

- **H. Samy Alim** 
 Anthropology
 University of California Los Angeles
 halim@ucla.edu
- **Adam Haupt**
 University of Cape Town
 adam.haupt@uct.ac.za

- **Quentin E. Williams**
 Linguistics
 University of the Western Cape
 qwilliams@uwc.ac.za
- **Emile Jansen**
 Heal the Hood Project
 emileyx@gmail.com

“Kom Khoi San, kry trug jou land”: Disrupting White Settler Colonial Logics of Language, Race, and Land with Afrikaaps

This article offers a broad and deep discussion of critical issues in the study of language, race, and political economy through an analysis of the verbal art, aesthetics, and performances of South African hip hop artists. In particular, we present an in-depth analysis of the Afrikaaps language movement in Cape Town, South Africa and theorize the language-race-land complex, the range of issues with respect to the co-constitution and refusal of the colonial logics of language, race, and land. Specifically, we address the Afrikaaps language movement in Cape Town, South Africa. Afrikaaps is a South African hiphopera that disrupts white settler colonial logics of language, race, and land through an interrogation and revision of white supremacist constructions of Afrikaans. This reinvention of language, race, and land frees the Afrikaans-speaking, so-called Coloured community from oppressive, colonial logics and offers them new ways of envisioning their linguistic, racial, spatial, and political-economic futures. We argue that, for the artists-activists involved in this decolonial, raciolinguistic movement, Hip Hop becomes a critical vehicle for raising consciousness through language, foregrounding Indigenous knowledge systems, and upending the white supremacist legacies of apartheid through a radical re-education. Methodologically, we center Black and Indigenous artists' voices, understanding them to be more than cultural producers but also cultural theorists. We draw upon our longitudinal, ethnographic cultural engagement with the Hip Hop artists involved in the theatre production and related forms of language activism (Alim & Haupt 2015, 2017; Haupt 2012; Haupt et al. 2019; Jansen 2019; Jansen et al. 2019; Stroud & Williams 2017; Williams 2018), as well as language and media analyses of the Afrikaaps production, soundtrack, and documentary film (Valley 2010). [race, racialization, coloniality, land, Hip Hop]

“Kom Khoi San kry trug jou land, Coloureds kom van Khoi San verstand.”¹

(‘Come Khoi San, get back your land, Coloureds come from Khoi & San understanding.’)

-Emile YX?

Die taal is gekoep in ons slaap. Nou vat ons n stap met Afrikaaps om dit trug te vat

(‘The language is stolen in our sleep. Now we take a walk with Afrikaaps in an attempt to reclaim it.’)

-Jethro Louw

Die Afrikaans wat os praat kom einlik way, way, way trug voorie Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners gestig was as a structure

(The Afrikaans that we speak actually came way, way, way back before the Society of Real Afrikaners was established as a structure.)

-Blaq Pearl

Ek is die theatre van pre-colonial imagination

(I am the theater of pre-colonial imagination.)

-Jitsvinger

This article offers a broad and deep discussion of critical issues in the study of language, race, and political economy through an analysis of the verbal art, aesthetics, and performances of South African hip hop artists. In particular, we present an in-depth analysis of the Afrikaaps language movement in Cape Town, South Africa, and theorize the *language-race-land complex*, the range of issues with respect to the co-constitution and refusal of the colonial logics of language, race, and land. *Afrikaaps* is a South African hiphopera that disrupts white settler colonial logics of language, race, and land through interrogation and revision of white supremacist constructions of Afrikaans. This reinvention of language, race, and land frees the Afrikaans-speaking, so-called Colored community in Cape Town from oppressive, colonial, apartheid era logics and offers them new ways of envisioning their linguistic, racial, spatial, and political-economic futures in South Africa.² At the same time, the Afrikaaps language movement liberates the Afrikaans language itself from its white supremacist history, offering white Afrikaner communities with potentially new ways of being in the post-colony, if they should choose to accept rather than appropriate them.

This article, however, is primarily concerned with the Afrikaaps movement’s efforts to rewrite the history of Afrikaans while creating new racial and linguistic futures for Cape Town’s Black/Colored/Indigenous communities. We argue that, for the artists–activists involved in this anticolonial, raciolinguistic movement, Hip Hop becomes a critical vehicle for raising consciousness through language, foregrounding Indigenous

knowledge systems, and upending the white supremacist legacies of apartheid through a radical re-education. Our analysis focuses on the Afrikaaps theatre production and its accompanying musical soundtrack and documentary film (Valley 2010; the production, soundtrack, and documentary share the same name), as well as attempts to commodify and appropriate the radical ethos of the Afrikaaps language movement. Beyond those forms of cultural production, we draw upon our longitudinal, ethnographic cultural engagement—for Alim since 2014, Williams since 2017, Haupt since 2010, and Jansen since 2008—with many of the Hip Hop artists involved in the theatre production and related forms of language activism (Alim & Haupt 2015, 2017; Haupt 2012; Haupt et al. 2019; Jansen 2019; Jansen et al. 2019; Stroud & Williams 2017; Williams 2018). Methodologically, we center Black and Indigenous artists' voices, understanding them to be more than cultural producers but also cultural theorists (see Spady 1991 on "hiphopography"; Spady, Alim & Lee 1999).

The artists and activists involved in the Afrikaaps language movement in Cape Town's Hip Hop scene—including Emile YX?, Blaq Pearl, Jitsvinger, Bliksemstraal, Monox, Jethro Louw, Shane Cooper and Kyle Shepherd, among others—offer us a vision of a radical, emancipatory social movement through their music, theatre productions, community organizing and educational interventions. In many ways, they are continuing the anti-racist, political ethos of what has been referred to as "nation conscious rap" (Spady 1991) or "a hip hop of Black consciousness" (Haupt 1995) in the South African context, pioneered by groups like Prophets of da City, Brasse vannie Kaap, Godessa, and Black Noise. By grounding themselves in one of Hip Hop's five elements, Knowledge of Self, these artist-activists reclaim ownership and authority over Afrikaans, "interrupting colonial relationships" through what Soudien (2014) referred to as an "ontological refashioning" of what it means to be a speaker of Afrikaans, more broadly, and a Colored speaker of Afrikaans, in particular (Stroud & Williams 2017).

In their view, the language variety spoken by most Colored speakers in the Cape is not Afrikaans, at least as it is conventionally understood as the language of white Afrikaner nationalism. These artists remix "the creole history of Afrikaans"—sometimes also referring to it as "the Black history" or "the Indigenous history" of Afrikaans—and provide a central and pivotal role to the linguistic contributions of indigenous Khoisan peoples and enslaved Muslims from India, Malaysia, and other parts of Southeast Asia (Alim & Haupt 2015, 2017; de Prada-Samper 2019). In this sense, they counter the erasure of their very existence. Within the logics of white settler colonialism, this erasure was central to a white Afrikaner national project that depended upon both racial and linguistic purity—a pure white race, with a pure white language of its own as the key component holding the ethnonationalist, colonial project together (Haupt 2017; Moses, 2019). As will become clear, these artists are not primarily concerned with whether or not most linguists would classify Afrikaans as a creole. In fact, they reject the colonial ideologies at work in these Eurocentric processes of classification, which DeGraff has repeatedly argued are rooted in ideological grounds—based in the histories of colonialism and slavery—rather than linguistic ones, are riddled with empirical, theoretical, and sociological flaws, and have more to do with "a set of sociohistorically rooted dogmas with foundations in (neo)colonial power relations" than "a scientific conclusion based on robust evidence" (DeGraff 2005, 576).

Inventing Afrikaaps: New Language for New Racial and Linguistic Futures

The process of racialization—where race is an enduring yet evolving social process steeped in centuries of colonialism and capitalism (Reyes, 2020), the essences of which embrace systemic violence—is central to linguistic anthropological studies of language and race (Alim, Reyes & Kroskrity, 2020; Delfino, 2020; Heller & McElhinney 2017; Hill 2008; Rosa 2019; Roth-Gordon 2016; Spears 1999). In fact, the race is not only a social construct; but, race theorists like Du Bois (1903), Rodney (1974), Robinson (1983), Crenshaw (1989), Kelley (2002), Perry (2011) and Balibar, and Wallerstein (1991), among others, have long argued that race is inextricable from

histories of apartheid, genocide, enslavement, dispossession, nationalism, capitalism and various forms of colonialism, as well as their contemporary manifestations.

