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School of Literature, Language and Media
Department of Linguistics

Diasporic Landscape: A Geosemiotic Analysis of Greekness in Johannesburg

By

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A dissertation submitted to the School of Literature, Language and Media, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisor: Dr Gilles Baro

March 2023

Plagiarism Declaration

I declare that this is my own unaided work. All work that is not my own has been duly acknowledged in the acknowledgements section or referenced in the text. It has been submitted for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand and has not been submitted for examination at any other institution.

Ethical clearance certificate: H21/05/48



20 July 2023

Alyssa Vratsanos **Date**

Student Number 711405

Abstract

After a number of waves of immigration of Greeks from Greece, Cyprus, and the established Greek diaspora in Egypt, South Africa is home to a sizable Greek community – concentrated in Johannesburg – that has established its own cultural identity in the country and left indelible traces of Greekness in the semiotic landscape of the city. In this dissertation, I explore the discursive, multimodal processes employed to inscribe Greekness – the quality of being of Greek heritage – in the city of Johannesburg.

The overarching aim of this study was to analyse how members of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg negotiate and perform their Greek identity and how Greekness is inscribed in various spaces in the city. In particular, it aimed to answer the following research questions: (i) How are certain spaces in the city of Johannesburg materially constructed as Greek spaces?; (ii) How is Greekness semiotically constructed?; and (iii) How is this constructed Greekness experienced by social actors, in the context of a European diasporic community in Johannesburg, a city in the Global South?. Empirically, this linguistic/semiotic landscape study made use of multimodal data, in the form of ethnographic field notes, photographs of signs, interviews, and newspaper articles, which were analysed within Scollon and Scollon's (2003) geosemiotics framework.

Previous works by McDuling (2014) and McDuling and Barnes (2012) have examined the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg from a sociolinguistic perspective, with a focus on language shift and maintenance. This study differs significantly in approach, shifting the focus from language use to an analysis of the signs used to assert and inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg, thereby drawing this subject matter into a linguistic landscape study of the diaspora.

In the empirical chapters of the dissertation, I used geosemiotics as a methodological toolkit to analyse several themes that arose from my data. First, I analysed the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city, such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets, as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness. I then introduced the concept of *syncretism* as a term that can be applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the ways in which signs and symbols from various, sometimes incompatible, aspects of Greek history and identity are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogeneous and 'authentic' Greekness. Finally, I took a 'semiotic approach' (Van Leeuwen, 2001) to authenticity and analysed how authenticity in the Greek diaspora is semiotically constructed both visually and aurally in Greek spaces in Johannesburg.

This study argues that the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg seeks to construct spaces in the city as recognisably and undeniably Greek, deliberately distinguishing themselves from the rest of the city, including other South Africans and other diasporas, by using a constellation of multimodal and multisensorial signs to convey a sense of homogeneous Greekness. The types of signs that are used to inscribe Greekness are all linked to the desirability – and by extension superiority – of Greek culture, heritage, and history. Thus, the ways in which Greekness is inscribed by the diaspora in Johannesburg rely on a process of self-exoticism (cf. Iwabuchi, 1994).

Keywords: semiotic landscape studies, linguistic landscape studies, diaspora studies, Greek diaspora, Johannesburg, food, food studies, syncretism, authenticity, sociolinguistics.

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Table of Contents

Plagiarism Declaration ..... **ii**
Abstract ..... **iii**
Acknowledgements ..... **v**
List of Figures ..... **ix**
List of Acronyms ..... **xii**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION **1**
1.1. Aim 4
1.2. Rationale 5
1.3. Structure of the dissertation 7

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: SEMIOTIC LANDSCAPES, DIASPORAS, AND SOUTH AFRICA **10**
2.1. Linguistic and semiotic landscape studies 11
2.1.1. Diasporas in linguistic/semiotic landscape studies *16*
2.1.2. Linguistic/semiotic landscape studies of Greece *25*
2.1.3. Diasporas in the linguistic/semiotic landscapes of South Africa *27*
2.2. Diaspora studies 32
2.2.1. Diaspora studies in South Africa *36*
2.3. Diasporas in sociolinguistics 39
2.3.1. Diasporas in sociolinguistics in a South African context *41*
2.4. The Greek diaspora in sociolinguistic research 41
2.5. The Greek diaspora in South Africa 44
2.6. Summary of chapter 50

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY **52**
3.1. Signs in the material world 53
3.2. Geosemiotics 56
3.3. Methods and data 63
3.4. Positionality 69
3.5. Summary of chapter 72

CHAPTER 4: JOHANNESBURG AND THE GREEK DIASPORA **74**
4.1. An overview of Greek immigration to South Africa 75
4.2. Greeks and apartheid 81
4.3. Greeks in contemporary Johannesburg 85
4.3.1. Greeks and other diasporas in the city *90*
4.4. A note on Johannesburg 95
4.5. Summary of chapter 98

CHAPTER 5: INSCRIBING GREEKNESS THROUGH AND AROUND FOOD **100**
5.1. Food and diasporic identity 101
5.1.1. Food and diasporic identity in a South African context *108*

5.1.2. Food and diasporic identity in linguistic/semiotic landscape studies ... 111
5.2. Greekness and food ... 114
5.3. Inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg foodscapes ... 119
5.3.1. Greek food as the embodiment of Greekness ... 128
5.3.2. The Greek language as a marker of geosemiotic identity ... 135
5.3.3. References to Greece in the construction of Greekness ... 140
5.3.4. A note on performativity ... 141
5.4. Smellscape of Palm Sunday at The Greek Taverna ... 142
5.4.1. Smellscapes as ethnographic approach ... 143
5.4.2. Palm Sunday at The Greek Taverna ... 145
5.5. Summary of chapter ... 151

CHAPTER 6: SYNCRETIC INSCRIPTIONS OF GREEKNESS IN JOHANNESBURG ... 154
6.1. Origins of the term ... 156
6.2. Precedent for syncretic Greekness ... 163
6.3. Syncretism and linguistic landscapes ... 168
6.4. Johannesburg and syncretic Greekness ... 169
6.4.1. Antiquity ... 175
6.4.2. Religion and superstition ... 194
6.4.3. Idyllic landscapes ... 201
6.4.4. The colour blue ... 205
6.4.5. Political nationalism ... 206
6.5. Syncretic Greekness in South Africa and Greece ... 208
6.6. Summary of chapter ... 210

CHAPTER 7: INSCRIBING AUTHENTICITY IN GREEK SPACES IN JOHANNESBURG ... 212
7.1. Concept vetting 'authenticity' ... 214
7.2. Authenticity, diasporas, and sociolinguistics ... 221
7.3. Constructing authentic Greekness in Johannesburg ... 233
7.3.1. Asserted authenticity ... 233
7.3.2. Visually constructing authentic Greekness through churches ... 244
7.4. Soundscapes of authenticity ... 254
7.4.1. Indexing authenticity: Soundscape of Chaucer Rd Shopping Centre ... 258
7.4.2. Performing authenticity: Soundscape of Easter mass at Pantanassa ... 260
7.5. Summary of chapter ... 263

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION ... 266
REFERENCE LIST ... 282

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Johannesburg inner city indicating the Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen 87

Figure 2: Map of Senderwood, Bedfordview, Edenvale, and Primrose 88

Figure 3: The menu at 1920, a Portuguese restaurant in Hyde Park, northern Johannesburg 93

Figure 4: The interior of Franco's, a family-owned Italian restaurant in Parkview, north-central Johannesburg 95

Figure 5: Original colonial farms of what would become Johannesburg, indicating Langlaagte 96

Figure 6: Still of Maria, the protagonist's mother, in the 2002 film 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding' 115

Figure 7: A meme from a Facebook page called Growing Up Greek Style 117

Figure 8: A meme from the Facebook page Greek Gateway 117

Figure 9: A typical cafe de move-on in the 1890s (Source: Chaldeos, 2020, p. 161) 121

Figure 10: Rand Daily Mail, 7 May 1970 (Source: Rand Daily Mail Archive) 124

Figure 11: Rand Daily Mail, 13 September 1984 (Source: Rand Daily Mail Archive) 125

Figure 12: Menu of Meraki, a Greek restaurant and deli in Birnam 129

Figure 13: Part of the menu of Emporio Meze in Senderwood 131

Figure 14: Rows of whole lambs roasting over hot coals to form the main part of the Easter meal at the Hellenic Community of Germiston Easter celebration in 2022 132

Figure 15: A decorative wall hanging in The Greek Taverna, Senderwood 133

Figure 16: Olive oil tins on display in The Cheese Place, Linden 133

Figure 17: The shop front of The Cheese Place in Linden 134

Figure 18: Feta & Olives in Cresta 135

Figure 19: The back side of the menu of Meraki, Birnam 136

Figure 20: The front of the menu at The Greek Taverna, Senderwood 138

Figure 21: Kolonaki logo in Parkhurst 138

Figure 22: Part of the menu of Emporio Meze in Senderwood 139

Figure 23: A section of Emporio Meze's menu 140

Figure 24: A table setting for Palm Sunday at The Greek Taverna 147

Figure 25: Palm Sunday menu 148

Figure 26: St Marina beating a demon with a hammer. An icon by Lazaros, 1857. Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens 165

Figure 27: Rand Daily Mail, 18 June 1981 180

Figure 28: Rand Daily Mail, 4 June 1981 181

Figure 29: Rand Daily Mail, 24 April 1985 181

Figure 30: Rand Daily Mail, 17 May 1978 182

Figure 31: Rand Daily Mail, 14 Aug 1984 183

Figure 32: Part of a review of a restaurant, called Poseidon, in Joubert Park, Johannesburg (Source: Rand Daily Mail, 18 Dec 1981) 183

Figure 33: An assortment of Grecian columns on the grounds of the St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church in Krugersdorp, western Johannesburg 185

Figure 34: Sign at the entrance to St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, where the Hellenic Community (ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΑ) of Germiston community organisation is based, in Primrose, Germiston, eastern Johannesburg 186

Figure 35: Signs at a shopping centre (which has a wing of offices) on Chaucer Rd, Senderwood, a suburb in eastern Johannesburg with a substantial Greek presence 188

Figure 36: The Great Hall at Wits University 189

Figure 37: The William Cullen Library at Wits University 190

Figure 38: Pillars with a meander pattern at the entrance to the Greek Sporting Club 192

Figure 39: A meander pattern at Meraki, a Greek restaurant in Birnam 192

Figure 40: A display of Greek art at The Greek Taverna in Bedfordview 193

Figure 41: Religious displays at The Greek Taverna 196

Figure 42: Icons for sale at Meraki, a Greek restaurant in Birnam 197

Figure 43: Icons for sale at Zettas, a jewellery and accessory shop in Edenvale 197

Figure 44: Icons adorn the interior of Pantanassa Church, a Greek Orthodox Church in Melrose Estate, northern Johannesburg 198

Figure 45: A range of products with evil eyes available at Zettas 199

Figure 46: Lambades, Greek Easter candles, on sale at Emporio Meze in Senderwood 200

Figure 47: A book on display in The Greek Taverna 202

Figure 48: A mural on a wall in the outdoor seating area of Emporio Meze, Senderwood 203

Figure 49: Scenes in the bathroom at The Greek Taverna 205

Figure 50: A massive Greek flag adorns the ceiling of the outdoor seating area of Emporio Meze, a restaurant and deli in east Johannesburg 207

Figure 51: A display of stickers on sale at Zettas 207

Figure 52: SAHETI School billboard on the school's premises displaying its motto, 'know thyself' 213

Figure 53: The sign at the entrance to Mythos at The Zone shopping centre in Rosebank 235

Figure 54: Another sign at Mythos at The Zone in Rosebank, displaying the slogan "authentic Greek [sic] cuisine" 236

Figure 55: The meze section of the menu at Mythos at The Zone in Rosebank 237

Figure 56: Advertisement for 'Emporio Nights' at Meze Emporio 238

Figure 57: The cover of my mother's much-used recipe book Classical Recipes of the Greek Islands 239

Figure 58: A portion of the menu of Meze Emporio, displaying the 'traditional Greek foods' section 241

Figure 59: Orexi, a Greek restaurant serving "Greek street food", in Fourways, a suburb in northern Johannesburg 242

Figure 60: Soul Souvlaki, a restaurant serving "Greek street food" in Rosebank, a central suburb of Johannesburg 242

Figure 61: Souvlaki Box, a restaurant serving "Greek street food" in Blairgowrie, a suburb in north-western Johannesburg 243

Figure 62: Kalamaki, a Greek restaurant in Bryanston, northern Johannesburg 243

Figure 63: Early photograph of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen, before its completion in 1912 247

Figure 64: The official blue plaque at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen, marking it as Johannesburg heritage site under the auspices of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation 248

Figure 65: The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen in Hillbrow, central Johannesburg 249

Figure 66: Ypapandi, the church at SAHETI School in Senderwood, eastern Johannesburg (Source: Saheti Chapel – "Ypapandi" page on Facebook) 250

Figure 67: St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church in Krugersdorp, western Johannesburg 251

Figure 68: Icons on the walls inside St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox church at the Hellenic Federation of Germiston, in Primrose 252

Figure 69: Icons inside Pantanassa church in Melrose Estate 253

Figure 70: Pantanassa church in Melrose Estate, northern Johannesburg. (Source: Pantanassa Church Melrose Johannesburg's Facebook page) 261

List of Acronyms

AIC	African Initiated Christianity
ANC	African National Congress, the ruling party in South Africa since 1994
CYA	Cypriot Youth Association, a subsidiary of NAHYSOSA
IEB	Independent Education Board
LL	Linguistic Landscape(s)
NAHYSOSA	National Association of Hellenic Youth and Student Organisations of South Africa
NP	National Party, the previous ruling party of South Africa during apartheid
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SHA	Student Hellenic Association, a subsidiary of NAHYSOSA
SL	Semiotic Landscape(s)
UJHA	Universities of Johannesburg Hellenic Association, a subsidiary of NAHYSOSA
ZCC	Zion Christian Church

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

All four of my grandparents, two of whom are of Greek descent, are especially adept at storytelling. My cousins, sister, and I have grown up familiar with the stories of my grandparents' respective childhoods, how they met each other and got married, how our parents came to be in the world, and what their past houses were like. Most relevant to the study that I present in this dissertation, they tell the stories of how they came to be in South Africa – my paternal grandparents from the Greek diaspora in Egypt and my maternal grandparents from Spain – and their experiences as European immigrants in the city of Johannesburg. When my paternal grandparents arrived in Johannesburg in 1961 as a recently married young couple, they were in a peculiar position, having come from Cairo, Egypt, where both they and their parents were born and raised, but with Greek passports. My grandmother tells the story of how she was puzzled when the South African immigration official – a gruff Afrikaans man typical of the apartheid-era bureaucracy – selected 'European' on their immigration forms when she had told him that they had come from Egypt, a country in north Africa, and so by her reasoning should be 'African'. After a brief debate, and no doubt a polite one on the part of my young grandmother, the official brusquely informed my grandparents that because they were Greek, they were white and therefore 'European' according to the South African racial classification system. At this point in the story, my grandmother would relate how she realised that the subtext of his statement was unequivocally that it was bad to be 'African' and good to be 'European', and so should consider themselves lucky. Thus, my young grandparents entered their new lives in South Africa as Greeks and therefore as white Europeans on the more desirable side of the apartheid regime.

Apartheid, in essence, was a legislated economic, social, and geographical division between white and 'non-white' people, but the reality was more complex and nuanced. When my

grandparents arrived in South Africa in 1961, the Greek diaspora had already become fairly established since the first immigrants arrived towards the end of the 18th century, but their presence in the country – even as Europeans – had not always been well-received. Since the early 1900s, several attacks on Greek residents in South Africa and their businesses occurred, including the infamous anti-Greek riots in Johannesburg in 1917 (Dedering, 2013; Mantzaris, 1978, 1982). Anti-Greek sentiments stemmed from a national drive to avoid exacerbating the 'poor white' problem in South Africa before and during apartheid (which began officially in 1948), and immigrants from predominantly agricultural, often war-torn, Mediterranean countries were long seen as a direct threat to this goal (Dedering, 2013; Mantzaris, 1978, 1982). The first half of the 20th century in South Africa was characterised by governments explicitly striving for 'ethnic purity' – where white people were expected and enabled to be economically, intellectually, and socially superior to all others. The category of 'whiteness', however, was itself stratified and so 'poor whites' impeded this vision of a leading white minority, untarnished by less-than-perfect members. Immigrants from Mediterranean countries were often relatively poor as they came from largely agricultural backgrounds. Despite all of this, South Africa remained a fairly attractive place for Europeans looking to emigrate and so, after a number of waves of immigration of Greeks from Greece, Cyprus, and the established Greek diaspora in Egypt (Dedering, 2013; Mantzaris, 1978, 1982), South Africa is home to a sizable Greek community that has established its own cultural and national identity in the country and left indelible traces of Greekness in the linguistic landscape of Johannesburg, home to the largest Greek community in the country.

In this dissertation, I explore the ways in which Greekness – the state or quality of being of Greek heritage – is inscribed in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa, in order to unpack the discursive, multimodal processes employed to do so. This study, which is primarily a linguistic

or semiotic landscape study, made use of multimodal data – in the form of photographs of signs, interviews, field notes, and archival newspaper articles – which was analysed using Scollon and Scollon's (2003) framework of geosemiotics. Specifically, I analysed the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city, such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets, as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness. I also introduced the concept of syncretism as a useful term that can be novelly applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the ways in which signs and symbols from various, sometimes incompatible, aspects of Greek history and identity – including philosophy, mythology, superstition, Orthodox Christianity, and political nationalism – are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogeneous and 'authentic' Greekness. Finally, I took a 'semiotic approach' (Van Leeuwen, 2001) to authenticity and analysed how authenticity in the Greek diaspora is semiotically constructed both visually and aurally, using sound, in Greek spaces in Johannesburg.

Previous scholarship on the Greek diaspora in South Africa has focused on the history of immigration (Mantzaris, 1978, 1982; Added, 1973), while linguistic research on this group has focused entirely on language maintenance and shift (McDuling, 2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012). This is therefore the first study to analyse how the South African Greek diaspora constructs and communicates its Greekness via linguistic and semiotic modes. Moreover, this study contributes both to the field of LL/SL studies and to the canon of diaspora studies literature, and that of the global Greek diaspora in particular.

In this dissertation, I argue that the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg deliberately distinguishes themselves as recognisably Greek, using a variety of multimodal and multisensorial signs.

In this introductory chapter, I briefly discuss the aims of the study, enumerate the types of data that have been used, as well as present the rationale behind the research. I also indicate the structure of the dissertation and the contents of each of its seven remaining chapters.

1.1. Aim

The overarching aim of this study is to present a linguistic/semiotic landscape analysis of how the now mostly South Africa-born members of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg negotiate and perform their Greek identity and how Greekness is inscribed in various spaces in the city of Johannesburg. In particular, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

I. How are certain spaces in the city of Johannesburg materially constructed as Greek spaces?
II. How is Greekness semiotically constructed?
III. How is this constructed Greekness experienced by social actors, in the context of a European diasporic community in Johannesburg, a city in the Global South?

Empirically, this LL/SL study makes use of multimodal data, in the form of ethnographic field notes, photographs of signs, interviews, and newspaper articles, which are analysed within Scollon and Scollon's (2003) original geosemiotics framework. As mentioned, previous works by McDuling (2014) and McDuling and Barnes (2012) have examined the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg from a sociolinguistic perspective, with a focus on language shift and maintenance in this community. This study differs significantly in approach, shifting the focus from language use to an analysis of the signs used to assert and inscribe Greekness in the city of Johannesburg, thereby drawing this subject matter away from variationist sociolinguistics into a linguistic landscape study of the diaspora.

1.2. Rationale

The value of this study is multi-faceted. First, the use of a linguistic or semiotic landscapes (henceforth LL/SL) approach in relation to the subject matter – the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg – is novel. This particular field is no stranger to diasporic studies (see Gonçalves, 2012; Budarina, 2017; Lou, 2016; Blommaert, 2013), but there is at present no LL study of a Greek diaspora in South Africa, particularly in Johannesburg. The linguistic landscape of Greece, however, has been studied, both quantitatively by counting signs and languages (see Nikolaou, 2017) and qualitatively using 'corporeal sociolinguistics' (cf. Peck & Stroud, 2015) to analyse how bodies in a protest 'speak politically' (Kitis & Milani, 2015). This study will therefore augment the canon of LL/SL work done on diasporas and Greek spaces, and pave the way for further research on the Greek diaspora in South Africa from this perspective.

The empirical value of the study is closely linked to its methodological value. Ethnography and a standalone analysis of signs in a particular space run the risk of producing a time-bound study that would merely present a vignette of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg. The use of multimodal data as the empirical underpinning of the study is enhanced by a multifaceted methodological approach, which has geosemiotics at its core, but draws on insights from anthropological and historical approaches. This has ensured that the study is not limited to a snapshot of the community in the year in which it is written, but takes historical context and background into account, to produce a well-rounded and thorough analysis which is diachronic – a quality that Blommaert (2013) and Pavlenko and Mullen (2015) emphasise the importance of for LL/SL studies by considering the history of a sign and its place. Baro (2017, 2018) again emphasised the importance of time as an analytical lens, what he calls the *chronoscape*, in linguistic landscape studies "in order to understand how the meaning of the space came to be" (Baro, 2018, p. 50).

Moreover, although not the first study of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg from a sociolinguistic perspective, this is the first study to provide a multimodal perspective utilising other semiotic modes of communication used in the performance of a Greek identity in South Africa, and not on the Greek language alone. Previous work on the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg by McDuling (cf. 2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012) acted as a valuable springboard for my study, as it laid the foundations for sociolinguistic work on the subject. Multimodal data in the form of ethnography, photographic and visual items, semi-structured interviews with members of the Greek community, and items from the media (such as newspaper articles), allow for multidimensional analysis across a selected array of themes and a much deeper introspection of diasporic Greek identity. Previous work (cf. Added, 1973; McDuling, 2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012; Mantzaris, 1978, 1982) on the South African Greek diaspora has involved the use of interviews as primary data, and these personal stories provide invaluable insights. The interviews collected for this study have added to an already rich cache, augmenting and continuing work begun in the 1970s, but used in conjunction with the additional data have enabled a more contemporary, comprehensive, and multifaceted analysis that extends beyond just the people, to the landscape that is filled with other inscriptions of Greekness.

Furthermore, McDuling (2014) has already extensively focused on language practices amongst the Greek community in Johannesburg, and identified the main linchpins of Greek language maintenance in the city (education, religion, marriage, family communication, and cultural activities) thereby providing insight into what may be linchpins of Greek identity, where signs of Greekness are most prevalent. The use of the geosemiotics framework (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) provides a spatial element to the analysis, allowing for an analysis of the aforementioned linchpins of Greekness in terms of how they function to inscribe Greekness in space. Thus, the

use of the geosemiotics theoretical framework in such a study is novel and brings the subject into a more empirically contemporary space.

1.3. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of eight chapters, three of which are analytical. The following chapter, Chapter 2, presents an overview of the literature relevant to this study of how Greekness is inscribed in the linguistic landscape of Johannesburg, highlighting the previous studies that have informed it and the canon of literature to which this study adds – in sociolinguistics and diaspora studies. I look at the development of diaspora studies as a field in its own right as well as the importance of diasporas in sociolinguistics. I also explore how the Greek diaspora has been studied in global sociolinguistic research and present the literature that has been conducted on the Greek diaspora in South Africa – both sociolinguistic and from the perspectives of other disciplines.

In Chapter 3, I present the main theoretical, analytical, and methodological considerations for my research. First, I aim to anchor my study in the field of linguistic/semiotic landscape studies and present the background and main tenets of geosemiotics, which I used as a methodological toolkit with which to analyse Greekness in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg. I also present the method I employed – ethnography – to collect the data for this study, as well as expound upon the types of data I used. I follow the tradition of contemporary self-reflexive scholarship and present some relevant information on my 'historical body' and briefly reflect on my experience of the data collection process.

In Chapter 4, I lay out the history and context of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, looking at how the Greek diaspora came to be concentrated in the city, as well as examining some of

the experiences of members of the Greek diaspora during apartheid and in the present day. I also present some scholarly discourse on Johannesburg as a city in order to better contextualise this study.

In Chapter 5, the first analytical chapter in this dissertation, I consider the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city, such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets, as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness. In addition, the links between food and Greekness in general are widely attested, which manifests in the way that food is used in all spaces (not only in food-centred spaces) as a tool to inscribe and perform Greekness by the diaspora.

In Chapter 6, I explore how syncretism presents a useful way of accounting for how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg. Building on the idea of syncretism as a way to describe the co-occurrence of discrete aspects of a number of competing systems, I argue that the term *syncretism* can be applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the ways in which signs and symbols from various, sometimes incompatible, aspects of Greek history and identity – including philosophy, mythology, superstition, Orthodox Christianity, and political nationalism – are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogenous and 'authentic' Greekness.

In Chapter 7, I explore the ways in which indexing and performing authenticity are salient aspects of the inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg. I first analyse and problematise the concept of authenticity, before examining the use of the term 'authenticity' in relation to both diasporic identity and sociolinguistics. I provide an analysis of how authenticity is used in the linguistic landscape to inscribe Greekness, and some of the discourse around authenticity and

Greekness. I also look at the role of sound in inscribing authenticity and present a soundscape of two different spaces of Greekness to show how sound has the ability to both index and perform authentic Greekness.

In Chapter 8, the concluding chapter of the dissertation, I present a summary of the findings of each of my analytical chapters and how these indicate that the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg seeks to construct a homogeneous sense of Greekness through the use of multimodal and multisensorial signs. I argue that the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg actively constructs itself as different from the rest of the city's inhabitants and uses the inscriptions of homogeneous Greekness to present it as desirable and somehow aspirational. I also discuss some avenues for future related research.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review: Semiotic Landscapes, Diasporas, and South Africa

There is a tenable link between sociolinguistic research, particularly within the context of the study of linguistic/semiotic landscapes, and diasporas – or culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse groups of people. It is at the convergence of these two concepts – linguistic/semiotic landscapes and diasporas – and their respective fields of study – sociolinguistics and diaspora studies – that the present study is epistemologically and theoretically located. Blommaert (2013) ruminates on the modern ability of sociolinguists to augment their field notebooks and audio recordings with photographs of the linguistic landscape. He goes on to note that "the locus where such landscapes are being documented is usually the late-modern, globalized city: a densely multilingual environment in which publicly visible written language documents the presence of a wide variety of (linguistically identifiable) groups of people" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 1).

