

REVIEW ARTICLE

Beyond the Cult of ‘Salvation’ and ‘Remarkable Equality’: A New Paradigm for the Bleek-Lloyd Collection

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My Heart Stands in the Hill. By JANETTE DEACON and CRAIG FOSTER (London, Cape Town, Sydney and Auckland: Struik Publishers, 2005). 191 pp. ISBN 1-77007-125-3 and *Bushmen in a Victorian World: The Remarkable Story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of Bushman Folklore*. By ANDREW BANK (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006). ix + 422 pp. ISBN 1-77013-091-8.

Over a 14-year period between 1870 and 1884, a set of research encounters took place in Mowbray, Cape Town, between the European philologist Wilhelm Bleek, his sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd and a group of /Xam-speakers from the Karoo region between Vanwyksvlei, Kenhardt and Brandvlei ('/Xam –ka !au'). Convicted on charges of stock theft and other crimes arising out of defensive acts against colonial encroachment, the /Xam-speakers had been incarcerated at the Breakwater Prison, where they had also been subjects of racial research and anthropometric photography. Those late nineteenth century encounters and engagements, mediated by the efforts of Lloyd and later Bleek's daughter, Dorothea, gave rise to a material assemblage of testimonies, transcripts, translations, traces and artefacts. These took the form of letters, glass photographic plates, numerous notebooks and more than 450 printed pages of *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*.¹ The materials came to be held across three archives: the National Library of South Africa (then the South African Public Library, where Bleek and later Lloyd worked as librarians on the Sir George Grey Collection), the Iziko South African Museum and most importantly, the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the University of Cape Town Libraries.

The /Xam testimony and folklore recorded by Bleek and Lloyd achieved importance a century later, in the 1970s and 1980s when selections thereof were marshalled in the interpretation of rock art in southern Africa. Out of these interpretations a dominant view of the significance of these records has sought to understand rock art in southern Africa by recourse to theories of shamanism. Much of this

1 W.H.I. Bleek and L.C. Lloyd, *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (London: George Allen, 1911). See also Janette Deacon, ‘A Tale of Two Families: Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd and the /Xam San of the Northern Cape’ and Martin Hall, ‘The Proximity of Dr Bleek’s Bushman’, in Pippa Skotnes (ed), *Misplaced: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996).

work has centred on David Lewis-Williams and his interpretations, and there are a host of associated representations in the academy and the field of heritage that draw upon this work. This dominant perspective is to be found in books published since the 1980s,² in the work of a major rock art research centre as well as in a range of museums and exhibitions.³

Moved by the richness and poignancy of /Xam folklore the artist, Pippa Skotnes, began a long-term artistic and intellectual engagement with the archive that gave rise to two important exhibitions and accompanying catalogues, to popular publications as well as a museum and archive project. 'Sound from the Thinking Strings' (South African Museum, 1991) displayed a collection of etchings and an art book, while 'Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture' (South African National Gallery, 1996) was a powerful installation which contrasted the Lloyd-Bleek (note Skotnes' reversal of the nomenclature) /Xam records with the violence of colonialism and museum representation. The accompanying books, *Sound from the Thinking Strings* (Cape Town: Axeage Private Press, 1991) and *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996) brought together academic work by archaeologists, anthropologists, historians and linguists on various questions related to Khoesan studies.⁴

In the aftermath of *Miscast*, Skotnes established the Lucy Lloyd Archive Research and Exhibition Centre (LLAREC), formerly called The Museum Workshop, at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, UCT and initiated a series of popular publications in visual history.⁵ The major work of LLAREC in recent times has been the development of a digital archive which brings together all the Bleek and Lloyd collections from the three holding institutions.⁶ The central driving passion for Skotnes has been to recover and emphasise the significance of Lucy Lloyd's documentation and preservation work over the efforts of Wilhelm Bleek, who had developed the phonetic script for /Xam. In the early 1990s, while the Bleek-Lloyd /Xam folklore texts were still the domain of discovery claims, the poet and literary scholar, Stephen Watson, was moved to produce poetry based upon transcriptions of the records.⁷ More than ten years later, the writer and poet Antjie Krog also

2 See for example, J.D. Lewis-Williams, *Believing and Seeing: symbolic Meanings in Southern San Rock Paintings* (London, 1981); *Stories that Float from Afar: Ancestral Folklore of the San of Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 2000); J.D. Lewis-Williams and T.A. Dowson, *Images of Power: Understanding San Rock Art* (Cape Town 1999).

