

Surface and underneath: A linguistic landscape analysis of the Bosman neighbourhood in Pretoria

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how the study of the linguistic landscape (LL), which is to say the texts visible in public space, allows for a rich and complex understanding of place. More specifically, the article studies the Bosman neighbourhood in Pretoria through a geosemiotic lens. Geosemiotics situates signs in the material world, approaching them as actualisations of a multimodal social semiotic and as a site of encounter of the cycles of habitus, interaction, place semiotics and visual analysis. Walking is adopted as a research methodology, a means of reading the city and also a praxeology with which to constitute place. Aspects of LL that are considered here are reading path, change over time, materials used, represented participants and local and global production. Themes discussed are the habitus of receivers and producers expressed in the LL and mediated practices such as literacy. Language domination, the differentiation in LL according to power and temporality, informal and transgressive texts and the narratives and lives of producers and receivers are also introduced. Bosman emerges as a site of entanglement where origins, aspiration, intimacy and vulnerability merge in unexpected ways.

Keywords: Pretoria; Bosman; linguistic landscape; geosemiotics; place; entanglement.

Introduction

In this article, we plunge into the streets and signs of a part of Pretoria. At the upper (southern) end of Bosman Street a taxi rank stands, in people's designations and in their talk, as metonymic for a collection of low-rise blocks. Their ground floors are taken with small businesses; the succeeding floors are mostly residential. There are fast-food outlets, two private colleges, a stationer, several hair and nail parlours, a closed-down furniture shop, an old hotel, two purveyors of traditional medicine, some bars, a surgery and the main Pretoria train station.

Straddling Bosman and Paul Kruger Streets (Figure 1) facing the train station, adjacent to the taxi rank, and home to approximately 15,000 people,¹ Bosman is perhaps more of a neighbourhood, now, than it was pre-transition (i.e., pre-1994). But it remains enigmatic, under-researched, little documented. During apartheid, according to participants, this urban space housed some offices (a branch of the Department of Education, for instance) and its residents were largely Afrikaans-speaking low level government employees, single parents, young persons, those who needed to live close to work. As a part of the city centre it was a segregated space (see Horn 1998) that had a reputation, perhaps a little exaggerated, for prostitution and drug dealing.

Post-transition (i.e., post-1994), Bosman was caught up in a complex demographic shift (see Donaldson, Jürgens & Bahr 2003) that saw people moving into the residential blocks, and then moving out in response to infrastructural and financial constraints, leaving it to be dominated by short term lease apartments that have favoured those arriving to South Africa from neighbouring Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries such as Zimbabwe, but also from further north on the continent. The ground floor businesses have shifted similarly to host family enterprises coming from major international trading partners. In our interactions and interviews between 2012 and 2014, we encountered many languages and dialects, from Pakistan, China, India, the Congo, Nigeria, Ghana, and Zimbabwe. The increasing informality of both housing and shop spaces has, in recent years, given this neighbourhood a particular, identifiable feeling of community.

Bosman stands out because of its cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, its spatial multilayeredness. All this generates a feeling of constant movement. It is an eccentric, busy, and noisy place where different social constituencies live side by side 'in proximities of difference' (MacGiolla-Christ 2007). It represents that entanglement where 'sites and spaces in which what was once thought of as

1. Following visits to several blocks, a rooftop count was used to gauge approximate population.



FIGURE N^o 1



Map of the Bosman site (courtesy of Google Earth) with the research site circled in green.

separate ... come together or find points of intersection in unexpected ways' (Nuttall 2009:20). As will appear clearly throughout this article, Bosman raises questions of language fragility (see Dowling 2010), but also offers clear examples of the 'politics of aspiration' (Nuttall 2008) embedded in South African consumerism. It gives evidence of spaces of intimacy – that 'measure of closeness – sometimes uncomfortable closeness – that comes from the knowledge that lives (even the lives of strangers) are bound together by the very structures and closures of society' (Bystrom & Nuttall 2013:324).

Analogous to what Nuttall says about Johannesburg, the space of Bosman can be read with the help of a bifocal lens that focuses on *surface* and *underneath*. Its surface 'is studded with texts: billboards, newsprint, magazine covers, road signs, even the entire surfaces of buildings, constitute a stream of local and global city signs' (Nuttall 2009:84). Any surface, however, cannot exist without an underlying ground – the 'underneath' of South Africa's racialised past, a common history of coercion, exploitative labour, forced demographic change. The underneath, in this metaphor, is what might not be directly visible but nonetheless imbues verbal/visual manifestations with meanings, namely, the lived experiences and the histories of a place. The surface of a text must be read in its own right.

As Dowling (2010:199) notes, ‘People have something to say, something real.’ Analysis should, furthermore, be sensitive to the effects of surface, to dialogicality and semiotic expansion between texts – their temporality, juxtaposition, framing and subversion (through graffiti and tagging).

Whilst Nuttall does not give specific methodological guidelines as to how to operationalise the notions of surface and underneath, we believe that geosemiotics can provide us with a valuable analytical toolkit through which to put these concepts to work. It is to such a framework that we will now turn, before moving on to an analysis of relevant artifacts.

