Stick-fighting against Extinction: *End Beginnings* and Other Dada Nihilismus Polemics

Warrick Swinney

Abstract

This essay seeks to provide a personal context to the enigmatic life of the poet and writer Lesego Rampolokeng. The essay divides into three sections which I call 'Foreground', 'Middleground' and 'Background', which provide a loose framework for a set of parameters around which to peg this (auto)biographic narrative. I met Lesego through various politics/ music/ poetry events, revolving around the Shifty Recording Studio during the late1980s. We developed a body of work which we performed in South Africa, Europe and Brazil and a friendship which continues to this day.

The piece is framed by film making concepts of framing using Foreground, Middleground, Background and Extreme Close up. The incident which introduces us to the violence that underpins daily life in South Africa, and more specifically, to Lesego's reaction; it foreshadows a source of his work, which is a background of juvenile pre-paredness to meet inevitable violence. The 'Foreground' also introduces the reader to the premise that he could be more usefully categorised as being a dadaist or surrealist than the epithets of 'struggle', 'praise' or 'dub' poet, that so are readily reached for when dealing with his work. Our 2009 performance at the 'Dada South? Experimentation, Radicalism and Resistance' exhibition at the Iziko Gallery in Cape Town frames much of this section.

The 'Middleground', then, is the substance of my understanding of Lesego's biography, and an analytical look at his work and his influences. I examine the album *End Beginnings*, which we did together, in 1990, and the

Print ISSN 1023-1757; Electronic ISSN: 2519-5476; DOI https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2022/sp40a3

socio-political circumstances around it. I touch on work with William Kentridge on *Faustus in Africa*, and Lesego's pact with the devil; his frightening Catholic ambience, the trilogy of God, Man and the State which permeates his work. I look, too, at his fall from favour with the ruling party, throwing his lot in with the Black Consciousness Movement, a more sympathetic home for philosophers and poets. This section analyses his past writing and how it progresses and informs more current work – where poetry gives way to prose. The semi-biographic novel *Bird Monk Seding* (2017) was the most recent at the time of writing this article and, more than any other work of his, emphasises the 'graphic' in autobiographic. Readings from *A Half Century Thing*, a book of poems written during 2017, gave rise to a new set of recordings which became the album, *Bantu Rejex* which is also examined.

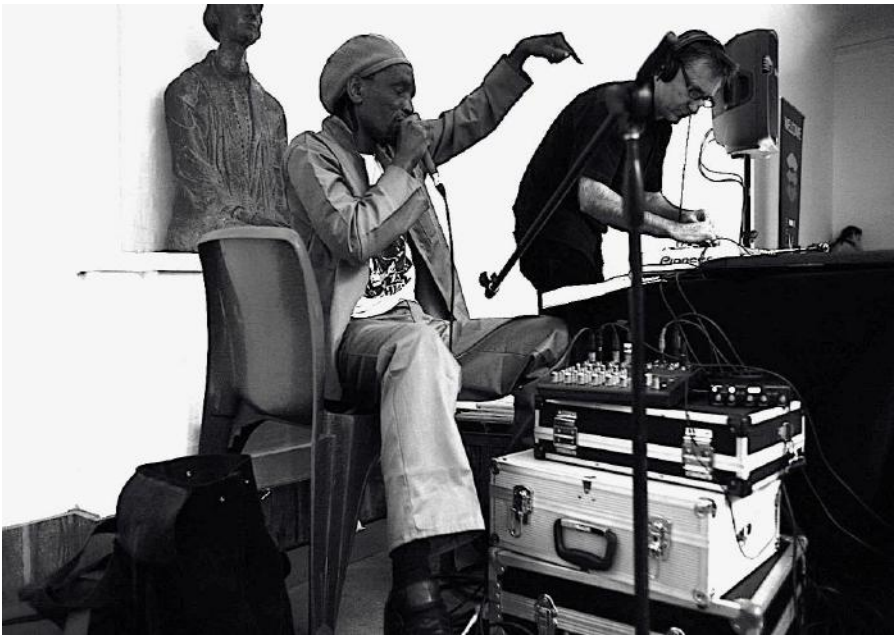
The third section, 'Background' looks at the historical landscape of the arts and the role of poetry during the struggle years and at some of Lesego's major influences and the formative events of the time. This section also discusses some of the recording studio technology used to make the album and focuses on two songs to see how they were put together. It also looks at another important poet of the time, Mzwakhe Mbuli, how he shaped a specific audience and demand for the performance poetry of the era, and how that differed from Lesego's trajectory.

The title of this essay quotes a line form the close of 'Broeder-bondage' in the book *Talking Rain* (1993), 'We're stickfighting against extinction', spliced together with the title of Amiri Baraka's famous 'Black Dada Nihilismus' poem, a Lesego favourite.

Keywords: Lesego Rampolokeng, Kalahari Surfers, South Africa, poetry, music, post -apartheid, African studies, dub-poetry, abject, syncreticism

Foreground

> … a rather undernourished, slightly pock-marked, very tall and thin writer …[1] (Richter 1964:12).



On the 13th of October 2009 an exhibition titled *Dada South? Experimentation, Radicalism and Resistance* opened at the Iziko South African National Gallery in the centre of Cape Town. A few of my early collages and record covers from the 1980s were on display, and I'd also agreed to team up with Lesego Rampolokeng, a poet I'd worked with on albums since the late 1980s to perform a few of our more experimental pieces. Lesego was also to present the opening speech for the exhibition. I took advantage of his visit to synchronise some new recording work at my nearby studio.

After the opening, a number of people milled around with glasses of wine and snacks, some sitting on the lawn under the clear, warm, summer

[1] Hugo Ball described by Hans Richter.

sky. Tourists wondered in to see what the occasion was. Lesego and I were talking to a couple from Gauteng; friends of his who had come to the Cape for a summer holiday. Standing behind us was my 14-year-old son and a school-friend, who had been comparing smart phones. Suddenly my son started agitating and pressuring us to leave. We said our farewells and moved off from the gallery, walking along the paved walkway in front of the planetarium and down to the road to where the car was parked under spreading oak trees.

As we reached the road the school-friend said, 'Hey bru I'm just coming down!' My son's voice behind me said, 'Don't turn around, Dad, keep walking – we've just been mugged – they're watching us'. Lesego spun around, 'What? Where? Show me'. I remember him telling me that he was once a dab hand with an Okapi, the ubiquitous wooden handled, lock-back knife favoured by gangsters[2]. 'No, leave it … let's just go' I said. I thought it better to get us all into the car and leave.