3 There are Bleek-Lloyd exhibitions at the Iziko South African Museum (in the form of an exhibition on rock art, 'IQe: The Power of Rock Art', which opened in December 2003) and at the new Museum van de Caab at the Solms-Delta estate in Franschhoek, as well as at the new Origins Centre in Johannesburg, whose first and founding section is the South African Museum of Rock Art (SAMORA). This last was formed partly out of the work of the Rock Art Research Institute (formerly 'Unit') at the University of the Witwatersrand, which was headed by David Lewis-Williams until his retirement a few years ago. One of the most recent temporary exhibitions focused on the drawings made by the /Xam at the Bleek/Lloyd household was 'The moon as shoe – drawings of the San' curated by Miklos Szalay of the Zurich Ethnological Museum and held at the Iziko South African National Gallery in 2003. An accompanying book by the same name was published in Zurich by Scheidegger & Spies in 2002.

4 Pippa Skotnes (ed and artist), *Sound from the Thinking Strings: A Visual, Literary and Archaeological and Historical Interpretation of the Final Years of /Xam Life* (Cape Town: Axeage Private Press, 1991) and Pippa Skotnes (ed), *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 1996). Note the difference in the sub-titles of 'Miscast', the exhibition, and *Miscast*, the book. The SANG refused to use the category 'Bushman'. In the case of the former publication, Skotnes insisted in the face of legal pressure from the then South African Library that it was not a book but an artwork in limited edition on hand-made paper. She lost her case.

5 This included Skotnes' own booklet, *Heaven's Things: A Story of the /Xam* (Cape Town: LLAREC, 1999).

6 See the website, <http://www.lloydbleekcollection.uct.ac.za/index.jsp>, accessed 15 November 2006.

7 Stephen Watson, *The Return of the Moon* (Cape Town, 1991).

produced a collection of poetry, in English and Afrikaans, inspired by the /Xam notebooks.⁸

During 2004 and 2005, the Bleek-Lloyd /Xam narratives entered the domains of physical theatre and in the work of Magnet Theatre in partnership with Jazzart Dance Theatre. The production 'Rain in a Dead Man's Footprints' saw Mark Fleishman's directorial skills, Alfred Hinkel's choreography and Neo Muyanga's music brought together to create a visually and aurally stunning piece through the use of fire, lanterns, dance, movement, illusion, puppetry and haunting music. Drawing upon Stephen Watson's poetry, but influenced very much by Pippa Skotnes' readings and understandings of the Bleek-Lloyd records and their meanings, the production depicted human and animal figures invoking shamans, dreams and cosmology in a 'hypnotising response to the ancient rituals and myths of the /Xam people'. The key character of the performance, which was staged in Stellenbosch, Grahamstown, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Mogale City and Okiep, was Lucy Lloyd, whose personality was powerfully brought to life in the movements and vocal presence of Jenny Reznek.⁹