Linguistic landscape and geosemiotics

In brief, a geosemiotic (see Scollon & Scollon 2003) approach combines a deconstruction of the verbal/visual interplay in public signage with an investigation of how people produce and interact with public texts. From such a perspective, a text in the public space (a linguistic landscape – LL artifact) indexes practices that intersect or ‘encounter’ each other in the text; the interpretation of which must refer to different systems of discourse. The idea of systems of discourse particularly highlights that the meaning of a text depends on how it is produced, by whom, with what affordances, and how it is received (Figure 2).

A geosemiotic approach entails situating a text indexically – in terms of how it is placed in the world – through three systems of discourse. The first of these is the *interaction order*, that is, how people move around in physical, interpersonal and perceptual space. This interaction in turn is dependent on people’s *habitus* (Bourdieu 1991), that is, their memories, experiences, and subjectivities. The second system is the *visual semiotics* of a text, that is, its multimodal composition. Finally, *place semiotics* encompasses the interaction of various aspects of the linguistic and visual make-up of a text with its placing in the urban environment, for example architecture. The intersection of these three forms ‘the main semiotic systems of social action’ (Scollon & Scollon 2003:8).

It is precisely the encounter of these systems that is at work in any artifact of LL. Visual semiotics, for instance, concerns (1) the information value of a text in terms of its design and layout; (2) the truth value or modality of a text as this can be inferred from colour choice, saturation, tones, and so forth; (3) the vectors or reading paths within the frame of a text and what this frame is. But it is important to understand that visual analysis will take account of how, interactionally,

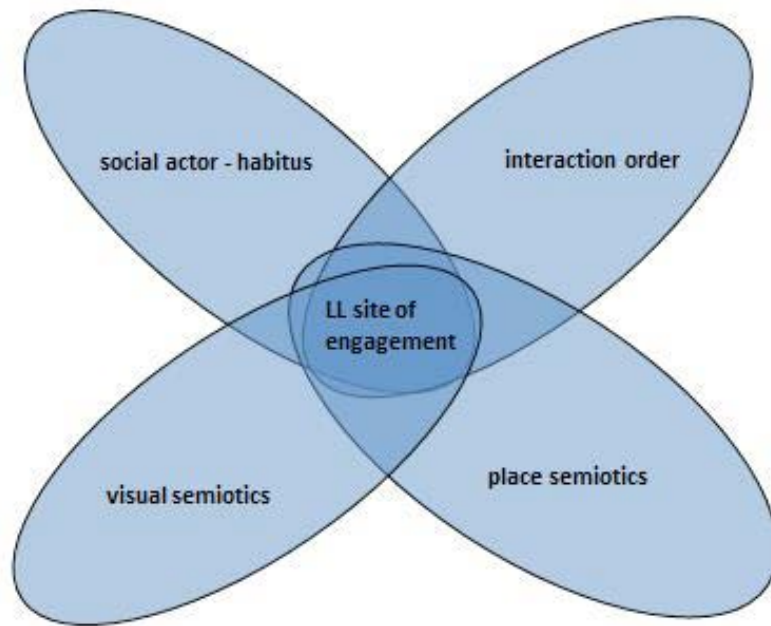


FIGURE **Nº 2**



Geosemiotic model based on Scollon and Scollon (2003:10).

represented participants will reflect senses of urgency and bodily proximity that are usual in the place in which the text is displayed. Similarly, realisation and interpretation depend on mediated practices that are a part of habitus – literacy, inequality of class, access, and disposition. Finally, no text is alone, but rather enters into dialogue with the other texts in a place. Vectors can be set up between texts that may overlap, or on the contrary be clearly framed. There is a dialogue, an intersemiotic expansion, between texts and between texts and the material affordances of the built environment (e.g., walls, street tarmac, etc.).

Research into linguistic landscapes, and particularly that using a multimodal or geosemiotic heuristic, is best thought of as a ‘material ethnography,’ as Stroud and Mpendukana (2009) call it, that seeks to answer the questions, ‘how and why they [i.e., public texts] got there, how they are read, what meanings they are intended to carry, and are read as carrying’ (Pennycook 2009:305). The underneath of LL is complex, extending to legal framework, shared and dialogic production, reception, the processes and the interactions from which LL result and that are

so intrinsically linked to the ‘bundles of histories – of language, of discourses, and experiences, of social and political performances’ (Scollon & Scollon 2003:15) of producers and receivers.

Bosman’s linguistic landscape - surface

Since the aim of this article, and the research on which it is based, is to understand the construction of Bosman as a place, a question of primary importance is how one can find the thread that links individual texts in a particular space. Walking is a practice of ‘everyday life’ (de Certeau 1984) which allows one to actualise and read the city (see Kistner 2012). Our movement, the way we interact with a streetscape, its surfaces, asperities and ruptures, as well as our choice of path and movement of the gaze, is an enunciation. Walking, as noted by Stroud and Jegels (2014), is suited to a praxeological approach that views ‘place as a socially accomplished and embodied practice’ (Stroud & Jegels 2014:184). Since it is also an active mode, ‘include[ing] engagement with the full physical and sensory environment’ (Lee 2004:4), walking is thus also suited to an exploration of many elements of the interaction order as given by Scollon and Scollon (2003:20).

