Strehlow's *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*, invited metaphorical and literal translation into musical terms in my symphonic cantata of the same name (2003). In this paper I will look at the way composers draw on existing metaphors, and create new metaphors, for real, lived experience: in particular, the way music can act as a translation and transformation of experience and gain cathartic weight in the process. The focus will be on examples from the musical work that translate space into compositional form; and on the challenges that exploring space in an unconventional way creates for a composer in the pragmatic and conservative world of orchestral performance traditions.

**Professor Andrew Schultz** has received various awards, prizes and fellowships. His music, which covers a broad range of chamber, orchestral and vocal works, has been performed, recorded and broadcast widely by leading groups and musicians internationally. He has held many commissions, including from the major Australian orchestras. Andrew has written a number of large-scale works, including three operas (*Black River*, *Going Into Shadows* and *The Children's Bach*) that have been presented live and on film around the world. Other major works include *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*, *Song of Songs* and three symphonies. Andrew is currently Professor of Music at the University of New South Wales. Recent composition successes include the Paul Lowin Prize, the Schueler Award, Australia Council Fellowship, Cité des Arts Paris residency and the Centenary of Canberra symphony commission. CDs of his orchestral music performed by the Sydney and Tasmania Symphonies are available on ABC Classics, three volumes of chamber music are available on the Tall Poppies and Wirripang labels, and a disc of ensemble vocal music has been released by The Song Company.

## Lunch Session: Macquarie Room

### Launch of the new edition of T.G.H. *Strehlow's Journey to Horseshoe bend*

Professor Ivor Indyk, Giramondo Publishing

Dr Philip Jones, Museum of South Australia

**Professor Ivor Indyk** is founding editor and publisher of *HEAT* magazine and the award-winning Giramondo book imprint, and Whitlam Professor in Writing and Society at Western Sydney University. His current research projects include the history of Australian literary publishing and the expression of emotion in Australian literature, with a particular interest in Patrick White, and such concepts as awkwardness, shyness, embarrassment and wonder. Important Australian authors published by him at Giramondo include Alexis Wright (winner of the Miles Franklin Award), Brian Castro, Gerald Murnane, Nicholas Jose, Judith Beveridge, Jennifer Maiden, Robert Gray, Gig Ryan, Beverley Farmer and Antigone Kefala. A critic, essayist and reviewer, he has written a monograph on David Malouf for Oxford University Press, and essays on many aspects of Australian literature, art, architecture and publishing.

**Dr Philip Jones** is a historian working in an anthropological milieu at the South Australian Museum. He curates and writes on the themes of Aboriginal history, art and material culture, and has a particular interest in the histories of collecting, photography and anthropology.

## Session 4 The Mission and Hermannsburg

### The remote mission – towards a model of innovative colonial authority

Tim Rowse

In remote Australia, the rule of colonial law was slow to achieve practical effect, and venturesome colonists – sometimes including low-ranking state officials – were free to exploit Aboriginal people on whose land and seascapes they developed their enterprises. From 1877 the churches offered a corrective force, deploying missionaries in remote locations. To be effective, missions had to rival the economies of those that were exploiting Indigenous people. In this paper, I will sketch a general model of the remote mission in these terms – focusing on the mission as a political economy rather than as the source of a new set of religious beliefs and practices. The paper will draw its examples from all over 'remote Australia'. As a site of economic engagement, the mission offered incentives to belong, such as much desired commodities (notably tobacco) that could be 'purchased' by trading and/or by compliance with mission routines. This mode of engagement afforded much choice to hunter gatherers who maintained practical access to the means of production. Aboriginal people thus differed in the extent and nature of their commitment to missions. Sex and age were among the axes of such differentiation. Missionaries also differed in their aims and methods and the paper will give examples of different views about the management of children, the emancipation of women and the use of tobacco as an incentive to attachment.