In this chapter, I provide an overview of literature relevant to this study of how Greekness is inscribed in the linguistic landscape of Johannesburg, highlighting the previous studies that have informed it and the canon of literature to which this study adds – in sociolinguistics and diaspora studies. I look first at the development of diaspora studies as a field in its own right, before moving onto a discussion of the importance of diasporas in sociolinguistics, and linguistic/semiotic landscape studies in particular. I then zoom in on the Greek diaspora and look at how it has been studied in global sociolinguistic research. Finally, I present the literature that has been conducted on the Greek diaspora in South Africa – both sociolinguistic and from the perspectives of other disciplines.

2.1. Linguistic and semiotic landscape studies

The study presented in this dissertation is, at its core, a semiotic landscape study: it focuses on language in place, and presents an analysis of different types of signs in a space in order to evaluate what they communicate and how, and also delves into the social, political, and historical context and implications of these messages. In this study, I attempt to understand how Greekness is inscribed in spaces in Johannesburg through an analysis of the meanings of signs in place. This section provides a brief theoretical and historical overview of the field of linguistic/semiotic landscapes, focussing on the debates around the name of the field – linguistic versus semiotic landscapes – and the resultant questions around what constitutes a sign. I illustrate how I align my study with a broader interpretation of what constitutes a sign and, by extension, with semiotics and semiotic landscape studies. Regardless of their terminology, linguistic/semiotic landscape studies have come a long way since early studies of multilingual signs, and remain an ever-growing field of study.

Early methodological approaches to the study of signs, or semiotics (see CHAPTER 3:), laid the foundation for linguistic landscapes to emerge as a field of study, with what is frequently referred to as the 'first wave' (Blommaert, 2013) of linguistic landscape studies beginning in the 1990s. This first wave of linguistic landscape studies was quantitative studies which focused on multilingual signs in predominantly urban areas as indicators of multilingual language practice, policy, maintenance and shift, and attitude and ideology. Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) large-scale corpus-based analysis of over 300 public signs in Jerusalem is perhaps the most important study for the emergence of linguistic landscape studies as a field. While they do not use the term 'linguistic landscape' in their study, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) look at the links between language in the material world and the sociopolitical context of the city. They noted the occurrence of 12 languages – Hebrew, Arabic, English, Armenian,

German, French, Greek, Swedish, Aramaic, Italian, Latin, and Coptic – across 339 signs (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). Their corpus consisted of eight different types of signs: street signs, advertisements, warning and prohibition signs, building names, informative signs, plaques, signs which label objects, and graffiti (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). The aim of their study was to explore how the prevalence of various languages, and the appearance of some languages over others, speak to the power dynamics of the city of Jerusalem. They emphasise the erasure of Arabic, despite it being a majority language at 88% (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). Thus the linguistic landscape of Jerusalem represents the broader aim of Israeli politics to exclude Arabs. This research, despite being mostly corpus-based, therefore speaks more widely to a canon of research illustrating the links between language and power, language and identity, and language and representation.

The first iteration of the term 'linguistic landscapes' to describe studies such as Spolsky and Cooper's above occurs in Landry and Bourhis's (1997) analysis of the vitality and maintenance of French based on the perceptions of public signage in Francophone Canada. They define the linguistic landscape as the 'language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the LL of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration' (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). Informed by language policy, and accompanied by a survey completed by over 2000 students from various parts of Francophone Canada, Landry and Bourhis (1997) assessed only the written language on signs. They concluded that language maintenance of French was less likely in areas where signs in French were less frequent, while in areas where French signs were more prevalent, Francophone bilinguals were likely to be more stimulated to use the language (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Similar quantitative linguistic landscape studies – in the tradition of the 'first wave' (Blommaert, 2013) – continued to emerge throughout the 1990s

and still appear to this day (see Calvet, 1994; Shohamy, 2006; Backhaus, 2007; Hult, 2008; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009; Torkington, 2009; Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2015; Fabiszak et al., 2021). These quantitative studies have been widely criticised (cf. Itagi & Singh, 2002; Leeman & Modan, 2009; Pennycook, 2010; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Blommaert, 2013, 2016; Moriarty, 2014) for failing to acknowledge "the reality of space as dynamic, fluid and ever-changing" (Moriarty, 2014, p. 458), thereby reducing the analysis to a mere snapshot of a moment in time (see Blommaert, 2013). Moreover, as noted by Itagi and Singh (2002), these quantitative linguistic landscape studies tend to take a literal approach to what constitutes a sign, favouring written language over any other mode. Moriarty (2014) argues that "LL research needs to move beyond the descriptive and distributional approaches favoured in earlier work and to consider the nuances of the given context, where local historical and symbolic processes are at play" (p. 459). Moreover, Blommaert (2013) criticises earlier 'first wave' quantitative research for being concerned merely with counting languages and signs, without engaging with the people who interact with the signs in question, nor with the sociopolitical and sociocultural context in which they occur and which likely informed their creation. Gradually, there was an increase in the number of studies which took a qualitative approach to linguistic landscapes. This shift, which is often termed the 'qualitative turn' (Blommaert, 2013, 2016; Moriarty, 2014; Woldemariam & Lanza, 2015) in linguistic landscape studies, allowed for more focused, and therefore more in-depth, studies of language in place: as opposed to studies counting languages and signs in large cities like Jerusalem (as in Spolsky & Cooper, 1991), researchers began to hone in on smaller locations, presenting in-depth, qualitative analyses of spaces such as certain marketplaces (see Lou, 2017), neighbourhoods (see Blommaert, 2013; Baro, 2017), shops (see Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017), and restaurants (see Tran, 2021).

The turn towards more qualitative, in-depth, and focused studies of linguistic landscapes seems to have co-occurred with a reframing of what constitutes a 'sign' worthy of study. Where Spolsky and Cooper (1991) only considered text in their analyses, Shohamy and Gorter (2009) argue for the inclusion of images in analyses – as signs that contribute to meaning-making in a space. According to their definition, linguistic landscape refers to "the attention to language in the environment, words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces" (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009, p. 1), thus broadening the scope of linguistic landscapes significantly from Landry and Bourhis's (1997) definition. This paved the way for researchers to rapidly and immensely expand the definition of 'sign', moving away from merely text and images, to include a variety of meaning-makers, including looking at the materiality of the signs in question (Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009). Thus, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) advocate for the use of the term *semiotic landscape* in place of *linguistic landscape* – a terminology change that harkens back a hundred years to De Saussure's early notion of the sign and semiology. They defined the semiotic landscape as "any (public) space with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making" (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010, p. 2), thereby opening it up to myriad possibilities and opportunities for interdisciplinarity. In the decade or so since then, several additions have been made to the canonical list of things that may be considered signs worthy of study, such as: architecture (Iqani & Baro, 2017), scent (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015), time (Pavlenko & Mullen, 2015; Baro, 2017), gender and sexuality (Milani, 2013a, 2013b), memory (Moore, 2019), social media (Lyons, 2019), tattoos (Peck & Williams, 2019), mobile signs and stickers (Sebba, 2010) and many more. The materiality of signs also became an important aspect of linguistic/semiotic landscape research: the "materiality of a sign enables a sign to be contextualised as it may index its history and thus enables a more accurate reading of the sign. Such an approach marks a discursive turn in LL studies, especially when one considers that the materiality of a sign involves the interaction of time and space [...]"

(Moriarty, 2014, p. 459). Furthermore, the expansion of the list of media considered 'signs' co-occurred with a move to consider the people who produce, consume and experience the signs around them (Ben-Rafael, 2009). As such, ethnography became the preferred and encouraged co-method in linguistic landscape analysis. I made use of ethnographic research methods in my own study, in this tradition, which I explain in more detail later in this chapter.

The study presented in this dissertation is aligned with Jaworski and Thurlow's (2010) definition of the semiotic landscape, and I consider a broader view of what constitutes a 'sign' by looking beyond purely text-based signage. While South Africa has been the subject of several studies in semiotic landscapes (cf. Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009; Peck & Stroud, 2015; Peck & Williams, 2019; Williams & Lanza, 2016), these studies have generally considered locations other than Johannesburg. As I discuss later in this chapter, Johannesburg is an interesting, multi-faceted city that is a rich space for sociolinguistic inquiry, as shown in the handful of studies that have focused on the city (see for example Baro, 2017; Milani, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2015; Edwards & Milani, 2014; Milani & Kapa, 2015; Cerimaj et al., 2020). My aim with this research is to add to the still relatively small canon of semiotic landscape research on Johannesburg. In addition, the Greek diaspora in South Africa has until now not been the subject of any linguistic/semiotic research. The Greek diaspora of Johannesburg, specifically, has been the topic of some sociolinguistic research focusing on language maintenance and shift (see McDuling, 2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012). My expansion on this subject in the form of a semiotic landscape study brings it into a more contemporary space and paves the way for further study on the Greek and other diasporas in Johannesburg from this perspective. Moreover, studies of the material world and the ways in which diasporas influence the semiotic landscape of their 'new' home contribute greatly to the field of diaspora studies as they enable

insight into the relationships between diasporic groups, their country of origin, and the context of the society in which they now find themselves.

2.1.1. Diasporas in linguistic/semiotic landscape studies

I now turn to a contextualisation of diaspora studies within linguistic/semiotic landscapes research to illustrate how the two concepts and areas of study are inextricably linked. Blommaert (2013), as I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, notes that "the locus where such landscapes are being documented is usually the late-modern, globalized city" (p. 1), places characterised by superdiversity as a result of accelerated forms of globalisation. Superdiversity is, according to Blommaert (2013), "driven by three keywords: mobility, complexity and unpredictability" (p. 1). Such superdiverse spaces necessarily involve the presence of various diasporic communities, who make up the "densely multilingual environment" to which Blommaert (2013, p. 1) refers. It is therefore unsurprising that diasporas form an important part of many linguistic/semiotic landscape studies across the globe, regardless of whether the concept of a diaspora is engaged with explicitly or not. In many studies, diasporas feature with varying levels of prominence – either as inhabitants in an area under scrutiny (Blommaert, 2013), or as owners of shops or stalls in a market (Lou, 2010, 2017; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). Linguistic/semiotic landscape studies are well-suited for investigations of spaces occupied by diasporic communities.

Worth noting also is that diasporas, if not the main focus, appear on the peripheries of most – if not all – studies conducted in linguistic/semiotic landscapes. The nature of a 'superdiverse' (Blommaert, 2013) space is just that: incredibly diverse, comprising a variety of connected yet distinct 'communities' of people, many of which are diasporic. For example, Budarina's (2017) assessment of Berlin as 'cosmopolitan' by virtue of 32% of the signs she surveyed being

entirely non-German, and a further 35% being bilingual (p. 87), speaks to the presence of diasporas. Budarina's (2017) dataset indicates the presence of English, Turkish, Russian, Chinese, French, Spanish, Polish, Serbian, Arabic, Thai, Vietnamese, and Ukrainian (p. 83) – each of which, in turn, likely indicates the presence of an associated diaspora. The same can be said for Blommaert's (2013) assessment of the 'superdiverse' Berchem neighbourhood of Antwerp, Belgium. The researcher's preliminary assessment of the number of visible languages hints at the presence of over twenty diasporic communities: Dutch, French, English, Turkish, Arabic, Russian, Polish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai, Farsi, Spanish, Portuguese, Tamil, Urdu, Hindi, Albanian, Serbo-Croatian, Italian, German, Armenian, Bulgarian, and Japanese (Blommaert, 2013, p. 52). Blommaert's (2013) focus on superdiversity was therefore fundamentally theorised around the presence of various *diasporas* in his neighbourhood. Similarly, the linguistic landscape of Barcelona is much more intricate than merely Catalan and Spanish, with significant immigrant populations from "Italy, Ecuador, Pakistan, Bolivia, Peru, China, Morocco, France, Colombia, and Argentina" (Colomé & Long, 2012, p.184), and so "it can be inferred that some of the most common languages spoken by immigrant groups in Barcelona are Italian, Spanish-Quechua, Urdu-Punjabi-Pashto, Chinese, Arabic-Tamazight, and French" (*ibid*., p. 184).

It is, however, important to note that the concept of superdiversity, as originally theorised by Vertovec (cf. 2004, 2015) is not without contestation or problematisation. Deumert and Mabandla (2013) highlight that the term has predominantly been used by European scholars to describe vey recent developments in migration patterns to and within the Global North, which have resulted in the rapid diversification of previously homogeneous – white, European – spaces. Applying the term 'superdiverse' as a descriptor of places in the Global South therefore implies that the diversity in these places is also new, and not the result of slavery and

colonialism beginning more than half a millennium ago (Deumert and Mabandla, 2013). In other words, the recent superdiversity of cities like Brussels (Blommaert, 2013) had already existed in cities in the Global South long before (Deumert and Mabandla, 2013). It is with this in mind that I choose to describe Johannesburg as superdiverse, which – as a descriptive term – encapsulates the extreme level of diversity amongst the people in the city which is the result of both 'old' colonial systems and 'new' forms of migration, mobility, and globalisation.

As another example of the link between diasporas and linguistic landscape studies, Gonçalves (2012) makes use of a geosemiotic approach to investigate how Ironbound – an area in Newark, New Jersey, with a strong Portuguese presence – is constructed as a multi-ethnic and multilingual space. The presence of various signs and symbols and the use of Portuguese as the main language on signage in the area lead to its being described by visitors as "European-like" and "foreign" (Gonçalves, 2012, p. 93), while simultaneously enhancing the sense of belonging there felt by the diasporic community – to whom the artefacts provide a sense of home (p. 93). Gonçalves (2012) concludes the following in her study:

> "Researching the code preference and sign composition has shown that Portuguese is in fact the preferred language within this neighborhood. The use of monolingual Portuguese signs characterizes the community they identify while simultaneously pointing to the kinds of individuals and migrant groups who are the receivers, addressees, and audiences of these signs. [...] Furthermore, the use of both monolingual Portuguese signs, as well as bilingual Portuguese and English signs, functions to construct the Ironbound as particularly multilingual, multiethnic, and primarily Portuguese" (Gonçalves, 2012, p. 93).

It is interesting to note that Gonçalves does not make use of the word *diaspora* even once in her paper, and only refers to this particular Portuguese community as *diasporic* twice throughout the course of the article. The status of the particular community in question is, nevertheless, unquestionably a diaspora.

Lou provides additional examples of semiotic landscape studies in which a diaspora features prominently, in her article on a particular billboard advertisement in Washington, DC's Chinatown (Lou, 2010) and in her more comprehensive book on the same location (Lou, 2016). In Lou (2010), she looks at a billboard that "features a prominent Chinese-American restaurant owner and his daughter telling the story of the neighborhood's recent transformation" (Lou, 2010, p. 626) and uses it to argue "that the economic power of the corporation enables it to exercise its symbolic power [...] to construct itself as a benefactor to the community in the process of gentrifying the neighborhood" (*ibid*.). Lou (2010) first offers some contextual information on the Chinatown in question:

> "A small downtown neighborhood with Chinese-owned businesses mostly concentrated on one block of H Street, its size has been continuously shrinking over the past 20 years, as the residential pattern of Chinese immigrants shifts to the suburbs and as more American national and transnational chains move into this downtown neighborhood. Facing the challenge of Chinatown disappearing completely, the Chinatown Steering Committee, formed in 1986 by a group of local Chinese-American entrepreneurs, has devised and implemented a policy in conjunction with the Office of Planning of the district government to mandate that all stores in the officially designated Chinatown area carry Chinese-English signs on their storefronts. The result of this policy is a unique linguistic landscape not observed in other major North American Chinatowns: Chinese characters are inscribed not only on Chinese restaurants but are also seen on the outside of American businesses such as Starbucks and AT&T" (Lou, 2010, p. 626).

Here, she illustrates that the diaspora that established this Chinatown has played an important role in uniquely developing its linguistic landscape. In her analysis of the billboard, Lou (2010) explores the links between narrative and place:

> "[...] narratives about place provide us with rich materials for examining ideology and power in discursive place-making. However, in order to understand how certain narratives prevail, we need to move beyond the text of the narrative and look at it as a discursive practice enacted by a variety of social actors employing a multitude of semiotic and material resources in concrete settings" (Lou, 2010, p. 630).

In order to achieve this, Lou (2010) argues, one must employ a number of different methods at once, "including structural and textual analysis of the narrative text, multimodal analysis of non-linguistic means, and ethnographic study of the process of narrative production and locations of emplacement" (Lou, 2010, p. 630). Inspired partly by Lou's work here, my own study of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg makes use of multimodal data and ethnography. Lou (2010) effectively illustrates how the billboard acts as a device used by the corporation behind its creation and placement to drive the "material reconstruction" (Lou, 2010, p. 643) of Chinatown through narrative. She argues that "by considering both linguistic and non-linguistic resources, this analysis shows how the economic power of the corporation transfers symbolic power into the narrative and makes it a dominant account" (Lou, 2010, pp. 642-643). The narrative employed by the corporation on this billboard in Chinatown serves to "legitimize their actions" (Lou, 2010, p. 643).

In Lou (2016), the author again turns to the same diasporic neighbourhood – Washington, DC's Chinatown – and presents a more comprehensive analysis of its linguistic landscape, making use of geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) in the form of a book. From the title of the book alone, *The Linguistic Landscape of Chinatown: A Sociolinguistic Ethnography*, we can already anticipate that the book focuses on a diasporic space – that inhabited and shaped by the Chinese community in Washington, DC – and we can know the methods that Lou employs in the book to conduct her analysis – ethnography. In the book, Lou (2016) explores the ways in which language and discourse contribute to the "place making" (Lou, 2016, p. 131) of the Chinatown in Washington, DC – "a small, traditionally ethnic urban neighborhood with a predominant presence of non-Chinese businesses but homogeneous bilingual commercial signage and with an ambivalent identity frequently perceived as inauthentic" (Lou, 2016, p. 131). Like my own research, Lou made us of multimodal data in her analysis, including a prolonged period of

ethnographic fieldwork, photographs of "shop signs and spatial practices" (Lou, 2016, p. 131), interviews with various social actors in the neighbourhood, including "neighborhood residents, community organizers, and daytime workers" (*ibid*.), and some public discourses in the form of policies and promotional documents. Lou's work on Chinatown is interesting as it shows a unique relationship between the Chinese diasporic community and the 'top-down' corporations present in the area, who both play a role in creating the signs that convey the 'Chineseness' of the space. As we already know from Lou's earlier study on the same area (Lou, 2010), Chinatown in Washington, DC has a policy necessitating the presence of bilingual signs, even on the façades of non-Chinese businesses, which has an interesting effect on its linguistic landscape:

> "Adopting analytical tools from Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) and Scollon and Scollon (2003) in the examination of shop signs, I have found systematic similarities and differences between Chinese and non-Chinese stores' signage. On one hand, they have in common language choice, symmetrical layout, text vector and material emplacement, which simultaneously indexes traditional Chinese aesthetic values and the historical change of Chinatown from a monolingual, segregated ethnic enclave to a multilingual, integrated neighborhood. On the other hand, they diverge in terms of visual and material features, such as code preference, content and color scheme. These more subtle features serve to minimize the visual prominence of Chinese characters on non-Chinese businesses storefront designs and thus are used as semiotic tactics by corporations to comply with a mandatory design policy in order to gain entry into a profitable central urban location. Therefore, the glossy surface of DC's Chinatown is the visible textual artifact (Silverstein & Urban, 1996) resulting from conflicts and compromises made during the making of linguistic landscape" (Lou, 2016, p. 132).

Similarly to my own study (see CHAPTER 7:), Lou raises the issue of authenticity – or inauthenticity, more specifically. She notes that discourses around the Chinatown in Washington, DC often paint it as 'inauthentic' (Lou, 2016) based on "an imagined ideal of a 'real' Chinatown that must be a maximally different and unfamiliar Other place" (Lou, 2016,

p. 133). Lou's (2010, 2016) work serves as good examples of the ways in which diasporas are present in linguistic landscape studies.

I mention Lou in this much detail because her work on Chinatowns is seminal and extensive, and her effective use of ethnographic research methods parallels my own work in this study. She is, however, far from being the only person who is interested in studying the linguistic landscapes of Chinatowns. Indeed, it would probably be safe to assume that linguistic landscape studies of Chinatowns – or of the Chinese diaspora in a particular place – account for the vast majority of the canon of work done at the intersection of diaspora studies and linguistic sociolinguistics. It is now worth mentioning some of the other linguistic landscape studies that have been conducted on Chinatowns and the Chinese diaspora in other parts of the world. Using semiotics, Lee and Lou (2019), for example, examine the semiotic landscape of Chinatown in Incheon, South Korea. They focus on the ways in which this Chinatown is constructed as a 'spectacle' through "spatial, linguistic, semiotic, and material resources" (Lee & Lou, 2019, p. 187) in order to construct it as 'unordinary' vis-à-vis its context surrounded by "ordinary space, practice, and language use" (*ibid*.). Still in Asia, Zhang et al. (2023) analyse shop signs that appear in the linguistic landscape of the Chinatown in Singapore. They pay particular attention to the varying levels of impact that different groups of Chinese immigrants – 'old' and 'new' immigrants to the city – have on the linguistic landscape of the Chinatown in question (Zhang et al., 2023). Using a corpus of 326 shop signs, Zhang et al. (2023) found that the different groups of immigrants "make different linguistic choices when projecting their respective authenticities and identities" (Zhang et al., 2023, p. 15). Wu et al. (2020) also look at a Chinatown in East Asia in the form of an emerging Chinatown on Pracha Rat Bamphen road in Bangkok, Thailand. With the aim of gleaning insights into the issue of authenticity in

this space, the authors attempt to unearth "what constitutes an authentic Chinatown, and in whose eyes" (Wu et al., 2020, p. 794).

Chinatowns in other parts of the world have also been the subject of linguistic or semiotic landscape studies, especially in extremely recent years. For example, Zhao (2021) focuses on the linguistic landscape of Triangle de Choisy – the Chinatown of Paris in France. She applies the framework of geosemiotics and place theory (Augé, 1995) to her analysis, and posits that the 'semiotic aggregate' constructed in this Chinatown constitutes "an identifiable, relational, and historical transnational space that helps to orient" (Zhao, 2021, p. 1) newly arrived Chinese immigrants in the city. The Chinatowns of several cities in the Netherlands have also been the subject of some linguistic/semiotic landscape studies (see Mei & Van Liempt, 2022; Li & Kroon, 2021). Mei and Van Liempt (2022) conduct a comparative analysis of the linguistic landscapes of the Chinatowns of Amsterdam and The Hague, which "deconstructs the intangible and ambiguous aspects around the concept of Chineseness through a geosemiotic lens" (Mei & Van Liempt, 2022, p. 69). Similarly, Li and Kroon (2021) present an analysis of the Chinatown of Eindhoven. Taking changing language ideologies towards Chinese and the "internal diversities within Chineseness" (Li & Kroon, 2021, p. 137), the authors present an ethnographic account of youth of Chinese heritage in Eindhoven, and illustrate how the various complex shifts at play have altered the linguistic landscape of the Chinatown (Li & Kroon, 2021). They note that "young people of Chinese heritage articulate a whole repertoire of inhabited and ascribed identities, and they do so by means of a complex display and deployment of the ensemble of linguistic and communicative resources at their disposal" (Li & Kroon, 2021, p. 137). Other noteworthy linguistic or semiotic landscape studies of Chinatowns include Amos's (2016) analysis of the Chinatown of Liverpool, Li and Marshall's

(2020) examination of Vancouver's Chinatown in Canada, and Xu and Wang's (2021) discussion of Chinese restaurants in Sydney, Australia.

There are also, naturally, studies of diasporic spaces other than Chinatowns from the lens of linguistic or semiotic landscapes (cf. Woldemariam & Lanza, 2015; Baranova & Fedorova, 2019; Tran, 2021; Nguyen, 2022; Karapetian & Gulludjian, 2021; Edmond, 2017; Mirvahedi, 2019; Paffey, 2019). Woldemariam and Lanza (2015), for example, present an interesting analysis of 'Little Ethiopia', a site of the Ethiopian diaspora in Washington, DC. Through their analysis of this place, Woldemariam and Lanza (2015) look at the ways in which the linguistic landscape constructs "an imaginary community built on the myth of the old homeland, including a unique African identity in a new homeland with other Africans as well as African Americans" (Woldemariam and Lanza, 2015, p. 172). In addition, Baranova and Fedorova (2019) look at the presence of various migrant communities in the linguistic landscape of St Petersburg in Russia. They found that the occurrence of languages other than Russian in the linguistic landscape of the city is extremely rare, with only Chinese and Uzbek occurring occasionally (Baranova & Fedorova, 2019). They argue that the invisibility of any minority languages in the city is deliberate on the part of language policy and the language ideologies of Russian speakers, the majority, to ensure the city maintains a "façade" (Baranova & Fedorova, 2019, p. 17) of monolingualism. Other studies of diasporic spaces worth noting here are: Tran's (2021) analysis of the Vietnamese diaspora in Edmonton, Canada; Nguyen's (2022) account of the Vietnamese diaspora in Manchester in the UK; Karapetian and Gulludjian's (2021) examination of the Armenian diaspora in the linguistic landscape of Los Angeles in the USA; Edmond's (2017) comparative analysis of the South Asian and Hispanic diasporas in Cary, a city in North Carolina, USA; Mirvahedi's (2019) account of various Iranian diasporic

groups throughout the world; and Paffey's (2019) study of Spanish and, by extension, the Spanish and Latin American diasporas in London, UK.