Through walking, one can participate in the research site and meet the people that reside, work and move through the site, like us – on foot. One can also link texts together chronologically, giving them the temporal element that is so necessary to narrative and discourse. Finally, the memories and associations of our lives that subtend the places we pass through, form a network of meaning and reference - a movement from the general and the undifferentiated to the particular, the familiar, the individual. It is in this respect that neighbourhoods too, are often seen as a middle-term in the city: a place of lessened anonymity (see Tonnelat 2003, 2010; Oppenchain 2010).

The surface of Bosman’s textual and visual environment corresponds to that first walk through the site, photographing artifacts, meeting people and gaining a sense for the ensemble, the slight traces, the creation of place. Visually, what is so immediately striking are the colours, framing, temporality of materials, and the information that is placed in thematic position. In terms of interaction, the way texts orient to the spaces of the street and the kinds of interaction that find expression in the represented participants is distinctive. Colour is used in the large majority of texts in Bosman (90 per cent²). In many of the locally produced signs, stark primary shades predominate. Many artifacts are handwritten (15 per cent). As for length, they are mostly short, with less than five words (45 per cent). The

2. Statistics are based on detailed analysis of nearly 800 texts that represent total LL photographed on the walking route adopted, then adjusted for changes observed during site visits.



FIGURE N° 3



Photograph of the Belle Dame Fashion Hair Salon shop front on Scheiding Street.



FIGURE N° 4



Photograph of the Good & Cheap shop front on Scheiding and Bosman Streets.

framing in Bosman is often a function of the materials chosen, either permanent materials (such as laminated hardboard, plastic or metal sheets) or temporary materials such as paper notices and posters.

The Belle Dame salon is a good example of these points. In light of the fact that the owner is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), it is perhaps unsurprising that the colours employed here are those of the DRC flag (Figure 3). The very name 'Belle Dame' is in thematic position and differentiated from the rest of the text in all four of its repetitions. This, however, is done in different guises – through use of font, different colour, and placement above or in-line. Colour saturation, choice of background and font colour give the LL of the shop a 'high' degree of modality (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996). The effect of these visual choices is to catch attention, not in a threatening way, though, but evoking trust and confidence. Interestingly, this is in line with the perception that the participants in Bosman had of salons and hairdressers from the Congo; valuing them for their thoroughness, dexterity, and style. Different backgrounds and materials frame the different LL texts in the window, on the wall and in the space of the street. Several reading paths are catered to, taking advantage of the depth of field, different directions, and heights. Through size of font, clarity of display and luminosity, these varied realisations also correspond to the changing timeframes of passers-by.

The fact that 'Belle Dame' is in French is a 'metaphoric' (see Hult 2009) use of language, indexing both the origins of the salon's owner and the connotations of style, chic and elegance typically associated with French culture. Moreover, there is a complex thematic interplay at work here. Reproduced on the boxed, laminated sign hanging from the concrete awning is Rihanna, whose 'demand' gaze (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996) directly addresses prospective viewers. Effects such as this, in combination with arrows and degraded colours, establish vectors that further animate these texts, prompting different reading paths and thereby a dynamic distribution of information. The handwriting, irregular font and spacing, the sloping of the letters as well as the primary, undifferentiated application of colour indicates that this, just as the Good & Cheap shop front below, is of predominantly local fabrication (Figure 4).

There is a difference between locally made LL and the 'global' LL that are produced by larger commercial enterprises (see also Stroud & Mpendukana 2009). Local texts are often transactional in nature, emphasising the person of the seller, whilst their layout relies on isolated phrases for which several reading vectors are possible that can make use of ludic spaces on the borders of the artifact or subdivision through colour blocks (see Stroud & Mpendukana 2010). Because of the local,

transactional, nature of many of the LL texts in Bosman, branding is really not ubiquitous. Over 30 per cent of LL on the site does not carry any reference to a trademark, and many are not even particularly phatic. Imprecation, incitement to buy and many of the ploys that one stereotypically associates with advertising and displayed texts are not prevalent, with only 18 per cent of texts containing any kind of a verb phrase (the 'Buy one pair of shoes ...' of the Good & Cheap shop front is an example).

Indeed, both Belle Dame and Good & Cheap are examples of local, transactional, texts – through for instance the arrow pointing to the shop entrance, or the nature of the incitement to buy. However, the pragmatic nature of the Good & Cheap shop front (that offers a free pair of socks to go with shoes bought) is here in contradistinction to the 'global' elegance of Rihanna. In placing a 'global' icon on its shop front, Belle Dame is not alone. The Bosman site as a whole is marked by this tension between place and reference. A good example is the Hansa advertisement (Figure 5) that associates the brand with a relaxed, sensual, well-dressed represented participant.