**Professor Tim Rowse** is a Professorial Fellow in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. His most recent book is *Rethinking Social Justice: From 'Peoples' to 'Populations'* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2012).

### T.G.H. Strehlow – The Hermannsburg Years

Martin Edmond

T.G.H. Strehlow was born on the Hermannsburg Mission, west of Alice Springs, on June 6, 1908. It was a birth attended by portents; or so the Lutherans believed. He was the youngest of six children of Superintendent Carl Strehlow and his wife, Frieda. Apart from a visit to Germany with the family in 1911-12, from which he was the only child to return to Australia, Ted spent his formative years on the Mission. He received instruction from his father in Greek, Latin, music and scripture; and grew up multilingual (German, English, Arrernte) and multicultural, living cheek by jowl with the children of the Western Arrernte people for whose salvation the Mission existed. This paper will use Philipp Scherer's redaction of the Superintendent's Annual Reports to his superiors in Adelaide to construct an account of the social, political, anthropological and familial background of the years 1908- 1922. It will investigate both the day-to-day activities on the Mission—essentially a ranch—as well as the larger trends over that period. This was, of course, the time of the First World War, during which, because of the German connection, attempts were made to close Hermannsburg down. The intent will be to give some idea of the factors that formed the character of the boy who became, many years later, the author of *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*.

**Dr Martin Edmond** was born in New Zealand and now lives in Australia, where he has worked as an author and a screenwriter. He has written a number of books of literary non-fiction and published several collections of essays. Martin graduated with a Doctorate of Creative Arts from the University of Western Sydney in 2013. His dissertation, *Battarbee and Namatjira*, was published in 2014 by Giramondo. He lives in Summer Hill.

## Session 5 Visualising Horseshoe Bend

### From eternity to eternity: On the end of time and TGH Strehlow's vision of Central Australia in *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*

Peter Dallow

This paper will reflect upon how T.G.H. Strehlow's wide-ranging research into the indigenous cultures of Central Australia helps inform the writing of his personal narrative *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*. The book, with its apparently simple daily journal structure, belies the complex multi-temporal literary architecture embedded within that format, that offers an opportunity to consider *time*, as a culturally marked or measured perception of how existence is organised in particular spaces at specific junctures, specifically here in relation to the lives of Carl and Ted Strehlow, and of the indigenous people and places of Central Australia. The task in this paper then is to consider the book as a literary construct, and some of the broader extra-textual realities that inform the text, and the thinking about the various broader dimensions of cultural life in Central Australia. That is, in looking at some of the broader research that Ted Strehlow undertook into the belief systems that inform/ed life in Central Australia, and the influences these understandings may have had in shaping the writing of *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*. To help locate it more in a contemporary context, the paper will also consider the work that we might do on/with it and which may be applicable now. I want to consider the vantage point of this book set against something of the specifics of the horizon of the present time in which we live, the present historical moment, set between the eternities that bracket us now.

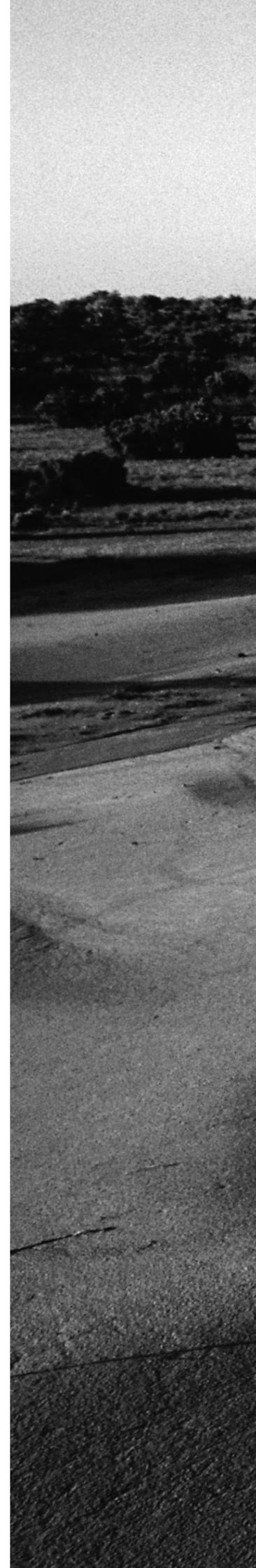
**Dr Peter Dallow** is a former member of faculty of the School of Humanities and Communication Arts, and more recently has been an Adjunct Research Fellow with the Writing and Society Research Centre, at Western Sydney University. He is a former member of the research team developing Strehlow-focussed work at Western Sydney. He has a background in media and creative arts teaching, practice and research. Continuing areas of research focus are on fiction writing, the mediation of memory, and developments in new media.