2.1.2. Linguistic/semiotic landscape studies of Greece

There are no linguistic/semiotic landscape studies on the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg and, indeed, in South Africa more generally. The linguistic landscape of Greece, however, has been studied (cf. Nikolaou, 2017; Kitis & Milani, 2015; Canakis, 2017), albeit not prolifically. In this section, I briefly discuss some of the linguistic landscape studies that have been carried out in Greece as my study augments this canon of linguistic/semiotic landscape work done on Greek spaces, and paves the way for further research on the Greek diaspora in South Africa from a linguistic/semiotic landscape perspective.

Nikolaou (2017) presents an analysis of commercial signs in Athens, which – he claims – differs significantly from typical linguistic landscape research conducted in "officially multilingual and multi-ethnic areas" (p. 1), as Greece has a monolingual language policy. Nikolaou's (2017) study takes the form of a quantitative and qualitative study of a corpus of 621 shop signs in Athens. The results of his quantitative analysis indicate a prevalence of written English and, to a lesser extent, Italian and French in addition to the dominant Greek (Nikolaou, 2017). He posits that the use of English on shop signs forms a less utilitarian function than the use of Greek and is instead used symbolically to "signify chic cosmopolitanism, classy urbanism, and technological sophistication" (Nikolaou, 2017, p. 16). As a result of this distinction, English and other foreign languages are more likely to be found on the signage of less formal domains, while monolingual Greek signage prevails in "professional domains such as law offices and surgeries where informational concerns largely override symbolic considerations" (Nikolaou, 2017, p. 16).

In addition, Kitis and Milani (2015) present a qualitative analysis of the linguistic landscape of protests in Greece described as 'anarchic' and 'anti-authoritarian'. The authors apply the concept of 'corporeal sociolinguistics' (cf. Peck & Stroud, 2015) in order to analyse the performativity of human bodies and how they 'speak politically' in a protest (Kitis & Milani, 2015). Kitis and Milani (2015) explore the ways in which various meanings or signs are embodied by the protestors themselves in order to index them as such and produce 'spatial turbulence' in their physical interactions with the other bodies within and the materiality of a space. They emphasise a focus on the body "through spaces, its discursive and material (inter)actions with other texts and material artefacts" (Kitis & Milani, 2015, p. 269) and argue that this necessitates investigations of the "material and discursive processes through which individuals and groups context the very contours of what counts as public" (*ibid*.). These "bodies in movement contest economic and political arrangements" (Kitis & Milani, 2015, p. 268) during these protests in Greece and, the authors argue, thus serve to reconfigure and 're-signify' certain urban spaces.

Finally, Canakis (2017) presents an ethnographic analysis of the linguistic landscape of Stadiou Street, a main thoroughfare which connects two busy squares in Athens, Greece. Canakis (2017) notes that this street is of particular interest as it is "the only Athenian thoroughfare that has undergone as dramatic a change and the only one in which protest signs run its entire length (roughly 1.000 meters)" (Canakis, 2017, p. 166). His analysis suggests that the prevalence of "spray-canned directives and expressive assertions" (Canakis, 2017, p. 165) on the often run-down buildings along Stadiou Street mark it as being characterised by "a heightened awareness of exclusion, and constitute vociferous attempts at appropriating emblematic strongholds of the local status quo" (*ibid*.), or archetypal 'Athenianness'. Much of the graffiti on this street concerns social, political, and economic concerns – such as high rates of youth unemployment,

increased political extremism, racism, xenophobia, and anti-LGBTQI sentiment – making it an "arena for the discursive public negotiation of gendered and sexed predicates and meanings, as well as for the discursive construction of social categories" (Canakis, 2017, p. 170).

I now turn away from Greece and Greek spaces, to focus on how diasporas feature in linguistic/semiotic landscape studies in the context of South Africa.

2.1.3. Diasporas in the linguistic/semiotic landscapes of South Africa

Given its categorisation as 'superdiverse' (Blommaert, 2013; Deumert & Mabandla, 2013), South Africa is extremely well-suited to linguistic/semiotic landscape studies, especially making use of geosemiotics as an analytical toolkit. Various places in the country, especially the city of Cape Town , have featured as sites of interest in linguistic/semiotic landscape studies (cf. Stroud & Jegels, 2013; Banda & Peck, 2016; Peck & Banda, 2014a, 2014b; Peck 2012; Lou et al., 2022; Hiss & Peck, 2020; Roux et al., 2019; Williams, 2012; Peck & Stroud, 2015; Abongdia, 2014; Mokwena, 2018; Kelleher, 2014; Kelleher & Milani, 2015; Du Plessis, 2011; Baro, 2017, 2018; Deumert & Mabandla, 2013). While South Africa is already complex and superdiverse without considering all the diasporas that call the country home (and ostensibly affect the linguistic landscape of the country), much of the linguistic and semiotic landscape work that has been done on South Africa tends to be about spaces that are multilingual in terms of indigenous or official languages (see for example Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009; Banda & Peck, 2016; Peck & Banda, 2014a; Williams, 2012; Mokwena, 2018; Kelleher, 2014; Kelleher & Milani, 2015; Du Plessis, 2011). As a result, not much work has been done on the linguistic landscape of diasporic spaces in South Africa, and sociolinguistic studies of diasporas in the country tend to focus on the Chinese diaspora (see Deumert & Mabandla's, 2013; Thompson, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2022; Thompson & Anthonissen, 2019; Deumert et al., 2021), with a limited

number of exceptions (cf. Vigouroux, 2005, 2008), from perspectives other than linguistic landscapes. There is limited reference made to diasporas in a handful of South African linguistic landscape studies (see Kelleher, 2014; Mokwena, 2018), in which diasporas – or 'immigrants' – feature in the periphery.

In a non-linguistic landscape study, Deumert and Mabandla (2013) examine the Chinese diaspora in rural South Africa, namely in the small towns of Tsolo, Maclear and Cala in the Eastern Cape province. In this paper, after providing brief historical information on Chinese migration to South Africa, the authors examine the ways in which "newly arrived Chinese traders have developed various strategies to facilitate economic interactions" (Deumert & Mabandla, 2013, p. 45), noting the use of the following strategies: "signage which draws on local meanings; the employment of local 'language mediators' who can interact with customers; the use of a basic, mixed jargon, and various forms of second language acquisition" (*ibid*.). They also note that "superdiversity encourages us to consider the complexities of the social and sociolinguistic formations that are created through migration in contemporary societies" (Deumert & Mabandla, 2013, p. 51). Relevant to my own study is the authors' rejection of diasporas as homogeneous and static:

> "[…] rather than viewing the world as consisting of multiple distinct and well-bounded ethnolinguistic diasporas, super-diversity invites us to conceptualise such diasporas as internally diverse and multi-dimensional, shaped by individual biographies and characterised by different levels of hybridity and interaction with other groups" (Deumert & Mabandla, 2013, p. 46).

The instinctual drive to refer to a group of people connected only by country of origin is one that must be overcome by the researcher of diasporas, as the resultant study would be essentialist and reductive. Whilst this is not a linguistic landscape study, nor is it a study that makes use of geosemiotics, the argument to be made here – and that is evident in many of the studies mentioned in the course of this dissertation (see Lou, 2016; Deumert & Mabandla,

2013; Baro, 2017; Ali, 2019, and others referenced here) – is one in favour of incorporating interviews into the methodology. Thus, the geosemiotic analysis of a space can be complemented and enhanced by stories from the humans who occupy, experience and shape it. For more on this as it pertains to my own research, see CHAPTER 3:

Thompson has also conducted extensive research on the Chinese diaspora in South Africa, focussing specifically on that in Cape Town (see Thompson, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2022; Thompson & Anthonissen, 2019; Deumert et al., 2021). Her work, like Deumert and Mabandla's (2013), is not from the perspective of linguistic or semiotic landscapes, and considers the communicative practices that occur between Chinese shop owners and their employees, who are often migrants from other African countries (Thompson, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2022; Thompson & Anthonissen, 2019). This creates an interesting dynamic, in which the shop owners deliberately employ migrants who have some level of English proficiency in order to bridge a communication gap between them and their clientele (Thompson, 2018, 2019). She also notes that while in many cases the employees' level of English proficiency is greater than that of their Chinese employers, it is not mother tongue level, resulting in creative use of English by and between these two groups of people, whose shared language is nevertheless English (Thompson, 2018, 2019). Thompson and Anthonissen (2019) use ethnography to explore the informal language policies of shops in Chinatown shopping centres in the Western Cape, in which the Chinese shop owners frequently employ African migrants. They posit that "what makes China Town interesting from a language-policy development point of view is the fact that covert, de facto policies have emerged in a space where official language policy appears not to be relevant" (Thompson & Anthonissen, 2019, p. 20).

Mokwena's (2018) work focuses on the linguistic landscapes of two rural municipalities in South Africa's Northern Cape province, namely Frances Baard District Municipality and John Taolo Gaestewe District Municipality. While the overall aim of Mokwena's (2018) study was to "explore how multimodality is drawn on […] in the creation of signs and the navigation of spaces" (p. 38) in a rural setting by means of a "multimodal social semiotic analysis" (*ibid*.), and so focuses on the spaces in question in their entirety, diasporas feature on the periphery on the study, particularly in Mokwena's discussion of tuckshop signage in Galeshewe. She notes that many tuckshops employ signage in Setswana, despite being owned by people who do not necessarily speak the language, in an effort to 'localise' (Mokwena, 2018, p. 109) these tuckshops in an area where the predominant language is Setswana. The owners of these tuckshops are immigrants from various other countries in Africa and south Asia (Mokwena, 2018). Relevant to my own discussion of authenticity in Chapter 7, Mokwena (2018) explores how the signage of these tuckshops illustrate the "contest for the construction of tuckshops" (p. 110) between local and foreign tuckshop owners and the "commodification of language and authenticity" (p. 109). In contrast to the immigrant tuckshop owners who make use of Setswana to position themselves in the "realm of familiarity" (Deumert & Mabandla, 2013, p.49), Mokwena (2018) also examines a set of signs that indicate the opposite of assimilation "to an 'authentic' Northern Cape identity" (p. 110) by using Arabic. The use of Arabic in the signage of some immigrant-owned tuckshops is, Mokwena posits, "a means to be distinguished from non-immigrant owners, yet concurrently identify with the increasingly dominant immigrant tuckshop owners' community" (Mokwena, 2018, p. 111). She also argues that the use of Arabic forms part of the commodification of language in these rural spaces as it serves to "sell and authentify the 'new' face of tuckshops" (Mokwena, 2018, p. 111). Mokwena's (2018) study, while not focused solely on issues of diasporic communities, nevertheless indicates the

prevalence of such communities beyond where they are expected to be – in superdiverse urban environments.

Vigouroux's work on the Francophone African diaspora in Cape Town (2005, 2008, 2013) is also worth noting here because although it is not explicitly an LL/SL study, it touches on similar themes. She looks at the identity construction and language practices amongst Francophone African immigrants in Cape Town (Vigouroux, 2005, 2008). Vigouroux (2005, 2008), similarly to my own study, makes use of ethnographic methods in order to collect data for her research, and – perhaps most relevantly – makes use of semiotics in some of her analyses. Vigouroux (2005) focuses on the language practice and language attitudes of Francophone Africans in Cape Town, "both approached in relation to space, which is conceived of multidimensionally" (p. 237). She argues for "an interactional and dynamic model of analysis based on territoriality" (Vigouroux, 2005, p. 237) in order to understand the links between language and space:

> "While space shapes language practice and attitudes, territoriality is a key notion that helps us understand the relation between language and space and how they are interconnected. By emphasizing the agency of the speaker, 'territoriality' also highlights the way a speaker negotiates his/her position in a space even if we recognize limits to this agency, in the sense that the speaker is also constrained by the same space. 'Territoriality' thus provides a dynamic and interactional frame for understanding how different layers of 'context' are interrelated and how they shape each other" (Vigouroux, 2005, p. 254).

With this study, I bring a diaspora to the forefront of my research and augment the aforementioned existing sociolinguistic literature on diasporas in South Africa, while also bringing the subject matter into the more contemporary realm of linguistic or semiotic landscape studies. South Africa is home to numerous diasporic communities, which all affect the linguistic landscape in various ways. I therefore hope that my study paves the way for future

linguistic/semiotic landscape research on these groups and the spaces they have contributed to shaping.

2.2. Diaspora studies

Diasporas have long been a subject of study in the humanities and other disciplines, including in sociolinguistics, as I show later in this chapter. As a field in their own right, diaspora studies are distinctly broad, and edited volumes and journals devoted to 'diaspora studies' will often include contributions by researchers across disciplines such as linguistics, history, anthropology, sociology, geography, and literature. As a starting point, it is both interesting and important to look at the history of the term *diaspora*, and its usage in scholarship. The word *diaspora* was first used in the *Septuagint* – the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible – in the 3rd century BCE to "describe the divine punishment – dispersal throughout the world – that would befall the Jews if they failed to respect God's commandments" (Dufoix, 2015, p. 1). The religious connotations of the word informed the earliest writings about diasporas, focussing on the dispersal and movement of Jewish people throughout the world during the first half of the 20th century. The term gradually became secularised during this time; it no longer solely denoted displaced Jewish people, and came to be used to refer to several other migrant communities. An early, secularised definition of *diaspora* appears in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* (Dubnow, 1931): "Diaspora is a Greek term for a nation or part of a nation separated from its own state or territory and dispersed among other nations but preserving its own national culture" (Dubnow, 1931, p. 126). Park (1939) later used the term to refer to "not merely the condition" (p. 108) of being separated from one's home state but the location in which these people find themselves. Here, Park (1939) specifically applied the term to "people of Asiatic origin" (p. 108), an application of the term that was used again later by Lee (1949, 1960) with reference to the Chinese diaspora in the USA.

French West Indian philosopher Fanon (1963) made reference to 'the Negro diaspora', or 'the Negro dispersion' in some translations, as the "tens of millions of blacks spread over the American continents" (Fanon, 1963, p. 148). Fanon's critique of colonisation and his call to establish a 'national culture' separate from the essentialised idea of homogeneous Africans or 'Negroes' propagated by the colonial authorities paved the way for "the development of an actual self-description as a *diaspora* by fractions of the African-American population" (Dufoix, 2015, p. 3). Dufoix (2018) explains:

> "The term *diaspora* provided black people with a name for themselves. It served as a reminder of their historical tragedy and, by emphasizing the connection and the return (spiritual and intellectual if not physical), as a positive way of recovering a sense of unity with Africa. This emphasis established the existence of continuities, or survivals, between black people living outside Africa and their African origin. This was all the truer for those fractions insisting more on blackness than on the achievement of civil rights […]. The quest for black pride and the will to recover their lost history led to the constitution of the discipline of Black Studies in American universities in the late 1960s […]. The term *diaspora* […] was inherently part of a new lexicon that aimed to give positivity to a previous stigma" (Dufoix, 2018, pp. 18).

Tölölyan (2019) reiterates the importance of the use of the term *diaspora* by African-Americans in laying the foundation for the scholarly acceptance of dispersion and diaspora as 'consequential', or worth investigating. In addition, Tölölyan (2019) argues, the passing of the *Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act* in 1965 allowing non-European immigration to the USA led to Americans being more cognizant of their country as a 'nation of immigrants', emphasising the need for academic inquiry into the notions of "identity, difference and diversity" (Tölölyan, 2019). These concepts are inherently related to diasporas and the study thereof, as related in the poem 'Diaspora Blues' by Nigerian-American writer Ijeoma Umebinyuo (2015, p. 162):

So,

here you are

too foreign for home

too foreign for here.

Never enough for both.

The wide acceptance of diasporas as a field of study – and a particularly rich one at that – has resulted in a large and ever-growing canon of work on the subject in history, anthropology, geography, sociology, and linguistics, all over the world. Research into diasporas often takes the form of case studies focussing on groups of people displaced by war and similar extenuating circumstances in their home countries, or in countries in which their presence is less than desired. Howell and Shryock (2003), for example, examine the Arab population of Detroit – previously "the capital of Arab America" (p. 443) – in the wake of the USA's post-9/11 'War on Terror'. Indeed, much work on diasporas focuses on the Muslim diaspora in various parts of the world, in the context of increased anti-Muslim sentiment and radicalisation efforts (cf. for example Akbarzadeh & Mansouri, 2010; El Hamel, 2002; Khosravi, 2018; Acim, 2019; Moghissi, 2002; Rane, 2022; Ahmed-Ghosh, 2011). In an edited collection entitled *Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West*, editors Akbarzadeh and Mansouri (2010) present a number of papers exploring topics relating to the dichotomous relationship between Islam and the West and "explores the changing nature of Islamism and its growing links with indiscriminate acts of violence as well as far-reaching implications of this development for the Muslim diaspora" (p. 3). Furthermore, El Hamel (2002) examines the controversial place of the *hijab* in France in an effort to explore issues of integration, privilege, and discrimination in the context of the French Muslim diaspora; Khosravi (2018) provides an ethnographic exploration of the "segmentation, hybridity and complexity of the experiences" of the Muslim Iranian diaspora in Sweden; and Acim (2019), in a journal dedicated to studies of Islamophobia published by the University of California, Berkeley, explores narratives of

Islamophobia in North America and Europe based on media texts from several major Western newspapers.

One of the main debates in diaspora studies regards the ways in which we can define and delineate diasporas. Özkul (2016), for example, criticises existing research on diasporas for essentialism: classifying people according to homogeneous groups based solely on "common attachment to their homelands" (Özkul, 2016, p. 42). She uses a combination of policy analysis, archival research, ethnographic participant observation, and semi-structured interviews to investigate the dynamism of diasporic communities, focussing on how the Alevi diaspora from Turkey has emerged and changed over time in Germany and Australia (Özkul, 2016). Özkul also emphasises the importance of considering the positionality of the researcher: how one's position in relation to the community under scrutiny "play[s] a role in their conceptualisation of dynamic notions such as 'identity', 'culture', 'community' and 'religion'" (Özkul, 2016, p. 67). She emphasises that notions of 'insiderness' and 'outsiderness' are not clear-cut when it comes to diasporas "for whom the meaning of belonging is even more flexible than for those who live in the homeland" (Özkul, 2016, p. 68). Positionality in relation to the studied group is of particular relevance to the present study of Greekness in Johannesburg, as the 'Greek diaspora' is a group to which I belong by virtue of my surname and my father's heritage, but to which I am still an outsider given my upbringing in a secular, multicultural family, geographically and socially dislocated from the Greek hotspots of the city (see CHAPTER 3: for a more in-depth discussion of my positionality).

Critiques of essentialism in diaspora studies, such as that of Özkul (2016), often take the fervour with which scholars declare the strong link between the 'home' and 'homeland' of a diaspora (cf. Cohen & Fischer, 2019; Tölölyan, 2019; Amelina & Barglowski, 2019):

> " […] the assumed relationship between nation-state and diaspora misconceives the ways in which identities are forged and draws on two limited assumptions. On the one hand, it builds on the idea that persons naturally belong to a specific nation-state. On the other hand, it holds that those belonging to but living outside their country of citizenship are prone, even obliged, to feel a sense of loyalty towards it" (Cohen & Fischer, 2019, p. 2).

The authors of more recent diaspora studies work on the epistemological and methodological concerns of the field (cf. Tölölyan, 2019; Amelina & Barglowski, 2019) argue that older, essentialist studies of diasporas serve to perpetuate the view that diasporic groups are homogeneous, linked together only by virtue of their ethnic and cultural identity or heritage. To combat this, Cohen and Fischer (2019) note that more recent studies of diasporas seek "to de-emphasize group solidarity and cohesiveness in favour of recognizing internal complexities – including multi-ethnic, multi-faith, multi-lingual, multi-cohort, multi-mobile and hybrid diasporas" (Cohen & Fischer, 2019, p. 2). In this vein, Amelina and Barglowski (2019) note that "rather than relying on notions of fixed connections to places, identities and cultures, we now see diasporas as communities that are constantly negotiated and constituted" and argue that "ethnicity is not a stable category, but one that relies on the social practices of people who organize their membership of a group and evaluate their experiences of it according to what they consider to be 'ethnic'" (Amelina & Barglowski, 2019, p. 31).

2.2.1. Diaspora studies in South Africa

A large part of the marketing of South Africa as a liberal democracy centres on its reputation as 'the rainbow nation', a nation comprising a 'melting pot' of people of different cultures, ethnicities, and religions, and all speaking different languages who can all nonetheless coexist harmoniously. First introduced by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931–1921), the 'rainbow nation' analogy "foregrounded his belief in the ability of all South Africans to co-exist in spite of and because of difference" (Gqola, 2001, p. 98). It was once again taken up by President

Nelson Mandela in an address on 10 May 1994, soon after he became the first democratically elected president of the country and has become a key component of South African national pride and identity:

> "Each of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world" (quoted in Manzo, 1996, p. 71).

The analogy of the 'rainbow nation' has since been distorted and the rhetoric of 'rainbowism' now allows for the denial of difference, "stifl[ing] rigorous discussions of power differentials" (Gqola, 2001, p. 98) and "contradicting itself by superficially emphasis[ing] difference but prevent[ing] its discussion" (Gqola, 2001, p. 99).

Much work has been done on the various diasporic communities that contribute to the 'rainbow nation' status of South Africa, particularly on the Indian diaspora (see Rastogi, 2008; Dickinson, 2015; Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2007, 2012, 2021; Hofmeyr et al., 2016; Bhat & Narayan, 2010; Hofmeyr, 2007a, 2007b; Hofmeyr & Williams, 2009, 2011), but also on the Mediterranean European (see Glaser, 2010, 2012; Gupta, 2007, 2018; Adinolfi, 2019; Bini, 1957; Sani, 1989; Marchetti-Mercer & Virga, 2021), Chinese (see Harrison et al., 2012; Laribee, 2008), Jewish (see Adler, 1979; Frankental, 1998), and other African (see Crush et al., 2015 for a study of the Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa; and Inyang, 2019 for a study of the Nigerian diaspora in South Africa) diasporas, across a variety of different disciplines.

Relevant to my own study of the Greek diaspora – a Mediterranean diaspora – is Glaser's historical work (2010, 2012) on the Portuguese diaspora (i.e. from Portugal and Madeira) in South Africa, which is extensive and well-known. Glaser (2010) provides a preliminary overview of the history of Portuguese immigration in South Africa in the 20th century. Here, he indicates the dearth of literature on Portuguese immigration in South Africa from a historical

perspective – a gap he goes on to fill in this and subsequent studies. The immigration of Portuguese people takes many forms: immigrants from Madeira (Glaser, 2012), immigrants from the mainland, illegal entry into the country (Glaser 2012), and colonial refugees (Glaser, 2010). Like all literature on diasporas, Glaser (2010) emphasises the notions of community and identity, and how "links to 'home'" (Glaser, 2010, p. 73) play an important role in the establishment of diasporic communities: language, church, community newspapers and radio stations, education, and community-centred events. Glaser (2010) also raises the issue of generation:

> "I would argue that it is precisely in the second and third generations that social, cultural and regional affiliations are really tested. Culture brokers have to work much harder with later generations – among whom the language of 'origin' recedes, experiences diversify, loyalties compete to promote, and perhaps re-ignite and re-imagine, immigrant identities" (Glaser, 2010, p. 76).

Glaser's work on Madeiran women immigrants (2012) provides further evidence of the importance of gender in diaspora studies. Glaser's study fills a gap in literature that usually neglects to include the experiences of women immigrants as "only male migration is seen as economically significant and the family is relegated to the social and cultural sphere" (Glaser, 2012, p. 886). An additional point of relevance raised by Glaser (2012) is the importance of the Catholic Church in the lives of the Madeiran women immigrants – these findings on the importance of the Catholic Church parallel my own and others' (McDuling, 2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012; Mantzaris, 1978) with regards to the centrality of the Greek Orthodox Church in the lives of Greek immigrants in Johannesburg.

Furthermore, more recent work by Marchetti-Mercer and Virga (2021) explores the history and psycho-social experiences of Italians in South Africa. Prior to this, there were only a handful of historical accounts of Italian immigration to South Africa and the experiences of the South

African Italian diaspora (Milanese, 2002; Buranello, 2009), most of which were written and published in Italian (see Bini, 1957; Sani, 1989; Giuliani-Balestrino, 1995; Macioti & Zaccai, 2006; Iacoponi, 2013). Marchetti-Mercer and Virga (2021) present a historical overview of Italian migration to South Africa, as a "first step towards a better understanding of the presence, legacy and dynamics of the Italian community in the country today, and of how it differs from the global Italian diaspora, laying the groundwork for a larger study" (p. 467) on Italian-South Africans' experiences of *Italianitá*, or "Italian national identity and culture" (p. 468). Their article traces the migration patterns, experiences, and motivations for the immigration of Italians who came to South Africa beginning during colonial times and continuing through World War II, apartheid, and post-apartheid, until today (Marchetti-Mercer & Virga, 2021).

This study on the Greek diaspora in South Africa, while from a sociolinguistic perspective within the field of linguistic/semiotic landscapes, nevertheless forms a part of an established and ever-growing canon of diaspora studies literature – both global and within a South African context. In this section, I have paid particular attention to the non-linguistic studies of diasporas – namely those conducted by historians, geographers, and sociologists, for example – but not because diasporas have no place in sociolinguistics. In fact, the case is quite the contrary: diasporas form an irrefutably integral part of sociolinguistic study – a link that is deserving of a full section on its own. These links between diasporas and sociolinguistics are explored in the following section.