This advertisement raises the issue of how 'commodity images, and the market itself, come to produce some of the most powerful reimaginings of race South Africa has known in some time. At the same time, the idea of the gap (here between what you have and what you want) is continually reconstituted at the heart of the commodity in order to propel new desires' (Nuttall 2008:93). In both the examples of Belle Dame and the Hansa advertisement, the gap, the aspiration the models incarnate, is in contrast with the people, means and opportunities of the Bosman site. The discordance between LL and the people who drink in the Low Side Bar just under the Hansa advertisement, or those who enter the Belle Dame Salon under the gaze of Rihanna, is sometimes startling. This self-imagining of much of the iconography in Bosman that takes place within the distinction between global and local, is one of the distinctive features of the place. Many other sites offer, on the contrary, a very cohesive cultural and socio-economic representation. It gains a particular poignancy in Figures 21 and 22 that are discussed in the following section.

The point can be captured differently by turning to the geosemiotic cycle of habitus. In what way are Bosman's LL reflective, but also constitutive, of the practices, subjectivities, class inequalities and the 'bundles of histories' that were referred to earlier? The Belle Dame LL, here, marks diaspora, immigration and the insertion of an elsewhere (see in particular Yeoville Studio, Benit-Gbaffou 2011 in this regard). The tension between these reimaginings of the self and more conservative references can be brought out further by looking at other examples from the site.



FIGURE N° 5



Photograph of a Hansa advertisement on Scheiding Street.



FIGURE N° 6



Photograph of a mural in Eric's Café that is visible from the pavement of Paul Kruger Street.

Visible from the pavement of Paul Kruger Street, there is a mural inside Eric's Café that depicts an Afrikaans woman eating and drinking in a slow, unjoyful, meditative way (Figure 6). This representation is still relevant to the clientele even though the café has changed hands several times (recently under a second generation Portuguese owner and now a couple from China). The mural predates the enormous demographic changes effected post-1994, yet although the people now sitting at Eric's are different, there are similar practices, understandings and senses in both pre and post-apartheid eras of Bosman. There is, in this respect, an ecology of place (Bourgois 2003) where, despite demographic change, the socio-economic contours of a place remain similar.

The photographs reproduced below are some other examples of LL and habitus – analysed here at its surface. The text of the 'Gold & Coins Exchange' (Figure 7) displays several aspects of Bosman's liquid economy and of the practices of people in the neighbourhood. Representing a wad of bank notes and a gold Kruger Rand, it visually summarises circuits of capital that rely on informal, easily disposable and exchangeable channels. The last two vignettes, however, also depict gold jewellery that can be worn in a show of status and wealth that recalls the comments made above concerning stylisation of the self. The Baba Mswazi and the Cura Life texts (Figures 8, 9) both illustrate the role of traditional customs and medicine. Whilst Baba Mswazi has a cohesive window display that links the fire used in many traditional rituals (such as the practice of burning *impepho*,³ for instance) with the colour and the style of the font. The Cura Life board emphasises the ongoing need for, and confidence in, traditional herbs such as *Lerumo Lamadi*.⁴ Even on the first day on site, whilst walking down Scheiding Street, one could not help but be attracted to the charismatic figure of Dante⁵ who sold these remedies. The relationship to one's body, and the intimacy of contact in the Bosman site, here goes beyond the surface and is dealt with in the next section. The need for sexual potency, and its value, can, however, be briefly introduced through Dante himself who was quick to say that despite his age (almost 80), 'I still get it up, every day I tell you'.

3. *Impepho* is a helichrysum herb with an array of medicinal and spiritual uses and often burnt as an offering to the ancestors.

4. *Lerumo Lamadi* is a plant extract that is used as a potentiiser and immune booster.

5. Names have been changed.

6. Raymond Loewy, who some have said 'designed America', had a hand in the curvilinear white script of the Coca Cola bottles that also figures on the Calabash café LL (Figure 10).

7. *Umqombothi* is traditional beer made from fermented maize stock.

Other texts deliberately construct and mobilise specific discourses. The owner of the Calabash Café whose murals were worthy of Raymond Loewy himself,⁶ explained that the name of the bar was there to deliberately reference African practices and traditional *umqombothi*⁷ beer in a heterogeneous mix of old and new. Similarly, Muslim identity was very important to the owners of the Bra Alli shop (Figure 11). This text is a very good example of the temporality that is so important to geosemiotic analysis. These texts, painted in enamel on sheets of steel affixed to the fence around the shop, came with the shop and are not linked to the current owners, but have been kept because of their evocation. Their producer associated both



FIGURE N^o 7



Photograph of shop front and artifacts of LL in Paul Kruger and Scheiding Streets.



FIGURE N° 8



Photograph of shop front and artifacts of LL in Paul Kruger and Scheiding Streets.



FIGURE N° 9



Photograph of shop front and artifacts of LL in Paul Kruger and Scheiding Streets.



FIGURE N° 10



Photographs of various shop fronts and other artifacts of LL in Paul Kruger and Scheiding Streets.