Generally following this dominant perspective initiated by David Lewis-Williams, Janette Deacon has been one of the main scholars who studied the Bleek-Lloyd records to understand rock art as the physical signs of a San spirit world and religious belief. Perhaps Deacon's most significant contribution has been her efforts to identify and map the actual locations from which //Kabbo, Dia!kwain, /Han≠kass'o and other /Xam speakers came and to which they refer in their stories. Her work, which was inspired by that of David Lewis-Williams,¹⁰ began with a fieldtrip to the Northern Cape in 1985 and an initial article on the /Xam territory published in 1986.¹¹ What followed was an archaeological study of the rock engravings in the area of the 'Grass' and 'Flat' Bushmen which tried to draw connections with /Xam beliefs and customs as contained in the nineteenth century records. For Deacon, the Bleek-Lloyd collection were records of the /Xam cognitive system which also recorded valuable information for understanding 'such elements as the metaphors expressed in the rock art of southern Africa and the close bond that existed between these indigenous people and the landscape in which they lived'.¹²

8 Antjie Krog, *The Stars say 'Tsau': /Xam Poetry of Dia!kwain, Kweiten-ta-//ken, /A!kunta, /Han≠kass'o and //Kabbo* (Cape Town, 2004). During 2006, in an acrimonious public row, Watson accused Krog of plagiarising his work.

9 See Annual Report of the Magnet Theatre Educational Trust, 1 March 2005-28 February 2006 and the Magnet Theatre website, <http://www.magnettheatre.co.za/productions>, accessed 15 November 2006. Pippa Skotnes and Mark Fleishman also collaborated on a LLAREC publication. See Pippa Skotnes and Mark Fleishman, *A Story is the Wind: representing time and space in San narratives* (Cape Town, LLAREC Series in Visual History, 2002). See also Mark Fleishman, "'Stories like the wind': /Xam narratives and arts development practice in the Western Cape", paper presented at the Centre for the study of colonial and postcolonial societies, University of Bristol, 19 January 2006 and Judith Rudakoff, 'Recovering/Uncovering: Heritage Reclamation and the Clanwilliam Arts project in South Africa', paper presented to the Association for Canadian Theatre Research, York University, 27-30 May 2006.

10 See for example, J.D. Lewis Williams, *Believing and seeing: symbolic meanings in southern San rock paintings* (London: Academic Press, 1981).

11 Janette Deacon, "'My place is the Bitterpits': the home territory of Bleek and Lloyd's /Xam San informants", *African Studies*, 45, 1986. It is not insignificant that the article was published in this journal. Since the 1940s, *African Studies* was the new name of the journal *Bantu Studies* ('devoted to the study of the Bantu, Bushman and Hottentot') in which Bleek's daughter, Dorothea, published /Xam texts between 1931 and 1936.

12 Janette Deacon, 'A tale of two families: Wilhelm Bleek, Lucy Lloyd and the /Xam San of the Northern Cape', in Pippa Skotnes (ed), *Miscast*, 113. See also Janette Deacon and Thomas A Dowson (eds), *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1996, and especially her own article therein, 'Archaeology of the Grass and Flat Bushmen'. Deacon was one of the organisers of the landmark international conference on the Bleek-Lloyd collection held at UCT in 1991 from which *Voices from the Past* was produced.

David Lewis-Williams suggested that Wilhelm Bleek had been a man before his times for whom Bushman and European languages were equals. In a similar vein, Janette Deacon argued in 1996 that what had unfolded in Mowbray had been ‘a remarkable relationship between two families’ who were drawn together in a ‘joint effort’ to record the language and folklore of the /Xam, the ‘descendents of the indigenous San of the northern Cape’. The Bleek-Lloyd records, she suggested, had been ‘the result of remarkable mutual respect and co-operation between interviewers and interviewees’.¹³ The Bleek family of scholars were ‘committed to a cause that must have seemed esoteric in the extreme to many of their contemporaries’. Without the ‘personal sacrifice’ on the part of the two families, ‘we would know virtually nothing of the /Xam and their cognitive system’.¹⁴ The archive, Skotnes had suggested was the closest thing we had to ‘a Bushman or San voice’ from the nineteenth century.¹⁵

Alongside David Lewis-Williams, Janette Deacon’s scholarship has been central to ensuring that shamanist and neuro-psychological interpretations of rock art have been combined with understandings of rock art’s main interpretive archive - the Bleek-Lloyd records - that have stressed remarkable equality and cultural salvage. This paradigm has come to dominate the field of rock art conservation in South Africa and beyond through the influence of the work of the Rock Art Research Institute.¹⁶ The impact of this paradigm was seen, for example, in its transportation to Zambia in Ben Smith’s studies of rock art at Kasama.¹⁷ Its influence has also been felt through Deacon’s work as one of the most committed and influential rock art conservation educators in southern and eastern Africa.