As I turned on the ignition a rush of white noise, like the sound of the sea filled my car. It was from a CD we were discussing when I had parked. Given to me by a new age healer, it purported to be the sonic healing frequencies of the Swine Flu (H1N1) which at that time was was infecting people across the globe. Apparently, playing the CD would boost the immune system making it less likely to contract the virus. We were discussing the feasibility of hiding the sound in one of our tracks; a sort of dada-esque absurdity.

As we drove, the boys told us the story. A tall, thin, shirtless man in his late twenties, came up to them brandishing a knife, his T-Shirt stuffed into the back of his track-suit pants, like a tail. He told them to hand over their phones and said, 'Don' make me do things I don' wanna do'. His accomplice, an older man who hovered in the background said, more relaxedly, 'just do as he says'. The school-friend asked if he could at least keep his SIM card. They agreed and let him remove it and then strolled over, with the prize, to sit on a nearby wall. 'We're watching you', was indicated with a hand/ finger signal. The white-middle-class nerd in me wondered what

[2] Also used by gangsters (Rude Boys) in Kingston Jamaica, 'the major emblem of the Rudie was his ratchet, a curved German gravity knife (Okapi was a favourite brand), made for scaling fish, that could be whipped out in the time it would take for an upset domino game to hit the floor' (Davis 1990: 49 - 50).

Lesego would have done if I'd let his anger give vent to violence. The violence in his writing had long fascinated me and I suspected was a constant silent presence throughout his life. Did he still travel in the company of the Okapi? Was he still up to speed? Long after the incident Lesego told me that he if an altercation had taken place, he would have been the last man standing.

Lesego grew up toughened by the abuses fostered in apartheid Soweto. In an interview for the magazine *Counterpunch,* he said 'I grew up watching my mother get her face split under the fists and boots of a multitude of men, who…were pushed on to expend whatever excess anger, energy, fury-fuelled by their own emasculation they had left, on me. I carry the scars on my back, face, body as a reminder. Anyway…I am here. What more do you want to know?' (Valentine 2013).

I visited his family home once in Orlando in the early 1990s and met his stepfather who told me that he had sold cannabis to put 'that boy' through university. Rampolokeng senior, rather disparagingly, complained about his son's choice of career. The man had emerged, affable and confident, from a smoke-filled, rusted shell of a wheel-less 1970s Austin 1100 which was propped up on bricks. It was a kind of smoking-room where he and two friends were passing the day. I was reminded of the LP cover by the reggae artist U-Roy where clouds of marijuana smoke obscured the portrait photograph[3].

Middleground

The 'Dada South?' exhibition at the National Gallery 'presented artworks of South African artists from the 1960s to the present day, in conjunction with some of the most iconic Dada artworks from the early-twentieth century' (Toussaint 2017:20). This was a fitting place for Lesego to have his word-art acknowledged. He embraced the anti-art spirit of Dada with his opening speech comment on being disgusted to open an exhibition in an art institution…' (ibid). In his railing against 'Art' he shared common ground with the Dadaists. These sentiments are echoed in the frequent substitution of the word 'fart' for 'art' which is prevalent in much of his writing.

[3] U-Roy's album cover can be viewed here: https://www.discogs.com/U-Roy-Dread-In-A-Babylon/release/607803

> & then of course the Farts Minister had a lot of
> broken hot wind to blow about how great Gwala[4]
> was & that they'd been in negotiation to put him
> in the education-stream. Lies & bullshit. Faecalfaced
> Friends (Rampolokeng 2017:12).

> poetry-hoboes & literary-tramps
> not with fart-critics, gossip-colonists or glory-whores in power's corridors
> nor detractor-farmers with their tractors in my mind-field
> I'm more the Jesus with a crown of thoughts (ibid:65).

The early Dadaists were forged from the trenches of World War I and performed their rage-against-the-machine words on the stage at the Cabaret Voltaire. Lesego was forged in the trenches of the apartheid ghetto and dug his way out with his pen and his Okapi. His first book *Horns for Hondo* announces that he is a 'rapmaster supreme word-bomber in the extreme' (Rampolokeng 1990:53) and that 'the word endures forever' (ibid:19). In the foreword to *Dada: art and anti-art* (1968) Hans Richter recounts the parting words of Tristan Tzara, 'Don't forget that polemics always played a big part in Dada. The polemical was an important weapon for the Dadaists in the destruction of the status quo'. Hugo Ball's words delivered to the first Dada soiree in 1916 at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich declares the polemic in literary terms:

> A line of poetry is a chance to get rid of all the filth that clings to this accursed language, as if put there by stockbrokers' hands, hands worn smooth by coins. I want the word where it ends and begins. Dada is the heart of words (Ball 1916).

The etymology of 'polemic' means 'pertaining to controversy', from the Greek *polemikos* 'warlike, belligerent, stirring up hostility'[5]. As we have

[4] Mafika Gwala; the Black Consciousness poet who was the subject of Lesego's PhD research. https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/mafika-pascal-gwala

[5] etymology online:

come to expect from the 'word-bomber in the extreme'. He is concerned with politics, greed, and the interplay of violence and religion; as Christo Doherty points out in his 1993 review of *Horns for Hondo*:

> [I]t is apparent that Rampolokeng is not in any obvious sense of the word, a 'political' poet. His vision is too apocalyptic; his imagery is too overwhelmingly biblical, and even the references to the political lexicon of revolution, imperialism and capitalism are subsumed within strongly religious connotations (Doherty 1993:52).

The album *End Beginnings* was released on cassette in 1992; a post-script to the noise of the dying apartheid beast[6]. Most of the poems came from *Horns for Hondo* though a few were taken from *Talking Rain* published a year later in 1993. *Talking Rain* provided more material for a second album which we half-finished but much of it was lost in the change from analogue to digital formats. Strange tape-based digital machines in the interim allowed non-linear editing as well as non-linear ways of archiving. One of the tracks that was completed, however, was 'Johannesburg' (1995) which rages against the brutality of the city 'where dreams come to die' existing, merely 'to keep the money belt spinning' (Rampolokeng 1993:10). We recorded the poem to a bass guitar groove I had built around a drum-loop with a guitar track played by Louis Mhlanga. A rework appears several years later on the *Bantu Rejex* (2018) album released online[7]. This version is a more electro-dub production with the added sound/design element of a Sowetan coal seller calling his horse whilst riding through the streets.