Urciuoli (1996, 2020), building upon Omi and Winant's seminal racial formation theory (1994), argued that analyses of racialization should examine "not merely the emergence but the active construction of that norm as whiteness in relation to labor and economic structures and reinforced by social policies, as shown by DuBois (1947), Roediger (1991), Allen (1994), Jacobson (1998), and Lipsitz (1998) among others." As Spears (1999, 2020) explained, the violence, brutality, and terror of capitalism and colonialism are not only the macro-contexts within which race and language are produced, but white supremacy comes to *depend* on the idea of race, and therefore, processes of racialization for its reproduction (Hill, 2008; Kroskrity, 2011). As this special issue demonstrates, linguistic analysis brings a crucial perspective to analyses of white supremacy by revealing the ways in which language and race are mutually constituted as social realities (Alim, 2004; Bucholtz 2011; Ibrahim 1999; Lo and Chun 2020; Rosa and Flores 2017a; Smitherman 1977; Smalls 2020).

Building upon the earlier theorizing of Makoni & Pennycook (2006), Severo and Makoni (2020) summarize their view of language as a process, an *invention*, by recognizing that:

(i) languages are historically and politically invented by a complex colonial apparatus that overlaid language, race, power, and religion in specific ways; (ii) the metalanguage used to frame communicative practices is historically invented and cannot be considered separately from the "objects" they describe and invent; (iii) the colonial linguistics that helped to shape languages had material effects on language policies adopted by colonial powers, as in the role of education in the institutionalization and systematization of languages, mainly by inserting literacy as a powerful representation of what counts as language; (iv) the concepts of language should be submitted to continuous revision so that we avoid using colonial frameworks to describe and problematize historical power relations.

Further, with respect to language, Severo and Makoni (2020) argue that we must "problematize from a historical and critical perspective the concept of languages as fixed entities capable of being counted, systematized, and named." Viewing language as a social process, rather than products or "abstract and separate" entities "that exists prior to... individuals and social practices," allows researchers to reveal hegemonic ideologies and practices, such as the homogenizing ideology of "one-language-one-nation" that undergirds several colonial practices, for example.

In the case of South Africa's history of white settler colonialism, and the contemporary manifestation of white settler capitalism (Speed 2019), race and language play central roles in the continued oppression of "Indigenous," "Black," and "Colored" communities. Commonly-known narratives about South African apartheid note how Afrikaner nationalists oppressed "Black" (or "Black African") people, not unlike Jim Crow segregation in the U.S., for decades of racialized segregation and multiple, insidious forms of legalized discrimination in every domain of life, including marriage, housing, education, and citizenship, among others. "Colored" was a racial label created by the apartheid regime to refer to people racialized as "mixed" and not readily classified as either of the dominant categories, "White" or "Black" (Erasmus 2001; Adhikari 2005). As Shaheen Ariefdien of Prophets of da City, South Africa's premier Hip Hop crew, explained:

Colouredness, or Coloured people, is generally regarded as not white, and not Black African. It's a socially constructed category, and, at various moments of white supremacist rule in South Africa, the definition changed. Under Dutch rule, this heterogeneous group of enslaved peoples from places as diverse as Indonesia to various areas along the south-east coast of Africa came to be known as Colored. The term was used for any person who was not considered of "purely" European descent. Under British rule, that definition shifted. And because the British feared the local Indigenous people banding together with enslaved communities against their enslavers, they created divide-and-rule strategies, as they've done elsewhere. Coloured then became not white and not Black, as a way to further separate and

exploit people. These culturally and ethnically diverse groups of people who formed a community based on shared experiences of enslavement were further divided and oppressed. (Alim interview with Ariefdien, 2014)

As Ariefdien further shared, the white Afrikaner nationalists' manipulation and use of the term "Colored" added further repressive layers:

Later, the Afrikaner ruling class—Afrikaners are the descendants of the Dutch colonizers, took it a step further with apartheid—the intersection of Calvinism, Capitalism, White Supremacy and Patriarchy on steroids. For them, Coloured meant inferior to white, and slightly superior to Black...The psychological trauma Coloureds endured was brutal, because British colonial notions of "purity" added an additional layer to oppression. Since Coloureds were an already ethnically heterogeneous group who didn't fit into colonial notions of racial purity, typical tropes linked to impurity, whether they be promiscuity, shame, criminal, etc., were put on this group. Also, the Indigenous, First Peoples, the Khoi, the San, etc., were also now lumped into this group...In terms of media depiction, so-called Coloured people were largely invisible or portrayed as alcoholics, coons, gangsters, drug addicts, etc. Coloureds were socialized to denounce any kind of identification with their African heritage. So that's important to keep in mind in terms of how hip hop knowledge played a role in our consciousness. (Alim interview with Ariefdien, 2014)

Directly germane to our arguments in this article regarding the so-called Colored community's use of Afrikaaps, Colored South Africans, of course, were also framed by white Afrikaner nationalist discourses as speaking a sub-standard form of Afrikaans. Afrikaans and Dutch whiteness were laminated one on top of the other, each described as pure, immaculate and unsoiled (Stroud & Williams 2017) in order to bolster Afrikaner ethnoreligious nationalism against both British imperial powers and the "uncivilized" Africans whose land they came to occupy (Alexander 2012; see also Alexander 2010, 2011 for broader context, and Deumert 2004 on the standardisation of Afrikaans).

This ideology of Afrikaner raciolinguistic purity is precisely what the Afrikaaps language movement seeks to unravel, and invent anew. As Haupt (2017) has argued, Afrikaaps depicts this colonial Afrikaner project as "cultural appropriation" because "the construction of Afrikaans as a 'pure' language with Dutch origins served the Afrikaner Nationalist project when the National Party came into power in 1948 and began to justify its plans to implement legislated apartheid," which "relied on biologically essentialist understandings of race as bounded and fixed and...those classified as coloured [were] seen as racially mixed and, therefore, defiled—marked with the shame of miscegenation" (Erasmus 2001, 16; Haupt 2001, 176-178).

Moreover, as Alim & Haupt (2015, 2017) have argued, artists involved in the Afrikaaps language movement explicitly revise hegemonic understandings of language and race. They provide a creative rewriting of the language variety—Afrikaaps, not Afrikaans (see Figure 1)—as well as its history and their place in it. The neologism itself—Afrikaaps—serves as a metaphor for counterhegemonic revision, the basis for the invention of Afrikaaps. In a wide-ranging, ethnographic interview with Jitsvinger, one of the most critically acclaimed emcees in Cape Town and the artist credited with this innovation, he shared an in-depth account of the genesis of "Afrikaaps" and how it serves to upend racist Afrikaner colonial logics:

Because we're dealing with this Afrikaans history, we're mentioning "Afrikaans" so many times, you know what I'm saying? And that's when I knew I had to do something that was about what we *understand* about the language. It's almost like I *attacked* it. You see, Afrikaans had a plaster on it, so I had to crack that. I had to hit what we know it as. And so I took the word and I just slashed the "n" out of it and I put the "p" there. (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017)

Here, the violence of the colonial encounter, including the symbolic violence of erasure, was met with the force of a new version of history that, as hip hop often



Figure 1. Poster of a canceled Afrikaaps performance scheduled at Die Afrikaanse Taalmonument (or The Afrikaans Language Monument), a contested site of Afrikaner nationalism. [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]

does, de-centered whiteness by flipping the proverbial Afrikaner script on its head. Jitsvinger explained more directly how this neologism combated European, colonial erasure:

Afrikaaps! Because now you're saying Afrikaans, but you're not saying it, because we changed the end. This is a new awareness of Afrikaans now. It's like you're bringing "Afrika" into "Kaaps." Kaaps is not now something separate from the language. It's there now. Let's understand that this language was born in Africa. It wasn't brought here by the apartheid system or any European rule, brother. They may want to believe so, with all the academic and borrowed knowledge from any part of the world. But they cannot claim the language Afrikaans as a white language. (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017)

What's brilliant here is that "Afrikaaps" effectively silences traditional notions of "Afrikaans" ("Because now you're saying Afrikaans but you're not saying it") by reclaiming it as a language forged primarily by Indigenous Africans as opposed to the white Dutch settlers ("They cannot claim the language Afrikaans as a white language"). As South African linguist Neville Alexander states in the *Afrikaaps* documentary, an excerpt that also appears in the theater production, "*As die Khoi en die San en die slawe veral nie gedwing was om Hollands of Nederlands te leer nie of te praat nie, sou die taal Afrikaans eintlik nie ontstaan het nie.*" (If the Khoi and the San and especially the slaves were not forced to learn and speak Dutch, the language Afrikaans would never have been invented.) Adding to that, historian Patrick Tariq Mellet, who also appears in both the documentary and via video in the theater production, claims that the linguistic history of Afrikaans begins prior to enslavement with the initial colonial encounters, where Indigenous Africans were "the first to mold this new creole language Afrikaans" (see also Holm 2004, and De Kline 1997 on Afrikaans creolization).

In the interview with Jitsvinger, he explained how this colonial erasure vis-à-vis the linguistic history of Afrikaans was due to:

a deep investment from the previous government with regards to the language, because back since the late 1700s, they consciously decided to wipe out the Black influence or the slave influence that formed the base of Afrikaans. They consciously decided to make it their own

by doing that and having a language of *their* own. And then they started writing the first standardized dictionary, you know? That went into the school system. Every generation then had to deal with that and make it part of their knowledge or education, which is why we're so removed from it. Now, over 100 years later, we discover the true history of that, that we are actually the architects of the civilization that we're in, but we were never acknowledged as such. (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017)

Jitsvinger argues that Afrikaaps does not reproduce the ethnonationalism of the Dutch in their construction of Afrikaans. He acknowledges that this remixing and reclaiming of Afrikaans linguistic history doesn't mean that they are "claiming it as our own alone, because remember now Dutch is a part of it. . . It's got Chinese in it. It's got Nguni in it. It's got Khoisan in it. So, we're recognizing *people* here, the cultures it comes from. Because you can't remove a language from the culture it was born out of." He adds, depicting the relationship between Afrikaans and the Indigenous speakers of Afrikaans in metaphorical terms, bringing us back to the necessity of the term, Afrikaaps:

It's like you're looking at the child [Afrikaans] but you're not acknowledging the parents [the Indigenous peoples who birthed the language]. How can you understand the child? Now, this child is made to look a certain way to suit a certain mentality. And that's what we're dealing with. That's why Afrikaans, when I looked at that mold, I had to break it down, because I am from Kaapstad (*Cape Town*). A lot of it started here. . . It's possible for us to have birthed this language, because we understood something about it way before Afrikaans came about. (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017)

Further, a point that can be easy to overlook is that Afrikaaps "Africanizes" the Colored community by locating them within an Indigenous history of South Africa. Expanding upon the importance of the "Afri" in "Afrikaaps," Emile YX? explained:

[It] challenges people's perception that they are African, because there is this idea amongst the so-called Coloured community that we're not. It's not only them that think that, but it's the way that the history of the country is structured, that "This language is not from here. This is a Boer language. This wasn't created here in any way" . . . [And you think] "Aw, I'm just this person in the middle. We're stuck here. As a so-called Coloured or mixed-race person, we don't have a home. People don't see us as African." Then placing that ["Afri"] there, and when you do the research, you're like, "Oh, damn!" It places you right here. (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017)

In combating white settler colonial erasure, these artists are also offering a new way forward for the Colored South African community, rejecting an apartheid-era system of racial categorization that both de-Africanized them (by relegating them to a separate category, neither "African" nor "Black") and reaching back to claim their pre-colonial Indigenous, Asian, Black, and Khoisan histories. Again, rejecting colonial categories of racialization and racial purity goes hand-in-hand with the refusal of white supremacist, colonial constructions of Afrikaans as "a Boer language" as well as notions of racial purity altogether.

Die Reenmaker (The Rainmaker): Die Theatre Van Pre-Colonial Imagination

In the Afrikaaps theatre production, Jitsvinger imparts Indigenous knowledge while performing a captivating spoken word piece, "Die Reenmaker," in which he narrates the tragic transformation of Indigenous societies as the Bible-wielding, colonial missionaries of *die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* ("the Society of True Afrikaners," if you can believe the colonial caucosity) sought to spread Christianity amongst the *bruin mense* ("brown people") within the Afrikaans-speaking population. This conversion went hand-in-hand with the standardization of Afrikaans by the Afrikaners, and as Jits described above, the conscious erasure of "Black influence or the slave influence that formed the base of Afrikaans."

In “Die Reenmaker,” Jitsvinger introduces us to an Indigenous couple—a local medicine man and his wife—and society struggling to make it through a difficult period of drought. The wife implores her husband to go speak to the !*gi:xa* (‘spirits’) so that they can break the curse and provide rain for their land and water to drink. Eventually, we see that the !*gi:xa*, who are powerful and used to provide the rain, are “*uitgedryf as misterieus en sinister*” (‘expelled as mysterious and sinister’). Jitsvinger depicts the aftermath of this colonial calamity:

Nie meer die volks geneesheer, inteendeel nou word man en vrou bekeer. Brood en wyn is deel van n sekere bloed en vleis ritueel, ge-orkestreeur deur n sendeling in sy swart karos met sy boek met die rooi tong wat klap –ken hy die bol en knoll wat die !gi:xa uit die randjies gaan haal het? Ken hy die jackals dans wat ons innie maanlig trans? Stukkend is ons tromme geslaan om nou sy weg na die kerk te baan. ‘n Gebou vir sy god deur ons hande gevorm. Nou is ons geklas as arm en stom/dom. Wie gaan nou vir ons die reen bring?

No longer the people’s medicine man, instead now man and woman are converted. Bread and wine are now part of a blood and flesh ritual. Orchestrated by a missionary in a black jacket, with its book with a red tongue that snaps from it. Does he know the “boll and knoll (‘herbs/offerings’)” that the !*gi:xa* (‘healer’) fetched from the hills? Does he know the jackal dance that we trance-danced in the moonlight? Our drums are now hit broken to lead the way to their church. A building built with our hands for their god. Now we are labeled as stupid or dumb. Who is now going to bring us rain?

In no uncertain terms, Jitsvinger depicts the white Afrikaner colonial missionaries as destroyers of a civilization and the Bible as a red-tongued serpent with utter disregard for Indigenous culture, beliefs, knowledges, and lifeways. “To me, as a youngster, I always saw [the Bible] as not a book; it’s a face, and it’s got this red tongue. . .It subdued a lot of our people.” According to Jitsvinger, the red tongue is “a way of portraying these weapons of oppression. Well, people didn’t need spirituality. We didn’t need it. Well, we had it, but in a different way, through stars, through how seasons change, through saying thank you for the time we hunt, to being in-tune with ourselves. That was our Bible.” Under European rule, “You had to go to a church on this day over here. God was somewhere in the building. We built the church. We built it. We built God’s house. Why can’t we be free in there or free through it?” (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017). Not only were the Indigenous peoples robbed of their traditions, and framed through colonial logics as “stupid, dumb,” but they were also forced to build churches to worship the Christian god of their colonial masters. The tragedy is brought into stark relief in the conclusion of Jitsvinger’s breathtaking performance, “Who is now going to bring us rain?” In other words, who will provide relief for a metaphorical if not more disastrous drought—colonialism.