Here I want to suggest that these notions of cultural salvage and remarkable equality have served to create a kind of cult out of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd whose archive has been understood in a very limited way as a system of linguistic and cultural documentation and which has been mined for a lost, extinct authenticity. These dominant meanings and idealised notions of significance were incorporated into world heritage when the Bleek-Lloyd Collection (UCT and South African Library) was inscribed on the register of UNESCO’s ‘Memory of the World’ Programme in 1997.¹⁸ Although she was not the formal nominator, it is most likely

13 See Janette Deacon, ‘A tale of two families’, 93-113. See also Pippa Skotnes, ‘Introduction’ in Pippa Skotnes (ed), *Miscast*, for a similar understanding of the ‘series of relationships’ between the European scholars and the /Xam individuals who had a ‘common aim’ to ‘preserve the memories of cultures and traditions which were fatally threatened’ (23). Elsewhere, Skotnes refers to the ‘folklore that was created through a unique collaboration between settler and native’. See Pippa Skotnes, “Civilised Off the Face of the Earth”: Museum Display and the Silencing of the /Xam”, *Poetics Today*, Vol. 22 (2), Summer 2001. In the exhibition, *Miscast*, this relationship was counterposed with colonialism’s savage violence.

14 Janette Deacon, ‘A tale of two families’, 93, 113.

15 Skotnes, *Miscast*, 18.

16 See the two volumes edited by David Lewis Williams and Thomas Dowson, *Images of power: understanding Bushman rock art* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1989) and *Contested Images: diversity in southern African rock art research* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 1994).

17 Benjamin W Smith, ‘Rock Art in south-central Africa’, Ph.D dissertation, Cambridge University, 1995 and *Zambia’s ancient rock art: the paintings of Kasama* (Oxford: Nuffield Press for the National Heritage Conservation Commission of Zambia, 1997). For a critical discussion of these matters, see Billiard Berbbington Lishiko, ‘Politics of Production of Archaeological Knowledge: A Case Study of the Later Stone Age Rock Art Paintings of Kasama, Northern Zambia’, M.A. mini-thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2005. Lishiko had been Smith’s research assistant for his doctoral research in Zambia. Smith later became director of the Rock Art Research Institute after David Lewis-Williams’s retirement.

18 Third Meeting of the International Advisory Committee of the ‘Memory of the World’ Programme, Tashkent, 29 September-1 October 1997 (www.unesco.org/webworld/memory/committee_tashkent_report.doc, accessed 15 November 2006). See also the nomination form for the Bleek-Lloyd collection at http://www.unesco.org/webworld/nominations/en/south_africa/southafr.htm, accessed 15 November 2006.

that Janette Deacon, then as conservation professional and archaeologist of the National Monuments Council, was an important presence behind this inscription. According to the nomination form, Bleek and Lloyd's notebooks 'serve as a "Rosetta Stone" which has enabled scholars to decipher the meaning of southern African rock art'. Because of the insights it has made possible in southern Africa, 'advances [were also made] in the study of Australian and European rock art'.¹⁹