The poem 'End Beginnings', which closes the *Horns for Hondo* book was, for me one of the most surreal of Lesego's works. It captures, in an almost, tableau vivant, the essence of dadaist/surrealist imagery: 'archangel Gabriel still-born choked by a condom … Shaka was a cannibal & the pope had abortions for supper' (Rampolokeng 1990:95). The slow-

https://www.etymonline.com/word/polemic?utm_source=extension_searchhint

[6] Kalahari Surfers on-line archive: https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/album/end-beginnings

[7] Kalahari Surfers on-line archive: https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/album/bantu-rejex-a-half-century-album

motion videos of Zimbabwean artist Kudzanai Chiurai come to mind, especially his *Iyeza* (2011) in which he re-creates 'The Last Supper' as a historic and surrealist framing device. It is tempting to link Lesego's work to the Surrealist movement which, from its genesis, had strong connections to Africa, according to Franklin Rosemount,

> surrealism is the only major modern cultural movement of European origin in which men and women of African descent have long participated as equals, and in considerable numbers …. African influence on the founders of surrealism was evident even before they called themselves surrealists – that is, before the formation of the movement in 1924 (Rosemount & Kelly 2009:06).

The surrealists, according to Richter, were 'a weapon to destroy' Dada (Richter 1964:93). They were interested in the workings of the subconscious, and the intersection of 'dreams and chance carried to the point of hallucination' (ibid 195), and it is here that Lesego's work fits, more clearly, the pragmatic of Dadaism. His writing is an art that takes a hammer to realism and re-shapes it. Strongly auto-biographical, he practices a story telling that is often jagged and un-believable but never fantastical.

End Beginnings came out in the same year as Vusi Mahlasela's, album, *When You Come Back* (1992) through Shifty Records. Mahlasela was an old friend of Lesego's from their days at the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW). Keith Lister of BMG-AFRICA loved Mahlasela's album to such an extent that he bought a half share in the record company – henceforth called Shifty-BMG. And so, without really listening to what they'd purchased, BMG's marketing department suddenly had to figure out what to do with Lesego's album. They had no experience in marketing a record that set out clearly from the start to avoid radio play and had lyrics that suggested that Jesus had died from masturbation. It was released as a limited cassette. The avant/art music label, Recommended Records in the UK thought better of it and released it on CD with a beautiful booklet containing all Lesego's words as well as a series of photos from William Kentridge's movie, *Johannesburg: 2nd Greatest City after Paris* (1991). I had been working on the sound design and music for the film and Kentridge kindly let us use selected images. Later, both Lesego and I worked on the Kentridge/ Handspring Puppets theatre production, *Faustus in Africa* (1995).

After the ANC took power and elbowed out the UDF, Lesego became belligerent about how corrupt and untrustworthy the core leadership had become[8]. His anger with Cyril Ramaphosa – who had removed him from an ANC cultural event – still simmers to this day. Despite their protestations

[8] Prior to this the UDF had elbowed the Black Consciousness Movement out of the way: 'The emergence of the UDF as a powerful umbrella body of organisations was itself a product of struggles that saw the "Congress-aligned" organisations achieve dominance over those aligned to the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). This was a complex process, but by the early 1980s the organisational presence of the BCM was restricted to a handful of small organisations – as opposed to its broader cultural and ideological influence within the ANC and other organisations that remains to this day' (Suttner 2004).

to the contrary the ANC had little time for the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and their poets. Much of the BCM leadership had been decimated by apartheid police, spies and hit squads. Their position was further weakened by the international support for the ANC who were seen as the only real opposition to the apartheid government. The academic literature on this generation of poets is scant. Lesego is currently chipping away at the nescience with his research work on Mafika Gwala, but more biographical work is essential, especially on Ingoapele Madingoane, Lefifi Tladi and the Medupe and Dashiki initiatives (Chronic 2019). In Lesego's 2017 novel *Bird-Monk Seding*, Bavino Sekete, the protagonist, says that Ingoapele 'died with an axe in his skull, sitting on a toilet' – one of the most shocking images in the book. I tried to find out more on this, aware that the novel skirts a thin line between fact and fiction. The two or three articles I found on Madingoane's death stated that the poet had 'died after a long illness'[9] but I have come across no biographies or other information on the man despite numerous emails and extensive academic on-line searches. I remain open to correction here but until then I trust my source – Lesego. In an interview with the *Mail & Guardian* regarding the overlooked poets – the missing voices of that time – he said:

> Of all the poets … you can throw in Ingoapele Madingoane – and please mention this – he died with an axe in his skull. He had been abandoned by all these Black Consciousness comrades who bought into BEE [black economic empowerment] bullshit, into this coffee creamer crap. He died with an axe in his skull. Nobody cared for him (Keylock & Miles 2014).

Lesego also draws a line between the BCM poets and the UDF/ ANC torch bearers; 'The bring-on-the-poet-to-lick-the-stage-clean-for-the-politi-

[9] long illness: https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/good-life/2011-07-08-brilliant-writer-and-political-activist/
and:
https://joburg.org.za/media_/Newsroom/Pages/2013%20articles/2011%20%26%202012%20%20Articles/Poet-celebrated-in-Youth-Month.aspx
passed away: https://onlyeverydaysa.wordpress.com/2018/06/23/ingoapele-madingoane-soweto-s-poet-laureate/

cians thing'[10]. A very real critique of the problem for the artist when aligning to a political movement: 'The revolution will devour its children'[11] (Mallet du Pan 2002:113). Returning to Ingoepele; Bavino Sekete, in *Bird-Monk Seding* says:

> [He] was a lonely man. His BC comrades would have nothing to do with him. But at his memorial the whole blasted fat-piglet lot of them came out spouting platitudes. Friends. Peter Makurube died of malnutrition and neglect after all the years he put into the arts of poetry & music. He was persona-non-grata to all besuited over-flabby frames & business spots. Memorial & funeral what happened, all the rats came out screaming praises. Friends. Mafika Gwala died torn up, soul cut to pieces but spirit still flying high with defiance & and unchanged, solid belief in what he stood for, a world beyond the grasping, clasping, clawed existence some sold on the stock exchange (Rampolokeng 2017:12).

[10] Rampolokeng, L. & I.M. Mboneni Muila 1999. Interviewed by Robert Berold. *New Coin* pp. 36 – 45.

[11] Mallet du Pan (2002:113) quoted in *Helen Maria Williams and the Age of* Revolution, edited by Deborah Kennedy.

When the ANC exiles returned they took preference over UDF locals. Many had come from successful careers in the music and performing arts worlds of Europe and America.

