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## CULTURE, MEDIA & FILM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Enter the imperceptible: Reading Die Antwoord

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**Abstract:** Die Antwoord (The Answer), a Zef-rap outfit from South Africa, have been criticised for their appropriation of cultural signifiers in their lyrics and the images which come to fore in their music videos. This paper investigates how the band uses culture as a “found object” and albeit problematically, subverts static conceptions regarding South African life. I read Die Antwoord’s performance as an embrace of simulation (via Jean Baudrillard) which destabilises myths regarding authenticity. Die Antwoord’s lack of authenticity is investigated in relation to hip hop as well as the creation of a Zef counter-culture. Drawing specifically from “Fatty Boom Boom”, the analysis centres on how the band satirises exoticised myths surrounding South African life.

**Subjects:** Art & Visual Culture; Arts; Cultural Studies; Humanities; Media & Film Studies; Music; Performance Theory; Practice and Practitioners; Theatre & Performance Studies; Visual Arts

**Keywords:** Die Antwoord; myth; simulation; authenticity; appropriation; “Fatty Boom Boom”

## 1. Introduction

When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality—a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity. (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 12)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sonja Smit recently completed her doctorate and is currently engaged in a postdoctorate programme at Rhodes University. She is both an academic researcher and a choreographer/live artist. Her research interests are focused within the field of the arts (specifically experimental approaches to performance theory) and philosophy. She is fascinated by creative approaches to the production of knowledge and, more specifically, how the practice of art making can be understood as a valid mode of knowledge. Her PhD research investigated how Whiteness has been challenged through performance in post-apartheid South Africa. The research on Die Antwoord was located within a broader critique of Whiteness by South African artists. She also lectures at the Rhodes Drama Department, and has choreographed, designed and performed on various platforms since 2009. She resides in Grahamstown, South Africa.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This article discusses the notion of authenticity and how the idea of the “real thing” is constructed through a process of myth making. By challenging notions of authenticity that are based on essence alone, one can reveal how perception is informed by representation. Perhaps in doing this, one can also point to the possibilities for alternative presentations through the process of deconstruction. For example, this paper investigates how important authenticity is in the reception and production of hip hop music and what elements constitute this “realness” in hip hop. The article goes on to investigate how the Zef rap-rave group, Die Antwoord embrace simulation (via Jean Baudrillard) by focusing on appearance and surface value in their imagery. The analysis is focused on the music video for “Fatty Boom Boom” (2012) and investigates the problematic use of blackface imagery as an example of the group’s satirical version of “authentic” South African hip hop.

In *Mythologies*, Ronald Barthes discusses the manner in which signs become naturalised to represent popular myths: “things lose the memory that they once were made” (1972, p. 142). This naturalisation arising from myth making can also be described as a process of reification in which society forgets the part played in the construction of myth (1972, p. 142). Signs and codes are created through myths which in turn serve to sustain those myths. Hal Foster, interpreting Barthes, identifies a historical transformation of the sign in relation to the conversion from a feudal society to a bourgeois society, associating the latter with the sign and the former with the index (1996, p. 74). Whereas the index has a reference and origin, the sign does not; the sign is unlimited in its references and can be bought and sold (1996, p. 74). The sign, penetrated by capital, no longer represents its reference in reality, but rather refers to other signs. Much of the experience of contemporary Western societies is to some extent characterised by this saturation of the sign.

Jean Baudrillard elaborates on this saturation of the sign in contemporary culture and describes his theory of “simulation” as the “liquidation of all referentials” (1983, p. 4). This indicates an absence of reality external to representation which is replaced by the “hyperreal”, described by Baudrillard as a strategy of simulation, by “substituting the signs of the real for the real” (1983, p. 4). As audiences of a Disney movie, for example, one (most likely) knows or can at least guess as to what the conclusion will be, an endorsement of the ideal as reality, if not compensation, for the lack of the ideal in reality. Baudrillard argues that hyperreal spaces, like Disney World, compensate for a lack of reality (1983, p. 25). Instead, signs become substitutes for a reality that has become “hyperreal”.