As the main researcher and thinker behind Iziko South African Museum's rock art exhibition, 'IQe: The Power of Rock Art', that opened in December 2003, Janette Deacon took her perspectives into the field of museum display. The production of this exhibition saw the dominant shamanist and neuropsychological paradigm, and the Bleek-Lloyd cult of salvation and remarkable equality being combined with a politics of consultation that sought authority in authenticity. The main voices of authentic indigeneity were N/u-speaking elders from Upington and Witdraai, including Ouma /Una Khasi, with whom the linguist Nigel Crawhall had been working on behalf of the South African San Institute (SASI) on projects documenting N/u language, mapping personal and community histories and place names, and compiling a 'biodiversity resource history'.²⁰ While Crawhall's language research showed enormous potential for transcending ethnic paradigms, his participation on the exhibition's academic committee saw him become the deliverer of indigenous participation and authentication. The assembled indigenous in turn would be able to reflect with a sense of gratitude upon the implied chain of salvation and benefaction, beginning with Bleek and Lloyd's documentation and culminating in the museum exhibition itself.

The problem with all of this work is that in spite of its mushrooming in the post-apartheid era and its deep concern with indigenous heritage, it is remarkable that almost nowhere do you find an engagement with the blood and brutality of the Khoisan experience (with the exception of Skotnes). In addition, despite a growing corpus of scholarship on archives, mediation and the production of knowledge, including serious postcolonial scholarship on archives in South Africa,²¹ the approach to the Bleek-Lloyd records in Deacon's work, and the Bleek-Lloyd canon more generally, remained couched in the language of recovery and authenticity.²² Nowhere in the Bleek-Lloyd canon is the archive engaged with from the point of view of its mediations, except for the idea of salvage.

Deacon's book, *My Heart Stands in the Hill*, produced with the photographer Craig Foster, is the one of the most recent renditions of the Bleek-Lloyd canon that reproduces all of its discursive characteristics. Foster had previously made the acclaimed film, *The Great Dance* that reproduced the idea of the Bushman as hunter-gatherer.²³ This coffee table book, referred to as the product of a 'pilgrimage of a modern archaeologist and film maker' is at the same time hauntingly beautiful and

19 Bleek-Lloyd Collection Nomination Form, http://www.unesco.org/webworld/nominations/en/south_africa/southafr.htm, accessed 15 November 2006.

20 See Nigel Crawhall, 'Reclaiming Rights, Resources and Identity: the Power of an Ancient San Language', in Yvonne Dladla (ed), *Voices, Values and Identities Symposium: Record of Proceedings* (Pretoria: South African National Parks, 1998).

21 See Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michelle Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh (eds), *Refiguring the Archive*, Cape Town: David Philip, 2002.

22 An important recent exception is Jill Weintroub, 'From tin trunk to worldwide memory: the making and re-making of the Bleek-Lloyd archives, M.Phil Mini-thesis, University of Cape Town, 2006.

23 See S.Douglas, 'The Re-Enchantment of the World and the Threat to Reason: *The Great Dance: A Hunter's Story*, *Kronos*, Special Issue: Visual History, vol. 27, Nov. 2001, 304-19.

deeply troubling. It draws on Deacon's knowledge of the landscape of '/Xam –ka !au' based upon the references in the Bleek-Lloyd archive. The book is an attempt to 'reunite' photographic images of the /Xam and the /Xam 'voices' of the texts with the landscape they left behind, including the rock art. For Foster, the book was a means 'to celebrate the rock art and the people who made it'.²⁴

In the book, another version of Deacon's interpretations of the Bleek-Lloyd archive and her accumulated knowledge of the /Xam landscape have been combined with Foster's enlarged photographs of the region and its rock art in all its detail and beauty, and archival images of the /Xam that have been 'reunited' with that landscape. All the elements of the Bleek-Lloyd canon are restated and re-explored, including detailed discussions on shamanism and trance, and there are explanations of the neuropsychological approaches of David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson. The photographic images that have been 'reunited' with the landscape are the well-known Breakwater and studio photographs of the /Xam.