FIGURE N° 11



Photograph of shop front and artifacts of LL in Paul Kruger and Scheiding Streets.



FIGURE N° 12

Photograph of shop front and artifacts of LL in Paul Kruger and Scheiding Streets.

popular Gauteng football teams – the Orlando Pirates and the Kaiser Chiefs – in the makarapa, or South African football supporter, that is assembled from Coke and Fanta cans (Figure 12).

This last example highlights one final aspect of the Bosman site, which is the temporality and materiality of its LL. So far, we have mostly been discussing formal LL (shop fronts and signage). It is interesting to note that the surfaces of Bosman's streets are equally host to numerous informal texts (notices, posters, graffiti, etc. that make up over 40 per cent of the total). In this respect Bosman is alive. The change over time of Bosman's LL is 13.5 per cent per day – a rate that is almost entirely accounted for by informal texts. The site and its informal texts has a materiality that is expressed in plastic products such as bins, crates and packaging that together account for 27 per cent of total LL. This materiality needs to be accounted for in order to understand processes of meaning making (Stroud & Mpendukana 2009; Kress 2009).

Not only are different boxes and containers placed on the pavement, arranged next to products to which they have no direct link, and in many cases used as temporary seating, but in the process of their reuse (see Dowling 2010), these plastic materials and products are also given new meanings. Artifacts such as coverings and laminated sheets are subverted from their original purpose. A striking example is the hospital waste bucket placed next to a fruit stall. It was being used as a recipient for water meant to rinse the fruit. The meaning and purpose of the black biohazard sign on the yellow of the bucket was completely subverted by the actual usage of the bucket. This is perhaps a key example of the style of Bosman, and its uniqueness. There is a very particular attitude to the material semiotics of everyday artifacts, an undoing of a sign's meaning that represents a singular kind of subversion, one that also pertains to time. For it is the temporary, disposable, media of this artifact that has become permanent, and in so doing, suffered a reversal of meaning.

All in all Bosman seen from the perspective of LL texts is a rich tapestry of culture, language and design. This texture extends from shop windows (35 per cent) to wall space (10 per cent) to sign posts and lampposts (11 per cent) to the pavement (20 per cent). It is a landscape in which one walks through signifying practice that is informed by habitus, to texts that respond to interaction through represented participants and to space through reading path and orientation. It is a heterogeneous place that recycles and subverts materials and packaging and that is more consciously a 'neighbourhood' than one could expect, with 38 per cent of texts making reference to the specific cultural environment in which they are produced and received.

Bosman's linguistic landscape – the underneath

The image of Bosman's linguistic landscape that has been painted so far, of cultures, bundles of histories, different pasts and presents rubbing up alongside one another in a complex heterogeneous fabric of text and image, goes to the heart of how identities, spaces and histories (Nuttall 2009:11) come together in unexpected ways. To be sensitive to this is also to be sensitive to the common experiences of confrontation, to the ambivalence of the present moment in South Africa, to lives lived behind the spectacular, to vulnerable bodies, aspiration and to intimacies that are revealed in the public space (Brystom & Nuttall 2013:324).

The spectacle of apartheid and the equally spectacular post-apartheid transition is present at Bosman in the change of name of the street signs (see Swanepoel 2012), but also in the domination of English at the site. At the beginning of the research project on which this article is based, key streets in the neighbourhood were Jacob Maré Street, Bosman Street, Scheiding Street and Paul Kruger Street, all of which have strongly pro-Afrikaans connotations. Bosman was a Dutch Reformed Minister who served in the English concentration camps during the South African War. Jacob Maré was a leading businessman and one of the founders of Pretoria. Paul Kruger was four times president of the Transvaal Republic. During the unfolding of the research project, the City of Tshwane Council won, then lost and then finally won an application to change street names. Whilst Bosman and Paul Kruger have stayed, Jacob Maré has now become Jeff Masemola Street. Bra Jeff or the 'Tiger of Azania' was a founding member of the Pan-African Congress who served 26 years on Robben Island. Yet few interviewees were able to recognise his name.

The strength of spectacle and the way lives are, in this case literally lived under its signs, is also relevant to English, which has been chosen by the ANC government as the de facto lingua franca in South Africa and the carrier of a visible discourse about democracy. Cases of language mixing or switching (such as in the case of Baba Mswazi above) that involve local texts made by local producers are scarce on the site (non-English texts total only 3 per cent). This responds perhaps to a pragmatic feeling of the 'appropriateness' of English, and of the values that it represents in terms of business efficiency and globalisation. Many participants in this research explicitly said that they would not feel 'comfortable' in displaying LL texts in languages other than English. There is copious literature on this subject (see in particular Dowling 2010; du Plessis 2010; Lanza & Woldemariam 2009); suffice to say that this complex flattening of language choice and thereby a targeting of the receivers of LL (pedestrians, shoppers, workers) as English users is a significant part of transition rhetoric.