In 1994, amongst all this, Lesego and I were invited to Brazil to play some concerts at 'Festival Poesie BH'94' poetry festival in Belo Horizonte, the country's second largest city. We were interviewed by a journalist from São Paulo, the day before the opening (26 de agosto de 1994) and disagreed – much to the surprise of the Brazilian – over the concept of 'The New South Africa'. The Hunt Lascaris advertising agency was employed by the Mandela government to sell optimistic promises of a better life which many people (including myself) thought was necessary to avoid violence and bloodshed. Lesego disagreed.

The bright new flag and happy rugby team was derided by him as win-dow dressing, masking anger, fury and a corrupt and inept ANC who had not shown any interest in artists – especially non-partisan, free thinking, philosopher poets like himself. *Talking Rain* prophetically ranted against the new order.

> now the horse is out of the stable
> the worm's eaten the bird
> time's gone mad
> the fowl's seen the dog dead
> the deranged slave runs the whole range
> of fables of change
> it's boiling the mind
> it tumbles in the gut (Rampolokeng 1993:39).

The Last Bribe uses the metaphorical selling out of Christ for a few shekels:

> the last cry on golgotha
> rent the veil
> coins fell into empty hands
> a cold focus beyond reach
> of warmth
> an unutterable meaning
> the phrasing of twilight's
> deep tenderness
> a return to the earth

> from the stars
> shattered in realization (ibid:32).

In more recent writings, Lesego's polemic against the ruling dis-order nails his colours less obtusely. The first poem in the collection *Head on Fire* (2012)', Orlando Cockroach Chronicles', shoots from the hip, the following fragments illustrate my point:

> the struggle house a museum 'buy a piece of struggle-dream'
> where once mothers marched …
>
> the leader's house stands behind hope-high walls, eyes fall on
> electric fence and surveillance cameras while next door old blind woman bends
> under disability's years weight of rape & robbery recipient the grant (Rampolokeng 2012:11).

In the end it was the word, and the word was the beginning. 'End Beginnings' (1992) underscores the influence of Lesego's Catholic Church background. The coupling of end and beginning, though biblical, also alludes to Madingoane's 1976 poem *Africa my beginning, Africa my ending.* Lesego has said that he encountered Black Consciousness at the Regina Mundi Catholic Church in Soweto (which was the church where he was baptised) (Valentine 2013). The Book of Revelations is re-purposed in the poem 'End beginnings' and it is a frightening, afro-surrealist vaticination; a foretelling of the future, of the world we now occupy[12]. The poem begins:

> cock crows & owl goes to sleep. kings sprout where slaves take root..
> apocalypse is genesis. sun a black glob of ice spurts Impotence into earth's barren womb.

The poem twists through an abject landscape of Catholic iconography and ends with the lines, 'the weakest inherit the earth…truth is treason now liars rule the world'. The recording of *End Beginnings* was one of my first encounters with the digital technology which would influence

[12] 'I was baptized … by a Father Coleman. That is where I encountered 'Black Consciousness' (ibid).

sound processing for ever more. The sounds captured were digitised into one of the first user-friendly sampling devices on the market. I was able to process found voices, radio snippets and recordings made in the field. These are deployed as a chorus between the recitation.

The 'End Beginnings' track starts with the sound of Betamax video tape machine[13] fast forwarding to the words 'welcome to the program' and then shuttling to the word 'peace' where a loop of a sampled bow and atmospheric-pad holds a tonal centre, over which Lesego recites. A counter chorus made from a treated voice puts the Afrikaans words 'Ja/ Nee' into the mix. Excerpts from an interview recorded with Pik Botha cut in and out with lines like 'I'm interested in the future' and 'we can make a list of the wrongs of the past', which are interrupted by right-wing AWB chants and audio scrubbing from a video. The piece ends with a jolly radio-ad excerpt of a group of white South Africans singing 'You just can't beat a braai' and Mandela's voice saying 'Go back to school'[14].

It is tempting to place compositions like this, and indeed Lesego's whole oeuvre, into the fashionable Afro-futurist genre but his writing is too dark and too gothic to be aligned with what Kodwo Eshun describes as 'engineering feedback between its preferred future and its becoming present' (Eshun 2003:290). Lesego is far more punk[15] – where punk is synonymous with Dadaism. He is his own genre: Afro-Dadaism perhaps, or what Le Roi Jones (aka Amiri Baraka) called 'the Black Dada Nihilismus' (1964), 'minds packed in straw'. Lesego's Christian iconography pulls the work from free association into social realism, where absurdism and nonsensical wordplay is replaced by the sub-realist theology of sufferance which, after all, is the bedrock of the Christian faith. Lesego's catholic veil is a backdrop to the theatre of an extraordinarily violent life. He often employs a prophetic voice to deliver messages of stinging rebuke and post-capitalist gore. Doherty, again, picked up on this in the early writing:

> Rampolokeng displays an Old Testament awareness of the complexities in the role of poet-prophet. Although he describes

[13] Beta and VHS were the two rival formats for video capture.

[14] *End Beginnings* can be listened to here: https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/album/end-beginnings

[15] *Etymology Online* defines the root of punk as: 'inferior, bad', 1896, also as a noun, 'something worthless'.

> himself as 'my people's transmitter' Rampolokeng is aware that the public poet in times of darkness is both a Moses urging his people forward and an Isaiah condemning falsehood wherever it may be discerned. Rampolokeng explores the antimonies of the role: at several points he imagines himself floating above the pain and despair like one of Blake's prophets (Doherty 1993:53).

On 1st May 2013 Lesego posted this to Facebook:

> Four poems by Dambudzo Marechera
> The Bar-Stool Edible Worm[16]

Dambudzo Marechera – the product of an Anglican education – was writing with a punk/ nihilistic attitude similar to Lesego's. His polemical 'Bar-Stool Edible Worm'[17] has the lines:

> I am against everything
> Against war and those against War.
> Against whatever diminishes
> The individual's blind impulse.

There is a careless existentialism here, that even echoes – though more intelligently – the Sex Pistols' Anarchy in the UK (1976), 'I don't know what I want but I know how to get it/ I wanna destroy the passer-by'[18]. The fight against everything is also captured in Lesego's 'we're stick-fighting against extinction' (Rampolokeng 1993:16). Here we have the nub of his 'black dada nihilismus'; he is fighting against 'the state or fact of being rendered non-existent, physically unsound, or useless'[19].

---

[16] My own retrieval from his, now deleted, Bavino Bachana, Facebook account. We need to note that this is not to be found in the Black Ghost Press publication 'facebook the poet' (2018) which is a selection of Lesego's Facebook posts.

[17] Probably written in the early 1980s, published in the collection *Cemetery of the Mind* (1992).