As Baudrillard observes in the quote cited at the beginning of this paper, the perceived loss of reality is met with desperate attempts to cling to an “authentic” world which can be meaningfully and objectively determined. Signs act to compensate (in fact to over-compensate) for this perceived lack of the “real thing”. Simulation as a strategy is “not only the loss of reality, but also its very possibility. The aim of simulation is not to do away with reality, but on the contrary to realize it, to make it real” (Butler, 1999, p. 23). The result of this hyperreality is “totally oppressive” and prescriptive, leaving little space for the enigmatic, as Baudrillard puts it: “the inaccessible secret” (1990, p. 147). In *The Vital Illusion*, he suggests that: “for, facing a world that is unintelligible and problematic, our task is clear: we must make that world even more unintelligible, even more enigmatic” (2000, p. 83). Baudrillard’s suggestion is to embrace the idea that there is no objective reality. Perhaps this is exactly the strategy of Die Antwoord, who manipulate the desire for the real through the creation of Zef.

Die Antwoord appropriate from multiple reference points, treating culture as a found object with which to create their particular brand of Zef. Van Der Watt points out, “Die Antwoord’s illegibility and ambivalence is achieved by their obsession with surface and their consistent erosion of depth, continually frustrating our desire to find deep meaning or consistency in their act” (2012, p. 401). Borrowing from the “subcultural signifiers available to them” (Woodward, 2011, p. 18) in South Africa as well as from popular culture, their act heightens the non-reality of the signs they borrow. One of the ways Die Antwoord do this is through a comic exaggeration and celebration of what many may deem as a vulgar taste. The band manipulates the desire for authenticity to reveal the deep inconsistency of this expectation, and thereby they de-naturalise the signs they employ. Neil Pendock humorously asserts that:

Afrikaans zef-rappers Die Antwoord are neo-Baudrillardians in the Boland. Zef Baudrillard, if you like. With a philosophy based on “PC computer” games on the interweb with the aim to get to “the next level”, these Belville Baudrillards embrace simulation as the new reality. (2012)

Die Antwoord are a Zef rap-rave musical outfit who perform their music both nationally and internationally. Both Ninja and Yo-landi are creations by Watkin Tudor Jones and Anri du Toit, and as constructed characters, they do not qualify for an authenticity that is based on essence. The Zef movement started in 2009 with the popularity of Die Antwoord’s “Enter the Ninja” and Jack Parow’s “Cooler as Ekke” (You think you are cooler than me). The Zef rap-rave outfit have been criticised for a lack of authenticity (and the appropriation of cultural signs) in their performance of Zef. I argue that these responses to Zef reveal a problematic expectation of authenticity which rests on static

concepts of identity. Their construction of Zef is purposely false and exaggerated. For instance, Ninja had previously been active in the South African music industry as the front man for MaxNormal.TV (1995–2002) and the Constructus Corporation (2003). He was known for creating onstage characters and for his satirical performance style in these two musical products. Yo-landi Visser, a former Fine Art student from Pretoria, was also involved in some of these projects.

What is particularly fascinating about Die Antwoord is their refusal to acknowledge their performance as constructed. In fact, Die Antwoord have been consistent in resisting the question of their authenticity. In “Fok Julle Naaiers”, Visser asks Ninja if his act is real and in an aggressive tone he replies that the question is idiotic and that he will punch someone if he is asked this question again. Ninja’s response here sounds as a refusal to “sell out” the manufactured and performed “authenticity” of Zef. Both performers get exasperated when interviewers question their “realness” as an act. When asked by a Norwegian interviewer, “What do you feel about the debate on the internet that you are a piece of conceptual art?” Ninja responded as follows: “We are a rap group from South Africa. Some people think too much ... other people fucking get it. Do you consider yourself to be an intelligent person? What do you think?” (Interview Gone Wrong, 2010). Visser interjected with “What the fuck is ‘ceptual art?” (Interview Gone Wrong, 2010). For a statement that has been repeated in previous interviews, Ninja’s reply to Los Angeles Times reviewer, Chris Lee, testifies “Conceptual art, I don’t even know what that is” (2010).

## 2. Rap/zef/poverty

Die Antwoord do not merely appropriate, but perform multiple ideas about life in South Africa and their interpretation of popular culture. As a rap group, Die Antwoord have created a way to “live up to” the tropes of hip hop authenticity. Rap is known as an intentionally subversive form of music which emerged as an expression of marginalised Black youth in urban America. Rap often celebrates Blackness and intercity culture with its roots in the South Bronx in the 1970s and 80s. As privileged White subjects, Die Antwoord have little claim to the marginal experiences of black rappers.