2.3. Diasporas in sociolinguistics

Predictably, diasporas have provided linguists with a wealth of subjects of study. Sociolinguists in particular have been interested in phenomena brought about by language contact, when speakers of one or more languages from a diaspora come into contact with languages prevalent

in the country into which immigration occurs. Prominent research has been conducted in such situations regarding bilingualism and contact-induced language change (see Sayahi, 2007, for a study of French and Tunisian Arabic in Tunisia and Spanish and Northern Moroccan Arabic in Morocco), language ideology (for studies on diasporic Latinx language ideologies, see Potowski, 2014; Reiter & Rojo, 2014), and identity and cultural authenticity (see Potowski, 2014; and Patiño-Santos, 2014 for an examination of Colombians in Barcelona). Language attitude and language maintenance are also particularly robust areas of research at the convergence of sociolinguistics and diaspora studies. Ali (2019), for example, explores language use as a practice that is necessarily gendered, "realised through socio-cultural structures present in the target language and heritage communities" (Ali, 2019, p. iv) in her analysis of the language attitudes of Muslim women in Barcelona, Spain. In addition, Kroon and Kurvers (2020) examine issues of language attitude, identity, and language maintenance and shift amongst the East Timorese diaspora in the Netherlands, based on eight sociolinguistic questionnaires and two further in-depth interviews. They found that second-generation members of the diaspora are more likely to shift to Dutch almost exclusively, while first-generation members of the diaspora are more likely to actively use and maintain their home languages – namely Tetum and Indonesian (Kroon & Kurvers, 2020). Similarly, Wei and Hua (2010) examine the changing hierarchies of prestige of the various varieties of Chinese spoken by members of the Chinese diaspora, and how these shifts affect education and identity development, language attitude and ideology, and linguistic practices. Wei and Hua's (2010) findings were based on 25 ethnographic interviews with members of the Chinese diaspora in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Singapore. Moreover, Canagarajah (2008) also explores the links between language attitude and language maintenance in his study of Tamil in the Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic communities of the USA, UK, and Canada, noting the role that British colonisation played in elevating the prestige of English, to the detriment of other indigenous

mother tongues such as Tamil. He illustrates how "the positive valuation of English since British colonization, the need to make up for past deprivations because of caste, religious, and gender inequality, the pressure for migrants to join the social mainstream, and the need to resolve intergenerational tensions" (Canagarajah, 2008, p. 143) all impact diasporic families' "language maintenance goals" (*ibid*.) and, ostensibly, their language practices.

2.3.1. Diasporas in sociolinguistics in a South African context

In a South African context, Mesthrie is perhaps the most prolific linguist working on diasporic groups. Mirroring the plethora of historical and anthropological work done on the Indian diaspora in South Africa that I mentioned in the previous section of this chapter (cf. Rastogi, 2008; Dickinson, 2015; Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2007, 2012, 2021; Hofmeyr et al., 2016; Bhat & Narayan, 2010; Hofmeyr, 2007a, 2007b; Hofmeyr & Williams, 2009, 2011), much of Mesthrie's extensive variationist sociolinguistic work focuses on the varieties of South African English (see Mesthrie, 2011), particularly Indian South African English (see Mesthrie, 1993, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2014, 2021; Mesthrie & Chevalier, 2014). For example, Mesthrie (2007) examines language shift from various Indian languages to English in the Indian diasporic communities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in an effort to account to for why "the rich vein of multilingualism within the community eventually yielded to a largely monolingual habitus" (Mesthrie, 2007, p. 134).

2.4. The Greek diaspora in sociolinguistic research

The Greek diaspora around the world has by no means been neglected in the literature. Apart from that in South Africa, there are sizable Greek communities in the USA, Canada, and Australia, and studies in diverse fields – anthropology, geography, sociology, history, and linguistics, in particular – have been done on each. Australia has one of the largest Greek

communities outside of Greece in the world, with the largest concentration of Greek people located in Melbourne, Victoria (Avgoulas & Fanany, 2018). Avgoulas and Fanany (2018) examine how the identity of Greek-Australians is 'conflicted', and identify four factors instrumental in maintaining Greek heritage in Australia: language, food, religion, and culture. The participants interviewed in the study spanned three generations, and the authors argue that the immigrant generation – the grandparents and parents of the third and second generation participants – are responsible for establishing and continuing heritage practices in the new country, and passing these on to subsequent generations. The notions of identity and the space occupied by Greek diasporas is taken up in many other studies on the Greek diaspora around the world: Georgitsoyanni (2020) provides a historical account of a family of confectioners who were 'pioneers' in this industry upon arrival in the USA from Greece; Christou (2013) in relation to Greeks in Denmark; and in historical accounts of Greeks in Victorian England (Chatziioannou, 2016) and 18th century London (Harris, 2016).

Panagakos (1998) examines the obsessive involvement diasporas often have in 'homeland affairs', looking at "how the Macedonian issue became a catalyst for political mobilisation and a forum for the expression of ethnic identity" (Panagakos, 1998, p. 53) in the Greek-Canadian community – broadly speaking, how political involvement and activism endorse and reinforce ethnic identity and 'homeland' nationalism in Greek diasporas. She emphasises the role 'Hellenism' plays in the self-identification of Greeks in diaspora, noticeable in the name of the Hellenic Community of Calgary and District:

> "The terms 'Hellene' and 'Hellenic' indicate an acceptance of Greek historiography, the basis of nationalist sentiments in Greece, which emphasises a continuity with the ancient, glorious past of Pericles and Aristotle […]. The idea of Hellenism began with the Greek independence movement of the early nineteenth century, in which European intellectuals attempted to resurrect a long-ago past that had few documented historical links to contemporary Greek

> populations. What developed from that time was an ethnonational imaginary upon which the very structure of the Greek nation-state was built and which would become the basis of identity for Greek ethnics throughout the twentieth century" (Panagakos, 1998, p. 60).

'Hellenism' is evident in the Greek diaspora of South Africa, as I mention in later chapters of this dissertation. Another interesting parallel between Panagakos's narrative of the Canadian Greek diaspora and the South African is the similarity between the South African 'rainbow nation' rhetoric (discussed previously in this chapter) and the notion of the 'Canadian mosaic', a "metaphor used to describe Canadian ethnic and racial groups as distinct pieces that differ in shape, color, and size but fit together to produce 'Canadianness'" (*ibid.*, p. 61). In later work, Panagakos (2004) also brings into focus the gendered experiences of members of diasporas – complementing Glaser's (2012) study of Madeiran women – by examining the 'recycled odyssey' of women in transnational families: women in the Greek diaspora in Canada who have experienced particularly Greek upbringings, then relocating to Greece in search of an 'authentic', heterosexual, patriarchal Greek family experience. This qualitative study is based on recorded interviews with women who have had this transnational experience of "cycled liminality" (Panagakos, 2004, p. 309): not belonging entirely to either Greece or the country of their birth (Canada, in this case). I expect similar experiences to have been had by Greek-South African women.

The prevalence of people from Greek extraction in Australia, Canada, and the USA makes these places ideal for sociolinguistic inquiry. As early as 1916, Richard McGillivray Dawkins presented an overview of Greek as spoken in Asia Minor, focusing on structural dialectal differences between three regions: Sílli, Cappadocia, and Phárasa. Later, and in a similar vein, Tamis (2005) provided an overview of the usage of Greek in Victoria, Australia. Papademetre (1994) looks at how Greek-Australians navigate dual identities, and the type of membership held by a bilingual in the broader sociolinguistic community, reiterating the importance of

looking at the issues of identity and belonging when studying diasporas, sociolinguistically or otherwise. Alvanoudi (2018) takes a more variationist approach, examining contact-induced language change and code-switching amongst the Greek community in an area in Far North Queensland, Australia. Finally, Mavroudi (2020) again takes up the argument supporting the importance of notions of identity, emphasising that language is not the only way people 'hold on' to their Greekness. The Greek communities in Australia are perhaps the most widely-studied, but the reach of the Greek diaspora is vast: Aikhenvald and Dixon (2009) present early findings in a broad study on Greek in contact situations in Australia and Argentina, where there is an established community of Greeks. The Argentinian Greeks are again the subject of study by Zombolou (2011), who provides an overview of the structural features of the variety of Greek spoken by the diaspora. To my knowledge, there are no studies of Greek diasporic communities that make use of a framework of geosemiotics – a gap which my own research will begin to fill.

2.5. The Greek diaspora in South Africa

This study is concerned with the ways in which Greekness is inscribed in the semiotic landscape of spaces in Johannesburg, South Africa. While many aspects of my research are novel, the subject matter – in the form of the Greek diaspora of South Africa – has been the subject of some research in the past century or so, both sociological or historical and sociolinguistic. This section discusses the canon of previous literature – both non-linguistic and sociolinguistic – about the Greek diaspora in South Africa, to which my own study adds significantly.

The research on the Greek diaspora in South Africa from non-linguistic perspectives is not recent. The first study, to my knowledge, conducted on the Greek diaspora in South Africa is

Added's (1973) Master's thesis, which begins with an amusing and peculiarly impassioned description of the fragmented nature of the Greeks:

> "The recent history of Greece is again one of wars and political struggles, of emigration and of a scattering of the population to the four corners of the globe. Here again one finds the tragic dichotomy of the peoples of this scattered nation striving for their very existence while simultaneously longing for their homeland" (Added, 1973, pp. 1-2).

Focussing on Greek immigrants with agricultural or otherwise rural origins who then found themselves living Cape Town, Added (1973) – an anthropologist – looks at the influences the new setting had on traditional Greek peasant values which, he notes, "emphasise the centrality of the Greek family" (p. 3). Added's (1973) thesis first presents an account of peasant life in a typical Greek village, which is then followed by a detailed account of the early immigration of Greeks to South Africa, particularly to Cape Town. He then launches into his main analysis of the Greek community – with an emphasis on the Greek family – in Cape Town (Added, 1973). Data for the study came in the form of interviews with members of the Cape Town Greek community, who were largely interviewed by Added's wife, a fluent speaker of Greek. However, initial attempts to establish contact with these community members were fruitless, as Added (1973) recounts:

> "As a first contact we looked through the Cape Peninsula Telephone Directory and noted every Greek sounding name. We tried to establish contact with these people by telephone in order to make an appointment to interview them, but this method was entirely unsatisfactory. The people telephoned did not understand our intentions, and a great deal of suspicion was aroused, which resulted in them refusing to grant interviews and an absolute rejection of any requests for information. At a later stage, when we began to know the community and after studying the general literature on Greek society, it became quite clear that owing to the suspicious nature of the Greek this method could never have succeeded" (Added, 1973, p. 7).

They were eventually successful in acquiring research participants after managing to establish connections with people via word of mouth and mutual friends. Despite the strange academic

voice of Added's study, it remains the first research on the subject of the South African Greek diaspora, and so paves the way for subsequent research on the subject, including my own.

A few years later, Greek-South African sociologist E.A. Mantzaris took his cue from Added, and examined the South African Greek community in his Master's (1978) and PhD (1982) research, as well as in a few subsequent pieces of work (Mantzaris, 1983a, 1983b, 2012). In his work, Mantzaris critiques Added's assessment of the Greek South African community as divided, and instead emphasises the sense of national unity that developed amongst them – especially after the anti-Greek riots in Johannesburg in 1917, and the appearance of several newspaper articles expressing anti-Greek sentiments in the earlier part of the 20th century (Mantzaris, 1978, 1982). The establishment of Greek Orthodox Churches, Greek-centred nationalist and philanthropic societies and 'Hellenic' communities, to Mantzaris, represent the desire of the Greek diaspora to resist assimilation (Mantzaris, 1982). While Mantzaris (1978) provides useful historical information on the movement of Greeks from Greece to South Africa, as well as relevant statistical information, the overall tone of the thesis is startlingly laudatory of the overall accomplished nature of Greeks in South Africa, and he begins his conclusion with the following amusing piece of self-congratulation:

> "At the beginning of this research on the Greeks in South Africa, the writer had only an image of them in his mind. The research and the conclusions written below show that this image was not false in any way. It was true practically to the last detail […]" (Mantzaris, 1978, p. 177).

Mantzaris's Master's thesis (1978) and PhD dissertation (1982) provide invaluable historical information, aiding in the situation of my research within the broader context of studies on Greek South Africans. Most significantly, Mantzaris (1978) hints at the importance of food spaces in the lives of Greek immigrants to South Africa. Eighty-five percent of Greek immigrants in the 1930s were either café owners or greengrocers (Mantzaris, 1978, p. 48). Mantzaris (1978) logically attributes this to the fact that a majority of Greek immigrants into

South Africa came from agricultural backgrounds, and illogically to the "personality and general orientation of the individual immigrants", in whom "suspicion and tension" were "instilled […] from a young age" (Mantzaris, 1978, p. 48), causing them to be inherently distrustful and self-sufficient so as not to be reliant on others:

> "The self-interest principle gained emphasis. From the very beginning his whole orientation was towards a search for something new, a special type of occupation, one in which he would not have to rely on others, share his life's secrets or establish social relationships. Greek individualism explains the immigrant's orientation to cafe work" (Mantzaris, 1978, pp. 48-49).

Mantzaris's above assessment reiterates that of Added (1973):

> "The natural individualism of the Greek peasant, his never wearying love of freedom and independance [sic], prevents him from choosing an occupation in which he would be an employee dependent on a master. The "employer-employee" relationship is foreign to his spirit. He was certainly subject to the superior authority of his father when he was at home, but this was compatible with the cultural definition of family individualism. To accept orders or instructions from a stranger is intolerable for him. Any dependance [sic] on others would damage the self-esteem so precious to him" (Added, 1973, p. 58).

The role of food spaces in the lives of members of the Greek diaspora, and of food in relation to cultural identity more generally, are worth exploring – which I do in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. Despite the, at times, puzzling assessments made by both Mantzaris and Added, these two researchers are responsible for establishing and further developing a canon, albeit a small one, of literature on the Greek diaspora in South Africa, legitimising its relevance as a subject of inquiry – perhaps more rigorous and contemporary – in a variety of fields, including sociolinguistics and semiotic landscapes in particular.

Another study of the Greek diaspora in South Africa is Hayes's (2010) historical account of Orthodox Christian mission – or the lack thereof – in the country. Hayes (2010), a theologian, traces the origins and developments of mission work by various Orthodox diasporas –

including Greek, Russian, and Serbian – in South Africa. As the Greek Orthodox diaspora was (and still is) the largest Orthodox diaspora in the country, it accounts for the vast majority of the discussion presented in Hayes's account. Interestingly, and relevant to my own analysis in later chapters, Hayes (2010) outlines the relative dearth of mission work (i.e. the conversion of non-Orthodox people to Orthodoxy) carried out by Orthodox churches in South Africa:

> "In South Africa the Orthodox communities of the diaspora have tended to be apathetic towards or even opposed to mission, as they tend to see Orthodox Christianity as part of their own ethnic culture, which therefore cannot be shared with people from other ethnic groups. Some clergy have had a wider vision, but they have generally found it difficult to share this vision with the lay members of their parishes, and when they have left the parish, the vision often dies with them" (Hayes, 2010, p. 303).

Here, Hayes emphasises the role of the church in cultural and identity maintenance amongst diasporic communities in South Africa, including the Greek diaspora in the country.

The most recent research on the Greek diaspora in South Africa is Chaldeos's self-published historical account of the history of Greeks in the country, entitled *The Greek Community in South Africa* (Chaldeos, 2020). Based on previous research – including that of Added, Mantzaris, and McDuling – and archival work, Chaldeos – who holds a PhD in history from the University of Johannesburg – presents an exhaustive account of migration from Greece and Cyprus to South Africa. The book traces the Greek presence in South Africa from the earliest Greek settlers in the 19th century, and also looks at the establishment of the various South African Hellenic associations, other community organisations, and community media platforms, as well as providing brief information about the "interrelations of the Greek community with the homeland and host country" (Chaldeos, 2020, p. 10). While one cannot fault Chaldeos's book for being under-researched as it shows evidence of meticulous and in-depth historical inquiry, it reads peculiarly and contains frequent biased comments by the

author. For example, Chaldeos's book includes several essentilaised statements about the nature of both Greeks and South Africans; refers to the "dangers of assimilation" (Chaldeos, 2020, p. 100); and describes the distance between the South African Greek diaspora and the 'homeland' as well as South African Greeks' inability to speak Greek as 'unfortunate'. Nevertheless, as I am not a historian, I appreciate the existence of this book as a historical source while carrying out this research and it was especially useful in compiling the historical and background information presented in Chapter 4.

The Greek diaspora of South Africa has also been the subject of some sociolinguistic study, specifically by Allistair McDuling, whose early career involved studies on Portuguese people in South Africa (see McDuling, 1995, his Master's thesis), before shifting his focus to Greek people in the country for his doctoral research (see McDuling, 2014). McDuling's work on the Greek diaspora in South Africa focuses predominantly on language maintenance and language shift in the Johannesburg Greek community (McDuling & Barnes, 2012; McDuling, 2014). McDuling (2014) and McDuling and Barnes (2012) report a high level of 'language loyalty' among Greek inhabitants of Johannesburg, and attribute the successful maintenance of Greek to five main factors: the availability of Greek education, the role of religion and the Greek Orthodox Church, a historically outright avoidance of inter-marriage, family communication in Greek, and the availability of Greek-centred cultural activities in the city. In addition, McDuling (2014) notes two minor contributors to the maintenance of Greek: the availability of various forms of media and overseas visits to the 'homeland'. For his research, 92 participants from the Greek community in Johannesburg – both adults and children – were interviewed by the author and all also completed a questionnaire. Interestingly, McDuling (2014) deliberately excluded "Greeks on the outside or periphery of the community (i.e. those Greeks who have 'drifted away' from the community for a number of reasons, such as inter-

marriage, assimilation, religious conversion etc.)" (p. 174) as he felt that they "would not give any valuable input with regard to language and/or cultural maintenance, as they are usually not interested in maintaining the language anymore" (p. 175). Also relevant to this study's interest in food spaces (see Chapter 5) is McDuling (2014) and McDuling and Barnes's (2012), albeit fleeting, mention of the Greek café as a "characteristic feature in many suburbs" of Johannesburg pre-1994 (McDuling & Barnes, 2012, p. 167).

McDuling (2014) and McDuling and Barnes (2012) provided an important springboard for my own research, by paving the way for subsequent sociolinguistic studies of the Greek diaspora in South Africa, and in Johannesburg more specifically. McDuling has already provided a comprehensive overview of language shift and maintenance in the Johannesburg Greek community, as well as fairly exhaustive historical information regarding the scattering of the Greeks over time. The present study, although also concerned with Greek South Africans in Johannesburg, diverges quite starkly in terms of methodology, theoretical framework, and empirical focus and thus is hopefully a valuable complement to McDuling's work, while augmenting the canon of sociolinguistic work done on the Greek diaspora in South Africa.

2.6. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of literature relevant to this study of how Greekness is inscribed in the linguistic landscape of Johannesburg, highlighting the previous studies that have informed it and the canon of literature to which this study adds – at the nexus of sociolinguistics and diaspora studies. In the first section of the chapter, I looked at the development of diaspora studies as a field in its own right, including a brief overview of the term *diaspora* and its usage, and the status of diaspora studies in a South African context. I then presented a discussion of diasporas in general sociolinguistics, including those that have

been conducted in a South African context. In order to illustrate where my study is anchored, I next presented an overview of the emergence of linguistic or semiotic landscape studies, focussing on the debates surrounding the name of the field and the resultant questions around what constitutes a sign. I traced the emergence of the field from the early foundational work by De Saussure and Peirce, to the 'first wave' of quantitative linguistic landscape research, the critiques thereof, and the resultant 'qualitative turn' in the field. I also discussed Jaworksi and Thurlow's (2010) argument for the renaming of the field to 'semiotic landscapes' and illustrated how my study is aligned with this broader, redefined concept. Within this section, I also included discussions of how diasporas are positioned within LL/SL studies worldwide as well as in South Africa, and briefly discussed LL/SL studies that have been conducted on Greece. Thereafter, I turned to focus on how the Greek diaspora has been studied in global sociolinguistic research. Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I presented the literature that has been conducted on the Greek diaspora in South Africa, specifically – both sociolinguistic and from the perspectives of other disciplines.

In the following chapter, I present the main theoretical, analytical, and methodological considerations for my research. I present the background and main tenets of my chosen analytical framework, Scollon and Scollon's (2003) framework of geosemiotics, which I used to analyse Greekness in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg. I also discuss the main method I employed to collect the data for this study, ethnography, and explore my 'historical body' (Blommaert, 2013; Milani, 2014).

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

While much about a complex society can be inferred from within a language – for example, from only looking at textual elements in a linguistic landscape – we can really only hope to achieve a more comprehensive insight if we look outside 'language' as well (Blommaert, 2013). Thus, conducting semiotic landscape studies of certain spaces has the potential to reveal massive amounts of information about the sociopolitical, historical, and geographic contexts in which they are located. "As soon as one treats language as an autonomous object," notes Bourdieu (1984), "accepting the radical separation which De Saussure made between internal and external linguistics, between the science of language and the science of the social uses of language, one is condemned to looking within words for the power of words, that is, looking for it where it is not to be found" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 107). In this chapter, I aim to lay out the theoretical context in which my research sits, as well as present the main tools that I used to conduct my analysis.

In this chapter, I present the main theoretical, analytical, and methodological considerations for my research. I anchored my study in the field of linguistic/semiotic landscape studies and here indicate how and why I aligned my study with semiotic rather than linguistic landscapes. I then present the background and main tenets of geosemiotics, which I used as a methodological toolkit with which to analyse Greekness in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg. Thereafter, I present the method I employed – ethnography – to collect the data for this study, as well as expound upon the types of data I used. In the section following this, I follow the tradition of contemporary self-reflexive scholarship and present some relevant information on my 'historical body' – the 'baggage' that I bring with me into this study as the researcher (Blommaert, 2013; Milani, 2014) – and briefly reflect on my experience of the data collection process. Finally, I provide a summary of the chapter.

3.1. Signs in the material world

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the study presented in this dissertation is, at its core, a semiotic landscape study: it focuses on language in place, and presents an analysis of different types of signs in a space in order to evaluate what they communicate and how, and also delve into the social, political, and historical context and implications of these messages. In this study, I attempt to understand how Greekness is inscribed in spaces in Johannesburg through an analysis of the meanings of signs in place. While the field of linguistic landscape studies is no stranger to studies of diasporas in the world (cf. Gonçalves, 2012; Budarina, 2017; Lou, 2016; Blommaert, 2013), as summarised in Chapter 2, there is no semiotic landscape study of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, or even in South Africa more broadly. What follows in this section is a discussion of the methodological foundations for the study of signs in the material world as this is important to contextualise Scollon and Scollon's (2003) pioneering framework of geosemiotics, which I used as a methodological toolkit to analyse the inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg.

Linguistic landscapes is a relatively young field of research, but the importance of the concept of signs has been recognised as worthy of inquiry since at least the early 20th century, when the foundations for semiotics were laid in the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. De Saussure's seminal *Course in General Linguistics* (first published posthumously in 1916 in French as *Cours de linguistique générale*) introduced the concept of the linguistic sign, which consists of two parts: a signifier and a signified – a form and a correspondent meaning. De Saussure termed his theory of signification *semiology*, which would "show what constitutes signs [and] what laws govern them" (De Saussure, 1966, p. 16). Theorising from the perspective of structural linguistics, De Saussure's definitions of signifier and signified pertain to language directly. For example, he says, the

word ‘rabbit’ has a particular spoken and written form that evokes a particular mental image of a small, fluffy, hopping animal. These mental images are based on social convention (Danesi, 2002). It is important to note that De Saussure’s theory of a linguistic sign – an abstract construction – differs significantly from what is considered a sign in LL/SL studies, where the concern is with material signs. Nevertheless, De Saussure’s work laid an important foundation for the development of all kinds of studies of signs, both abstract and material. A contemporary of De Saussure, Peirce developed his theory – which he initially termed ‘semeiotics’ (perhaps to match his peculiarly spelled surname) – around the same time De Saussure was developing his theory of semiology. Peirce’s theory conceived of a sign as consisting of a form, termed the *representamen*, which refers to a particular *object* and elicits a particular context-dependent meaning, termed the *interpretant* (Danesi, 2002). Unlike De Saussure’s binary system of signifier/signified, Peirce conceived of the relationship between representamen, object, and interpretant as “not a static one, but dynamic, whereby one suggests the other in a cyclical manner” (Danesi, 2002).

Also unlike De Saussure, Peirce took the material world into consideration, positing that our interpretation of the meanings of various signs relies on our experiences of and in the material world. He developed a system for classifying signs as either icons, indexes, or symbols, depending on the relationship between the sign and its object. An icon is a sign that closely depicts its object; a symbol is an arbitrary representation of an object that we have learned to interpret in a particular way; and an index is a sign that points to its object or meaning (Danesi, 2002). The concept of the index – and ostensibly *indexicality* – is vital in my study as it is intrinsically linked to the idea of where something is located in the material world. Peirce’s theory, particularly regarding the index, forms a vital foundation of Scollon and Scollon’s

(2003) geosemiotics framework, which I employ as an analytical toolkit in subsequent chapters, as discussed in a later section of this chapter.

De Saussure and Peirce influenced a number of subsequent studies of and in semiotics throughout the 20th century. Their influence spanned a number of disciplines – including linguistics, literature studies, philosophy, psychology, and sociology – and included scholars such as Roland Barthes, A. J. Greimas, Thomas A. Sebeok, Roman Jakobson, Louis Hjelmslev, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Jacques Derrida (Danesi, 2002). Barthes is probably the most notable of this group. He developed a theory of signs in which signs have a 'language-object' – a literal meaning or denotation – and 'metalanguage' – a connotation, or second-order meaning (Barthes, 1972). This connotation or second-order meaning system constitutes what Barthes terms the *myth*. The formation of a myth occurs when the connotation of a sign takes on a life of its own, so to speak, and becomes a signified that is less reliant on the material object signifier (Barthes, 1972). In *Mythologies* (Barthes, 1972), originally published in 1957, Barthes discusses myth in relation to wine in France as an illustrative example:

> "Wine is a part of society because it provides a basis not only for a morality but also for an environment; it is an ornament in the slightest ceremonials of French daily life, from the snack (plonk and camembert) to the feast, from the conversation at the local cafe to the speech at a formal dinner. It exalts all climates, of whatever kind: in cold weather, it is associated with all the myths of becoming warm, and at the height of summer, with all the images of shade, with all things cool and sparkling. There is no situation involving some physical constraint (temperature, hunger, boredom, compulsion, disorientation) which does not give rise to dreams of wine. Combined as a basic substance with other alimentary figures, it can cover all the aspects of space and time for the Frenchman" (Barthes, 1972, p. 60).