The narratives of displacement and belonging that the participants in this research shared suggests that speakers of other languages, and of African languages in particular, feel the need to adapt to the contemporary South African linguistic economy. As mentioned previously, there are many languages and dialects spoken at Bosman, including those from Pakistan, China, India, the Congo, Nigeria, Ghana, and Zimbabwe. Yet, for the participants in this study, the learning and the use of English formed part of their history of literacy that, in many interviews, brought back memories of school and of childhood, and certainly formed one of the elements that bound people together.

Cultural practices, as already noted, are for the least heterogeneous in Bosman, but some points in the street display similar posters and LL linked by a common theme. Gospel music posters, and the religiosity that they bring with them, are regularly pasted on the corner of Scheiding and Bosman Streets. Similarly, under the arches of the Victoria Hotel there are many overlapping posters celebrating Zimbabwean musicians on tour in South Africa. Ethnicity and the cultural practices related to it are complex and multi-faceted phenomena. As Appadurai notes (1996), ethnoscapas can summon a locality that has little to do with material proximity. This dimension of the local – its networks of affinity, knowledge, origin and affect – find subtle linguistic expressions in Bosman. One facet is the newspapers that are destined for different communities. The photograph below shows newspapers at Bernard's stand⁸ aimed at the isiZulu, the Afrikaans and the Zimbabwean communities (Figure 13).

Multilingual 'surfaces' notwithstanding, an exploration of the linguistic 'underneath' reveals a sometimes contradictory picture. As participants walked, talked and shared the discovery of the LL of the site, it became clear that what Tonnelat (2010) discusses as an aspect of the public – the *capacity* to interact with the environment – is problematic in Bosman in terms of language, reference, and literacy. A good example is Dante, the 'Cura Life' seller referred to earlier. The board that is featured in Figure 9 is simple black and white, drawn on in permanent marker and with font that de-emphasises contact information, and that also must decrease in size to list the ingredient that is being promoted, 'Lerumo Lamadi'. When Dante was interviewed about this text he showed little attention to its layout and design, preferring to tell personal anecdotes. When the board was replaced by a more commercial one (made by an employee at the PEP store behind the stand) Dante similarly had little comment as to content. It could well be that Dante is illiterate and that he has had recourse to a coping strategy in making his advertising (see Prinsloo & Breier 1996). What is at issue here is the idea of mediated practice and of the habitus as well as interaction with LL artifacts.

8. Names have been changed.



FIGURE N^o 13



Newspapers catering to different communities, photographed in Paul Kruger Street.

Tellingly, the Bosman site had few examples of transgressive texts such as graffiti (0.3 per cent) or of political texts (4 per cent). Seen from this angle, the public sphere at Bosman is hesitant, exploratory, a space where the intimate breaks through. In the examples below transgressive texts are marked in the soot of fires that strip the insulation from copper so that it can be sold as scrap, or penned by the students of a private college facing the back entrance (Figures 14-18). In many, if not most of the transgressive texts photographed in Bosman, there were non-standard elements in the written English, together with corrections and rephrasing. Certainly the last two examples below represent an adolescent exploration of the liminal suspension of codes, behaviour and expression between rule-bound settings (see Rampton 1995). In this respect the street can be seen as a space of civil and political expression that is rarely used, as such, at Bosman.