[18] Johnny Rotten and the Sex Pistols. *Never Mind the Bollocks* (EMI 1977).

[19] Merriam -Webster definition for 'extinction'.

Joanna Wright (2004) uses the word 'syncretism' as a vehicle to explain political non-alignment strategy in Lesego's 'resistance' writing. She says he 'appropriates the speaking position, social space and function of the praise poet, not aesthetically, but in terms of function and intention [and]… also uses this rhetorical space to criticize authority' (Wright 2004:91). I would be more inclined to suggest that the syncretic, as used in its Greek etymological root – a uniting against a third force – is the presence of the church throughout almost all of his work. The so-called 'resistance' then, is a resistance to the father figure; God the father (or the god-father) who brings down violence and fury upon person and family. If syncretism is the 'attempted reconciliation or union of irreconcilable principles' then both Dambudzo and Lesego are wrestling with the three-fold violences perpetuated upon them by: the church, the state and the family. 'I answered in the language of stone' said Lesego; stick-fighting metaphorically; twisting, turning, break my bones – and the words that never hurt.

Words are Lesego's life-blood; his reading is wide and ranges from the Negritude/Blackness poets and theorists, to the abject Marechera, the surreal Tutuola and South Africans like Biko, Gwala and Bosman. The American and Caribbean electronic-spirit-words coming through Sun Ra and Lee Perry, Mutabaruka and Amiri Baraka are often referred to by him in conversation and text.

In a poet plus dancer performance he devised with producer Bobby Rodwell for the Grahamstown festival in 2009 he made a feature of this love of books and words, appearing onstage surrounded by them. Titled *Bantu Ghost: A stream of (black) unconsciousness* (2009), the show had him sitting at a desk, dressed in white, and reading, while Nelisiwe Xaba performed a choreography of moving shapes, almost like ghostly alphabet fluttering around, dreamlike and interacting with him. Books filled the stage and flowed like liquid from the desk onto the floor, each a parcel of possible enlightenment.

Books absorb sound. They contain imaginary sound but physically are also acoustically useful. A number of bookshelves crammed with books formed the essential acoustic treatment of a 'live room' in the Shifty recording studio set-up in the house we set up in during the early 1990s. LP records also contribute to acoustical treatment in a similar way and we had a few shelves of my collection in the room. One album which caught Lesego's eye – as opposed to ear – was titled *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1981) by

Brian Eno and David Byrne, both big name music stars of the late 1970s and 1980s.

> 'Have you read the book?' Lesego asked.
> 'What book? I didn't know there was a book'.

He then brought me a copy of Amos Tutuola's 1954 *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* which I read and then followed on with two others I could find: *The Palm Wine Drinkard* (1952) and *Feather Woman of the Jungle* (1962). I was intrigued at how each book seemed to fold into the other, though unconnected in narrative, chronology or location. There is a commonality that holds them that goes beyond language and style; a metaphysical clairvoyance, as if they are all part of the same dream that never ends, each book inhabiting an identical but different sur-reality. Tutuola was like no other author I had read. His spirit-worlds are visual word-pictures and seem to spring from a syncretism of African and Christian religious folklore – knowledge of aurality – melded together to form something new. Even though his characters occupy ghostly or dream-state realms, they are beyond death, but still occupy a real sense of darkness, a terrifying gothic darkness that comes from a surprisingly casual disregard for death.

Perhaps this is the veil that W.E.B Du Bois writes about in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1909), the veil that 'black folk' slip behind, separating them from whites, and return to from time to time. For Tutuola it is the veil of life and death. I sense that a veil born from a similar almost casual violence is prevalent in Lesego's work, although his is a wrestling with the South African psyche; a different beast, though equally biblical, and still 'slouching towards Bethlehem'[20]. In an interview with Robert Berold and Stacy Hardy Lesego touches on the brutality of his childhood experiences – which I feel is key to understanding his writing. When asked about the many scatalogical references in his work he said:

> I don't know if you have encountered children who have been raped, who have been sexually violated, I'm speaking about kids specifically, to the extent where they don't seem to have any control over their bowel movements. And I am not talking about infants; it could be a teenager. They just sit there and the next thing you know,

[20] From W.B. Yeats *The Second Coming* (1920).

> there is faecal matter there and urination going on. I think that that continues their entire lives. I've seen that, it's part of my reality. I present that without sanitising it[21].

Background

> 'You have to revisit your past to be able to move ahead' (Geoff Mphakati)[22].

Lesego was one of a number of poets working within the so-called praise/ struggle poetry idiom who found refuge within COSAW, an umbrella organisation affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF). Many of these young people were influenced by the extraordinary energy of the poetic outpouring of the previous generation of *Staffrider* writers and poets.

In contrast to the intimidation, apathy, stagnation, and pessimism that set in after Sharpeville in 1960, the Soweto uprising of 1976 was followed by one of the biggest literary outbursts South Africa has known, an outburst of literary and other cultural activity which marked the climax of the Black Consciousness era. In defiance of the government's efforts to suppress black cultural and political expression, many cultural groups of Black Consciousness persuasion emerged after Soweto (Mzamane 1988:3-11).

Lesego talks about how as a young boy aged 11 he was transported by the charisma of BCM poets such as Ingoapele Madingoane, Lefifi Tladi and others who were 'putting the word to the sound of the drum'[23]:

> … not long after things exploded in Soweto, people like Ingoapele Madingoane and all the other groups, Medupe and Dashiki and Lefifi Tladi, started taking to the ghetto streets themselves. I was dragged to some of these and then later I went of my own accord. Their work

[21] Interview with Lesego Rampolokeng by Robert Berold & Stacy Hardy (November 2016).
[22] *Giant Steps* directed by Geoff Mphakati & Aryan Kaganof 2005. *Loc* 51:50.
[23] Interview with Robert Berold. *New Coin* June (1999).

had a very high impact that was quite different to what I was getting at school[24].

An important cultural shift happened in South Africa after the June1976 Soweto uprising due to the introduction of television a few months later. A more sophisticated propaganda war was to be fought by a government often ham-strung by religious conservatives. Television was seen as a golden propaganda opportunity and a way of countering the lo-fi broadcasts of the liberation movement's Radio Freedom (Bevan 2008). The first TV broad-casts were, however, way off target. They totally ignored the Soweto uprising and, ironically, played a kind of fake news item for children using 'Sesame Street' type puppet presenters who read out nonsense news items in English and Afrikaans; a bizarre Dadaist moment if ever there was one[25].