Kembrew McLeod observes that one of the most emphasised aspects of hip hop realness is related to street credibility (thug for life status) and being true to oneself (1999, pp. 140–142). A White rapper can be authentic by proving him/herself through a sincere and honest presentation of self through hip hop. Hess argues that White rappers accentuate their Whiteness, thereby challenging the invisibility and privilege of Whiteness (2005, p. 382). He regards Eminem as a White hip hop artist who manages to represent his low-income background, while at the same time, highlighting his privilege as a White male working within an industry dominated by African-Americans. Although Eminem is White, he manages to represent hip hop authenticity by responding to his own Whiteness within the context of hip hop. In order to live up to tropes of rap “realness”, Die Antwoord focus on the figure of the poor White (or White trash) in order to carve out their gangsta status.

When one considers the importance of a disadvantaged background in hip hop, it becomes more evident why the idea of Zef is able to accommodate and embody tropes of hip hop authenticity since Zefness is defined by a lack of wealth. Parow states that Zef “is like, well, like the opposite of posh, like plastic ... fur on the dashboard” (Samson, 2011, p. 20). Zef is described by Ninja as an appropriation of aspects of American popular culture, he explains: “Zef is, like, American style, it’s like the debris of American culture that we get in dribbles. We tape it together and try to be American ... The Zef style is a coarse style” (Lee, 2010). While Visser describes it as: “Zef is, you’re poor but you’re fancy. You’re poor but you’re sexy, you’ve got style” (Hoby, 2012). Clearly, Zef is not an unambiguous term, but it is a very specific way of incorporating the mainstream and commercial “debris” into a South African idiom. It will become more apparent that Zef cannot really be defined in any simple or definite way and that Zef constitutes a multiplicity of references.

The word Zef, for instance, was derived from the Ford Zephyr car of the 1950s and 1970s, and was used as a derogatory term to identify poor Whites who lived in caravan parks (2012, p. 402). Although the Ford Zephyr was not necessarily representative of poverty, it was associated with a less

educated and working-class background of those, for instance, who worked on the mines in Johannesburg. Die Antwoord's interpretation of "poor whites" can be seen in the majority of their music videos, but it is probably the *Zef Side* video which accompanied the release of "Enter the Ninja" that introduced the world to Zef subculture. The short video reveals the three members of the rave-rap trio in their urban environment as Ninja, Yo-landi and DJ Hi-Tec. Working as a narrative of origin, *Zef Side* shows Die Antwoord in their home environment: a banal looking government housing suburb. These visual clues expand the concept of Zef as a "poor" or working-class phenomenon. One is given a sense of the interrelational "debris" that constitutes Zef culture. The video demonstrates a pastiche of outmoded fashion accessories from popular culture, such as, for example, Ninja's Pink Floyd shorts and his yin-yang shirt. The *Dark Side of the Moon* emblem and the symbol of the yin-yang are disassociated from their original context: "You see a kid in Liberia wearing a Tupac T-shirt. That's so Zef" (Lee, 2010). Visser's mullet hairstyle and the use of a Bronski Beat sample "The Perfect Beat"<sup>1</sup> further exemplify the anachronous elements that comprise the Zef style. The result is comedic, as if the band consulted magazines from the 1980s to create their style. Die Antwoord have reinterpreted the idea of Zef: "what we see here is not a picture of original Zef, but the rebirth of Zef as a contemporary style, 'next level Zef' as they call it" (Van der Watt, 2012, p. 411). In this way, the outmoded and defunct idea of Zef becomes relevant and mainstream through Die Antwoord's re-appropriation of the term. The narrative of Die Antwoord's origin in *Zef Side* is of course completely fictitious as neither Yo-landi nor Ninja have ever lived in this neighbourhood. The new versions of Tudor Jones and du Toit have usurped their former selves.

The references to poverty and a disadvantaged background operating within the performance of Zef is a simulated one. It is an appearance of poverty pertaining to the idea of "white trash" or the "poor white" as it comes to fore in the imagery of the band. When asked about their "white trash" aesthetic, Die Antwoord were dismissive: "We're not trashy ... maybe it's because your country is like much more first world than our country so maybe we look a bit trashy to you" (Interview Gone Wrong, 2010). In attempting to defend Zef style, Ninja also points out dominant, but sometimes invisible perceptions about African countries. Ninja's response, although humorous, is politically charged and brings attention to the "tripartite" division between *First*, *Second* and *Third* worlds.