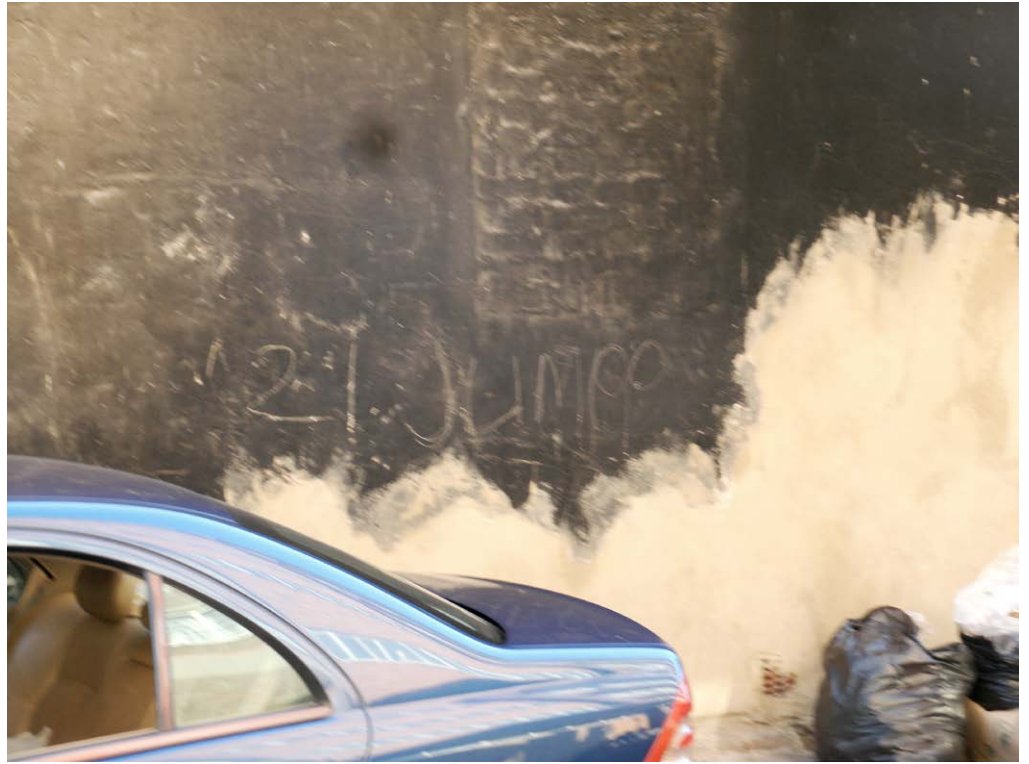


FIGURE **Nº 14**



Photograph of graffiti and civil society LL in Hoop and Christina Streets.



FIGURE **Nº 15**



Photograph of graffiti and civil society LL in Hoop and Christina Streets.

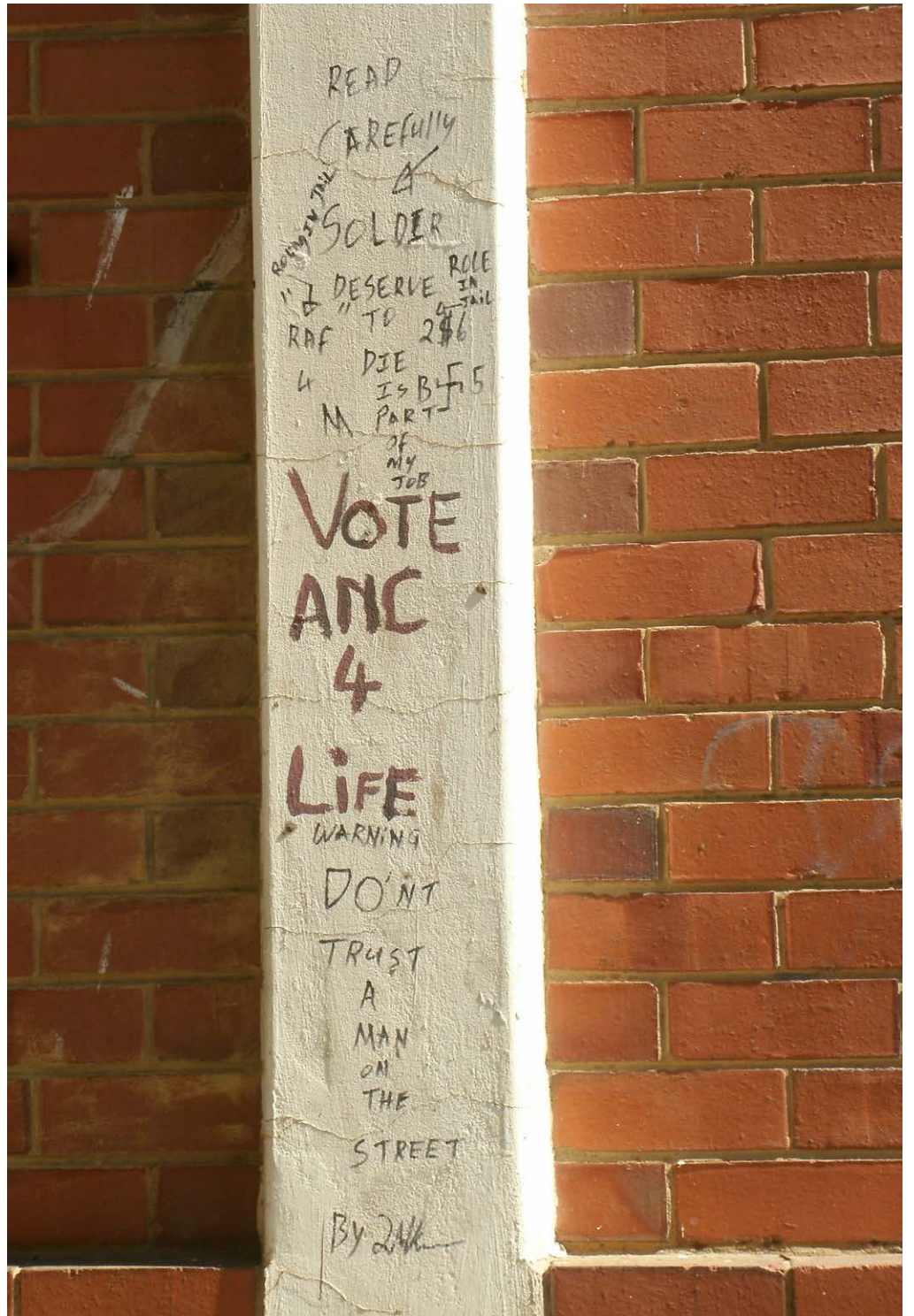


FIGURE **Nº 16**

Photograph of graffiti and civil society LL in Hoop and Christina Streets.