Secondly a global revolution in music was happening in 1976. Initially labelled punk or punk-rock in Western Europe, the UK and America, this movement morphed into a dada/punk do-it-yourself youth rebellion which, Tim Mohr convincingly argues, brought down the Berlin Wall (Mohr 2018). Musically, the post-punk era embraced art, noise and reggae – particularly the afro-futurist dub music – production techniques from the studios of Kingston, Jamaica (Patton 2018:139). This shook the foundation of the megalithic capitalist music industry creating a generation gap as wide as that of the Vietnam conflict era and heralded an attention to political content, world class struggles and the Cold War divide. British punk band The Crass (1979) shouted 'do they owe us a living, course they do, course they fucking do'. A lyric which could go down well in many major COVID19 hit cities today[26].

Punk was a soapbox on which to vent and rage. Putting words to the drum. Words that were conspicuously 'concerned' and socially conscious overrode ostentatious musical proficiency. Reggae and punk existed in unison in the UK; both politically charged genres of the late 1970s and both inspired by an outsider do-it-yourself-ethic, fuelled by Japanese technology which made it possible for the amateur to own the means of production.

[24] Interview with Robert Berold. *New Coin* June (1999).

[25] The first SABCTV programme entitled 'A Special Programme in the Wielie Walie Speelkamer'.

[26] From the album, *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* (1978) by The Crass.

Big studios and record companies had received the first of the body blows that would eventually lead to their demise with the advent of digital music production and distribution (today music is inextricably linked to video and almost unrecognisable as a stand-alone consumer product). By the 1980s home recording studios proliferated and the ability to record, manufacture and distribute radical, uncensored music and words was accessible to middle budget entrepreneurs. Lloyd Ross set up the Shifty mobile studio in this spirit and I accompanied him to Lesotho to record the first African-post-punk album by the (then) three-piece band Sankomota (1984).

Two years later Ross completed *Change is Pain* an album for the poet Mzwakhe Mbuli who had grown in popularity appearing at UDF rallies and cultural events. To get the timing of the voice and music right, Ross had to splice the voice recordings into the music that was composed in workshopped sessions with Jito Baloi, Ian Herman and Morri Uart, all session players from other Shifty projects[27]. Pressing vinyl initially wasn't an option because of political interference at the pressing plant. To avoid a banning order, *Change is Pain* existed as a white labelled cassette with the word 'Pete' written on in marker pen. We connected ten cassette recorders together and ran off copies throughout the day in our kitchen. The album preceded *Before Dawn* (1989), Mbuli's best-selling book published by the Congress of African Writers (COSAW). For a few years in the early 1990s, at the stadium sized rallies of the UDF and COSATU, Mzwakhe became a huge star, his huge voice and declamatory style inspiring many young imitators.This was before he entangled himself in a myriad of personal problems; not least of which was a bizarre bank robbery in 1997 for which he served 6 years of an initial 13 year prison sentence. An extremely harsh and controversial sentence. As I write this article Mzwakhe's support of ex-president Zuma and the State Capture project is manifest in various social media messages, videos and even appearances in adverts and publicity of various kinds. Lesego admired him, commenting in his June 1999 interview with Robert Berold:

It doesn't matter whether you liked his work or thought his stuff was

[27] Jito Baloi played for *Tananas* and a Mocambiquan band called *Pongola*. Simba Morri Uarti was from Kenya and a solo artist and Ian Herman drummed for the *Genuines* and played on a number of Shifty albums.

> 'work', he opened a crack in the literary structure and occupied it. And for that he gets my respect. The old goats that gloat at him today are the ones who lifted him high yesterday. Bad roll of the dice. The mass democratic movement propped him up once, and then what? He dropped. So, everyone runs around cackling away in their little farticles. I say biggup to him, and flash my lighter in the direction of the dynamite up the wrinkled butts in Parliament.

I was initially drawn to record Mzwakhe because of my interest in Dub music and the success of the Dub-poet, Linton Kwesi Johnson, but felt that his writing was too politically compliant, too strident. Consequently, the idea to work with a similar 'Dub' poet was very attractive. Lesego was introduced to me through a friend at COSAW. He was sophisticated, hard hitting and, above all, unique; a totally unique physical and metaphorical voice. I had not come across anything comparable in South Africa.

One of the first pieces we completed was a track titled 'Heavy-weight' from *Horns for Hondo* (1990). Like the dub masters, I relied heavily on technology to produce my music, working alone mostly during the studio's downtime. Consequently, much of my music was looped based, rhythm section ideas – what Jamaican producers called the RIDDIM – grooves of drum and bass which I played myself. This was before the ubi-quity of computers so the loop had to be played in real time. I would normally lay down four minutes of drums and then lay a bass guitar and build from there. Early samplers and synthesisers were deployed on the *End Beginnings* album particularly on the title track and 'Heavyweight'. So 'putting the words to the sound of the drum'[28], as Lesego said, was a natural progression when adopting the Dub/poetry process.

The Dub concept came out of the instrumental B-Side remixes of Jamaican hit songs that were played for members of the audience to freestyle their own words over; a rap style known as *toasting*. 'Heavyweight' spoke of rioting (the language of stone) and the muting of communications (the freezing of the drum) with a historical context thrown in by the use of the word 'rum'. The trope of the rum guzzling pirate frames the poem and complemented, coincidentally, my own writing. Told from the pirates point of view my track 'Europeans' (1985) employs the voice of, agit-folk-singer, Roger Lucey who bellows out,

[28] Interview with Robert Berold. *New Coin* (June 1999).

> We come from across the sea in wooden ships - our scurvy eyes scour this new land …. we are Europeans, our hearts are on fire and we can't stand the pulse of the drums at night[29].

Four years later Lesego's voice answers this using the voice of the colonised in 'Heavyweight'[30].

> They come in the heat of rum / To freeze the beat of my drum
> Oh people take note / I wasn't allowed to vote
> They sang a song / sharp as the devil's prong
> They spoke in the gun and rifle tone / I answered in the language of stone (track 1 on *End Beginnings*)[31].