In Jitsvinger’s performance poetry, the political is quite literally personal. As he detailed the story of “Die Reenmaker,” he explained “it relates to my family history. I’m third-generation since that happened. My grandfather was approached by missionaries with this mechanized spirituality, a version of Christianity that was politicized, or I say mechanized, and then brought as a means to subdue him and his household, his parents.” (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017). He continued, explaining his vivid description of the encounter with the colonial missionaries:

Because once the Bible came, the gun came, meaning the government. That arm wasn’t far behind. My grandfather had land. He maintained a large community every season. I sat with that, and I could understand why they did it, the ruling government . . .they needed the land there, but they had to go to those who owned the big parts of it, but they could do it through Christianity, through making the people believe that they are being forsaken. . .That was the role of the missionary there. (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017)

Here, Jitsvinger became noticeably affected by his family’s history. “Still, today, I can see them not dealing well—they have a hard time. Because, look, they lost a lot. If you

had land, you had capital. If you had land, you had livestock. That's their existence. It all changed. . . That huge land grab." (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017).

This personal, painful experience of dispossession explains why these artists link language and land constantly throughout the production.

Because back in late 1800s, to have land, you need to have an identity, a sense of belonging to that land. It only happens through you having a language that comes from the place where that land is. If that land is in Africa and you're an Afrikaner, but the language is Afrikaans—oh, that makes sense. But where does that come from? Oh, so you hid all the actual history. You actually had to rewrite it to appropriate it yourself in this situation. . . They didn't rewrite it. They falsified it completely. . . And that's why we have such a hard time coming back to the fact that it's actually our language, because we fought against it in the 70s with the uprisings and stuff. . . "To hell with Afrikaans!" Not knowing that we are the makers of it. (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017)

And here Jitsvinger links language and land more explicitly: "It's like your house. You've been told for generations that this is not your house. 'We kicked out your parents. We're not gonna mention that to you, but this is not your house.' Now you're smashing the windows in! But I saw the foundations. Now we're gonna hold on—this is ours, as well—and everything that comes with it." (Alim interview with Jitsvinger, 2017).

In "Ek Is" ("I Am"), one of the central pieces in the Afrikaaps performance, Jitsvinger continues to weave together references to Indigenous remedies and the rural homelands of the Khoisan peoples with local myths and allusions. He begins by describing himself, and Afrikaaps, as "the theater of pre-colonial imagination, *die fynbos encyclopedie, die alkemie van Namibia, Garob, Namaqua, langs die Gariep, Noordwes, oppie N2, Tsitsikama*" ("The fynbos—name of an Indigenous plant; translated as 'finebush' encyclopedia—the alchemy of Namibia, Garob, Namaqua, alongside the Orange River, Northwest, on the N2, Tsitsikama"). The chorus of the song, "*Ek is, wie is ekke, wie is ekke, maa wie is dji?*" ("I am, who am I, who am I, but who are you?"), is answered loudly at the very end by the entire cast in a thundering punctuation: "Ek is . . . Afrikaaps!" (therefore, "I am Afrikaaps"). As Blaq Pearl, the critically acclaimed spoken word poet and writer explained, "*Afrikaaps is me. It's the language I—dissie taal wat ek in droom, die taal wat ek in sing, die taal wat ek in poetry doen, die taal wat ek vir my kind sing annie slaap. Soe is ek, you know*" ("It's the language I dream in, the language I sing in, the language that I perform poetry in, the language with which I sing my child to sleep. That's who I am, you know.") (Jansen et al., 2019: 228).

If "I am Afrikaaps," then these artists are weaving together a narrative of a stolen language that is inseparable from both stolen identities and stolen lands. As Blaq Pearl further explained about the variety of Afrikaans created by the white Afrikaner national project, "If you go back into the history, the perception [is] that Afrikaans, die regte ['the real'] Afrikaans, you know is die [is the] superior one." She continued, complementing Jitsvinger's pre-colonial reasoning behind the need to invent the term Afrikaaps, "But that IS a stolen version. . . *Die Afrikaans wat os praat kom einlik way, way, way trug voorie Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners, etc., gestig was as a structure.*" ("The Afrikaans that we speak actually came way, way, way back before the Society of Real Afrikaners, etc., was established as a structure.") (Jansen et al. 2019: 222).

Not surprisingly, these narratives were received with quite a bit of controversy from some conservative Afrikaans corners of South African society. After all, if language is inextricable from both the land (recall that "KaaP" means "Cape") and Colored identity, then Afrikaaps suggests not just the reclamation of African languages and identities, but also a reclamation of African lands. But what would that mean in contemporary, neoliberal, white settler capitalist South Africa? How do artists involve in the Afrikaaps language movement negotiate the complex, often volatile politics of land reclamation? These are only two of the questions brought to the fore, explored, and complicated by Afrikaaps, and most principally so, in the provocative "Kom Khoi San."

“Kom Khoi San, kry trug jou land”: The Complex, Volatile Politics of Land

Thus far, we have seen how the Afrikaaps language movement pushes back against regressive, colonial ideologies of language and race that both erase and reify linguistic and racial boundaries. More than a pushing back, these artists refuse, reject, and reframe oppressive, white supremacist, settler colonial logics of erasure. The Afrikaaps production provides a glimpse of possible alternative linguistic and racial futures for the Colored community in Cape Town by refusing European, colonial systems of racial categorization and foregrounding Indigenous knowledge systems as both a return to the sometimes proverbial pristine precolonial past, and importantly, as a means of theorizing futures that necessitate transformations over the contested, intimately connected terrains of language, race, and land (see Kroskrity 1993 and Mays 2018a for comparisons with North American Indigeneity).³

The *Afrikaaps* documentary both opens and closes with the song “Kom Khoi San.” The chorus, sung by Emile YX?, issues a call: “*Kom Khoi San kry trug jou land, Coloureds kom van Khoi San verstand.*” (“Come Khoi and San, get back your land, Coloreds come from Khoi & San understanding.”) Among other possible interpretations, the chorus can be interpreted as both a rallying cry for land reclamation by Indigenous communities as well as a call for the Colored community to acknowledge the Khoi and San “understanding” that is a part of their ethnoracial heritage. But the song, like the entire production, is more complex than that, inciting not a physical revolution of land reclamation per se but a revolution of thought about language-race-land in contemporary South Africa. As Emile YX?’s raps:

- 01 *Kykie vestaan die San behoort aanie land*
 Look, understand the San belongs to the land
- 02 *Ma die land kannie gekoep word ie, so hou jou blerrie rand*
 But the land cannot be purchased so keep your damn rand (South African currency)
- 03 *Gaat vra die Xhosa en Zulu, wie was eeste hie*
 Go and ask the Xhosa and Zulu, who was here first
- 04 *Die naam Xhosa ennie clicks het die Khoi aan hulle gegie*
 The Khoi and San gave them the name Xhosa and the click sounds
- 05 *In Khoi mean Xhosa “Angry looking man”*
 In Khoi, Xhosa means “Angry looking man”
- 06 *Elke click in isiXhosa is oorspronklik vannie San*
 Every click sound in isiXhosa originally comes from the San
- 07 *Boesman en Hotnott is gebruik om te beledig*
 Bushman and Hottentot was used to dehumanize
- 08 *Maar oorals staan die rotskuns nog stewig*
 But everywhere the rock art stand strong
- 09 *Vir duisende jare, nie eens “Rockgrip” kan so maakie*
 For thousands of year, not even “Rockgrip” paints can do this
- 10 *The “Gods Must Be Crazy”, ma die San issie vaakie*
 The “Gods Must Be Crazy” but the San is not asleep
- 11 *Wie’s jou dom darkie, Afrikaaps kom vannie Kaapie*
 Who’s your dumb darkie, Afrikaaps come from the Cape
- 12 *Nou word elke dag, tweede nuwe jaar gemaak hie*
 Now every day is a 2nd New Year
- 13 *Nie net vir ‘n party, of apaart hie*
 Not only a party, nor apart here
- 14 *Die menses sal hulself trug aan die land gie*
 The people will return themselves to the land
- 15 *Hie’s elke sogenoemde ras is gemix, ou bra*
 Every so-called pure race is mixed, my brother
- 16 *Ma daais oek o’right, os is amal van Afrika...*
 But that’s also OK, we are all from Africa...