### 3. The complexity of unity in diversity

Ninja's statements regarding race are often politically incorrect in tone, for instance, he has referred to himself as "die wit kaffir"<sup>2</sup> in the track "Never le Nkemise" (2012). In "Fishpaste", Ninja raps that he is a Cape Coloured, for instance, insisting that he can take on this identity if he so desires, it need only be discovered within himself. Often Ninja professes to be an amalgamation of South African cultures, the most well-known example of this is in the intro to "Enter the Ninja", wherein he states that he is a combination of the different races and ethnicities abiding in South Africa. Ninja satirises ideas surrounding not only hip hop authenticity, but the construction of race and ethnicity in South Africa. In the post-election context, since the democratisation of South Africa and the breakdown of apartheid, emphasis has been placed on the notion of diversity. Brink Scholtz observes how work that represents diversity receives more support and funding (Scholtz, 2008, p. 34). This support is largely related to the discourse of the "rainbow nation". She argues:

Importantly, this notion speaks of differences, but not differences that would threaten an overriding unity. Particularly marked in representations of the rainbow nation circulated for purposes of tourism and advertising, are depictions of cultural diversity reduced to superficial representations of difference that fail to do justice to the richness or complexity of cultures, or to the real material differences in people's lives. Such depictions also reinforce a South African propensity for stereotypes, particularly racial. (2008, p. 36)

Ninja's statements regarding his "mixed" identity is a threat to this idea of unity by his attempts to channel and embody the "rainbow nation" in his problematic White skin, which is a marker of the continuing privilege of Whiteness in South Africa. Yet, in saying this, Ninja also emphasises how the very notion of a unified rainbow nation is extremely problematic if one considers the complexity of

the various cultures living in South Africa. Anton Krueger notes that: “Perhaps, instead of providing a reflection of society, the rainbow nation trope may be an indication of the aspiration for something which sounds like a paradox: a multi-cultural homogeneity” (2010, p. 209).

By claiming that he is “all these different people, fucked into one person”, he challenges but also reveals the cracks in the desire for unity within diversity. In fact, it is these claims to diversity that many of Die Antwoord’s detractors criticise. Die Antwoord are often condemned for appropriating cultural codes and dialects from both poor White and coloured ethnicities. Adam Haupt regards this appropriation as a form of blackface and reminds his readers how ironic it is that Ninja is not coloured nor is he Afrikaans (2012b, p. 41). “Fatty Boom Boom”, released in October 2012, centres on insulting Lady Gaga and international perceptions of South African life. It is also in this music video that Die Antwoord quite literally use black body paint to erase their Whiteness and represent the “diversity” of South African culture.

#### 4. “Fatty Boom Boom”

Like most of Die Antwoord’s music videos, the design of “Fatty Boom Boom” (2012) is tightly conceptualised around an unfolding narrative. The product placement of South African brands in the music video, such as Sunlight Washing powder, the Lucky Star canned fishbrand on Ninja’s pants and Visser’s yellow Lion Matches dress, parodies big industry product placement. The music video starts in a minibus taxi in which the driver takes Lady Gaga (wearing the well-known meat dress) on a tour through the urban jungle of South Africa. The sign on the minibus reads “Big Five tours” and the video includes wild animals on the street, hyenas eating rubbish, a lion and a panther. The “Big Five” (the most popular wild animals: lions, elephants, rhinos, leopard and wildebeest) is one of the attractions for tourists on holiday in South Africa. These wild animals playing as pets to street vendors is a subversion of stereotypes related to Africa as a place where wild animals walk in the streets and children go to school on the backs of elephants. This trip can also be related to the popularity of “township tours”, where foreigners get the “authentic experience” of township life. On their trip through the “urban jungle”, the tour guide shows Lady Gaga a band of street performers (Die Antwoord), and she remarks that she would like to have them as an opening act. The minibus is hijacked and the Lady Gaga impersonator flees the scene in fear which eventually leads her to the office of a dentist/gynaecologist. The doctor removes a parktown prawn (a King Cricket) from her vagina and on leaving the clinic, she is mauled to death by a lion.

“Fatty Boom Boom” comments on the discourses of the tourist industry with its “highly selective representations of various countries ... constructed for the western viewer’s specular consumption” (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996, p. 287). Consider the Emoya Private Game Reserve outside Bloemfontein in the Free State which sports its own Shanty Town complete with a “long drop toilet effect” and is described as “the only shanty town in the world equipped with under-floor heating and wireless internet access” (Emoya, accessed on 5 December 2013, from [www.emoya.co.za](http://www.emoya.co.za)). This simulated township increases the opportunities for privileged travellers to “develop a commodified relation to the non-western other” (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996, p. 287). Although the tourist industry is a lucrative business bringing capital and foreign investment into the country, the effort put into maintaining a steady inflow of tourists is questionable. By this I mean specifically the effort that is put into maintaining stereotypes and certain versions of South African cultures. The commodification of the township life seen in tours and holidays resorts, such as Emoya, creates another form of exotification and can be argued as a unique form of blackface. Helen Gilbert argues that the tourist economy “typically repeats many of the same power games and struggles of initial imperial endeavours” (1996, p. 287).