FIGURE **Nº 17**



Photograph of graffiti and civil society LL in Hoop and Christina Streets.



FIGURE **Nº 18**



Photograph of graffiti and civil society LL in Hoop and Christina Streets.

Participation in the public sphere is a complex phenomenon that has as much to do with literacy as with the type of civil society. What is particularly noticeable in Bosman is that LL can be ripped and taken down by passers-by (as in the case of the Worker's Day poster that was replaced by an IFP poster within 24 hours), sometimes very quickly, but it is rare to see tags that subvert the meaning of other LL. A linguistic landscape is differentiated through power and temporality. The difference between formal and informal texts is one of permanence, of media used, of property, in short, of legitimacy, and this affects the intimacy (see Bystrom & Nuttall 2013) that is reflected in LL as they change over time. Graffiti can be defaced, a tag subverted in turn. Shop fronts close and open again under different names, and sometimes with different businesses altogether. One can read personal stories in the space of the street. An example of this is the M. Dawn Trading shop run by John, a man who became a key figure in the research (Figure 19).

Looking at the irregular font, spacing and bolding, the way the business name integrates advertising by firms such as MTN, and the changing orientations of the wording (horizontal and vertical), it is clear that this shop front was painted hastily. Indeed, John recounted that he and his brother did it in a day and that the name 'came to' his brother, like that, while they were fitting out the window and interior. Yet it would be wrong to suppose that this shop meant little to either of them. On the contrary, it represented a dream of them working together (John's brother had assisted him in coming to South Africa), of gaining residency, of John being able to bring his wife from Nigeria, and of course the regular trips that they both made to Durban where they received their containers from China. This aspiration is different from that discussed earlier concerning Rihanna. The aspiration here is one of place: of a formal, concrete place in the economy of the street and of society. When the business failed and John's brother abandoned him, John was taken in by a woman, an informal seller of fruit and vegetables, to whom he had been kind. They both now live in a one-room flat just above the old store and both now sell fruit – John peeling and cutting the oranges in half and helping his new partner with stock. Intimate stories like this can so often be read behind the LL of a street, and behind the subtle shifts in colour, font and design as artifacts replace each other. It is also, undoubtedly for reasons such as this, in addition to calculations of business sense and goodwill that the owners of Bra Alli kept on the painted sheets with the *makarapa* that were referred to previously.

Of course, M. Dawn's shopfront is a formal text – taking a 'legitimate' space in the street, representing property, a formal economy, and the aspiration that lies behind a certain vision of enterprise. As in the previous section, one must also turn to the informal texts such as notices, posters and flyers to understand the site.



FIGURE **Nº 19**



M. Dawn Trading in Paul Kruger Street.

Informal texts are much more volatile than formal texts. Their temporality is shorter, their media are less robust, their place and manner of distribution change. The result is that they reflect social changes in and around the neighbourhood far more quickly than formal texts. In the Bosman site a very significant proportion of texts concerns the objectification of female and male bodies (through hip and bum operations, penis enlargement creams, etc.) but also many (7 per cent of total) advertisements for cheap, quick painless (and almost certainly illegally performed) abortions (Figures 20, 21). There is much to be said about these texts in the sexual economy of South Africa, but it is certain that they are textual incarnations of a 'vulnerable body' (Brystrom & Nuttall 2013:314) that must negotiate sexual expectations, the challenges of the South African response to HIV (see Kauffman & Lindauer 2004), and the loss of intimacy when seeking counselling or healthcare.



FIGURE N° 20



Abortion and bodily enhancement notices in Scheiding Street.



FIGURE **Nº 21**



Abortion and bodily enhancement notices in Scheiding Street.



FIGURE **Nº 22**



Photograph of notice for flat sharing under the arcades of the Victoria Hotel.

The space of the street in Bosman is therefore ambivalent, marked by aspiration, but also by hesitancy, and constraint, by objectification of the body and by intimacy. Perhaps the character of Bosman is best captured by the small notices that are stuck with Prestik onto the columns of the Victoria Hotel Arcade. They are offers and want ads for rooms to let that rely on the tight haptic space of the arcade to be seen (Figure 22). These notices give telephone numbers, gender and dates of availability. They are written with a reticence and yet with a confidence in the public sphere that is both surprising and moving.

Conclusion

The linguistic landscape is a rich, varied and provocative aspect of what it means to live, work, arrive at or pass through a place. Texts, analysed multimodally, both construct and reflect habitus, interactions and dialogue with producers and receivers and with other texts. Through the study of LL, Bosman, as a place, can be captured in its contemporaneity and its entanglement of different pasts, different presents, different spaces, its vulnerability and its intimacy. A focus on linguistic landscapes brings out the ordinary and the complexity of city spaces in South Africa. The surfaces of LL texts intersect with the other surfaces of a place whether cultural, socio-economic or political. A consideration of production and reception is also sensitive to the underneath of these texts, a common history of dislocation.

This article was first presented as a paper at the Pretoria Imprint Workshop held on 8 May 2014 and sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as part of the University of Pretoria Capital Cities Institutional Research Theme.

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