The track opens the *End Beginnings* album with Lesego's voice over a bed of electronic drones and pulses which I designed to create an atmosphere of creeping fear. A Roland CompuRhythm drum machine anchored the ominous two note synth-bass groove which played over electronic-keyboard pads and stabs, all idling at a slow 85 beats per minute (BPM). I imagined the sound of colonial steamers chugging up the Congo River through a drone of mosquitos. This was interspersed by a string sound hits and 'stings' from our, then cutting edge, sound sampling keyboard[32]. These keyboards were synchronised to each other through a master-slave electronic relationship, a nomenclature which still exists in computer, video and music technology. The drum-machine, when connected to various keyboards is referred to as the master and the keyboards are the slaves; the heavier equipment typically driving the lighter. Ron Eglash in his paper *Broken Metaphor: The Master - Slave Analogy in Technical Literature*, traces the origin of this idea to an astronomer in Cape Town in 1904 who used it to

[29] Found on the album *Living in the Heart of the Beast* (1985): https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/track/europeans

[30] A productive way of working which we never fully explored, though on the album Bantu Rejex the track *Minority Report* employs this technique; a poetic call and response. This is to be heard here: https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/track/minority-report-2

[31] Rap 33_ https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/track/heavyweight

[32] The Japanese produced Roland S-50 (1986) could hold a sample of 12 seconds and save it onto a floppy disc.

describe the relationship between the various clocks in his sidereal clock innovation (Eglash 2007).

The last stanza of the poem 'my words are sacred honey / cannot be bought with blood money' are crucial to Lesego's sense of integrity. Throughout the hardship and poverty of the poet, he has never compromised. In the early 1990s, with two small children at home, I dipped my hand into the honey jar of television commercials. One of the first I worked on was Mzwakhe's voice-over for the Cremora Coffee campaign. 'Roar Young Lions and wake up to the great taste of Cremora in your coffee in the morning'. I used to joke with Lesego that it was time to sell out, get some cash, and build a future. This was before 'the ungovernable' future closed in on us.In the same year that Mzwakhe was arrested for bank robbery I was shot through the leg in a hijacking. 'I became a bullet fired from a gun' (Lesego in his Rap 34). The violence in South Africa had reached out to touch my life too.

Extreme Close Up

I wrote the above in 2020 during the first severe COVID lockdown and a time when Lesego had some major health issues and indeed seemed at deaths door for a while. Since deciding to write this piece I organised to meet him in Grahamstown where he was struggling to write a PhD thesis that was never completed and battling a mysterious illness. He had been in and out of the state hospitals and had stories of woe and misery. After a few years of teaching creative writing at Rhodes University in Makanda he moved to Gaborone and then to Mafikeng/ Mahikeng and then to Sharpeville from where, a few months later, he sent me the following note:

> Things are really bad in this country at the moment. So many depressed walking about. Sad times indeed all round.

This note came a few days after wild fires ripped through UCT's libraries and parts of upper campus, destroying the African Studies section, including ancient and rare African collections. We chatted about this, and the strange synchronicity with an earlier fire that closed down the Johannesburg General Hospital on 16 May; a day after we had started recording material for a new album. South Africa seemed to be sliding into the apocalypse. Lesego was

sending me texts about the continuing saga of life in Sharpeville:

> 8th day now no electricity. A guy last weekend got electrocuted messing with the elec-box trying to get the power back on. He was burnt green-purple, died 3 days later in hospital. Anger in the community. tensions. 10 800 new covid cases past 24 hours in Gauteng, news says. Critical mass.

We worked on the album until the release on July 12 which was slap-bang in the middle of the civil riots which upended Kwa-Zulu Natal and parts of Gauteng. Organised looting on a large scale had been planned as a pro-Jacob Zuma action but it quickly spread out of control as the economically depressed from all over the region went on a looting rampage stripping shopping malls of luxury and basic items, anything from school uniforms to fat-screen TV monitors. I even saw a guy on social media with three pairs of shoes made up from the display cabinets where every shoe was different.

Still in Sharpeville Lesego witnessed the effects of the looting in the chasing away of foreign nationals and the resulting lack of available food.

> terrible. no bread/essentials. did i tell you the looting crowd hit spar, shoprite, boxer shops and then went for ethiopian spaza shops? it was heartbreaking to witness.right now i am cold, hungry and electricity-free, among other unsavoury things.

These images and feelings were imprinted into the album and serve, at least for us, as a sonic bookmark of our time; a strongly prescient burst of extraordinary energy leading, almost prophetically up to the events that would frame it. The album – titled Babylon Mission Report – contains[33] a track we wrote, 'Perverse Chrysalis', which ends with the 'actual' voice of Aimé Césaire, one of Lesego's major influences, speaking in French. It translates as:

> We are far away from 'drifting under a sluggish sea' it's much more than that. It is the land of anger, an exasperated land, a land which spits and spews, which spews life. This is what we must be worthy

[33] Kalahari Surfers on-line archive: https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/album/babylon-mission-report

> of. The creative part must be nurtured. The anger must be continued. We must continue[34].

Lesego in his most recent book of poems writes:

> Trying to luv you, S.A. you are just making yourself so totally unlovable. always have. & I'm just your son, prodigal or not, trying to come home. with a bag of books, music & art the Sasol 3 were traded for...& the guerilla-poet Solomon Mahlangu wrote his will in his own blood when Goch street was not far from Russia. Mayakovsky was there[35].

Vladimir Mayakovsky's complex relationship with the Soviet state began with his admiration of V.I. Lenin[36] who, when in exile in Zurich, had sleepless nights from the noise coming across from Hugo Ball's 'Cabaret Voltaire' which was directly opposite his lodgings. Hans Richter had seen Lenin and Zinoviev in the library several times. 'It seemed to me that the Swiss authorities were much more suspicious of the Dadaists..than these quiet studious Russians …even though the latter were planning a world revolution and later astonished the authorities by carrying it out' (Richter 1965:63).

If, as Mayakovsky[37] said, 'Art is not a mirror to hold up to society, but a hammer with which to shape it', then Lesego's poems resist art, deflect the hammer blows and hold the mirror up high.

Acknowledgement: This essay was made possible by the Mellon Foundation *Turning the Tide* scholarship.

---

[34] From the film *AIME CESAIRE, A VOICE FOR HISTORY*- Trailer PART 1. https://vimeo.com/371881285

[35] Rampolokeng, Lesego 2018. *a half century thing*. Black Ghost Press. (p. 84).

[36] Winston Churchill said this when the Germans let him travel back to Russia: 'The Germans turned upon Russia the most grisly of all weapons. They transported Lenin in a sealed train like a plague bacillus from Switzerland into Russia' (Sebestyen 2019:497 iBook).

[37] Slight variations of this are also attributed to Bertoldt Brecht as well as the documentary film maker John Grierson.

