The existence of ideological links between language and particular social categories means that linguistic variation is available not only for identity construction, but also for parody and other forms of social commentary (e.g., Bakhtin 1984; Chun 2004; Rampton 2008). In this talk, I discuss how indexical language is deployed to serve this more political function by the South African rap-rave group Die Antwoord. Building on prior research on the sociolinguistics of staged performance (Bauman 2000; Coupland 2007; Bell & Gibson 2011), I argue that Die Antwoord makes use of salient linguistic and other semiotic cues to engage in a form of meta-parody (Coupland 2007; Bucholtz & Lopez 2011) that seeks to subvert constructions of Afrikaner identities that have emerged in the post-apartheid era.

The dramatic reconfiguration of the social, political and ideological order in South Africa since 1994 has demanded a concomitant reconceptualization of Afrikaner notions of self and belonging in the (new) nation. Over the past twenty years, this reconceptualization process has followed two related, if conflicting, trajectories: on one hand, there has been the advent of a culturally-based Afrikaner identity that, on the surface at least, is largely compatible with dominant discourses of non-racialism in the “rainbow” South Africa (e.g., Steyn 2001, 2004; Ballantyne 2004). On the other hand, there has also been a resurgence of a rehabilitated sense of ethnic Afrikanerness that functions by selectively (re)mythologizing elements of Afrikaner history and reinscribing the tropes of Afrikaner particularity and victimization that formed the backbone of the apartheid state (e.g., Marx & Milton 2011; Steyn 2014). I detail how Die Antwoord works to critique both of these conceptualisations of the “new Afrikaner” and the gendered, racial and class-based configurations on which they are based. In doing so, Die Antwoord foreground the persistence of unresolved racial and other social divisions in South Africa. Through the talk, I therefore hope to contribute both to the growing body of research on Whiteness in South Africa and elsewhere (e.g., Steyn & Conway 2010; Bucholtz 2011), and to the development of a theory of the politics of performance within sociolinguistics more broadly (e.g., Williams & Stroud 2014).