Per Barthes's theory of semiotics, a depiction of a bottle or glass of wine is a signifier that corresponds to a denotation, or literal signified – an alcoholic beverage made from fermented grapes. Its myth, however, is based on bourgeois French cultural values in which the

connotations of such an image would relate to luxury, health, pleasure, and sustenance. Barthes's work signalled the beginning of an important shift in the study of signs, away from earlier structuralist methods, such as De Saussure's, that isolated the object of analysis from its context in society (Gottdiener, 1995). The advent of post-structural and postmodern scholarship brought changes for semiotics, with researchers such as Derrida (1967) dismissing De Saussure's structuralist rejection of any flexibility of meaning and instead addressing the ways in which the "meaning of material culture is discovered not through the logocentric textual analysis of some independent observer, but from an analysis of the articulation between codified ideology and material forms illustrated in the socio-semiotic model of the sign" (Gottdiener, 1995, p. 28). Derrida's (1967) own contribution to post-structural semiotics was an emphasis on polysemy – or "the ambiguous nature of the signifier and the possibility (likelihood, actually) that any given signifier would be interpreted as linked to a different signified by different people" (Gottdiener, 1995, p. 20). Thus, post-structural semiotics is more aligned with Peirce's position that meaning depends largely on the personal and cultural experiences of the individual interpreter (Gottdiener, 1995).

3.2. Geosemiotics

In the analyses to be presented in coming chapters of this dissertation, I make use of geosemiotics, as described by Scollon and Scollon (2003), as a methodological toolkit with which to present a semiotic landscape study of Greekness in Johannesburg. Emerging out of the foundational work laid by early semioticians, the Scollons are pioneers in the study of signs in the material world. In their book *Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World*, Scollon and Scollon (2003) propose the framework of geosemiotics as "the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 2). The framework is based on insights and approaches

from a variety of different fields, including linguistics, sociology, anthropology, geography, and communication studies, which are combined into one systematic, comprehensive, and succinct approach to analysing "the meaning systems by which language is located in the material world" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 3). The Scollons note the importance of studying the "invisible, almost banal, systems of meaning which form the sociopolitical systems that so closely define us and our actions in the world" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 6). It is the very signs that we take for granted every day that carry the most social, political, and historical meaning and so it is these banal signs that are worth being studied in their contexts.

Underpinning the Scollons' framework is the notion that the meaning of signs is heavily dependent upon their social and physical placement – it is the study of signs *in place*. They link this to the concept of indexicality, based on Peirce's classification of signs into three types: icons, indexes, and symbols (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). As the Scollons succinctly put it, "a sign can resemble the object (icon), it can point to or be attached to the object (index), or it can be only arbitrarily or conventionally associated with the object (symbol)" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 25). However, they argue, indexicality is an important aspect of every sign – a large part of the meaning of any sign is where and how it has been placed in the world. In other words, the meaning of a sign is indexed by or "anchored in' (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 3) the material context in which it is located. Regarding indexicality, the Scollons note: "all semiotic signs, whether embodied or disembodied, have as a significant part of their meaning how they are placed in the world" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 205). Indexicality functions as one of three fundamentals of geosemiotics, along with dialogicality and selection. Dialogicality refers to how all signs "operate in aggregate" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 23) and no sign exists in isolation from others around it:

> "There is a double indexicality with respect to the meaning attached to the sign by its placement and its interaction with other signs. Each sign indexes a discourse that authorizes its placement,

> but once the sign is in place it is never isolated from other signs in its environment, embodied or disembodied. There is always a dynamic among signs, an intersemiotic, interdiscursive dialogicality" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 205).

The third fundamental principle of geosemiotics, selection, is the action of selecting to foreground certain meanings and background others by the actor (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 205). They note that action in and of itself is "a form of selection, positioning the actor as a particular kind of person who selects among different meaning potentials a subset of pathways" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 205).

Based on these three fundamentals, geosemiotics is a three-part framework consisting of three systems of social semiotics: (1) the interaction order; (2) visual semiotics; and (3) place semiotics. The interaction order system is based on that in the work of Erving Goffman, while visual semiotics is based on Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's method of sign analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Thus, the first two systems that comprise the framework of geosemiotics exist in research individually and independently from one another, but the Scollons' framework brings them together and complements them with their own theory of place semiotics, resulting in a cohesive and comprehensive toolkit for studying signs in place. The Scollons posit that the combination of these three systems accounts for the creation of meaning, and this forms the essence of geosemiotics as a method of analysis. I will now talk about each of the three systems comprising geosemiotics in turn.

Firstly, the interaction order, based on the work of Goffman, refers to the various forms social interactions can take. In analysing the interaction order, one must take into account the number of possible features of a particular interaction: the type of event, for example a service encounter or celebration occasion; the perceptual spaces invoked in the interaction; and the level of intimacy between actors, among other things (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 46). The

interaction order accounts for the importance of the physical occurrence and existence of people in the material world:

> "Our bodies as humans cannot fail to anchor us in the real, physical world in which we are performing as social actors. Whether we are actively trying to communicate a particular idea or position for ourselves or just trying to be nearly invisible, a 'fly on the wall' to some other social interaction, our bodies take up space, they take up particular postures, they make movements or are expressively still. Whatever we do, we communicate something to those who are there to view us as objects in their worlds. The general term which includes all of the ways in which we may be together with others in the world is the interaction order" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 45).

There are four main "semiotic resources out of which we construct the entities of the interaction order which are so central to the production and interpretation of discourses in place" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 47). These are: sense of time; perceptual spaces; interpersonal distances; and personal front (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 47). The Scollons emphasise that they are not theorising on nonverbal communication here, but are rather interested in "what is indexable – what language can point to – in the embodiment of language" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 47). Sense of time, in geosemiotic study, refers to the ways in which the psychological states related to a sense of time (for example, urgency) can be indexed, and how they are "embodied in the material world so they can be 'read'" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 50). Perceptual spaces refer to the ways in which "our senses produce boundaries" around "different kinds of space" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 52): visual space, auditory space, olfactory space, thermal space, and haptic or tactile space (*ibid*.). As the Scollons note, "geosemiotics takes it that all of these spaces are crucial in the location of discourses in place" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 53). Interpersonal distance refers to "the distance within which we feel we must engage in some kind of social interaction with another person" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 54). For example, is an interpersonal interaction intimate, personal, social, or public? These distances can be "read" as signs that index certain embodied meanings (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Finally,

personal front refers to another very important aspect of the interaction order in geosemiotics, referring to the "identity kit" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 57) of a person in an interaction, including such characteristics and features as hairstyle, posture, and outfit. In other words, it refers to "virtually any visible or perceptible" feature that is physically brought into a space (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 57).

Secondly, visual semiotics, based on groundwork laid by Kress and Van Leeuwen, is concerned with "how images represent the real social world, […] how images mean what they mean because of where we see them, and […] how we use images to do other things in the world" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 84). For geosemiotics, this translates to interest in how real actions are represented in images, how images index the real world around them, and how social actors index the images that surround them in the world (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 84). The Scollons draw our focus to four semiotic systems by which to analyse visuals: represented participants; modality; composition; and interactive participants (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Represented participants refers to the elements – human and non-human as well as image-based and not image-based – that are represented in a sign. For example, an image depicting a narrative or a conceptual relationship between people. Secondly, visual semiotics is also concerned with the level of modality in a sign, which "signals the degree of veracity, authenticity, or naturalness of the representation of an image to the phenomenon in real life" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 100), and can be indicated by characteristics such as colour saturation, differentiation, and modulation, contextualization, representation, depth, illumination, and brightness. Composition refers to the way in which a sign has been spatially composed and what this composition conveys about the information being presented. For example, analysing which information in a sign has been displayed most prominently, or has been represented as ideal. Finally, visual semiotics includes reference to the peripheral, yet no

less relevant, interactive participants – the people who interact with a sign, such as the producer of the sign, the represented person or people, and those who view the sign.

The third and final system comprising the geosemiotics framework is place semiotics, which is theorised by the Scollons themselves. Place semiotics is concerned with the 'in place' aspects of signs, which transform spaces into places by introducing meaning (Scollon & Scollon, 2003):

> "Language points to a world of social role performances, of personal fronts and sign equipment, of situational structures, layouts and designs of built environments. It is those sign systems in the world outside of language but to which language points or in which language is used which are our main interest" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 111).

It includes four different aspects that all contribute to the meaning of a place (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 214), which are: code preference, inscription, emplacement, and discourse in time and space (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, pp. 21, 167). Code preference is a way in which the geopolitical context of a place can be indexed as the choice of language on a sign "can either index the community within which it is being used or it can symbolize something about the product or business which has nothing to do with the place in which it is located" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 119). Inscription refers to a large system of sign characteristics:

> "The semiotic systems of inscription would include everything that printers know about the meanings of choosing and setting a typeface for a book or what designers know about using a particular typeface and color scheme for an advertisement. But beyond that, we'd include what sign painters know about how to present a banner – not just the typefaces but the type of cloth and the way it would be hung to suggest a range from the lightheartedness of a sale to the seriousness of a new exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC." (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 129).

In essence, it includes all meaning systems based on the "physical materiality" of language and other code systems (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 129), such as font, material, layering, and state

changes. Emplacement refers to the physical location of sign, considering, for example, if a sign in a particular place is transgressive, such as graffiti, or situated and thus predictable, such as exit signs in a cinema. Finally, place semiotics is also concerned with the discourses in time space that are represented by particular signs. For example, we might consider whether the discourses communicated by certain signs are regulatory, transgressive, or commercial (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

In addition to the three-system framework, Scollon and Scollon (2003) also emphasise the importance of the social actor in geosemiotic analysis. The Scollons' theory thus directly engages with the issue of subjectivity by emphasising and acknowledging how the individual experience, knowledge, interests, biases, motivations, and history of the social actor engaging with the signs contribute to the overall meaning-making of a situation (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). They note:

> "To summarize, we see humans in the physical world as bundles of histories – of language, of discourses, and experiences, of social and political performances, as juggling multiple social roles and performances, largely unconsciously, and as being physical bodies which carry and express genetic, social, and momentary dispositions which are never possible to fully occlude behind those socially constructed performances" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, pp. 15-16).

As I will discuss later in this chapter, the issue of subjectivity is often raised as a critique of ethnographic studies. Geosemiotics circumvents this critique by necessitating ethnography and dealing with subjectivity head-on, including the social actor's "historical body" (Blommaert, 2013) as a necessary object of study to understand the discourses produced by signs in a particular place. Furthermore, as "bundles of histories" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 15), bodies in a place can be 'read' as vectors of meaning themselves.

Geosemiotics lends itself well to a study on the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg: the employment of a rigorous, empirical, and systematic framework mitigates the effects of observer bias and subjectivity, as discussed above; and the framework itself necessitates interdisciplinary discussion, allowing for the use of a variety of different types of data and sources – important for a study of multimodal data, including food, people, signs, and other modes, as discussed later in this chapter. An additional benefit of using geosemiotics is that it acknowledges and so allows for nuance and dynamism in language, meaning, and context, thereby providing the researcher with a framework open to expansion and alteration. Applying the three semiotic systems of geosemiotics to an analysis of Greekness in Johannesburg allows for a multi-faceted analysis of how Greekness is inscribed in the semiotic landscape of the city as well as the ways in which social actors engage and interact with this, thereby creating distinctly Greek spaces in the city.

3.3. Methods and data

In this section, I lay out the main methods I used to collect data for this study before expounding on the types of multimodal data that I collected for this study. I collected data for this study ethnographically. Ethnography, as a method, has its roots in anthropology but has been – and continues to be – widely used in the field of sociolinguistics (cf. Blommaert, 2013; Baro, 2017; Lou, 2010, 2017; and many others referenced in this dissertation).

In essence, ethnographic research involves the documentation and analysis of a particular phenomenon – usually a culture or community of people – based on participant observation. The history of ethnography as a method in anthropology is, however, not unproblematic and is thus worth exploring here, albeit briefly. Liebersohn (2008) posits that the start of "anthropology before anthropology" occurred in two major eras: firstly, from 1492 until the

end of the 17th century, characterised by colonisation disguised as exploration which gave rise to an early canon of travel writing; and, secondly, the Enlightenment era, characterised by a search for "human nature in its original and […] universal form among non-literate peoples" (Liebersohn, 2008, p. 19). The notion of an ethnography – or an account of 'the other' – in earlier canonical works can, rightfully, be critiqued for its Eurocentric subjectivity:

> "With the best will and the greatest insistence on precise observation, early European observers could not accurately record what they saw: human perceptions and the ability to communicate depend on the existing stock of cultural and intellectual knowledge […]" (Liebersohn, 2008, p. 19).

However, the use of ethnography in anthropological investigation – and in the style of the early anthropologists mentioned by Liebersohn (2008) – predates the Renaissance by several centuries: in 98 C.E., for example, Roman historian and politician Tacitus penned *De origine et situ Germanorum*, an early ethnographic account of the Germanic peoples, in this case 'the other'. Tacitus assesses the steely stoicism and pragmatic simplicity of Germanic practices as it compares to the 'might and greatness' of the Roman Empire.

It is important to note that ethnographic research has not been exclusive to anthropology for some time, and has been employed to great effect in sociolinguistics for many decades (cf. Blommaert, 2005, 2013; Creese, 2010; Litosseliti, 2010; Lou, 2010, 2017; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015; Baro, 2017). Creese (2010) argues that "the combination of linguistics with ethnography – and their different analytical tools – offers a greater set of resources than each field of study could offer on its own" (Creese, 2010, p. 151), with linguistic research being enhanced by the "attention to context" in ethnography (Creese, 2010, p. 139) .

It is obvious that early ethnography in anthropology was under-theorised and its over reliance on subjectivity meant that, in many cases, ethnographic studies lack scholarly and empirical rigour:

> "There is something inherently ambivalent about ethnography. On the one hand, it is undoubtedly the success story of anthropology *par excellence*. It is the only anthropological development that has made it into mainstream social science; it is treated with respect by scholars in fields as widely apart as linguistics, psychology and history. On the other hand, though, ethnography has always had a doubtful reputation as well. It was under-theorized, relied too heavily on subjectivity and consequently produced data that did not stand the tests of a more rigid interpretation of objectivity in science" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 23).

As pointed out by Blommaert (2013), employing Scollon and Scollon's (2003) framework of geosemiotics allows for this obstacle to be overcome through the use of an empirical system for the ethnographic analysis of language in the material world. In addition, Blommaert (2013) levels another critique at ethnography which goes hand-in-hand with subjectivity: the issue of synchrony. To assess a group of people through the lens of your own subjectivity, at a particular moment in time, reduces any resultant work to a vignette – a contextless snapshot in time and place. He notes that "ethnography draws its data from real-world moments of intersubjective exchange in which the ethnographer and the informant are both sensitive to the contextual conditions of this exchange" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 25), but that the resultant work of the ethnographer largely aims to divorce their 'object' of study and themselves from these contexts. Ethnographic studies frequently present highly context-dependent observations about a society as generally applicable truths, therefore freezing their subjects in time and space and disregarding the complexities of contexts characterised by fluidity (Blommaert, 2013). Particularly in the context of a superdiverse world – driven by "mobility, complexity and unpredictability" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 6) – the flexibility and dynamism of people and spaces need always be taken into account, and so synchrony must be avoided:

> "[...] the core of this theoretical argument is to see space as a historically configured phenomenon and as an actor, as something that operates as a material force on human behavior performed in space. Space is not neutral in other words, and if it is our intention to provide a more robust footing for [linguistic landscape studies], we need to provide a sharply delineated vision on how space is semiotized, and how it semiotizes what goes on within its orbit" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 23).

Blommaert (2013) proposes introducing history "as a real category of analysis" (p. 27) to overcome the problem of synchrony. In Blommaert's own words:

> The way to escape this trap is, one could argue, relatively simple: reintroduce history as a real category of analysis. The simplicity is deceptive of course, for what is required is a toolkit of concepts that are intrinsically historical; that is: concepts whose very nature and direction point towards connections between the past and the present in terms of social activities – concepts, in short, that define and explain synchronic social events in terms of their histories of becoming as social events" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 27).

Blommaert (2013) – reiterating Scollon and Scollon (2003) – notes that every action, every space, is historically loaded and thus "whenever we ethnographically investigate a synchronic social act, we have to see it as the repository of a process of genesis, development, transformation" and a "moment of social and cultural transmission" (Blommaert, 2013, p. 37). In order to avoid the problem of synchrony in my own study, I followed Blommaert's (2013) warnings and included a historical aspect to my study by looking at the history of the people and places concerned and constantly bearing in mind the historical boundedness of actions in the present.

It is also important to refer to one's 'historical body' explicitly in ethnographic research (Blommaert, 2013; Milani, 2014). As Blommaert (2013) notes:

> "Whenever people enter into social action, they bring along their own skills, experiences and competences, and this 'baggage', so to speak, conditions and constrains what they can do in social action. Historical bodies have been formed in particular social spaces and they represent,

> to use an older notion, the 'communicative competence' of people in such social spaces" (Blommaert, 2013, pp. 29-30).

As Scollon and Scollon (2003) note in reference to their geosemiotics framework, one of the ways of overcoming issues of subjectivity in ethnographic research is by acknowledging it head-on, including your own subjectivity as the researcher. This is particularly relevant to new post-structural and postcolonial kinds of reflexive scholarship. Following this trend, I explore my own historical body – my positionality in relation to my object of research – in more detail in section 3.4. of this chapter.

Against this backdrop, I followed an established tradition of sociolinguistic work in linguistic landscape studies and approached my data collection ethnographically. Throughout 2022, I collected field notes and photographs of spaces associated with Greekness across the city of Johannesburg. In many instances, these were places already in my frame of reference that I visited deliberately with the objective of collecting data there. In some cases, however, I came upon usable data by chance, finding pockets of Greekness I had not previously known about. Certain areas of Johannesburg are commonly associated with Greekness as they are inhabited by large groups of Greek people, such as the suburb of Senderwood in eastern Johannesburg, or contain well-known Greek establishments, such as *The Cheese Place*, a Greek deli in the central Johannesburg suburb of Linden. I deliberately visited, documented, and photographed as many Greek Orthodox churches, Greek restaurants, and other Greek establishments in the city as I could, as well as attended several Greek cultural events – including an Easter celebration hosted by a community organisation and a night-time mass. In total, I collected a corpus of around 300 photographs, all of which I took with my cellphone. While at relevant locations or events, I also made detailed field notes – either in a notebook or on my cellphone – that I used when conducting my analysis as well. When going to various locations to collect photographic data, I would often have members of my family or friends with me. My casual

(unrecorded) engagements with these unofficial research assistants – as well as with strangers who happened to be around – about the spaces we were visiting and the photographs I was taking were very helpful in informing some of my thinking for this research.

I supplemented my photographs and field notes with another important aspect of ethnographic research in the form of interviews, which I conducted with members of the South African Greek diaspora living in Johannesburg. In total, I conducted nine interviews. My interviewees were all people who identified to some extent as being part of the Greek diaspora, and had varying levels of involvement with the Greek Orthodox church and Greek community organisations. I provide introductions to each of my interviewees throughout the course of this dissertation. I found almost all of my interviewees by word of mouth as many of them were acquainted with other people in my social network. In some cases, as with restaurant owners and leaders of community organisations, I contacted people listed on websites and social media pages directly to ask if I could interview them. The time at which I undertook my research interviews unfortunately fell during the COVID-19 pandemic and South Africa still had mask mandates and other restrictions on public social gatherings. As such, in all cases I gave potential interviewees the option of meeting in person at a convenient location – such as a coffee shop or restaurant – or conducting our interview on an online platform, such as Zoom. Of the interviews I conducted for this research, five were done in person and four were done on an online meeting platform. Involving human participants in my research required me to obtain ethical clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand, which I did. Participation in my study was naturally voluntary and interviewees were informed upfront of the nature and aims of my research. Each of my interviewees signed a consent form agreeing to be audio recorded and quoted verbatim in my dissertation (only one participant asked to be referred to by a pseudonym, which I duly noted and have referred to her by one where relevant in this

dissertation). I used the Voice Memo application on my cellphone to record the audio of each interview, and also made notes in a notebook during interviews for my own reference when writing up the analysis sections of this research. The length of each interview varied from interview to interview, with some lasting less than half an hour and others stretching close to three hours long. The interviews were unstructured and took the form of a casual conversation between me and the participants, all of whom were exceptionally forthcoming and happy to assist me with my research. To prompt the conversations in interviews, I would talk a little bit about my research which would inevitably lead to the interviewee engaging with the idea of Greekness in their own lives. It was fascinating to me how different each interview was.

Finally, I made use of the archive of the *Rand Daily Mail*, a Johannesburg-based newspaper that operated from 1902 until 1985. While archival work is not typically a part of geosemiotic analysis, this archive provided me with many interesting instances of discourse by and about the Greek community in Johannesburg in the 20th century. I have therefore included several excerpts from the newspaper in my analytical chapters.

It is important for me to stress that, as a SL/LL study first and foremost, my analyses in this dissertation rely mainly on the photographic data I collected, as this is common practice in the field. Evidence from interviews and the newspaper archive is used to supplement this where it is relevant.

3.4. Positionality

In a chapter aptly titled "The 'I' on the scene", Milani (2014) explores his own historical body – his life experiences – and how this led to his scholarly interest in studying the nexus of language, gender, and sexuality. This kind of self-reflection in sociolinguistics is becoming

increasingly more common (see Milani, 2014; Ali, 2020; Baro, 2017; Lou, 2017; and others cited here) and provides invaluable insights into positionality of the researcher in relation to their subject matter, bringing them bodily into the same space as the object of study. As a research method, ethnography necessarily requires the researcher to navigate their subjectivity. While the potentially negative effects of subjectivity on the analysis, as mentioned above, can be mitigated by implementing a rigorous analytical framework, the way the researcher's positionality, personal context and history may influence access to certain places is worth noting. It is, as such, important for the researcher to explore their own historical body in order to overcome issues of subjectivity in ethnographic research, as mentioned above. In this section, I explore my own historical body as relevant to my ethnography of Greekness in Johannesburg.

My personal interest in the Greek diaspora stems from my belonging to it, albeit broadly. In 1961, my paternal grandparents immigrated to South Africa from Egypt. There was a sizable Greek diaspora already in Egypt since the early 20th century, and all four of my great-grandparents had been born in Egypt to Greek immigrant parents. Upon their arrival in South Africa, my paternal grandparents – Nico and Mary Vratsanos – established their new lives as South Africans in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, where my father, Dimitri, was born in 1962. As a child, my father spoke Greek to his parents, attended a Greek community school after hours where he studied Greek language and culture, and was a member of an all-Greek Scouts group. His mainstream schooling was, however, in English and so he is fluent in both languages. As my father grew into adulthood and started going to university, his involvement with the wider Greek community in Johannesburg waned. My own upbringing was thus considerably less Greek-centric than my father's. My mother is not Greek – her family immigrated to South Africa from Spain in 1971 when she was a toddler. While my grandparents were happy with

the match, my parents' marriage was sometimes disparagingly referred to as a 'mixed marriage' by some of the more insular members of the wider Greek community, who thought it paramount that Greek people marry within the culture.

My younger sister and I grew up in a household in which our Greekness and Spanishness were no more or less important than our South Africanness. As a result, we were somewhat distanced from the broader Greek community, with whom we would only interact on the rare occasion my grandparents' friends were around, or on the even rarer occasions when we would accompany them to church at Easter. Despite the fact that our father speaks fluent Greek and our mother fluent Spanish, neither of us grew up speaking more than very basic conversational Greek and Spanish and, as adults, we are both more comfortable speaking and understanding Spanish than we are with Greek. Due to the extremely small size of the Spanish diaspora in South Africa, there are no Spanish community organisations or churches in Johannesburg. While the Greek community is much larger here than the Spanish, and there are many opportunities for people of Greek origin to engage with the wider community, my parents, sister, and I generally avoid any overt displays and performances of nationalism and so have never been involved in any culture-related activities. All four of us are not religious, either, which eliminated the possibility of having any cultural church links in our lives.

I do not want to fall into the trap of making sweeping generalisations about a group of people, but I do think it is relevant to mention my own experiences with the wider Johannesburg Greek community as they informed some of my thinking going into this research. My experiences with the wider Greek community have largely not been particularly pleasant. My surname is obviously Greek, as are many aspects of my physical appearance, which has resulted in many interactions with Greek people beginning with them eagerly asking, 'Are you Greek?'. Most

of these conversations involve them expressing disappointment in my inability to speak Greek, my lack of religious belief, and/or my non-Greek blood. I have never felt compelled to engage with people based solely on some shared sense of heritage, but this urge is what forms the basis of the existence of diasporic community organisations.

Coming into this research, I felt strangely like an outsider to the people and spaces I would be studying, despite my in principle 'insiderness'. I was initially quite nervous ahead of conducting my interviews, especially with people who I suspected would be deeply entrenched in the diasporic community, and many times I found myself thinking of ways to perform my own Greekness more overtly in my in-person interviews. For example, by wearing the evil eye jewellery (see Chapter 5) I had received from my grandmother as a child. Several people with whom I engaged over the course of this research – in both my formal recorded interviews as well as in informal settings – brought up my own Greekness in the course of the conversation. Interestingly, in some interviews, I even felt like I was the one who was being interviewed. Several of my interviewees tried to work out if they knew my grandparents or parents, or asked me if I spoke Greek, if I cooked Greek food, where in Greece my ancestors were from, where I was baptised, and if I had been to Greece. I do think my own Greekness helped me gain access to the wider Greek community in Johannesburg and my theoretical knowledge of Greek religion, traditions, food, and culture made some of my conversations and experiences in Greek spaces easier to navigate.

3.5. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I have presented the main analytical and methodological considerations of my research. I first provided a theoretical and historical overview of the emergence of semiotics, beginning with the early foundational work by De Saussure and Peirce and those they

influenced, which paved the way for further developments in the study of signs. I then presented the main tenets of Scollon and Scollon's (2003) framework of geosemiotics, which I employed in this study as an analytical toolkit with which to conduct my analysis of Greekness in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg. I also discussed the method I employed to collect data for this study – ethnography – and made the case for why this was the chosen method in my study, as well as in semiotic landscape research more generally. Thereafter, I enumerated the types of data I collected for this study. Finally, I followed the tradition of contemporary self-reflexive scholarship and presented some relevant information on my 'historical body' – the 'baggage' that I bring with me into this study as the researcher (Blommaert, 2013; Milani, 2014) – and briefly reflected on my experience of the data collection process.