References

Ball, H. 1916. *Dada Manifesto.* https://www.scribd.com/doc/202859327/1916-Hugo-Ball-Dada-Manifesto

Baraka, A. & L. Jones 1964. *Black Dada Nihilismus*. Poem

Bevan, C. 2008. *Putting up Screens: Television in South Africa, 1929 - 1976.* Thesis. Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/2263/24845/1/00front.pdf

Chronic & P. Mabandu 2019. *Propaganda and Politics Tunnel Vision. History of Art Activism in South Africa.* Available at: https://chimurengachronic.co.za/propaganda-politics-art-activism-south-africa/ (Accessed on 11 September 2021.)

Davis, S. 1990. *Bob Marley*. Brand: Schenkman Books.

Du Bois, W.E.B. 1909. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Atlanta. https://law.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/2282858/Du-Bois,-Souls-of-Black-Folk.Chapters-1-to-4.pdf

Doherty, C. 1993. *Horns for Hondo.* Review. *New Coin* 27,1.

Eglash, R. 2007. *Broken Metaphor: The Master - Slave Analogy in Technical Literature* 48,2,April. (The Society for the History of Technology.) https://doi.org/10.1353/tech.2007.0066

Eshun, K. 2003. Further Considerations on Afrofuturism. *The New Centennial Review* 3,2,Summer: 287 – 302. https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2003.0021

Kaganof, A. & G. Mphakati 2005. *Giant Steps*. Film. https://doi.org/10.1126/sageke.2005.14.nf27

Kennedy, D. (ed.) 2002. *Helen Maria Williams and the Age of Revolution.* UNKNO Publishers.

Keylock, M. 2014. No Easy Stroll to Freedom for SA Poetry's Restless Howler. *Mail and Guardian* 15 August 2014. Available at: https://mg.co.za/article/2014-08-15-no-easy-stroll-to-freedom-for-sa-poetrys-restless-howler/ (Accessed on 11 September 2021.)

Marechera, D. 1978. *The House of Hunger*. eBook.

Marechera, D. *Dambudzo Marechera Archive of the Humboldt University in Berlin.* Available at: https://rs.cms.hu-berlin.de/marecheraarchive/pages/home.php?login=true (Accessed on 11 September 2021.)

Marechera, D. *Dambudzo Marechera.* https://rs.cms.hu-berlin.de/marecheraarchive/pages/view.php?search=house+of+hunger&k=&modal=&display=thumbs&order_by=date&offset=0&per_page=48&archive=0&sort=DESC&restypes=1%2C2%2C3%2C4&recentdaylimit=&foredit=&noreload=true&access=&ref=615

Mohr, T. 2018. *Burning Down the Haus: Punk Rock, Revolution, and the Fall of the Berlin Wall.* Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books.

Mzamane, M.V. 1988. New Poets of the Soweto Era: Van Wyk, Johennesse, and Madingoane. *Research in African Literatures* 19,1: 3 - 11.

Patton, R.A. 2018. *Punk Crisis: The Global Punk Rock Revolution*. London & New York: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190872359.001.0001

Rampolokeng, L. 1990. *Horns for Hondo*. Johannesburg: COSAW.

Rampolokeng, L. 1993. *Talking Rain*. Johannesburg: COSAW.

Rampolokeng, L. 1999. Interview with Robert Berold June 1999. *New Coin* June.

Rampolokeng, L. 2012. *Head on Fire: Rants/ Notes/ Poems 2001 - 2011*. Grahamstown: Deep South.

Rampolokeng, L. 2015. *A Half Century Thing*. Cape Town: Black Ghost Press.

Rampolokeng, L. 2017. *Bird-Monk Seding*. Grahamstown: Deep South.

Rampolokeng, L. 2018. *Facebook the Poet*. Cape Town: Black Ghost Books.

Rampolokeng, L. 2013. Post-Freedom Poetry. Interview by Douglas Valentine. *Counter Punch* 13 September 2013. http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/09/13/post-freedom-poetry/ (Accessed on 11 September 2021.)

Rampolokeng, L. 2016. Interview with Robert Berold & Stacy Hardy. November 2016.

Rampolokeng, L. & W. Sony 1992. *End Beginnings*. Lesego Rampolokeng and the Kalahari Surfers, produced by Warrick Sony, Shifty Records. https://kalaharisurfer.bandcamp.com/album/end-beginnings (Accessed on 11 September 2021.)

Reynolds, S. 2006. *Rip it Up and Start Again: Postpunk 1978 – 1984*. London: Penguin.

Richter, H. 1964. *Art and Anti Art*. High Holborn UK: Thames and Hudson.

Rosemont, F., R. Kelley & D. Robin 2009. *Black, Brown & Beige: Surrealist*

Writings from Africa and the Diaspora. 1st Edition. (The Surrealist Revolution Series.) Austin: University of Texas Press.

Sebestyen, V. 2017. *Lenin: The Man, the Dictator, and the Master of Terror*. New York: Pantheon.

Sosibo, K. 2012. Lesego Rampolokeng: Fragments of Obscurity. *Mail and Guardian* 11 May 2012.

Surfers, K. 1985. *Europeans.* From *Living in the Heart of the Beast*, produced by Warrick Sony, Gross National Products.

Suttner, R. 2004. The UDF Period and its Meaning for Contemporary South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30,3: 691 – 702. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305707042000254164

Toussaint, D. 2017. Dada South? Experimentation, Radicalism and Resistance. *De Arte* 52,2–3: 54 – 76. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043389.2017.1336898

The Crass 1979. *Do They Owe Us a Living*. From: *Feeding of the 5000*. Music.

Tutuola, A. 1954. *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts.* London: Faber & Faber.

Valentine, D. 2013. *Post Freedom Poetry*. CounterPunch. Available at: http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/09/13/post-freedom-poetry/ (Accessed on 11 Sept 2021.)

Veal, M. 2007. *Dub: Soundscapes and Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.

Veit-Wild, F. 1997. Carnival and Hybridity in Texts by Dambudzo Marechera and Lesego Rampolokeng. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23,4: 553 – 564. www.jstor.org/stable/2637426 (Accessed on 11 September 2021.) https://doi.org/10.1080/03057079708708557

Wright, J. 2004. Syncretism as a Strategy of Political Resistance in the Poetry of Lesego Rampolokeng. *Scrutiny2* 9,1: 91. https://doi.org/10.1080/18125440408566019

Yeats, F.B. 1920. The Second Coming. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43290/the-second-coming

Related Music

Spotify Playlist.
https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1FtB761JrUGPBoxn9qDdJE?si=ul2RN3S0SAWrYNM95hKRKw

End Beginnings *and Other Dada Nihilismus*

Warrick Swinney
PhD candidate
English Department
University of the Western Cape
Bellville
warrick@kalaharisurfers.co.za