Foster, in using a generator, slide projector, stands, lighting and three cameras, was able to project images of photographed /Xam faces on a 35 mm slide film 'back into the landscape that they had lived in 150 years previously'. Images of 'old shamans and hunters' were superimposed on to trees, water, grass and hillsides, each with their peculiar textures and visual effects. Importantly, images were also projected onto rock surfaces containing engravings. For Deacon, what has been achieved is a layering of 'history, memory, spiritual experiences and landscape'. For both, this project was an act of symbolic return. The photographs were no longer "scientific" photographs of representations of a lost linguistic group', but had been given 'individuality, colour, texture and a place of their own'.²⁵ Once again, Deacon drew upon Nigel Crawhall and the South African San Institute to engage with N/u speakers and to get their approval.

Although only listed in the bibliography, the inspiration for this book was the work of Finnish photographer, Jorma Puranen, *Imaginary Homecomings*, in which he embarked upon a 'metaphorical return' of Sami images to the land of the Sami. These images were from the 1884 Roland Bonapart expedition that were in the collection of the Musée de L'Homme in Paris. This was achieved in Puranen's work not by projection, but by reinstallation and reinsertion. Here, anthropological photographs had been rephotographed in positive and negative forms, enlarged on large plexiglass panels, then reinserted into the landscape, or reproduced on polyester sheets which were then hung in bushes or wrapped around trees. In a powerful accompanying essay to the catalogue, the scholar of photography, Elizabeth Edwards, argues that the rephotographing of these installations created an 'imaginary, metaphorical homecoming' that played on both photography's indexical and iconic qualities.²⁶

Puranen's photographs, Edwards argues, move from the archive, the 'symbolic space of appropriation' into the land, 'the symbolic space of belonging'. The

24 Janette Deacon, *My Heart Stands in the Hill* (London, Cape Town, Sydney and Auckland: Struik Publishers, 2005), dust-cover, 36.

25 Janette Deacon and Craig Foster, *My Heart Stands in the Hill*, 143-144.

26 See the accompanying book/catalogue by Jorma Puranen, *Imaginary Homecoming* (with an Essay by Elizabeth Edwards), Oulu: Kustantaja, 1999. The references are to Edwards' essay, 'Anthropological Deconstructions', 43.

living and the dead are brought together in the ‘stylistic re-enactment of historic ways of photographing’. When plexiglass panels are held by living hands, the ‘boundaries between the past and the present’ are ‘intentionally blurred’. Puranen ‘reuses and juxtaposes’ historical representations of the Sami. More broadly, he enables positivist realist notions of photography to engage with expressive photography as part of ‘reflexive visual exploration in the late twentieth century’. Puranen’s images ‘form dense networks’ which allude to ‘the networks of memory and its mapping on to the land’. They destabilise the categories and genres of art, landscape and documentary as they attempt to reposition the ethnographic image. The project works, Edwards argues, because it ‘confronts the cultural stage on which the performance of photography was played out’. Far from romantic, ‘cultural atonement’, in *Imaginary Homecomings*, the photographs ‘confront the viewer with their own history’ and the nature of photographic appropriation becomes an ‘act of translation’.²⁷

In contrast, in spite of being inspired by Puranen’s work, Deacon and Foster’s book fails to examine the complex visual histories of ethnography and archive that are related to the /Xam photographs. Instead, Deacon’s project with Foster seems extremely undertheorised, and is located within a profoundly different paradigm of liberal paternalism, authenticity and cultural atonement. Any project of rehumanisation of ethnographic images must proceed from a detailed understanding of the history of photography’s violence and the evolutionist frames through which they were made. The complicity of science in these processes should not be obscured. It is very important to go beyond the frame of photography as document.²⁸

Andrew Bank’s book, *Bushman in a Victorian World*, on the other hand, poses substantial challenges for the entire canon of Bleek-Lloyd studies. It follows on from more direct attempts he made previously to show how the legacy of Wilhelm Bleek had been misunderstood.²⁹ Bank’s book is a study of the making of the Bleek-Lloyd archive, about the complexities of its formation and relations through which it was made. Archives and collections, in spite of the frames of most Bleek-Lloyd scholarship, are not mere storehouses to be mined for stories, poems, information and data. Archives have very complex, nuanced histories of formation, and Bank brings this out very beautifully in his new book. This is a study of how meanings are made – often contested – in and out of an archive.