### The journey to a digital scholarly edition

Jason Ensor

This presentation will provide an overview of the online scholarly edition of *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* developed by Hart Cohen, Rachel Morley and Jason Ensor. It will discuss the digital research environment named the 'Byala / Talking Gallery' and unpack the decisions made by the team to enhance T.G.H. Strehlow's biographical memoir within the context of a wholly scholarly approach to digital knowledge building and publishing. The outcomes draw on techniques and workflows pioneered during the ARC Linkage Project 'Deepening Histories of Place' (Australian National University 2011-2013) and rebuilt at Western Sydney University (2015).

**Dr Jason Ensor** is Research and Technical Development Manager, Digital Humanities, for the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University. His role is to support the Digital Humanities Research Group by providing vital research and technical expertise as well as enabling, developing and coordinating Digital Humanities projects through their full project life-cycle, from inception to delivery. With nearly twenty years experience in print and digital publishing, he is Director of Electronic Resources for the international 'Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing' (SHARP) and was Conference Director for 'Global Digital Humanities' (2015). Jason is a regular contributor to *The Conversation* on matters related to research impact and rethinking scholarship in the digital age and a Founding Editorial Board member for 'The Anthem Book History and Print Culture Series' (UK).



## Closing remarks

**Dr Hart Cohen** is Associate Professor in Media Arts in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and a member of the Institute for Cultural and Society and the Digital Humanities Research Group at Western Sydney University, Australia. He has led three ARC Projects related to the Strehlow Collection and is currently working on 'Digital Archives, Datadiversity and Discoverability: The Strehlow Collection as Knowledge Resource for Remote Indigenous Communities'. He has published widely with his most recent work titled, 'Film as Cultural Memory: The Struggle for Repatriation and Restitution of Cultural Property in Central Australia' in *Cultural Memories of Nonviolent Struggles: Powerful Times*, Katriel, T. and Reading, A., eds., Palgrave Macmillan. Two films commissioned by Public Television in Australia have been made in relation to these projects: *Mr. Strehlow's Films* (SBSI 2001) and *Cantata Journey* (ABC TV 2006). Hart Cohen is co-author of *Screen Media Arts: An Introduction to Concepts and Practices* for Oxford University Press (2009) and is managing editor of the *Global Media Journal: Australian Edition: 2007-present*.

**Dr Rachel Morley** is a Lecturer in Writing and Communications in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University and a member of the Writing and Society Research Centre and the Digital Humanities Research Group. Rachel has been involved in several Western Sydney University ARC-funded Strehlow projects including 'Digital Archives, Datadiversity and Discoverability: The Strehlow Collection as Knowledge Resource for Remote Indigenous Communities' and 'The Visual Mediation of a Complex Narrative: TGH Strehlow's *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*'. She is Postgraduate Editor of *Global Media Journal: Australian Edition* and convenor of the award winning, national postgraduate training event, 'Creative Ecologies: A Postgraduate Retreat in Creative Arts Scholarship'. Rachel is a regular contributor to the *Sydney Review of Books* and co-hosts the TVS literary arts show *Shelf Life* on TVS (channel 44).



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