First, and perhaps most importantly, Emile YX? foregrounds Indigenous perspectives on land and ownership that disrupt white settler colonialist, and white settler capitalist, understandings of land as the property of humans to be bought and sold. In fact, he opens the whole verse with “Look, understand the San belongs to the land,” rather than “the land belongs to the San,” rejecting the idea that land can be purchased (“So keep your damn rand!”). In a conversation with Emile YX?, he was asked if his art and activism had “actually” led to land reclamation by Indigenous communities, to which he responded:

Yo, I think within our minds at this point, only because I work with a lot of the First Peoples way of thinking. I understand that their belief was that they were owned by the land and not the reverse. . . . There’s a lot of Khoi-San movement groups in Cape Town at the moment that focus on the occupation of the land. And if the understanding is that land is just for your tribe, then it is not beneficial to, not only Africa, but humanity as a whole. I don’t subscribe to race, I don’t subscribe to tribe, and I’m trying to get that message across that all of us on this planet come from one people, this First People. . . . And that all of this other race stuff is just one hell of a big lie to keep us divided. And so, the thing, for me, the land issue is connected to that, all of the wealth is based on the theft of the land. [It’s also] about [our] own sense of self-worth, right, within the context of who we are and where we’re from. And I think only once we have Knowledge of Self and a clear understanding can we then work the land, and again, *be part of the land*. Not oppress and occupy the land, and other earthlings that frequent the land, the misuse of it. (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2014)

Within this conversation, and his verse, Emile again links the disruption of white settler colonial logics of land to the regressive logics of language and race. He does not “subscribe to race” or “tribe,” in his words, because he is engaged in a project that foregrounds the common origins of humanity. One of the ways he searches for these shared origins is by addressing the European, colonial language ideology that frames the “clicks” found in many African languages as “sub-human.” In lines 3-6, he is also addressing the legacy of the coloniality of race within so-called “Black” and “Colored” communities as well. As mentioned, apartheid-era divide-and-rule racial classifications relegated Afrikaans-speaking Colored communities outside of “Africanness.” This is an enduring legacy of apartheid-era racialization. Other African groups—including some Colored community members themselves—frame “Colored” as “not African.” Speaking broadly to all three communities (white Afrikaners, Black Africans, and Colored Africans), and specifically to those labeled “Black Africans,” Emile works to depict a linguistic history that connects all African groups through the Euro-stigmatized click sounds (“*The Khoi and San gave them the name Xhosa and the clicks. . . . Every click in isiXhosa originally comes from the San.*”). As Emile himself explained, the verse

points to the clicks in Xhosa being from the same root, the same Bushmen. That commonality and the illusion of purity that is connected to that. . . . And to quote Neville Alexander, that common thread, that returning to the source, which is his thing that there is a river, a common human source with little tributaries running off of it, but we all have the same foundation. It’s ironic that people find this as being threatening. (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017).

Being a little more honest about the nature of the threat, he brought it back to his critique of white settler capitalism and the white Afrikaner project: “Obviously, to them, it’s economic. Economic, also and an attack on the idea of the purity, and the sense of where they’re from, which is a false sense of where they’re from” (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017). By searching for common origins, linguistic flows, and cultural cross-pollinations, Emile disrupts the colonial logics of language-race-land for both the colonizer and the colonized.

Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing/Disruptive Pedagogies

For Afrikaaps artist-activists, schools are a major site of language ideological contestation. As a former teacher by trade and a public pedagogue, Emile YX? often gives public lectures, produces curricular materials, provides workshops, and sustains long-term relationships with schools through his non-profit organization, Heal the Hood Project. In the *Afrikaaps* documentary, there is a pivotal scene where members of the cast visit Lavender Hill High School, a local school in the Cape Flats that serves primarily Colored, Afrikaaps-speaking students, in order to share the information that they were learning about the “mostly unknown history of Afrikaans” and to learn how youth themselves perceived the language variety. Given that white Afrikaners labeled their own variety of Afrikaans *suiwer Afrikaans*, ‘pure Afrikaans’, and marginalized all other varieties of Afrikaans spoken by Colored communities, the conversation reflects oft-heard language ideological discourses about the construction of and tensions produced by hegemonic, monoglot standard language myths. Emile YX? began the in-class discussion with this provocative question: “*Sodra die klokkie lui dan praat julle n ander Afrikaans as wat in die boeke is, nuh? Wat is die maklikste om te praat? Die Afrikaans wat in die boeke is of die Afrikaaps wat julle praat? Afrikaans, Afrikaaps?*” (“The moment the bell rings you talk a different type of Afrikaans than in the textbooks, right? Which is the easiest to speak? The Afrikaans in the books or the Afrikaaps that you speak? Afrikaans, Afrikaaps?”). A rich dialogue ensued:

Student 1: Ek gaan Kaapse Afrikaans praat.

(I’m going to speak Kaapse Afrikaans.)

Monox: Hoe sal julle voel as Afrikaaps ‘n legal taal is man, of ‘n official taal is. Jou taal wat dji praat by die huis. Dji kry ‘it in n textbook miskien.

(How would you guys feel if Afrikaaps was a legal language, man, an official language. The language you speak at home. You get it in a textbook for example.)

Student 2: Die hele kinders sal Afrikaans so slaag!

(All the children would pass Afrikaans so well!)

Whole Class: [Uproarious laughter]

Student 3: As amper soes n mens dink dit is n bastard Afrikaans. Suiwer Afrikaans le boe en Kaapse Afrikaans le onder.

(It’s almost like some people think that it’s a bastard form of Afrikaans. Pure Afrikaans is on top and Kaapse Afrikaans is at the bottom.)

Student 4: As iemand nou vir my gaan interview, nou praat ek en hy. Nou’t ek hom nie lekke’ gehoor nie, dan gaan ek hom nou se: “Jy, sorry broertjie, wat het dji nou net gese?” Dan gaan hy dadelik die indruk kry. Jy, die is n gangstertjie. Nevermind het ek n degree of hoe intelligent ek is, maar hy gat my judge by die taal wat ek nou gepraat het. Vir een vraag gat hy my judge vir dai job, wat vir my my lewe gaan impak.

(If somebody is going to interview me, and he and I are talking. And say I don’t hear him correctly, then I will say [in marked Afrikaaps]: “Yoh, sorry bru, what did you just say?” He will immediately get the impression, “Damn, this is a gangster.” Nevermind if I have a degree or how intelligent I am, he’ll judge me by the language I speak. For answering one question, he’ll judge me for the job, that would impact my whole life.)

Student 3: Vir my is dit almal moet equal getreat word, maak nie saak waar dji vandaan kom nie. Dai is vir my nie iets kwaai nie.

(I think everybody should be treated equally, no matter where you come from. That’s not cool to me.)

In the above extract, it is clear from the beginning that the students know that their variety of Afrikaans is marginalized in dominant society (Williams 2018). Not only are they well aware that they do not speak the so-called “suiwer” Afrikaans’ but, they know that varieties of Afrikaans have been organized in a raciolinguistic hierarchy, with their variety—along with people racialized as “Colored”—viewed as “impure” and ideologically and normatively unacceptable (see Hendricks and Dyers 2016).

When Monox asks how the students would feel if Afrikaaps were to become a “legal” language, or the official language of their textbooks, he challenges the dominant ideology of mutual intelligibility amongst speakers of Afrikaans varieties, at least in terms of the written word. One of the students replies that all of her Colored Afrikaans-speaking classmates would finally be able to pass Afrikaans language instruction. It is precisely at this moment that the entire class breaks into uproarious laughter. In our interpretation, it is not that the very idea of textbooks written in Afrikaaps is itself comical. Rather, this can be read as the laughter of the subaltern when confronted, perhaps for the first time, with the possibility that their language, culture, and ways of being more generally might be considered normative in state-sanctioned institutions. Colonial logics have been enforced and reinforced with military and economic might for centuries since the colonial encounter. Why wouldn’t the very thought of their disruption appear hilarious to youth inculcated daily into assimilationist, conformist modes of speaking and being in order to survive in the “post”-colony?