In the next chapter, I lay out the history and context of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, looking at how the Greek diaspora came to be concentrated in the city, as well as examining some of the experiences of members of the Greek diaspora during apartheid and in the present day.

CHAPTER 4: Johannesburg and the Greek Diaspora

In a statement often attributed to Winston Churchill, the city of Johannesburg is described as "Monte-Carlo on top of Sodom and Gomorrah" (quoted in Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008, p. 33). Simultaneously a symbol of the "African modern" (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008. p. 1) and an exemplar of the typical Global South city as "an emblem of irresolvable crisis" (*ibid*., p. 5), Johannesburg has enjoyed a relatively short history as South Africa's largest and main economic and industrial city. Established in 1886 upon the discovery of gold deposits in the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg soon became a major destination for immigrants from across the world (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008), including Greek immigrants, who flocked to the city in the first half of the 19th century and established it as the epicentre of the Greek diaspora in the country (McDuling, 2014; Chaldeos, 2020).

In this chapter, I lay out the history and context of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, looking at how the Greek diaspora came to be concentrated in the city, as well as examining some of the experiences of members of the Greek diaspora during apartheid and in the present day. I also present some scholarly discourse on Johannesburg as a city – a city termed an 'elusive metropolis' in the title of a book by Nuttall and Mbembe (2008):

> "Cities are subjects *en fuite*. They always outpace the capacity of analysts to name them. This gap constitutes the elusiveness referred to in our title. Johannesburg is an elusive metropolis because of the multiplicity of registers in which it is African (or perhaps not at all, or not enough); European (or perhaps not, or no longer), or even American (by virtue of its embeddedness in commodity exchange and its culture of consumption). Its very elusiveness makes it especially compelling as an object of study [...]" (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008, p. 27).

The analysis presented in subsequent chapters of this dissertation takes Johannesburg as its object of study and attempts to unpack a microcosmic layer of the city's complex and dynamic make-up. Thus, an introduction to the city is necessary for contextualisation purposes.

Accounts of the history of Greeks in South Africa have appeared in prior research on this community (see Added, 1973; Mantzaris, 1978, 1982; McDuling & Barnes, 2012; McDuling, 2014; Chaldeos, 2020). Added's (1973) work focuses only on the history of Greek immigrants in the Cape and Mantzaris's two theses (1978 and 1982) provide an overview of Greek immigration across the whole country. McDuling (2014) and McDuling and Barnes (2012) present a brief overview of the history of Greeks in South Africa, focussing especially on Johannesburg, which has been useful in the writing of this chapter. Most recently, Chaldeos (2020), an academic based in Greece, released a self-published book containing an exhaustive history of the Greek community in South Africa, based on prior research and archival information. This book takes the form of an exhaustive summary of the history of the establishment of the Greek community in South Africa based on newspaper archives and immigration documentation and has thus provided useful and interesting information for my own research. While I do provide the historical information in this chapter, I deviate from this previous scholarship by, firstly, focusing on Johannesburg and, secondly, augmenting and complementing my historical account with the stories of the individuals interviewed for this research.

4.1. An overview of Greek immigration to South Africa

The 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were tumultuous and generally unpleasant times for Greek people in Greece and Cyprus, characterised by wars, conflict, agricultural disasters, and widespread poverty (McDuling, 2014; Mantzaris, 1978). As a result, large-scale Greek emigration from Greece and Cyprus to other parts of the world was a salient feature of this time (McDuling, 2014; Mantzaris, 1978). Many Greeks went to the already established republics of the USA and Canada, but the more recent, developing European colonies in the southern hemisphere – Australia and parts of southern Africa – were also appealing to

Europeans seeking better prospects (McDuling, 2014; Mantzaris, 1978). By the middle of the 19th century, several bustling port towns on the southern tip of Africa had been established by the Portuguese, Dutch, and English colonists – including Cape Town and Port Elizabeth (Chaldeos, 2020; Glaser, 2010; McDuling, 2014). There was ample work for European immigrants to be found on the railways and, after the discovery of diamonds at De Kalk in 1867, in the mines (Chaldeos, 2020; Glaser, 2010; McDuling, 2014).

However, the Greek presence in South Africa allegedly dates back to the late 18th century when, in 1790 (McDuling & Barnes, 2012), a convict known only as Stephanos escaped the ship on which he was being transported in Cape Town. His intended destination is unknown, and what became of this man has since passed into legend: "it is said that he became a prophet and chief of the Kora tribe" (McDuling & Barnes, 2012), although there is no way that this may be proven (or disproven, at that).

More organised immigration from Greece to South Africa began in 1850 and generally involved Greek seamen deciding to end their voyages in Cape Town, when their ships docked there to resupply (McDuling, 2014). The number of Greeks in the country was extremely low for many years, but picked up towards the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century (Chaldeos, 2020). While there are no detailed records of Greek immigration to South Africa for much of the 19th century, more precise records appear from the beginning of the 20th century, when Cape Town had a Greek community of about 1000 (McDuling & Barnes, 2012). The increased number of Greek immigrants led to the formation of the first cultural and community organisations in the country, but the Greek Community of Cape Town was the first to formally adopt a constitution and was established in 1902 (Chaldeos, 2020). Like all subsequent Greek community organisations, the Community's constitution set forth their

wishes to build a church, establish a community school for Greek children, and act as a charity for needy members of the community (Chaldeos, 2020). The records from these early Greek cultural groups show an interesting steady decline in membership from the late 19th century until long after the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 (McDuling & Barnes, 2012; Beinart, 2001) as more inhabitants of Cape Town (and other coastal areas) moved inland following the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 (McDuling & Barnes, 2012; Beinart, 2001). The gold rush led to the establishment and rapid development of Johannesburg, which quickly became the economic hub of South Africa and attracted masses of people – both from other parts of the country and abroad – looking to make their fortunes (Beinart, 2001; Latilla, 2018).

With the establishment of Johannesburg as the centre of economic activity in southern Africa, the city – for that is what it became within a matter of a few months as I will discuss later in this chapter – also replaced Cape Town as the default destination for emigrating Greeks heading to southern Africa. Just over 15 years after the first Greeks arrived in Johannesburg – most of them from Cape Town – to find better, or perhaps just different, work prospects, the three active informal Hellenic clubs in the area amalgamated in 1908 to form the Hellenic Community of Johannesburg and its subsidiary, the Greek Ladies Benevolent Association (Chaldeos, 2020). As a community organisation, the Hellenic Community of Johannesburg adopted a constitution that mandated the building of both a Greek school and a permanent Greek Orthodox church in the city, as well as to act as a charity organisation to provide financial assistance to the poorer members of the wider Greek community (Chaldeos, 2020). Community schools which taught Greek language and culture soon emerged and the first Greek Orthodox church in the city, the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, was completed in 1912 and officially opened in 1913 in Hillbrow (see Chapter 7 for more on this church). The building of this church in the Byzantine style of the most famous Greek Orthodox Church in

the world, the Hagia Sophia in Turkey (see Chapter 7), shows that the impact of the Greek diaspora on the semiotic landscape began fairly early, with the community deliberately constructing various spaces as explicitly Greek. Also in 1913, the first Johannesburg-based Greek newspaper – *New Hellas* – emerged (Chaldeos, 2020). There had been a short-lived Greek newspaper, *Apocalypse*, in circulation monthly in Cape Town between 1902 and 1906 but the small size of the Greek population in the city at the time made this economically unfeasible (Chaldeos, 2020). *New Hellas*, on the other hand, was established to serve a much larger and more established diaspora in Johannesburg and enjoyed a fairly long run until 1999. The existence of Johannesburg-produced media in Greek further served to assert the presence of Greekness in the city.

Subsequent Greek immigration to Johannesburg followed the typical chain model (Tilly, 2017), in which one person, usually a man, would come over from Greece and spend a few months or years establishing himself in the city before sending for the other members of his family (Mantzaris, 1978; Chaldeos, 2020; McDuling, 2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012). In many instances, the established person in Johannesburg would offer to sponsor – in other words, feed, house, and find employment for – a friend or relative who wished to leave Greece (Chaldeos, 2020). This pattern of immigration continued well into the 1970s, at least. The number of Greek immigrants in Johannesburg increased steadily over the first half of the 19th century, slowing only slightly between 1939 and 1945 during the Second World War (Mantzaris, 1978; McDuling & Barnes, 2012). Greek immigration boomed immediately thereafter during the Greek Civil War (1946–1949), with large numbers of Greek nationals emigrating to South Africa, the USA and Australia during this time (McDuling & Barnes, 2012). The war erupted from continued tension between the UK- and USA-backed right-aligned Greek government and the far-left military branch of the country's communist party

and followed on directly from German occupation during the Second World War (McDuling, 2014). The civil war – one of the first fought against the backdrop of the Cold War – was characterised by "bloodshed, arrests, exile of large sections of the population, and a fragmentation of the Greek society" (McDuling, 2014, p. 20) and the negative socioeconomic effects were felt long after the war had ended. Immigration to South Africa reached its peak in the 1960s, which saw an influx of skilled workers from Greece and the already established Greek community in Egypt (Mantzaris, 1978), who left the country in swathes to avoid Gamal Abdel Nasser's authoritarian socialism.

Many of the people I interviewed for this research either came to Johannesburg themselves around the 1960s and 1970s or are the children or grandchildren of those who did. People's reasons for leaving Greece, Cyprus, or Egypt for Johannesburg are many and varied. In my interview with Thalia G., who was born in South Africa, she recounted how her father and mother had ended up in Johannesburg:

> "My dad was actually quite a good artist in Greece, in his youth, when he was 18. He was, like, quite a good artist and my uncle sponsored him to go to Brazil and study patent tool and patent weapon design or something. And then he was sent to South Africa because, long story short, the SANDF wanted him to do a new hand grenade [...] he was doing patent machines for patents in South Africa, so he had a tool and die company in Sebenza. [...] So that's why my dad was called out. But then my dad's friend knew my mother in Greece, and you know how it is, that it is essential to get married here. *Ja*, so she got married to him. And luckily they liked each other. So that worked out."

Thalia's parents present a typical case of chain migration, in which arranged marriages between a man in the diaspora (in South Africa, Australia, or North America) and a single woman in the 'homeland' (in Greece or Cyprus), are often arranged by his relatives.

Renos Spanoudes, an actor, teacher, and presenter on the Johannesburg-based Greek radio station, also spoke to me about how and why his family left Cyprus for South Africa:

> "So you've got these families in Cyprus, in particular, the British occupation and uncertainty for the youth, the villages, losing the youth, and then this whole thing… I'm currently in rehearsal for a new play about George Bizos and there's a similar kind of statement about, 'We've gotta go, we've gotta go suddenly, we've gotta go to another country, somewhere, we've gotta escape here, there's no future.' So in the case of my uncle, my mom's brother, the typical plan was the brother would come to South Africa, or go to Australia, or to America or even to England. But there was that phrase, or the saying, 'If you go to Africa, not South Africa, Africa, you see that the gold is running in the streets'. So what it is, is you've got this young man, he comes out here to Johannesburg… Obviously they got a letter from someone saying 'send your son'. And the arrangement is when the son comes here, he will work in the cafe that exists, the cafe and grocery, and he'll work and pay his rent that way and slowly but surely he'll get a little bit of money. And the fascinating package deal that occurred is there was a company, well there were many, but the main one I think was L.J. Sussman and they made cigarettes. And what they would do with that is they would give a young Greek or even Portuguese, or Afrikaans, they would give you stock to start your shop. You didn't pay for the first batch and then you'd slowly pay it back that way. You also didn't need much of an education to do that, if you could communicate how much, what you want, you know… So my late uncle, who was also my godfather, he came out and then he would send some money back home. In fact when he first came I think it was still pounds here as well. And the whole idea is that he'll come and then he'll bring the sister. So that sister was my mom and he brought her over."

Andrea Nichas, the president of the Cypriot Youth Association, told me a similar story about her paternal grandparents, who left Cyprus for South Africa after the Turkish invasion and subsequent occupation in 1974.

Many people also came to South Africa from other African countries, having been members of the Greek communities there. As mentioned above, Greek immigration from Egypt was especially common, predominantly following Nasser's expression of anti-European

sentiments. My own paternal grandparents came to Johannesburg from Cairo, where they were born and grew up, as a newly-married couple in 1960. Maria Dzerefos, another presenter on the Greek radio station, told me how she came to South Africa as a baby with her family in the 1950s:

> "I was born in Cairo, in Egypt, and my dad was in the British Army. So after the war, the British had to leave and go anywhere else in the world other than Egypt. So my dad came to South Africa, and then at the age of six months, my mom and I and my older sister came to join my dad in South Africa, in Johannesburg."

Another one of my interviewees, Zetta Dale, owner of *Zettas*, recounted how she had come to South Africa from Tanzania, where her father had owned a sisal estate. She noted that the "Greeks had the monopoly on the sisal estates" in Tanzania, where there was already a fairly established Greek community. Zetta's parents had both been born in Tanzania, after her grandparents had moved there from Greece. Many Greek Tanzanians left the country after the government adopted a socialist and Pan-Africanist approach in 1967 (Lihamba, 1985).

Greek immigration to South Africa was therefore multi-faceted, with people coming from Greece, Cyprus, and other parts of Africa with established Greek communities for a number of reasons. Since the gold rush in the late 19th century, Johannesburg had become the economic centre of South Africa and so was the first port of call for many immigrating Europeans, eventually becoming the epicentre of the Greek diaspora in the country.

4.2. Greeks and apartheid

Greeks, and indeed other Mediterranean diasporas (most notably Portuguese), presented an interesting case for apartheid, and pre-apartheid, South Africa. In as early as 1915, the South African Greek community – roughly 1000 people and still relatively new to the country – sent a deputation to the Minister of the Interior asking for protection after a series of calls to attack

Greek residents had appeared in the press (Dedering, 2013). Attacks on Greek shops and other businesses occurred periodically over the next two years (Dedering, 2013), culminating in full-blown anti-Greek riots in Johannesburg in 1917 (Mantzaris, 1978, 1982), during which several Greek-owned businesses were burned down (Chaldeos, 2020). Anti-Greek sentiments stemmed from a national drive to avoid exacerbating the 'poor white' problem in South Africa before and during apartheid, and immigrants from predominantly agricultural, often war-torn, Mediterranean countries were long seen as a direct threat to this goal (Mantzaris, 1978, 1982; Dedering, 2013). The first half of the 20th century in South Africa was characterised by governments explicitly striving for 'ethnic purity' – where white people were expected and enabled to be economically, intellectually, and socially superior to all others (Mantzaris, 1978, 1982; Dedering, 2013). Thus, 'poor whites' impeded this vision of a leading white minority, untarnished by less-than-perfect members.

Similar sentiments remained prevalent after the 'official' start of apartheid, when the National Party (NP) government came into power in 1948. On the surface, as white Europeans, Greeks seem to fit neatly into the white side of the stark black-white split that characterised the latter three centuries of the last millennium. However, the concept of a South African 'nation' is historically an exclusionary one, in which the apartheid government strove to establish a nationalism that was homogenous yet ranked. The superficially homogenous 'white' category, particularly once the Afrikaner portion had established themselves as the country's rulers, was tensely stratified. To white Afrikaans speakers, white English speakers were inferior, and both of these groups deemed Europeans from certain countries (like Greece, Portugal, and the Balkans) as being at the bottom of the hierarchy of whiteness (Glaser, 2010).

Chaldeos (2020) notes the existence of a number of newspaper opinion pieces in which Greek South Africans are referred to as 'mixed race', or 'non-Europeans' (Chaldeos, 2020, p. 202), and calling for the boycotting of Greek- and Portuguese-owned businesses (Chaldeos, 2020, p. 199), throughout the 20th century. The veracity and ferocity of the anti-Greek sentiments expressed in mainstream South African media fluctuated over this time. It became particularly nasty following the assassination of Hendrik Verwoerd, the 'architect of apartheid' (Kenney, 2016) in 1966 (Posel, 2009; Kenney, 2016). At the time of his assassination, Verwoerd was the Prime Minister of South Africa and had been active in South African politics for several decades (Kenney, 2016). He was a notoriously proud racist and Afrikaner nationalist, having been instrumental in ensuring the NP's rise to power in 1948 as the party's political strategist, then developing and implementing several key apartheid policies during his time serving as the Minister of Native Affairs between 1950-1958 (Posel, 2009; Kenney, 2016). Verwoerd's assassin, Dimitri Tsafendas, had been born in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) to a Greek immigrant father and a mixed-race Mozambican mother, who died when Tsafendas was still a small child (Posel, 2009; Kenney, 2016). Tsafendas's existence until his imprisonment was "perpetually restless, unsettled and solitary, borne of a mix of audaciously illegal stints in various countries, many episodes of transitory employment on cargo ships, and desperate efforts to lay claim to a legal identity and presence, somewhere" (Posel, 2009, pp. 338-339). As a speaker of Greek and Portuguese, a multiple offender of illegal immigration, the uneducated son of a black woman, the politically-active son of a known anarchist, and the 'murderer' of the symbol of Afrikaner power, pride, and security, Tsafendas embodied a complex constellation of threats to white supremacy. The various facets of his identity were picked apart and scrutinised by the media in the wake of Verwoerd's death and rumours about his motivations and sanity ran wild (Posel, 2009).

Tsafendas's ties to Greece, through his father and his name, and Portugal, through Mozambique and his language, resulted in anti-Tsafendas sentiment extending to anti-Greek and anti-Portuguese sentiment. Greek and Portuguese-owned shops in various parts of Johannesburg, including Rosettenville and Doornfontein in the city centre, were attacked and there were reports published in the South African Greek newspapers of Greek people – particularly business owners – being harassed and assaulted by NP supporters (Chaldeos, 2020). In response to the antagonism, the Greek Communities of Johannesburg (and Cape Town) released a number of statements distancing themselves from Tsafendas and reaffirming their support for the government, with the Johannesburg-based Greek newspaper *Afrikanis* even publishing an editorial with the self-explanatory title: 'Verwoerd the Leader and Father of the Greek Community' (Chaldeos, 2020, p. 105).

Renos Spanoudes, who has played Tsafendas in a play, remembers the day of the assassination and the subsequent bullying he endured:

> "On the 6th of September 1960, Tsafendas stabs Verwoerd. I remember at school, Fairways Primary School, they called us and put us on the field and said that our parents are coming to fetch us, something terrible has happened. To cut a long story short, my mom was there and I didn't understand. She came so much earlier, and walking back I remember her saying to me that we were going to close the shop. And for me it was joyous because the only time we ever closed the shop was Christmas Day, but suddenly now it's not Christmas, but we're closing the shop and mom and dad are at home with me in the flat, because we rented a flat also half a block from the shop. And then there was this whole thing that this man…and then the news came out that this man was mad. Then the news came out that the man was Greek, then, no, he was Portuguese, and then half Portuguese, half Greek, then half white, half black. And I remember having students, other students at school and customers saying things like, 'You bloody Greeks, why don't you go back where you come from? You come here and you kill our Prime Minister.' That stayed with me. It was a deeply entrenched memory and injury."

I have heard many stories of Greek children being bullied at school during the 20th century. My own father was called names for being Greek, and it is also a theme that came up in many of my interviews for this research. Panos Dairopoulos, the owner of *The Greek Taverna* restaurant, recalled his difficulties growing up Greek and being in the South African army as a youth:

> "I think, uh, growing up Greek was obviously tough. Being in South Africa, growing up Greek, you always labelled as a non-citizen, as a… Especially when I went to the army, we were sort of outcast from the Afrikaans and stuff like that. So it was always, 'you freak', you know? So it was a bit difficult growing up Greek especially when you went to school and certain stuff like that. You give them your name and they tease you about your name."

I do not wish to diminish the lived experiences of my interviewees, but it is worth noting that there is no doubt that Greek people enjoyed much privilege during apartheid by virtue of being white. Greeks were not exempt from enjoying any civil liberties, rights, and privileges reserved for white people and could vote, own property, and travel freely, unlike Black, Coloured, and Indian South Africans at the time. My interviewees' experiences indicate that the struggles of being Greek during apartheid were related to localised victimisation and bullying, rather than Legislated oppression. Importantly, however, is that these experiences and instances of culturally-based victimisation that occurred within the seemingly homogeneous white population category illustrate how complex and stratified the apartheid system was constructed to be in practice.

4.3. Greeks in contemporary Johannesburg

Following the end of apartheid and the introduction of the African National Congress (ANC) government in 1994, the Greek community in Johannesburg remains fairly large and is still the largest in the country. Certain areas of the city are especially associated with Greek people, although there are obviously members of the community spread out throughout the whole city.

During initial waves of immigration to Johannesburg, Hillbrow and its neighbouring areas (namely Yeoville and Berea) in the inner city were the default points of entry to the city for many immigrants from the 1950s until the 1980s (Morris, 1997, 1999). At this time, Hillbrow was known for being particularly cosmopolitan (Winkler, 2014) and was also conveniently close to the Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen, the main Greek church in the city, and the headquarters of the main Greek community organisations (see Figure 1). In addition to the church, there would have been other places in Hillbrow in which Greekness was inscribed to some degree, including restaurants and cafes. Since the early 1990s, Hillbrow, and indeed most of the inner city, has been considered one of the most dangerous parts of Johannesburg (Morris, 1997; Winkler, 2014) and the Greek community has since moved out to the suburbs. My own grandparents moved out of Hillbrow for the suburbs in the 1970s and decided to go west, buying a house in Weltevreden Park. Maria Dzerefos told me in our interview, however, that most of the Hillbrow Greeks moved east – to the suburbs of Primrose, Edenvale, Bedfordview, and Senderwood, where they can still be found today (see Figure 2). These areas were convenient places for members of the Greek community – especially churchgoers – to move to as they were already home to a sizable Greek population and had established churches, community organisation headquarters, and community schools. Senderwood is also home to SAHETI, a mainstream Greek day school that draws students of Greek origin from around the city, and the Greek Sporting Club. There is also a fairly large group of members of the Greek diaspora further east, in Benoni.

Johannesburg is also home to a number of Greek restaurants and delis, which are frequented as much by Greek people as by other South Africans. The restaurants tend to be fairly distributed across the city and range from small, single-standing ‘traditional’ family-run places to more upmarket chains. *The Greek Taverna*, the restaurant at the Greek Sporting Club next

door to SAHETI, and *Meze Emporio*, a deli and restaurant, are noteworthy Greek spaces in Johannesburg. Both are in Senderwood, which Panos described as "the heart of the Greek community", and draw swathes of Greeks from around the city. *The Greek Taverna* is a popular party venue in the Greek community, and *Meze Emporio* serves a wide clientele from the east and south of Johannesburg looking for imported Greek ingredients and ready-made Greek snacks and food items. *The Cheese Place*, a Greek deli in Linden, is also a noteworthy place. Like *Meze Emporio*, they sell imported Greek ingredients and serve the wider Greek community in western and northern Johannesburg. For more on Greek food spaces in the city, see CHAPTER 5:



Figure 1: Map of Johannesburg inner city indicating the Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen



Figure 2: Map of Senderwood, Bedfordview, Edenvale, and Primrose

There are also several Greek Orthodox churches in Johannesburg, many of which are in the areas in the eastern parts of the city mentioned above: Primrose, Bedfordview, Edenvale, and Senderwood. Several of these churches also operate Sunday schools and community schools that teach Greek language and culture. For more on Greek churches in the city, see CHAPTER 7:

McDuling (2014) provides insights into the status of the Greek language in Johannesburg. He notes a general shift towards English, the "dominant language of the host society" (McDuling, 2014, p. 31), but notes that there are several factors that aid in the maintenance of the Greek language amongst members of the diaspora in Johannesburg, namely education, religion, family, language loyalty, and cultural activities (McDuling, 2014). Over the course of my data

collection for this research, I have found that knowledge of the Greek language varies. My interviewees' knowledge of Greek ranges from having full fluency or Greek as a first language, to having only functional vocabulary, as in the case of my own knowledge of Greek. In most cases, my interviewees speak English with their families and friends and only use Greek symbolically (for more on this see Chapter 7). Raphaela Cocotos, a former SAHETI pupil and the daughter of a Greek Orthodox priest, noted in our interview that, interestingly, she and her brother have distinctly different levels of Greek proficiency, despite growing up in the same environment. Another interesting exchange occurred in my interview with Maria Dzerefos:

> Maria: I'm wondering…shouldn't we be talking in Greek?
>
> Alyssa: I don't think I can… I don't speak Greek.
>
> Maria: Oh alright, no problem. My Greek's not very good either.

There are, as I mentioned however, several community schools that offer Greek lessons and it is not difficult to find speakers of the language in Johannesburg, nor is it difficult – McDuling (2014) points out – to find private Greek language teachers.

Johannesburg is also home to several active Hellenic community organisations, which serve to maintain cultural ties to Greek heritage and assist members of the community in need. The main ones include the Hellenic Federation of South Africa, and smaller area-specific community groups such as the Hellenic Community of Johannesburg, the Hellenic Community of Germiston, the Hellenic Community of Alberton, the Hellenic Community of East Rand, and the Hellenic Community of West Rand and Krugersdorp. There are also several Johannesburg-based clubs and associations based on one's particular origin in Greece, Cyprus, or elsewhere, such as the Pan-Cretan Association of South Africa, the Lemnian Brotherhood of South Africa, the Imvrian Brotherhood of South Africa, the Macedonian Brotherhood of South Africa, the Association of Greeks from Egypt and Sudan, the Peloponnesian Society, the Ithaca Society, and the Cypriot Brotherhood. Under the auspices of the Hellenic Federation of

South Africa, the National Association of Hellenic Youth and Student Organisations of South Africa (NAHYSOSA) is a collection of nine affiliated youth organisations that operate across the country (NAHYSOSA, 2022). The Johannesburg-based ones include the Cypriot Youth Association (CYA), the University of the Witwatersrand-based Student Hellenic Association (SHA), and the Universities of Johannesburg Hellenic Association (UJHA), which brings together Hellenic students from smaller or private higher education institutions in the city (NAHYSOSA, 2022). These associations, clubs, and organisations consist of members who carry out various activities for cultural maintenance purposes, such as the organisation of cultural events, a Hellenic beauty pageant, and social and networking events, the dissemination of newsletters, the hosting of targeted radio shows, and the operation of active social media pages. These organisations usually also operate as charity groups for disadvantaged members of the community, assisting with medical costs, school and university fees, and living expenses, for example.