In “Fatty Boom Boom”, Visser is covered in black paint which alludes to the images of blackface performance which developed in America in the nineteenth century. Haupt points out that blackface is more revealing of White racist perceptions about Black people than Black people themselves (2012b, p. 418).<sup>3</sup> The practice of blackface minstrelsy aided in justifying and perpetuating racial inequality in the USA; Eric Lott observes: “Black figures were there *to be looked at*, shaped to the demands of desire; they were screens on which audience fantasy could rest, securing White

spectators' position as superior, controlling, not to say owning" (1992, p. 28). Since blackface minstrelsy was a stereotyped performance of Blackness, it was clearly an inauthentic representation of the African-American subject. The use of blackface in "Fatty Boom Boom" can be interpreted as a sign of inauthenticity and an indicator of the band's failure to create a homogenous image of hip hop or South African life. For instance, as White subjects, the band fails to live up to the trope that "real" hip hop originates from Blackness. Secondly, they are not "authentically" African in their appearance, and therefore cannot deliver on the expectations of what an African should presumably look and act like. Although Ninja and Visser are South African-born citizens and do create music which falls within the style of hip hop, their skin tone fails to live up to the tropes of hip hop realness or to a standardised image of African identities. They paste on a mask of blackface—they perform parody and in doing this satirise some of the stereotypes constructed around South African life.

Of course, Visser's black paint is different to the mask which was created in conventional blackface minstrelsy, but the reference is clear. While the original use of blackface was used to effect the appearance of Blackness by White performers, in this case, it covers the entirety of her body and is glossy and reflective, instead of the matte burnt cork in traditional minstrelsy. This glossy texture of the body paint is noteworthy: gloss is surface value, something deceptively good in appearance, perhaps similar to the neoliberal mask which "promotes" alterity. The use of the body paint is a pastiche of cultural forms and it is perhaps through this superficial skin of glossy paint where the notion of simulation becomes more prominent. In Baudrillard's formulation, simulation replaces the lost "original" through signs. These signs stand in for or replace the real and in order to fulfil the expectation of a consolatory image, appearances can be more valuable than the truth. The band has to adopt a certain image to be identified as authentically hip hop and also South African in origin. The humour of *Die Antwoord* comes to fore in how they have interpreted the desire for an authentically South African experience.

Furthermore, this reference to blackface also comments on the continuing exoticisation of those perceived as "other", in a situation where difference is promoted and simultaneously exploited for profit. Contemporary forms of racism are more subtle than, for instance, the use of blackface, as Rosi Braidotti argues, "contemporary racism celebrates rather than denies differences" (2002, p. 4). The use of blackface in this music video can perhaps be read as a condemnation of the manner in which African cultures are represented in the popular media and travel brochures, which do not necessarily employ blackface, but, nonetheless, further objectify the *third world*. There are layers of subversion operating as surface signs. In "Fatty Boom Boom", blackface is pasted onto an already established "mask" of Zef-ness, creating a satirical presentation of this practice, specifically within the network of signs in the music video that underline this performance of misguided views about South African life.

The music video for "Fatty Boom Boom" was released on Youtube amidst the internet hype surrounding Lady Gaga and Interscope (*Die Antwoord's* record label at that time). *Die Antwoord* refused to sign up as the opening act for Lady Gaga and also broke with Interscope to release their *Ten\$ion* album on their own label, Zef Recordz. Ninja remarked that:

Weird shit's been happening, like Lady Gaga asked us to tour with her and we're like, "No, don't worry about it" Our stuff is like fucking hardcore like solid heavyweight! We want it to be like a secret mind-fuck!... We like making pop music, but we like making hardcore music at the same time, mixing them, but they've got like, soul. It's not like weak, superficial shit. You know? (*Die Antwoord, Lady Gaga, 2012*)

This split apparently occurred because the label wanted to steer the band in a more mainstream direction: "they also tried to get involved with our music, to try and make us sound like everyone else out there at the moment" (*Die Antwoord, Lady Gaga, 2012*). This refusal to work with the established and popular artist, Lady Gaga and the band's split with Interscope, gives *Die Antwoord* more street credibility as "thugs for life". This attitude plays into the tropes of hip hop authenticity as being

distinctly anti-mainstream. Ninja's desire to keep Die Antwoord "a secret mind-fuck" is to keep the sense of ambiguity that the band has established for themselves. So it is not that Die Antwoord are not sell-outs, but that they are quite specific about what they would like to "sell out" to. For instance, the band later agreed to be the opening act for the Red Hot Chili Peppers in 2013, a band which is commercial, but less superficial according to Die Antwoord?