Like Emile, Monox problematizes the notion of what a legal language is and how languages become official. What is significant here is the attempt by Monox to overturn the symbolic hold that the official Afrikaans, which is still defined by white linguistic norms, has over the “illegal” varieties of Afrikaans spoken by Colored Capetonians in Lavender Hill, whose very existence has been criminalized since before the apartheid regime (Ariefdien and Alim 2019). Much more painful still is the youths’ understanding of the real material consequences of not speaking a white-normed variety of Afrikaans. For example, a male student suggests what would happen if he spoke in his non-prestigious variety of Afrikaans during an interview: he points out that if he were to ask for clarity on one question in his language variety, during the interview he would be stereotyped as a gangster (pronounced as *gengsta*), as non-intelligent (even though he would possess a university degree). Further, he understands that these negative social judgments on his speech would have a deleterious effect on his chances for economic success.

After hearing this, Emile YX? commented that the Afrikaaps language movement represents a resistance to the colonial structures that circumscribe the life chances of too many Black/Colored/Indigenous Africans in a supposedly post-apartheid South Africa, a nation with eleven official languages but students still being tested “in the standard (white-dominant) version of our language,” not in the “Cape Flats original version of the stolen language named Afrikaans by colonisers” (Jansen 2019, 139). He wrote that he “left the school invigorated to spread this word of Afrikaaps to the masses on the Cape Flats and throughout the country” (Jansen 2019, 139). And indeed, he has followed through with his word and worked with Heal the Hood Project to teach the hipopera Afrikaaps to primary school students, encouraging them to tell their own stories in their own language.

Through these efforts, what hip hop artists have so far achieved through Afrikaaps activism is not merely a revisiting of the creole history of Afrikaans, or a consciousness-raising effort that marginalized speakers face discrimination, but that the future of Afrikaans may very well lie with a generation of Colored speakers of Afrikaaps who are motivated to upend white Afrikaner conservatism, supremacy, and privilege. These artists’ efforts are “disruptive” in that they aim to unsettle white settler colonial logics of language-race-land. San Pedro (2018), building upon Paris and Alim’s (2014, 2017) *culturally sustaining pedagogy* and McCarty and Lee’s (2014) *culturally revitalizing pedagogy*, offered the term *culturally disruptive pedagogy* to argue that educators must both seek ways to sustain and revitalize cultural practices and

“consider the ways hegemonic norms—as perpetuated by ideologies of whiteness—require a needed disruption.” In this case, that disruption is the Afrikaaps language movement. That said, the movement must remain ever vigilant of attempts at co-optation, appropriation, and ideological incorporation.

Colonizers Gonna Colonize: Appropriation, Commodification, and the Ideological Incorporation of Afrikaaps

Recall that Afrikaaps artists view Afrikaans as a language appropriated, “stolen” even, by the white Afrikaner colonial project for the purposes of inventing a “pure” raciolinguistic identity for themselves—not Dutch, not Indigenous African, but “True Afrikaners.” Afrikaaps, then, can be viewed as a re-appropriation of the linguistic history of Afrikaans. Today, in contemporary “post”-apartheid South Africa, the descendants of the “True Afrikaners” have re-re-appropriated Afrikaans through the commodification and attempted ideological incorporation (Rose 1994) of Afrikaaps.

One example of this process is the song, “Afrikaaps,” from the Afrikaans pop music album *Ons Klank* (Our Sound 2018; see Figure 2). Composed by Nadia Louw, a well-known pop star in the Afrikaans music community, the song is an uncritical, multicultural interpretation of Afrikaaps that is neither written nor performed *in* Afrikaaps. When compared to “Ek Is Afrikaaps” by the cast of Afrikaaps (described above), the song is a simplistic exercise in linguistic and cultural appropriation with lyrics set to a nursery rhyme-like instrumentals. Instead, the song celebrates The Cape (Die Kaap) as a place where *everybody* speaks Afrikaaps, a proverbial “melting pot” of diverse voices, colors, and sounds. What is essentially a musical version of a Benetton ad, the song infantilizes speakers of Afrikaaps and can be read as an attempt to appropriate the emancipatory discourse of the movement.

Although it celebrates the speakers of this variety, it fails to comprehensively represent the politics and poetics of the Afrikaaps linguistic experience as performed by Afrikaaps hip hop artists. The fact that no Black or Colored speakers of Afrikaaps are featured in the song reveals the freedom with which Louw appropriated and commodified—and simplified—the ethos of Afrikaaps. In a few short minutes, the Afrikaaps hip hop activists are priced out of participation in the Afrikaans music and linguistic market (Bourdieu 1993) without consent and, as a consequence, their symbolic pride in Afrikaaps is wholly disregarded (cf. Duchene and Heller 2012). For example, in the refrain below, the artist celebrates a form of Afrikaaps diversity *without* any Afrikaaps diversity—linguistic, racial, or otherwise:

Refrain/Bridge of *Ons Klank* (Our Sound)

Ek is Afrikaaps
I am Afrikaaps

Ek is Afrikaaps
I am Afrikaaps

Ek is Afrikaaps
I am Afrikaaps

Want Afrikaaps kan ons praat
Because we all speak Afrikaaps

So uie aan die Kaap
We belong to the Cape

Die kommer rol en die oe rek
Concerns may be and eyes may stretch

So kom almal oor die weg
This is how everybody gets along



Figure 2. Image art for *Ons Klank* ('Our Sound'). [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]

Want Afrikaans kan ons praat
Because we all speak Afrikaans

By die huis en op die straat
At home and in the street

Dit is lag en speel en harde werk
It's about laughing, playing, and hard work

Die Kaaps is n lekker plek
The Cape is a nice place

Die Kaapse Afrikaans
It's Cape Afrikaans

Dit klop hier in my hart
It's in my heart

n Mengelmoes van Stemme
a Mix of Voices

Van Kleure en Klank
Of Colors and Sound

When filtered through the hegemonic lens of whiteness, the song's refrain provides a distorted image of the linguistic landscape, interactions, and practices of Afrikaaps speakers. The artist appropriates Afrikaaps discourses of unity while flattening and universalizing the particular spatial, linguistic, and cultural experiences of Afrikaaps speakers and extending them to all speakers living in the greater Cape (disregarding the rural roots and routes of Afrikaaps, and other areas where it is heard and spoken in South Africa). Through her unwitting misreading of Afrikaaps, Louw has potentially minimized the agency and voice of not only the original cast of Afrikaaps but its speakers as well.

This case of appropriation has traded away the symbolic profits of the Afrikaaps movement for material gain, profiting off of the pain of Afrikaaps speakers like the students who understood they would be interpreted by white Afrikaner listening subjects (Rosa & Flores 2017b) as inferior, much less the pain of dispossession and forced removal articulated in Jitvinger's narrative of his family history. At the same time, these "culture vultures" remain wholly disinterested in the way forward offered by the Afrikaaps movement. Instead, these white artists' capitalist motivations, however well-intentioned, potentially compromise Afrikaaps hip hop artists' efforts by threatening ideological incorporation of the transformative power of Afrikaaps. In sum, they accept the profits while ultimately abandoning the movement's commitment to agitating for restorative linguistic justice through the disruption of white settler colonial logics of language-race-land. Interestingly, the artist's representation of Afrikaaps as a language of "unity" evinces a historical echo of the white Afrikaner nationalism's appropriation and further description of Afrikaans as a national unifier. In effect, cultural appropriations like this pop song reproduce the very logics they claim to disrupt.

The song is a case in point of the argument that cultural appropriation is both enabled by asymmetric relations of power and is an expression of these relations of power. The artist does not share the lived experience of the artists from whom she "borrows," and she does not seek their consent to do so. Given the racialized privilege that she enjoys, she is neither compelled to do so nor explore the possibilities of partnership. Louw's appropriation, like that of Die Antwoord's appropriation of Cape Flats hip hop (Haupt 2012), is enabled by neoliberal economics and the white Afrikaaps pop music industry that has considerable economic leverage. The act of her appropriation is therefore an expression of her power to convert the marginalized cultural expression into symbolic capital for her own ends.