4.3.1. Greeks and other diasporas in the city

It would be reductive to talk only of the Greek community in this research and, indeed – as evidenced by the previous section – it is in many instances impossible to talk only of the Greek community without mentioning other diasporas, such as the Portuguese diaspora or the Italian diaspora. These communities predominantly occupied the same geographical locations in the eastern parts of Johannesburg, and it was common – as Renos Spanoudes pointed out in our interview – for Greek cafés, Portuguese grocery shops, and Italian delis to be on the same street or on the same block, especially pre-1994. While a full comparison of the ways in which Greekness, Portugueseness, and Italianness are inscribed in the city is beyond the scope of this research, some preliminary notes are important to contextualise the Greek diaspora in the context of European diasporas in Johannesburg, both historically and today.

Before examining some other European diasporas in Johannesburg, it is important to note that Johannesburg does not only consist of European immigrants; there are also significant groups of immigrants from other parts of Africa and Asia. However, these groups did not occupy the same geographical and social space in the city as the Greek diaspora historically and so there are fewer parallels between the Greek diaspora and these other diasporas than between the Greek diaspora and groups of immigrants from other parts of Europe. Crush (2011) notes that South Africa has been an attractive place to immigrants both pre- and post-apartheid, with the post-apartheid period seeing a particularly sharp increase in immigration from other parts of Africa, particularly southern African countries such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe. This presents the first contrast between the Greek diaspora (and other European diasporas), which arrived in Johannesburg largely prior to 1994, while the diasporas from elsewhere in Africa are more recent arrivals. Moreover, there are considerable differences between how diasporas from Europe and Africa anchored themselves in the city of Johannesburg. Crush (2011) reports that the average household income of an African immigrant family living in Johannesburg was startlingly low, given that many non-South African Africans have difficulties finding jobs, even if they have the requisite qualifications. By contrast, when the European diasporas, including the Greek diaspora, were establishing communities in Johannesburg and other parts of the country pre-1994, they were doing so within the context of legislated economic and social preference for Europeans. A comprehensive account of the differences between European and African diasporas in Johannesburg, while interesting, is not wholly relevant to this study; thus, I now turn back to the discussion of European diasporas in the city of Johannesburg, with which the Greek diaspora would have interacted and overlapped significantly.

There are several parallels between the Greek and Portuguese diasporas in Johannesburg. Consistent and large-scale Portuguese immigration to South Africa throughout the 20th century,

both legal and illegal (Glaser, 2012), has resulted in the Portuguese community being the largest European diasporic community in this country (Gupta, 2018; Glaser, 2010). Glaser's work (2010, 2012) on the Portuguese diaspora (that is, from Portugal and Madeira) in South Africa is extensive and well-known. The immigration of Portuguese people takes many forms: immigrants from Madeira (Glaser, 2012), immigrants from the mainland, illegal entry into the country (Glaser 2012), and colonial refugees (Glaser, 2010). Twentieth century Portuguese and Greek immigration to Johannesburg was contemporaneous, and both communities initially established themselves in the eastern parts of the city, including Hillbrow and surrounds. Portuguese immigrants to Johannesburg were (and continue to be), however, concentrated in the southern suburbs of the city, such as Bezuidenhout Valley, Rosettenville, Glenvista, and Bassonia. Portuguese immigrants were in the same boat as most Greek immigrants as, as 'poor whites' from the Mediterranean, they posed a threat to the apartheid government's endeavours for white ethnic purity. As mentioned above, anti-Portuguese sentiment was rife, and existed in parallel with anti-Greekness. Like the Greek diaspora, Portuguese immigrants established community organisations, community schools to teach Portuguese language and culture, and community radio stations and newspapers, and organised cultural events (Glaser, 2010). Glaser (2012) notes the importance of the Catholic Church for members of the Portuguese community, which mirrors the importance of the Greek Orthodox Church in maintaining their cultural heritage identity in Johannesburg (see Chapter 7). There is also a substantial number of diaspora-owned Portuguese restaurants in the city, particularly in the eastern and southern suburbs. Based on my own observations, Portuguese foodscapes in the city also make use of a set of distinctly Portuguese symbols (see Figure 3) in order to inscribe 'authentic' Portugueseness, much like the Greek restaurants referred to in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.



Figure 3: The menu at 1920, a Portuguese restaurant in Hyde Park, northern Johannesburg

The Italian diaspora in the city, while not as large as the Greek or Portuguese diasporas here, is relevant as, impressionistically, Italianness constitutes a salient part of the linguistic landscape of the city of Johannesburg. This is most evident in the foodscapes of the city as I would guess that there are more Italian restaurants in Johannesburg than any other genre of cuisine, ranging from 'authentic' family-owned establishments to Americanised mainstream

and commodified pizza joints. Early Italian immigration to Johannesburg followed a similar pattern to that of Greek and Portuguese immigrants, with the discovery of diamonds and gold making the city and surrounding areas popular destinations for people from all over the world seeking to make their fortune, or escape poverty (Sani, 1989). Many Italian immigrants during this time came from poor, agricultural backgrounds and came to the Transvaal in the late 1800s to work on the railways or in the mines (Sani, 1989) – much like the Greek and Portuguese immigrants around the same time. In addition, many Italian prisoners of war were captured in North Africa during World War II and interned in camps in South Africa (Sani, 1989). After the war, many decided to stay in South Africa as the prospects in this country, with its thriving economy and industry, were better than those in post-war Italy (Sani, 1989; Milanese, 2002). Like Greek and Portuguese immigrants, Italians were perceived as undesirable 'poor whites', but, possibly due to the relatively smaller size of the diaspora and resulting novelty value, managed to escape a lot of the vitriol that was levelled at their Mediterranean neighbours. Speculatively, this could be because Italy (and ostensibly Italians) was more exoticised and romanticised in South Africa than Greece and Portugal. Furthermore, unlike Greece and Portugal, who had very little industry and almost no global corporate enterprises in the 20th century, Italy boasted several companies with international clout that established offices in Johannesburg – such as Olivetti and Fiat (Milanese, 2002). Based on my impressions, Italianness in Johannesburg is inscribed using similar strategies to the inscription of Greekness (see Figure 4), especially with the use of allusions to the Italian landscape, especially the sea, and food (see Chapter 5).



Figure 4: The interior of Franco's, a family-owned Italian restaurant in Parkview, north-central Johannesburg

4.4. A note on Johannesburg

Writing in 1978, Hughes (1983) notes that "the amazing thing about Johannesburg is that less than a hundred years ago, the land on which it now stands was bleak, barren veld" (Hughes, 1983, p. 5):

> "There was not one of the usual geographical features – a large river, a sheltering mountain or a sea port – to form the basis for the foundation of a city. The area was desolate, windswept and sparsely inhabited by a few impoverished farmers who, because of the rocky nature of the ground, did very little in the cultivating of the land; instead they grazed small numbers of goats, sheep and cattle on the harsh landscape – the more ambitious agricultural farming was done in the lush lowveld in the eastern and northern parts of the Transvaal" (Hughes, 1983, p. 5).

Were it not for a stroke of sheer dumb luck on the part of George Harrison (not the Beatle), a former gold-digger in Australia, who recognised gold-bearing rock on the Langlaagte farm (see

Figure 5) in 1886 (Hughes, 1983), it is likely that Johannesburg would never have sprung out of the ground as rapidly as it did.



Figure 5: Original colonial farms of what would become Johannesburg, indicating Langlaagte

Of course, it is reductive and anti-decolonial to think of the history of Johannesburg as beginning with white farmers and the subsequent exploitation of the mineral wealth of the area. There is evidence of San hunter-gatherers from the Stone Age and the remnants of Sotho-Tswana iron mining and smelting activity dating back over 200 000 years (Mason, 1989). The more lush and fertile land north-west of contemporary central Johannesburg, near the Magaliesberg valley, shows evidence of having been farmed as early as the 6th century (South African History Online [SAHO], 2017). The mineral wealth of the land was therefore known and being made use of since long before the Europeans arrived and George Harrison found the first gold deposits. The history of the emergence of Johannesburg as a city on what was prehistoric and current farming land does, however, begin with the discovery of gold. It is a city that was literally established atop a commodity by men in need of or wanting (more)

money. Matshikiza (2008) calls it an 'instant city', constantly in flux, with the ability to change almost overnight:

> "There must have been something here, where Johannesburg stands, before the gold rush, but it was never recorded in history. So Johannesburg became and remained, by default, an instant city, periodically growing and being torn down as the gold seams shifted course in one direction or another and the needs of its fickle residents changed. [...] It is said that Johannesburg has been built up and torn down no fewer than five times since it first appeared on the Highveld in 1886. And each time it has reemerged even uglier than before" (Matshikiza, 2008, p. 221).

Perhaps Johannesburg is ugly – the inner city is largely brutalist grey and brown – but its history is rooted in functionality; something built so quickly could only have been done following the principle of 'form follows function'. On the surface, the city has very little aesthetic or natural value: as Hughes (1983) pointed out, Johannesburg has no meandering river, unlike London or Cairo, no majestic mountain, unlike Cape Town or Santiago, and no endlessly exploitable sea or ocean, unlike Durban or Miami. "[O]ne of the critical nodes of Southern Hemispheric capitalism and globalisation" (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008, p. 1), at its bare bones, Johannesburg is a frenetic concrete island in the veld, established by male colonial avarice on the backs of those they oppressed, spatially organised to ensure the continued segregation and dispossession of black people. The city provides a case study in ultra-rapid urbanisation, through which to illuminate "the dialectics between dispossession, exploitation, and struggle so characteristic of South African history, while closely tying them to the race, labour, and capital triptych" (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008, p. 11).

In an article for the online magazine *Frieze*, O'Toole (2013) writes:

> "Johannesburg rarely inspires plaudits, either from nervously curious visitors or the 4.5 million inhabitants who commune in this agitated, sprawling, bombastic, insecure and, at heart, deeply musical metropolis. Perhaps it is a marker of Johannesburg's being that it inspires something between ambiguous disbelief and out-and-out contempt. It is worth cataloguing some of the

> insults – they contribute towards sketching a loose profile of this get-rich city, which was formally founded in 1886 on a corrugated savannah" (O'Toole, 2013, n.p.).

He goes on to enumerate some of the less than complimentary ways that Johannesburg has been described – including the aforementioned characterisation by Winston Churchill – which account for a large portion of what Nuttall and Mbembe (2008) refer to as the "loathing of Johannesburg in the social sciences" (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008, p. 11). Rooted in "antiurban ideology" (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008, p. 11), this discourse consistently perceives "the industrial city, in particular, as a cesspool of vice" (*ibid.*), discounting its inherent complexity and multi-layered, multi-faceted nature. Linguistic Landscape studies are a useful tool through which to begin to unpack this fluid and intricate city and "make it talk" (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008, p. 30). Johannesburg has been the subject of a handful of seminal LL studies over the years (cf. Baro, 2017, 2018; Dowling, 2014; Vertovec, 2015; Milani, 2015), but not nearly as many as one would expect for a city so interesting.

The study presented in this dissertation is inherently a study of Johannesburg, that takes the city as its object of study and attempts to unpack a microcosmic layer of its complex and dynamic make-up. While discourses of the harsh realities faced by many in Johannesburg are valuable and insightful, following Nuttall and Mbembe (2008), and the work of the authors in their edited volume, I deviate from the norm of presenting portraits of Johannesburg as a place of only despair, poverty, and violence and attempt rather to capture a different facet of the city.

4.5. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I have presented the history and context of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, looking at how the Greek diaspora came to be concentrated in the city, as well as examined some of the experiences of members of the Greek diaspora during apartheid and in the present day. I first provided an overview of Greek immigration to South Africa, starting in the second

half of the 19th century, looking at how the community epicentre shifted from Cape Town to Johannesburg following the gold rush. I then presented a discussion of Greeks in the context of apartheid, using some of the stories of my interviewees for this research. The following section presented further contextual information on the Greek presence in contemporary Johannesburg, outlining the major Greek spaces and entities in the city. I also looked briefly at two other large Mediterranean diasporas in Johannesburg – the Portuguese and Italian diasporas – and how they relate and compare to the Greek diaspora. Finally, I provided a brief discussion of Johannesburg, including its history and discursive representation in scholarship and other forms of writing. This chapter has thus laid out the historical and contemporary background and context for my study.

The three chapters that follow constitute the empirical analysis chapters in this dissertation. In the following chapter, the first chapter of empirical analysis, I look at the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city, such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets, as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness.

CHAPTER 5: Inscribing Greekness through and around food

Greek immigration to South Africa has been associated historically with food-centred spaces (Mantzaris, 1978), such as restaurants, tearooms, takeaways, and supermarkets, and these continue to be a salient part of diasporic Greek identity in Johannesburg. Food is extremely prominent in the linguistic landscape of Greek spaces in the city and is thus a salient site of semiosis and a valuable sign in place through which we might read the discursive and semiotic modes used by the diaspora to inscribe and perform Greekness in Johannesburg. In his 2019 collection of essays and recipes *Thinking and Eating*, writer and philosopher Alain de Botton beautifully encapsulates the importance of food in the aesthetic and material lives of human beings:

> "A dish can serve the same kind of purpose as a work of art, an item of clothing or a building: it too can 'materialise' – and hence render more permanent – an outlook we need in order to flourish" (De Botton, 2019, p. 17).

Similarly, Gabeba Baderoon – a renowned and prolific South African food scholar – asserts that "to make and share food are subtle and complex human activities" and that "food is history that we 'eat'" (Baderoon, 2007, p. 129). De Botton and Baderoon represent just two expert individuals – creative and scholarly – who have noted the symbolic nature of food and attempted to explore its complexities. Food is extremely nuanced: it is at once physical and symbolic, intimate and universal, political and personal, vital and luxurious. As such, food has been shown to be a rich area of research in a plethora of disciplines and has even taken on a scholarly life of its own in the form of food studies, which developed out of this multidisciplinary interest in the subject (cf. Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Ternikar, 2020; Weller & Turkon, 2015; Baderoon, 2002, 2014; Århem, 1989 and others referenced here). It is these ideas that form the basis of this chapter, which explores food as a meaning-making tool used by the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg to inscribe and enact Greekness. As I show later

in this chapter, icons of certain food items have the ability to communicate Greekness – for example, images of olives appearing in the logo of a Greek restaurant called *Feta and Olives*.

In this chapter, I consider the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city (such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets) as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness. In addition, the links between food and Greekness in general are widely attested, which manifests in the way that food is used in all spaces (not only in food-centred spaces) as a tool to inscribe and perform Greekness by the diaspora.

The format of this chapter is as follows: first, I present an overview of the links between food and immigrant or diasporic identity, as attested and explored in previous scholarship in sociolinguistics as well as across a number of diverse disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and food studies; secondly, I explore the link between general Greekness and food, and present some ethnographic and photographic data from the linguistic landscape of Johannesburg in which this link has been deployed as a tool to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg; thirdly, I present more ethnographic and photographic data from food spaces in the city to illustrate how Greekness is inscribed in Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg; I then provide an account of a smellscape – based on that of Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) – of a Palm Sunday celebration at *The Greek Taverna* restaurant in the East Rand of Johannesburg; and finally, I present a summary of the chapter.

5.1. Food and diasporic identity

As mentioned above, food has been shown to be a salient site of semiosis in relation to diasporic or immigrant communities expressing their sense of belonging. Indeed, extensive scholarship

across a number of different disciplines indicates tenable links between food and immigrant identity – a link which has also been depicted repeatedly in literature and film. For example, in Elif Shafak's 2021 novel *The Island of Missing Trees*, the main character's Turkish Cypriot aunt Meryem states that "[f]ood is the heart of a culture. [...] You don't know your ancestors' cuisine, you don't know who you are" (Shafak, 2021, p. 137). Here, the character in the novel expresses a sentiment that has been the subject of scholarly inquest for centuries. Moreover, Bourdieu (1984) refers to the cooking pot as a repository of identity and acknowledges the importance of food in reconstructing and maintaining links to home:

> "It is probably in tastes in food that one would find the strongest and most indelible mark of infant learning, the lessons which longest withstand the distancing or collapse of the native world and most durably maintain nostalgia for it" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 79).

It is impossible to refute the concept of food as an emotional trigger of nostalgia, even without having conducted any empirical research on it. One need not look very hard to find some evidence of this on the internet, in popular food writing, food podcasts, and cookbooks. An entire website has been dedicated to memories of food: aptly named Food Memory Bank[1], the site describes itself as "a public archive of food memory", to which readers can submit write-ups of their food memories to be published on the site. These memories range from one-liners to short essays, and to read them is to get a sense of how revered food is in our everyday lives. Food is written about sentimentally and reverentially and is used, in all instances on the site, to invoke links to a location or state from which the writer is now dislocated – most frequently one's childhood or past home(land). This theme has also been depicted in numerous films: Danish film *Babette's Feast*[2] (1987), Disney and Pixar's *Ratatouille* (2007), Lasse Hallström's

[1] www.foodmemorybank.wordpress.com (last accessed 28 February 2023).

[2] *Babettes Gæstebud* in Danish

Chocolat (2000) and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* (2014), Netflix romcom *Always Be My Maybe* (2019), and Hollywood comedy *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002), to name but a few.

Food as both a necessary part of human life[3] and a symbol with potent metaphorical power, therefore, presents scholars with a rich area of study:

> "Eating is central to daily life. Our relationship to food is one that is built on necessity and repetition. Because of this cyclical relationship, eating becomes a familiar and intimate part of our lives. Yet the foods we eat, and the circumstances under which we consume, extend beyond our biological need for fuel. They are also based on an individual's cultural, political, and familial heritage. Thus, the symbolic importance of food and consumptive rituals arises from the fact that these choices are representative of our individual and collective identities" (Godderis, 2006, p. 61).

Interest in the above has led to the emergence of Food Studies, an interdisciplinary field dedicated to the study of the relationship between food and the human experience, along with a number of devoted Food Studies journals and research entities. It remains a burgeoning area of research in the world. The remainder of this section is dedicated to an overview of studies from several disciplines, including (socio)linguistics, that illustrate empirical links between food and immigrant identity.

Gabaccia's (1998) noteworthy research indicates that there is an overwhelming sense in immigrant communities that to lose traditional food practices is to "abandon community, family, and religion" (Gabaccia, 1998, p. 54). Hundreds of studies of food and identity by anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and linguists argue that food and immigrant identity are inextricable. Parasecoli (2014), a food studies scholar and member of a diasporic

[3] I acknowledge that eating, and by extension food, is not uniquely human, but for the purposes of this research – which focuses explicitly and solely on humans' engagement with food – I must employ some human exceptionalism.

community in the USA himself, explores how and why "immigrants cope with the dislocation and disorientation they experience in new and unknown spaces by recreating a sense of place around food production, preparation, and consumption" (Parasecoli, 2014, p. 416). He draws a compelling comparison between language and food as two distinctly and arguably uniquely human behaviours and notes that food can be considered what Geertz (1973) described as "an ensemble of texts" (Geertz, 1973, p. 24):

> "Every ingredient, each dish, the meal structure, and all the elements forming a culinary culture are connected. They are influenced not only by the past, frequently interpreted and practi[s]ed as tradition, but also by new occurrences resulting from both internal dynamics and the incorporation of external elements. As a result, meanings attributed to food are never completely defined once and for all but are uninterruptedly negotiated and transformed through practices, discourse, and representations. However, despite constant changes, food cultures present an internal coherence, which provides parameters for defining behavio[u]rs and objects as acceptable or deviant and that can be interpreted as a form of culinary competence" (Parasecoli, 2014, p. 416).

Here, the author extends the notion of linguistic competence to food. He defines linguistic competence as the ability to interpret various phenomena as signs (Parasecoli, 2014, p. 417). In much the same way, Parasecoli (2014) notes, "culinary competence also functions as a practical toolkit acquired through embodied experiences and practices directed towards concrete goals" (Parasecoli, 2014, p. 417).

As a result, Parasecoli (2014) argues, food plays an important role in the "emergence of 'ethnic' identities" (Parasecoli, 2014, p. 423) and "ingredients, dishes, and practices have the potential to become cultural markers that identify and rally individuals and communities, who frequently display fierce attachment to their food traditions" (*ibid.*). It is this idea that forms the basis of the argument that runs through this chapter: that food is a meaning-making tool – a sign in place, through which we can read the discursive and semiotic modes used by the diaspora to

inscribe and perform Greekness in Johannesburg. Moreover, food and food practices play an important role in forging the cultural identity of a diaspora:

> "Participants in the same culinary culture acknowledge each other by the way they eat, by what they eat, and by what their diets exclude. Food is not only central to the emergence of a shared identity that is framed by the host community as 'ethnic'; it is also paramount to the formation of the migrants' opinions on their own history. Within the same population, the past can be projected as perfection and happiness, where food was healthier and more tasteful, or remembered as marked by hunger and deprivation" (Parasecoli, 2014, p. 425).

Parasecoli (2014) also examines *why* food plays the role in immigrant communities that it does. He argues that preparing and consuming food – vital functions necessarily involving the human body – are an important physical connection to an immigrant's heritage. These are actions and elements that are "firmly rooted in the tangible world, visceral bodies, and definite places" (Parasecoli, 2014, p. 426) and notes that studies of foodways are an important way to move away from the "detachment from physicality" (*ibid.*) that characterises much of the scholarship on globalisation.

Anthropologists Weller and Turkon (2015), in their study of the role of food in identity maintenance and formation for first- and second-generation Latinos[4] in an area of New York, also emphasise how food is a tool for meaning-making and can be used as a symbol to communicate membership to a group. Like Parasecoli (2014), they emphasise the physicality of food acts – preparation and consumption – and note that this is an important way through which immigrants maintain their links to their heritage:

> "Food is a physical manifestation of memory that connects immigrants to geographically and chronologically distant family members, experiences, and communities indicative of the fact

[4] I have chosen to use the term as used by the authors verbatim, but acknowledge that there is currently preference for the more intersectional term "Latinx" to refer to members of this community (Salinas, 2020; Salinas & Lozano, 2021).

> that food consumption and preparation function as both physical symbols and acts of nostalgia" (Weller & Turkon, 2015, p. 71).

In addition, Weller and Turkon (2015) refer to food as an "identity-validating symbol" (Weller & Turkokn, 2015, p. 70) that is used by immigrants to "communicate individuality of membership within a larger group" (Weller & Turkon, 2015, p. 58). Weller and Turkon (2015) emphasise how foods and food-related processes – such as preparation, consumption, and "passing on heritage foods to future generations" (Weller & Turkon, 2015, p. 70) – rely on the embodied meanings in these foods in order to "maintain, display and validate" immigrant identity. The idea of "displaying" one's identity through food is important in the discussion of the Greek community in Johannesburg that is to follow in this chapter, in which I illustrate that food which is an indispensable part of any linguistic landscape has been used extensively by the Greek community of Johannesburg to inscribe Greekness in a space.

Similarly to the aforementioned scholars, Ternikar (2020) emphasises the role that food plays for members of a diaspora in creating nostalgia and signalling links to one's homeland in her discussion of the Muslim kitchen in the USA. In this study, she explores how the maintenance of *halal* foodways is indispensable in the construction of an American Muslim identity (Ternikar, 2020). She also highlights the issue of "authenticity", which will be discussed in further detail within the context of the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg in Chapter 7:

> "Preparing authentic food is one way that immigrants signal their ethnic identity to each other. This functions both amongst insiders as well as outsiders. In the diaspora, the preparation of the authentic food of your parents' or grandparents' home is often equated with an authentic identity" (*ibid.*, p. 2).

In addition, Ternikar (2020) notes that "immigrants often hold onto imaginary or romanticised understandings of home" (Ternikar, 2020, p. 3), echoing a sentiment previously expressed by Bhabha (1994). In *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha, 1994), Bhabha asserts that members of a

diasporic community occupy an imaginary space and, in so doing, mythologise and idealise the place from whence they or their ancestors immigrated. Vallianatos and Raine (2008) note this phenomenon in their study of food in the lives of Arabic and South Asian women immigrants in a town in Canada, stating "non-recent immigrants [...] appear more nostalgic, idealising foodways and lifeways to a greater extent than recent arrivals to Canada" (Vallianatos & Raine, 2008, p. 370). I deal with the idealisation of Greece in the inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg in Chapter 6.

Several studies have also focused on the meanings of particular food items. Århem (1989), for example, looks at the meanings of milk, meat, and blood for the Maasai. As an anthropologist, Århem's study uses the food system of the Maasai as a "system of meaning" (Århem, 1989, p. 15) through which to read and understand the social system of the community. Nevertheless, his treatment of the food items – milk, meat, and blood, as well as honey and mead – as semiotic, or meaning-making signs, is relevant to this study:

> "These are the constituent elements of the pastoral diet: milk, meat, and blood. The ideas associated with them, and the multiple meanings they generate, make up the Maasai food system. As a cultural code it both communicates, and is informed by, the fundamental principles of Maasai culture" (Århem, 1989, p. 15).

He finds that milk is associated with women and the home and is considered ordinary food, while meat is associated strongly with men and the community and is considered social food (Århem, 1989). The value of these food analyses, for Århem (1989), lies in the ways in which they provide insight into the social structures of the Maasai. While I do not intend to discuss the social structure of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, Århem's (1989) work provides valuable evidence of the symbolic power of food.

