

Title of the lecture: “They were the people, those that broke the string...”

I begin the presentation by reading the English translation of the poem, “The broken string”, by Dialkwain, one of the |Xam men who worked with Bleek and Lloyd to record the |Xam language, which was spoken by a community of people living in the Northern Cape Province. I use the analogy of the broken string, and I interpret the poem which describes a sense of loss and interpret it as the loss of culture that no longer resounds, the songs that have been silenced and the instruments that are no longer played. The string which should bind us to our heritage is broken, as culture was erased. To restore cultural heritage, the string needs to be restored or mended, through the learning and practising of culture.

I frame my discussion of the broken string and how it can be restored, with two academic articles that I regard as the highlights of my career, and which also form the theoretical framework for this lecture. The first article explores cultural hegemony, as described by Gramsci. I discuss how cultural hegemony, can be subverted if we adopt multiculturalism, culturally responsive teaching and define music education as cultural education.

The second article is co-authored with Menan du Plessis, a novelist and linguist and an expert in Khoisan linguistics. In the article we contextualise the |Xam stories and the songs embedded in them. We also present a reinterpretation of the established scholarly view of Percival Kirby to refine the historical record. The article presents the songs, performed by Hang#kassō and originally written down by Weisbecker as one of the earliest examples of music influenced by the music bow in Southern Africa.

I conclude the presentation by suggesting ways in which we can restore the string, linking us to our African cultural heritage, so that *we are the people, those who restore the string.*