Discussion: Toward a Radical Politics of Racial Refusal

Hip Hop culture is a site of cultural production, knowledge production, and activism where aesthetics are inextricably linked to politics and pedagogy. In fact, scholars have argued that Hip Hop culture is inherently political and pedagogical (Haupt et al. 2019). The art form/forum (Spady 1991) itself, which encourages critical dialogic engagement through the explicit philosophy of "Each One, Teach One," is produced, both in South Africa and the US, in white settler capitalist contexts that are, at their foundation, anti-poor, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous. While continuing to evolve on the sometimes problematic politics of gender and urbancentricity (previously discussed in Alim & Haupt 2017; Williams 2018; Ariefdien & Alim 2019 for "loving critiques"), like much of hip hop, Afrikaaps hip hop artists have given a generation of Colored Capetonians the necessary "knowledge of self" to make sense of the violent, anti-Black, anti-Colored, and anti-Indigenous systemic racism that defines their experience, as well as the motivation to transform those systems through collective action (Jansen et al. 2019).

The strong interpretation of the Afrikaaps project may seem at odds with Emile YX?'s discussion about the politics of race, and in particular, his espousal of a radical *politics of racial refusal* ("I don't subscribe to race, I don't subscribe to tribe, and I'm trying to get that message across that all of us on this planet come from one people, this First People. . . , And that all of this other race stuff is just one hell of a big lie to keep us divided."). In fact, some have argued that Afrikaaps "reads easily as an ethno-nationalist counter-narrative" (Moses 2019: 10). Moses's reading is rich and layered, and he is most certainly not the only one to express reservations about the ethnonationalist undertones in the production. In our reading, these artists are working toward a more nuanced understanding of the politics of language-race-land, a transgressive, transracial politics that distinguishes between political acts of racial transgression from ones that simply "reproduce racial categories and hierarchies" (Alim 2016, 47-8). Our ethnographic engagement with the artists suggests something more in line with what Simpson (2017) has termed a "generative refusal" in her theorizing of Indigenous freedom through radical resistance. Refusing colonial categories of racialization and racial purity goes hand-in-hand with an emphatic withdrawal from white supremacist, colonial structures and institutions.

These politics of racial refusal are not simply how race is coded and decoded across "different" contexts but also how we might develop a transgressive politics that resists codification altogether (Pennycook 2006) through the alternate maintenance and subversion of racial categorization (Pollock 2005). These transgressive politics take for granted that we are raced "not simply by color or hair texture but by history and ideology," that is, "the transracial activist is aware that he or she must always return to an already raced body" (Douglass 2018). Unlike post-racial political fantasies, transracialization (or the politics of racial refusal) recognizes that this indisputable fact of race requires activists to adopt a strategic stance that knows when (and when not to) uphold, reject, and exploit racial categorization. With respect to Garifuna activists, for example, Douglass has described this position as "a *certain ambivalence*," that is, "they are often quite certain about their identificational ambiguity or multiplicity even as they accommodate more rigid understandings of who they are and what constitutes Garifunanness and national belonging. Moreover, they are quite creative in exploiting these ambiguities." Douglass argues that Garinagu have taken up Blackness as a racial identity, Garifuna as an ethnic identity, and Indigeneity as a "political/structural identity"—what has been described as a tripartite solution to the complex limitations of racial formation (England 2010, 203).

Emile admits that the radical politics of racial refusal are "difficult to navigate" within a "post"-apartheid South Africa where, for the most part, racial categories remain firmly in place (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017). When he founded "The So-Called Colored Appreciation Month," for example, a month dedicated to acknowledging the impact of "so-called Colored" people, some ignored the qualifier, "so-called," and he was criticized for being "divisive" and "appropriating apartheid racial categories," etc. (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017), even by some who understood the demands of "the neoliberal politics of recognition" (Stroud & Williams 2017). However, as Emile explained, he is not beholden to a fixed strategy, where one must *always* critique race in academic, theoretical terms. He maintained that being closer to the ground, "actually in the communities and you see where people are at" in terms of their understanding of racial categorization, requires him to be more "flexible" than most academics who theorize from a distance. "The thing is that in order for you to move, you need to have a point of departure, and where the majority of the people are at *is* that point of departure. . . They see themselves as Colored. They see themselves as 'proudly Colored' in a lot of cases. I feel like you can't start a conversation by telling someone, 'That's bullshit.'" (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017)). When asked how would he respond, he explained how he keeps the focus of the conversation on our collective humanity and the enduring struggle against "racism": "For one, I say I understand where they're coming from because I was there at some point as well. . . . My journey is to return to the source. My journey

is to return to my humanity. We're all part of this one race, human. That racism is a crock of shit."

Oftentimes, however, Emile YX? finds himself struggling to unsettle these entrenched logics:

When they see me, they see me as another Coloured person, right? I'll find myself often saying stuff like "our community." Then they'll be like, "Did he mean 'Coloured'? You know what I mean? That's twofold. One is they really think that I'm thinking I'm saying Coloured. In my mind I'm thinking "our community" generally, right? I've been called out on it a couple of times. I say, "But I'm not saying the Coloured community. I'm saying our community. . . .It's difficult to do because sometimes you find yourself in a position where you have to use the term (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017).

While conversations about racism and racialization can be difficult to have without using historically oppressive race labels, it is important to note that the politics of Afrikaaps engage "race" in relation to capitalism and colonialism, where the concept of race is tethered to struggles over land and economic power.

Using the very term occupation, Emile YX? explained the white, ethnonationalist Afrikaner project as one where "they almost occupied [Afrikaans] with the illusion that this is from their ancestors and not ours" (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017). He further explained his desire to take youth from the Cape Flats "to go and see the First People of South Africa. . .to the Kalahari" wasn't about a straightforward refashioning of Colored identity as "Khoisan"; rather, it was about "dealing with land. . .and the occupation of land, and how the theft of the land gave [Europeans] this might. Stealing this land from our ancestors is what gave them power. Because, although they make it sound like it's just land, everything comes from the land" (Alim interview with Emile YX?, 2017). According to Emile, then, Afrikaaps is about challenging white supremacist, colonial narratives about Afrikaans *and* Africans, as well as the colonial logics of land and how they are inseparable from the logics of language and race. Ultimately for Emile "it's more important that the conversation is being had than anything else." As we have argued, the struggle presented in Afrikaaps is as much about (de)occupying land, that is, decolonizing South Africa, as it is about (de)occupying the colonial logics of language-race-land.

As Haupt (2017) has explicated, these artists present a radical re-reading of the linguistic history of South Africa, one where "Afrikaaps preceded Afrikaans because it was spoken by slaves during the Cape colonial era and was later culturally appropriated by Afrikaner Nationalists in the apartheid era to construct white, Afrikaner identity as pure and bounded." This radical re-reading is followed by an insurgent re-writing of a new history, one where it is in fact Colored speakers, rooted in part in Indigenous peoples of southern Africa, who are not only legitimate speakers of Afrikaans but were, as Patrick Mellet mentioned above, "the first to mold this new creole language." Moving the seat of Afrikaans from the white Boers of Pretoria to the Indigenous ports of the Cape moves the locus of power and enunciation in the Afrikaans-speaking world away from white speakers and toward *bruin mense* ("brown people"). It is within these profoundly racially discriminatory white settler contexts that activists alternate between strategies of racial refusal, the exploitation of racial categories, and the recognition of the multiplicity of their identities to achieve their goals.

Conclusion

What these Afrikaaps artists have done, and continue to do in schools, performances, and workshops across the country and in Europe, is helped a new generation of South Africans glimpse the possibilities that are opened up via transformative, decolonial resistance through the arts. Afrikaaps is about realizing the potential of these alternative imaginings of language-race-land "to shift power relations. . .and

insert oneself into a space of dignity” (Stroud & Williams 2017). These shifts are enacted through what Stroud (2001, 2010) has referred to as “linguistic citizenship,” when “representing languages in particular ways becomes...the very dynamic through which acts of agency and participation, and reconceptualizations of self in matrices of power occur” (Stroud, 2010).