What Bank does is he gives the entire field a more profound sense of rigour. For the first time, perhaps, you have a deep, fine-grained, thorough reading of the archive in relation to the processes of its formation and constitution, not only differently by Bleek and Lloyd, but also by //Kabbo, Dia!kwain, /Han≠kass’o and other /Xam speakers. All the /Xam are given complex histories and biographies (not merely genealogies) of a relationship with the land, and with broader economic, political and cultural transformations.

27 Edwards in Puranen, *Imaginary Homecomings*, 43–76.

28 See Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford, 2001), and Ciraj Rassool and Patricia Hayes, ‘Science and Spectacle: /Khanako’s South Africa, 1936–1937’, in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley (eds), *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002).

29 See Andrew Bank, ‘Evolution and Racial Theory: The Hidden Side of Wilhelm Bleek’, *South African Historical Journal*, 43, November 2000.

Bank's book makes some important interventions. It moves away from the two contrasting positions through which the significance of the Bleek-Lloyd texts has been understood. Firstly it contrasts sharply with the notions outlined above that they were produced through 'a remarkable relationship of equality'. It contrasts also with the view that the records were simply a product of constraint and hierarchy involving alienated homesick informants, which Matthias Guenter says has created a distorted Oral Tradition as distinct from an authentic, native oral tradition.

Bank argues, instead, for an appreciation of the dynamism of the interactions with constantly improvised dialogue between informers and researchers. What took place in other words was 'a complex, negotiated interaction'. Indeed, Bank distinguishes between Lucy Lloyd's notebooks of //Kabbo's storytelling, both in content and texture, from those of Wilhelm Bleek. Bleek's work, in a pre-determined way, was more geared towards collecting mythology and fables as part of understanding the language and folklore of the Bushman as primitive. Lloyd, on the other hand, collected information on the culture of and everyday life in Bushmanland, with detailed descriptions of animals and plants, hunting and personal information. Lloyd, Bank suggests, had a closer, more flexible and more open relationship with the /Xam informants.

Bank also points to the misunderstandings on the part of poets Stephen Watson and Antjie Krog, who both re-rendered certain passages from //Kabbo's stories told to Lloyd as if they had been told to Bleek. In David Lewis-Williams' work on rock art interpretation, Bleek has been understood as a 'visionary' who recognised that rock art was an expression of 'ideas that most deeply moved the Bushman mind'. However, Bank questions the notion that Bleek was an expert on rock art. Furthermore, he shows that Bleek took a little authorial licence in ascribing to Dia!kwain his own interpretation of rock art images.³⁰ Bank shows how ethnography has been made to fit a pre-existing theory of rock art. Comments by Dia!kwain and /Han≠kass'o have been reproduced over and over in order to fit more symbolic and exotic interpretations especially a shamanistic view. What has been ignored are the ordinary, mundane readings of images, which have been left unpublished. In addition, Bank suggests, Dia!kwain's and /Han≠kass'o's understandings of pictures of rock art were often very unclear and had very little to do with religion or shamanism.

Bank has also given us an understanding of the processes and contests involved in the creation of the Breakwater and Studio photographs of the /Xam with reference to notions of performance. These photographs are not mere documents, and he is even able to detect signs of subjective experience amid dehumanising racial portraiture. If there is any criticism that can be made of Bank it is that he has been too modest about the achievements of his book, and about how it departs intellectually and politically from the Bleek-Lloyd canon. We are indeed indebted to Andrew Bank for this book. It is a labour of socially committed scholarship that transcends the paradigm of paternalism and cultural atonement. The whole industry around the Bleek-Lloyd records will never be the same.

³⁰ Andrew Bank, *Bushman in a Victorian World: The Remarkable Story of the Bleek-Lloyd Collection of Bushman folklore* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2006), 304-311.