Haupt observes how the reception to Die Antwoord in the media is a form of cultural imperialism (2012a, p. 2). He argues that it is Die Antwoord's media savvy approach and access to high-quality production tools together with their "self-referential parody of *white* and/or *coloured* working-class subjects" which have underlined their success (2012a, p. 115). Haupt goes on to note that, "it was the work of socially conscious hip hop activists in Cape Town that ensured that hip hop found an audience in South Africa" (2012a, p. 2), but who did not garner the kind of mainstream success that Die Antwoord has. This pertains to the representational power of Whiteness which seems to remain intact. Yet, Die Antwoord's treatment of culture as a found object, as "debris", also reveals the impossibility of a representation that could do justice to the complexity of South African life. This is the ironic aspect of Die Antwoord whose subversion of "keeping it real" is simultaneously soaked up by international audiences, revealing the West's inability to recognise (or to take responsibility for) their prejudiced perceptions of the (South) African "other".

### **5. Conclusion: the inadequacy of essentialist ideas surrounding cultural authenticity**

Trinh Minh-Ha argues that "authenticity as a need to rely on an 'undisputed origin' is prey to an obsessive fear: that of losing a connection" (1989, p. 94). Deleuze and Guattari agree when they argue that flights towards free and autonomous positions away from the connections of representation, interpretation or symbolisation are full of dangers such as, for example, fear: "We are always afraid of losing. Our security, the great molar organisation that sustains us, the arborescences we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us—we desire all that" (1987, p. 227). Through the desire to connect, to "represent, interpret or symbolize", one easily ends up categorising people, nations and ideas in order to make sense out of life. As one categorises, one might end up reifying concepts, forgetting one's own involvement in their creation. Perhaps this is more harmful than the fear of losing a sense of security which is based on ill-defined premises. Homi Bhabha speaks of a "creation of cultural diversity and a *containment* of cultural difference" (1990, pp. 208–209). Bhabha recognises the limit of Western liberal and universalist perspectives to accommodate difference and argues that no culture is complete in itself "because its own symbol forming activity, its own interpellation in the process of representation, language, significance and meaning-making, always underscores the claim to an originary, holistic, organic identity" (1990, p. 210). Desires for authenticity constructed around visions of an objective and well-defined world result in the reification of authenticity which ultimately hampers the emergence of new forms and modes of experience. With the realisation of difference, as Braidotti points out, "comes also the quest for alternative figurations to express the kind of internally contradictory multi-faceted subjects that we have become" (2002, p. 6).

By positioning themselves as quirky oddities, who blur the distinctions between themselves and the personas they create, Die Antwoord reveal their simulation of Zef. Die Antwoord cultural appropriation is on a surface level, a "pasted on" performance of authenticity which may empty the various tropes of their significance. In doing this, they provide an illustration of the impossibility of supplying an adequate representation of a multi-cultural society: the limits of representation.

Die Antwoord present us not with a representation of politics, but with a politics of perception. They are disinvested in an objective or rational world, rather they work within a simulated world, they are attached to the world of appearances. Die Antwoord's strategy is not subtle and they push this simulated world of Zef appearances to its nth degree. This rap outfit gives you more, but *more than more*, by supplanting signs of the "real" as their real. They abuse the rules of simulation and do not attempt to simulate an objective reality, but to create their very own. So, in their own unobvious and unstable manner, they cross into opacity—into a form which seems to lack coherence or

meaning. But as Baudrillard keenly observes, we are never identical or present to ourselves, and that the impossibility of reducing the meaning making process, is to embrace a “radical alterity” (2000, p. 71). Die Antwoord is an embrace of alterity and the confusion and discomfort that exist within the notion of difference.

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#### Notes

1. A British Synth-pop band from the 1980s.
2. *Kaffir*—originally meaning “heathen” is a racial slur and is considered as hate speech in South Africa.
3. Although it was popular for White performers to adopt blackface, often the only way for African performers to make a living in the USA was to perform the stereotyped beliefs of White audiences. Josephine Baker’s statement on this is notable: “the white imagination sure is something when it comes to Blacks” (Sowinska, 2005).

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