But amidst the reimagining of new futures, racial contradictions that deepen racial stereotypes remain; and, the apartheid organizational structures stay almost wholly intact (Williams forthcoming). Moreover, the promise of upward mobility for Black, Colored, and Indigenous citizens remain unfulfilled for most, as World Bank estimates list South Africa as the most unequal country in the world, with the top 1 percent hoarding over 70 percent of the wealth (Beaubien 2018). According to the South African Human Rights Commission, a mere 1 percent of white South Africans live in poverty, compared to 64.2 percent of South Africans classified as African/Black and 41.3 percent of South Africans classified as Colored (Wilkinson 2018). More than a quarter of a century after the legal fall of apartheid, what is needed is more than the redistribution and revaluing of linguistic resources. The transformational racial-linguistic-land politics of the Afrikaaps movement call for South Africa to move beyond the rainbow politics of reconciliation and toward the radical politics of redistribution and reorganization.

As Haupt has argued in Jansen et al. (2019: 214), Hip Hop in this context offers us a way to think about “language politics in a multilingual South Africa, a South African context where linguistic imperialism is very much a reality” and imbricated with economic relations as well as identity politics in a nation struggling to forge a way forward. Even within the neocolonial context of Cape Town, by replacing colonial knowledge systems with Indigenous ones, particularly in terms of relations to land, we argue that these artists’ art and activism have the potential to produce a new reality for South Africans who are economically and raciolinguistically marginalized by white South Africans (whites still hold 90 percent of the wealth in this “post”-apartheid democracy, or as Emile YX? refers to it, “demockery”). As Haupt (2017) has cautioned, “this is not to ignore the asymmetric relations of power...be it in the context of legislated apartheid, colonialism or in the age of corporate globalization or Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2000).” Even still, Haupt continued, “one should not underestimate the agency of subjects on the local level to produce alternative forms of expression and self-representation.” Beyond cultural expression and representation, we argue that the Afrikaaps language movement has the potential to not only disrupt but to refigure colonial logics by offering ways to understand our collective futures outside of a colonial framework.

Notes

1. The title of this article is drawn from the refrain in the song, “Kom Khoi San,” which appears on the soundtrack to Dylan Valley’s documentary film, *Afrikaaps* (2010). The full line is sung by Emile YX?: “*Kom Khoi San kry terug jou land, Coloureds kom van Khoi San verstand.*” (“Come Khoi San, get back your land, Coloureds come from Khoi & San understanding.”) All opening quotations are drawn from this soundtrack, except the quotation by Blaq Pearl (Janine van Rooy-Overmeyer), which is cited in Jansen et al. (2019, 222). We are deeply indebted to all of the artists who take the time to share their knowledge with us and to share the “mostly unknown history of Afrikaans” with the world. We are also indebted to the editors of this special issue on “Language and White Supremacy,” the editors of this journal, as well as the two anonymous reviewers, for their invaluable insights. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the Spencer Foundation for their generous support of the grant, “A Cross-Cultural Study of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in Global Perspective.” The title of this article is drawn from the refrain in the song, “Kom Khoi San,” which appears on the soundtrack to Dylan Valley’s documentary film, *Afrikaaps* (2010). The full line is sung by Emile YX?: “*Kom Khoi San kry terug jou land, Coloureds kom van Khoi San verstand.*” (“Come Khoi San, get back your land, Coloureds come from Khoi & San understanding.”) All opening quotations are drawn from this soundtrack, except the quotation by Blaq Pearl (Janine van Rooy-Overmeyer), which is cited in

Jansen et al. (2019, 222). We are deeply indebted to all of the artists who take the time to share their knowledge with us and to share the “mostly unknown history of Afrikaans” with the world; our collaborations with Heal The Hood have been both fruitful and transformative. We are also indebted to the editors of this special issue on “Language and White Supremacy,” the editors of this journal, as well as the two anonymous reviewers, for their invaluable insights. We are deeply grateful to Arthur K. Spears for constructive and necessary critique. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the Hip Hop Studies Working Group and the Discourse Lab at UCLA, as well as the Spencer Foundation for their generous support of the grant, “A Cross-Cultural Study of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in Global Perspective” (with Django Paris and Casey Wong).

2. In our collective work, we define the racial categories of “Black” and “Colored” as colonial and apartheid constructs created to design an unequal South African society. We view race as socially and politically constructed, and thus take our cue from Zimitri Erasmus, the editor of the seminal work *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town* (2001). In an editor’s note, Erasmus frames the work’s exploration of “Colored” identity politics in the following way: “There is no such thing as the Black ‘race’. Blackness, whiteness and coloredness exist, but they are cultural, historical and political identities. To talk about ‘race mixture’, ‘miscegenation’, ‘inter-racial’ sex and ‘mixed descent’ is to use terms and habits of thought inherited from the very ‘rare science’ that was used to justify oppression, brutality and the marginalisation of ‘bastard peoples’. To remind us of their ignoble origins, these terms have been used in quotation marks throughout (Erasmus 2001, 12). Erasmus refutes biologically essentialist thinking on race that was employed to justify racist oppression during the colonial occupation of Africa as well as during the nearly half a century of institutionalized apartheid in South Africa (or as Emile YX? would put it, “That shit began when white folk arrived in Mossel Bay on February 3, 1488.”). In order to make her position clear, she elects to include the editor’s note as well as to use a number of contested terms in quotation marks throughout the edited volume. We do not employ the use of quotation marks (unless when expressly noting a race label) or the phrase “so-called” throughout, but we hope that this note suffices to signal our position. We have used “so-called Colored” in the introduction to this article to align with the alternative race politics of Emile YX? and to signal up front the harmful legacy of this designation. In our collective work, we define the racial categories of “Black” and “Colored” as colonial and apartheid constructs created to design an unequal South African society. We view race as socially and politically constructed, and thus take our cue from Zimitri Erasmus, the editor of the seminal work *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town* (2001). In an editor’s note, Erasmus frames the work’s exploration of “Colored” identity politics in the following way: “There is no such thing as the Black ‘race’. Blackness, whiteness and coloredness exist, but they are cultural, historical and political identities. To talk about ‘race mixture’, ‘miscegenation’, ‘inter-racial’ sex and ‘mixed descent’ is to use terms and habits of thought inherited from the very ‘rare science’ that was used to justify oppression, brutality and the marginalisation of ‘bastard peoples’. To remind us of their ignoble origins, these terms have been used in quotation marks throughout (Erasmus 2001, 12). Erasmus refutes biologically essentialist thinking on race that was employed to justify racist oppression during the colonial occupation of Africa as well as during the nearly half a century of institutionalized apartheid in South Africa (or as Emile YX? would put it, “That shit began when white folk arrived in Mossel Bay on February 3, 1488.”). In order to make her position clear, she elects to include the editor’s note as well as to use a number of contested terms in quotation marks throughout the edited volume. We do not employ the use of quotation marks (unless when expressly noting a race label) or the phrase “so-called” throughout, but we hope that this note suffices to signal our position. We have used “so-called Colored” in the introduction to this article to align with the alternative race politics of Emile YX? and to signal up front the harmful legacy of this designation.

3. Kyle Mays (2018b) references Anishinaabe international relations scholar Sheryl Lightfoot (2016, 202), who “argues that the current movement for Global Indigenous politics, ‘seeks the peaceful accommodation of Indigenous nationhood, with or without state structures, on a trajectory that inevitably leads toward more pluralistic conceptions of sovereignty and territoriality.’ Similarly, what we might call ‘Global Indigenous Hip Hop’ forces a rethinking of relationships between Indigenous peoples and states away from hierarchical, colonial relations and toward a new, fair, and just relationship that allows Indigenous peoples to freely determine their political status with, within, or across the borders of nation-states (Lightfoot 2016, 203).

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