5.1.1. Food and diasporic identity in a South African context

Studies dealing with the semiotic powers of food abound in a South African context as well. Once again, most of these are completed within the context of a discipline such as anthropology, sociology, or food studies – I deal with linguistic studies of food towards the end of this section. Desiree Lewis is a notable food studies scholar, whose work, spanning a few decades, accounts for a large proportion of food studies work done in South Africa. Her work often deals with food security and the relationship between food and power and is grounded in feminist theory (cf. Lewis, 2015, 2016, 2019; Hames & Lewis, 2021). Most pertinent to this study is perhaps the work of Baderoon (2002, 2014), whose work examines the meanings of food in Muslim cooking in South Africa. She asserts that food is both "physical and symbolic" (Baderoon, 2002, p. 2) and notes the power food has in maintaining communities:

> "To everyone I interviewed, food has intensely emotional associations. An almost spiritual dimension to food is suggested by some of the stories. The ability to overcome feelings of homelessness, to maintain a sense of family and community; to retrieve precious notions of friendship and learning, to claim a link to history – all these seem part of a spiritual aspect of making, eating and sharing food" (Baderoon, 2002, p. 14).

Relevant to my own study, of course, is Baderoon's comparison of food to language:

> "Food is place, time – language. The practices surrounding food are never static. They absorb and carry traces of their encounters, like language. And like language, food is a channel for knowledge, memory, and artistry. Food articulates and mediates religious and social laws, and yet embodies varied interpretations across time and place" (Baderoon, 2002, p. 14).

The ability of food to embody meaning makes it an important aspect of a semiotic landscape and a vital tool used by the Greek diaspora to inscribe and perform Greekness in Johannesburg. Baderoon (2014) examines how Muslim food in the Western Cape was "crucially shaped by slavery" (Baderoon, 2014, p. 46) but has become exoticised – the "brutal history of slavery elided" (*ibid.*, p. 47) – in representations of Cape cookery. Looking at recipe books written by

white authors about "Cape Malay" cookery, she explores the ways in which the food and the figure of the "usually unnamed" (Baderoon, 2014, p. 47) woman in the kitchen carry "echoes of slavery" (*ibid.*) and how more recent cookery publications by Muslim women from the Cape themselves play an important role in reclaiming the history of slavery and challenging the way in which they have been portrayed. Although not a linguist, Baderoon (2014) presents an interesting analysis of a food item – the Hertzoggie[5] – as a sign that embodies a history that is both fraught and subversive. Hertzoggies were named after South Africa's third Prime Minister between 1924 and 1939 (Butler, 2017), J.B.M. Hertzog, it is believed, as a way to commemorate his promises to give women the vote and "make the slaves the same as the whites" (Baderoon, 2014, p. 63). While he fulfilled the former promise by giving the vote to white women, he remained an active proponent of racial segregation and was responsible for legislation which further limited (or eliminated) the land-owning and voting rights of Black South Africans – namely the Native Trust and Land Act (1936) and the Native Representation Act (Butler, 2017; Beinart, 2001). Cass Abrahams, one of Baderoon's interviewees and herself an expert on food in the Cape, asserts that when Hertzog did not "make the slaves the same as the whites [...] the Malays became very upset and they took that very same Hertzoggie and covered it with brown icing [...] and they call it a *twee-gevreetjie* [hypocrite]" (Baderoon, 2014, p. 63). Baderoon (2014) provides a succinct summary of the Hertzoggie as a sign:

> "The Hertzoggie is a complex sign. The word is a diminutive, potentially signalling familiarity and either affection or contempt. The cake is an invented and then changed ritual, a "delight" served at tea and special events like Eid, and also a bitter memory. It speaks a secret language of keenly ironic and cutting critique. It is a way of remembering history through the body, and makes history by speaking to the body. But it is also a divided sign, multi-layered, recalling the juxtaposition of the offer of commemoration, and why it was repealed. It speaks of a promise

[5] A Hertzoggie is a small biscuit consisting of a vanilla biscuit/pastry base, apricot (or another fruit) jam, and topped with desiccated coconut.

> by the dominant society that would in some ways salve the lingering historical pain of slavery. The story of the Hertzoggie remembers that the terms "Malay" and "Coloured" are directly linked to slavery. By using the word "slawe", it speaks in the register of history and addresses 176 years of slavery, not only the prefiguration of apartheid. On the other hand, the terms of this offer, to make the slaves the equals of whites, were always constrained in the language of whiteness, of becoming closer and equal to whiteness. This was a poisoned bargain and inevitably, one of betrayal. In contrast to its benignly picturesque image in popular cookbooks and media images, Muslim food thus carries the memory of enslavement and its long aftermath" (Baderoon, 2014, p. 64).

In her work, Baderoon makes reference to a seminal work of diasporic cookery in South Africa, Zuleikha Mayat's *Indian Delights*[6] recipe book, which has been the subject of much scholarship since its first edition was published in 1982 (cf. Vahed & Waetjen, 2010; Waetjen, 2009; Singh, 2021; and Wardrop, 2012). Govinden (2000) asserts that "[c]uisine was an important way of preserving cultural identity in a strange land" (Govinden, 2000, p. 107) and that *Indian Delights* demonstrates this through the stories about the history and experiences of Indian indentured labourers[7] in South Africa that are interspersed amongst the recipes in the book.

Van Niekerk (2014), another voice on South African cookery, explores how the food practices of Jews and Hindus in Durban "symbolise the local identity of the two groups" (Van Niekerk, 2014, p. 2). She found that the dietary practices of both groups, particularly the prohibitions on certain foods (pork for the Jews and beef for the Hindus) "were not only sufficient, but

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[6] A seminal piece of Indian women's writing in South Africa, *Indian Delights* is noteworthy for a number of other reasons as well. First published in 1982, it has since seen numerous new editions and spin-offs and is still in print and readily available online and in bookshops. It is a common feature in South African Indian households (and non-Indian households, including my own growing up) and is one of the most renowned South African cookbooks ever written.

[7] Many South African Indians are the descendants of indentured labourers from India who were brought to Natal (now the province of KwaZulu-Natal) between 1860 and 1911 to work on sugar plantations (Vahed, 2019).

necessary, for the creation, maintenance, and preservation of each of the groups' religions" (Van Niekerk, 2014, p. 9). Much of the scholarship on food and identity in South Africa looks at South Asian diasporas; so my own research, looking at food in a European diaspora in South Africa, will fill a gap in this literature.

5.1.2. Food and diasporic identity in linguistic/semiotic landscape studies

As mentioned previously in this section, food has also been the subject of much scholarship in linguistics, particularly in sociolinguistics, in recent years, illustrating how language plays an important role in studies of food. Many of these sociolinguistic studies involve the application of critical discourse analysis. Diemer and Frobenius (2013), for example, examine the language used in food blogs; Fuller et al. (2013) present a similar analysis of the discourse used around food and weight in *Men's Health* and *Women's Health* magazines; Al-Abodi (2022) presents a multimodal critical discourse analysis of restaurant menus in English and Arabic; Thomas and Selimovic (2015) present an analysis of the discourse on halal food in two online Norwegian newspapers; and Chiaro (2013) explores the performative nature of "food-talk" by television cooks Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson.

Given the importance of food in diasporic communities and the prevalence of linguistic landscape/semiotic landscape/geosemiotics studies to analyse superdiverse spaces, there are also a number of these studies that involve an analysis of food, either prominently or peripherally. In Kress and Van Leeuwen's *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001), they state that "sweets are clearly used to discipline oral pleasures towards important cultural values and life goals" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 78), in reference to Dutch liquorice. They explore how the characteristics of this particular sweet embody aspects of Dutch culture and "key moral values"

(Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 78): the sweet is incredibly hard and so has to be eaten slowly which, according to the authors, "teaches delayed gratification, saving, restraint, important virtues in the dominant Dutch tradition" (*ibid.*); the saltiness of the liquorice is reminiscent of salted herring which serves as a "symbol of how great things could come out of humble beginnings" (*ibid*.) for the Dutch, as well as links to the Dutch preoccupation with the sea and with salt-related metaphors; and, finally, the black colour of the liquorice is linked to how "black and white were the colours which Calvinist Dutch ministers prescribed as one of the key features of the Dutch dress code from the seventeenth century onwards" (*ibid*.).

Food appears in a number of traditional linguistic landscape studies that look at, for example, markets (see Lou, 2017), shops (see Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017), or superdiverse areas or streets (see Blommaert, 2013; Gonçalves, 2012; Lou, 2010, 2017; Leeman & Modan, 2009). Lou (2017), for example, takes a geosemiotics approach in her study of the "multilingual, multimodal, and multisensory repertoires" (Lou, 2017, p. 513) of three different food markets in Hong Kong, seeking "to understand how spaces of consumption are constructed by language in its various modalities and material forms and at its relationship with other semiotic resources" (Lou, 2017, p. 528). She highlights the importance of the markets where her participants shop for their food and identity:

> "To some extent, the geosemiotic aggregates of these three markets are aligned with the linguistic and cultural repertories of the customers. Just as Mrs. Lai's communicative competence and knowledge about food were indispensable in the wet market, Henry's dietary needs could only be fulfilled in the global supermarket. A shift in any component of the aggregate tends to give rise to a different sense of place as shown in Sasmita's encounter in the Nepali store. As key activity spaces in these individuals' lives, their interactions with language, signs, and material products inside these spaces of consumption further reinforce their relationships to the place. Where they shop becomes a part of who they are, and who they are informs them where to shop" (Lou, 2017, p. 528).

In a similar study, Pennycook and Otsuji (2017) examine semiotic assemblages in two Bangladeshi shops – one in Sydney and one in Tokyo. Amongst the 'assembling artefacts' that play an important role in these spaces are frozen fish and onions, which "enter sets of relationships with people, objects and place that give them particular local meanings" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017, p. 434) in these Bangladeshi shops.

There is also an established canon of research in which food and foodscapes take a prominent position, and are mentioned explicitly, in linguistic landscape or geosemiotics studies. Abas (2019), for example, examines cosmopolitanism in the linguistic landscape of three ethnic restaurants in Indiana, USA. She refers to these spaces as *ethnic foodscapes* (Abas, 2019), a term she defines as "referring to the entire built environment which any visible written inscriptions (shop signs, menu) and the literacy of people moving in and out of the restaurant" (Abas, 2019, pp. 53-54). While Abas's research complements my own in that it is also concerned with food and linguistic landscapes, her study remains largely logocentric, concerned only with "visible written inscriptions" (Abas, 2019, p. 72) in the restaurants and the social interactions between the people in the space and the written material (signs and menus).

On the other hand, Tran (2021) examines the links between *Pho*, a type of Vietnamese soup, and Vietnamese national identity in the linguistic landscape of Edmonton, a multiethnic city in the western part of Canada. Tran (2021) asserts that national identity is "understood as socially constructed to represent a series of assumptions about nationhood" (Tran, 2021, p. 73) and that it is "embedded in life's routines" (Tran, 2021, p. 73), and makes reference to 'banal nationalism', "the unnoticed ideological habits by which established nations are reproduced as nations" (Tran, 2021, p. 73). The author's analysis, couched in geosemiotics, shows that images

of Pho and iterations of the word itself in English and Vietnamese serve "as a national emblem by Vietnamese restaurateurs to evoke Vietnameseness" (Tran, 2021, p. 86). He notes that "the national identity of Pho is highlighted through the incorporated practice of addressing the taste of nostalgia, performing national identity, and eliminating regionalism" (Tran, 2021, p. 86). Tran's findings are similar to my own regarding inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg, where certain "Greek" food items such as feta cheese, olives, and lamb are used to inscribe Greekness and invoke links to a hegemonic Greek national identity.

It is evident that food and identity are linked and that there are tenable links between food and diasporic identity in particular. This has been explored in a vast canon of literature spanning several decades and a number of different disciplines (cf. Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Ternikar, 2020; Weller & Turkon, 2015; Baderoon, 2002, 2014; Århem, 1989 and others referenced here), including sociolinguistics (cf. Diemer & Frobenius, 2013; Al-Abodi, 2022; Chiaro, 2013; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Lou, 2010, 2017; Abas, 2019; and Tran, 2021). My study will augment the canon of literature on diasporic food and food in linguistic landscape studies and provide an analysis of European diasporic food in South Africa to complement the work that has already been done on Indian food in the country. The following section explores the links between Greekness and food, both in the historical context of Johannesburg as well as stereotypically.

5.2. Greekness and food

As well as historical associations between the Greek diaspora and food and food spaces, as I show in the following section, this also appears to be an issue of representation: there seems to be a general proclivity to associate Greek people in general – or Greekness in general – with food: depictions of an overabundance of food, a fondness for lamb, an obsession with feta

cheese, and the urge to feed and eat as comfort and occupation make the 2002 film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* more ethnographic portrait than comedic caricature. The film revolves around Toula Portokalos, a first-generation Greek-American woman whose immigrant parents run a Greek restaurant in Chicago, and her relationship with (and eventual marriage to) all-American Ian Miller. It is rife with allusions to Greek preoccupation with food. For example, Toula's mother, Maria, spends a lot of her time cooking and feeding people and is frequently depicted in the film surrounded by an abundance of food (see Figure 6 below); and in another scene, Toula's aunt, upon hearing that Ian is vegetarian, proclaims "that's okay; I make lamb".



Figure 6: Still of Maria, the protagonist's mother, in the 2002 film 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding'

My Big Fat Greek Wedding was particularly well-received by members of the diaspora, who found it to be an accurate and apt depiction of Greek-American life[8] (Tzanelli, 2004). Interestingly, however, the film seems to have been less positively received in Greece itself[9][10]. Nevertheless, the food-centric identity, that is played for laughs in the film, seems to be

[8] Also see https://screenrant.com/my-big-fat-greek-wedding-right-greek-american-culture/#greek-school-as-a-rite-of-passage (last accessed 28 February 2023).
[9] http://hellenisteukontos.opoudjis.net/2017-05-17-what-do-greeks-think-about-the-film-my-big-fat-greek-wedding/ (last accessed 28 February 2023)..
[10] https://www.quora.com/What-do-Greeks-think-about-the-film-My-Big-Fat-Greek-Wedding (last accessed 28 February 2023).

assumed by Greek people generally. Figure 7 and Figure 8 below are two examples of memes[11] that play on Greek people's penchant for food. Figure 7 features a still from the film *300* (2006) that shows an enraged Gerard Butler as King Leonidas of Sparta. This image, along with the caption "That moment when you're out of feta", imply that people of Greek descent react similarly when they run out of feta cheese. Figure 8 features an image of someone being 'injected' with a *souvla*[12] skewer as a form of vaccination particular to Greek people. This meme was shared in 2021 and so is likely playing off the context of the height of COVID-19 vaccination efforts. These memes were shared on Facebook by *Growing Up Greek Style* and *Greek Gateway*, respectively, and are representative of a whole genre of food-related memes that is favoured by these pages and their fans. Interestingly, the two Facebook pages – along with others such as *Greek Boston*, *Growing up Greek American*, and *Are you even Greek?* – are administered by and targeted to the Greek diaspora, and there is a lot of other evidence to indicate that this assumed food-centric identity is particularly prevalent in immigrant communities.

[11] An image, typically a humorous one, posted on and spread around the Internet.
[12] Chunks of meat, typically lamb or chicken, threaded onto a skewer and cooked over a fire.



Figure 7: A meme from a Facebook page called Growing Up Greek Style



Figure 8: A meme from the Facebook page Greek Gateway

There is no research on the origins of the links between food and Greekness. It remains something that is taken for granted by members of the Greek diaspora and those who are

familiar with them. For example, in a 2016 listicle[13] entitled '19 Signs You Were Raised in a Greek Kitchen'[14], the author asserts that "our [Greek] culture stems from the kitchen. Seriously, if we're not eating, we're dancing" (Doris, 2016). Similar online articles also make reference to Greek food as being an integral part of Greek (diasporic) life, including articles such as 'Growing Up Greek American: 15 Things We All Experienced in Childhood'[15] (Kolasa-Sikiaridi, 2022), '10 Truths About Growing Up Greek'[16] (Panagiotopoulos, 2014), 'What It's Like Growing Up Greek'[17] (Ioannou, 2022), and 'Growing up Greek in America – MTV has it all wrong'[18] (Karapanagiotides, 2014). This indicates that the act of eating – as well as of preparing and discoursing about food – are essential aspects of the performance of Greekness. The notion of performativity is a particularly salient aspect of research in tourism studies (Harwood & El-Manstrly, 2012; Wang, 2020; Larsen, 2010), including in those on food tourism (Rabbiosi, 2016; Everett, 2008, 2019; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Ikäheimo, 2020). Everett (2019) notes that "In placing specific emphasis on "things" (such as food) and their importance in tourism performance in the way they enhance the physicality of the body, such research stresses the inescapable hybridity of human and non-human worlds, the material and the non-material" (Everett, 2019, p. 7). These types of studies in performativity in tourism also "present opportunity for greater insights relating to how bodies are both inscribed by discourse, while also able to spatially perform both normative and transgressive identity practices" (De Jong & Varley, 2017, p. 220).

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[13] A portmanteau of *list* and *article*, denoting a form of internet writing that presents information as a numbered list.
[14] https://spoonuniversity.com/lifestyle/19-signs-you-were-raised-in-a-greek-family (last accessed 28 February 2023).
[15] https://greekreporter.com/2022/02/18/greek-american-childhood-growing-up/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).
[16] https://thoughtcatalog.com/angela-panagiotopoulos/2014/12/10-truths-about-growing-up-greek/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).
[17] https://gentwenty.com/what-its-like-growing-up-greek/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).
[18] https://cosmosphilly.com/growing-greek-america-mtv-wrong/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).

In summary, it is evident that members of the Greek diaspora around the world appear to assume a food-centric identity, which is also sometimes imposed by non-Greeks on those of Greek descent. The following section presents an analysis of the role of food in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg foodscapes, including how this food-centric Greek identity is assumed and projected onto Greek South Africans.

5.3. Inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg foodscapes

The discussion in the previous sections of this chapter has shown that food is a powerful meaning-making tool (cf. Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Ternikar, 2020; Weller & Turkon, 2015; Baderoon, 2002, 2014; Århem, 1989 and others referenced here) and that there is a common association between Greekness and food, where food-centricity is an assumed identity by members of the Greek diaspora across the world. This section presents an analysis of the role of food in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg foodscapes.

Renos Spanoudes, a teacher at King David Victory Park High School[19] and a well-known South African stage actor, effusively proclaimed in my interview with him for this research that "we're [the Greeks] bloody good at food". About his own upbringing in Johannesburg as the son of Greek-Cypriot parents, Renos recalls the time he spent "behind the counter in [his] father's cafe" which was on a street filled with cafes and other types of shops owned by Greek and Portuguese immigrants. Pronounced "caffy" (/kæfi/), the cafe to which Renos refers here is a corner shop – a small supermarket, often on the corner of a block, that would sometimes also serve takeaway meals. These shops were once ubiquitous in Johannesburg but have largely been replaced by mainstream chain supermarkets – McDuling and Barnes (2012) note the

[19] A Jewish private high school in Victory Park, Johannesburg.

Greek café as a "characteristic feature in many suburbs" of Johannesburg pre-1994 (McDuling and Barnes, 2012, p. 167). They can, however, still be found in older, less built-up residential areas in the city, such as Brixton, Linden, Sophiatown, and Orange Grove. Renos's experiences in a corner café mirror those of many Greek immigrants to Johannesburg in the 20th century. McDuling (2014), quoting from the *Sunday Times* newspaper, notes that the café or corner shop was historically a "type of business […] dominated by the Greek community" (Sunday Times 1977, quoted in McDuling, 2014, p. 318) and it was these food spaces that functioned as a steppingstone into South Africa for many new immigrants.

The history of Greeks and food spaces in South Africa goes further back in history to the late 19th century, when Greeks notoriously owned "cafés de move-on" (Chaldeos, 2020), a type of early horse-drawn food truck, pictured in Figure 9 below. While the earliest Greek immigrants to South Africa predominantly found work on the mines or the railways, from the late 1800s, the rapidly growing Greek community turned increasingly to the food sector (Chaldeos, 2020). Chaldeos (2020) notes that "a few people realised that servicing gold miners could be more lucrative than the act of digging" (Chaldeos, 2020, p. 161), and this could perhaps be the reason behind the shift to food-oriented businesses during the gold rush in Johannesburg. It is important to note that at this time, circa 1896, the Greek population in Johannesburg was miniscule at only around 70 people (Chaldeos, 2020), but every member thereof was involved in a food-related business: either cafés de move-on, tearooms, pastry shops, or groceries (Chaldeos, 2020). By 1919, the Greek population of Johannesburg had grown somewhat and business registration records for that year, as reported by Chaldeos (2020), show that 188 business licences were issued to Greeks for 88 tearooms, 44 groceries, five restaurants, two butcheries, one hairdresser, and one billiards café.

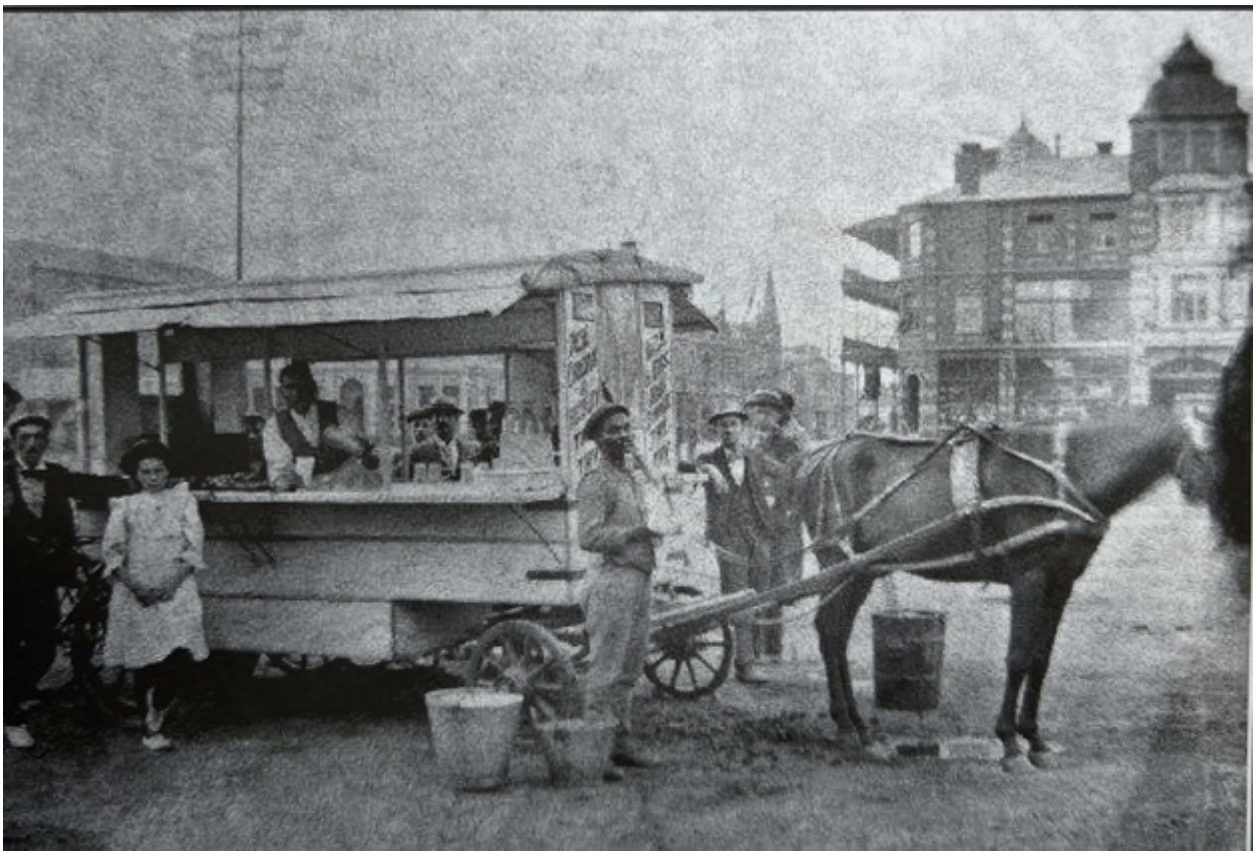

Figure 9: A typical cafe de move-on in the 1890s

(Source: Chaldeos, 2020, p. 161)

Mantzaris (1978) also notes the importance of food spaces in the lives of Greek immigrants to South Africa, asserting that 85% of Greek immigrants in the 1930s were either café owners or greengrocers (p. 48). He logically attributes this to the fact that a majority of Greek immigrants into South Africa came from agricultural backgrounds (an assertion made by Chaldeos (2020) as well), and perhaps illogically to the "personality and general orientation of the individual immigrants", in whom "suspicion and tension" were "instilled […] from a young age" (Chaldeos, 2020, p. 48), causing them to be inherently distrustful and thus self-sufficient so as not to be reliant on others.

It is both interesting and important to note that it was not only in South Africa where the earlier Greek immigrants became involved in the food sector. There is a fairly substantial body of

work, predominantly historical and anthropological, on the Greek diaspora in Australia (cf. Alvanoudi, 2018; Avgoulas & Fanany, 2018; Mavroudi, 2020; Papademetre, 1994; Tamis, 1986), which indicates that the Greek immigrants to Australia had similar occupations in the food industry to those in South Africa (cf. Keays, 2004; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1988, 1995, 2003, 2019; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998, 2016). This is not surprising as immigration to South Africa and Australia from Greece and Cyrpus occurred in parallel throughout the 20th century (McDuling & Barnes, 2012; Alvanoudi, 2018; Avgoulas & Fanany, 2018). Keays (2004) notes that Greek immigrants to Australia often ran cafés, fruit shops, and oyster bars in coastal areas starting in the first decade of the 20th century. She also indicates that Greeks were associated with food businesses well into the 1980s and Greek food and, ostensibly, Greek restaurants are common features in Australian cities (Keays, 2004). Janiszewski and Alexakis (2019) state the links between the Greek community and food spaces more explicitly: "[o]ver the first-half of the twentieth century, Sydney's Greeks became numerically prominent as food caterers and radically transformed the character of the city's popular eating-houses" (Janiszewski and Alexakis, 2019, p. 186). The authors also refer to previous work by demographer Price (1975), who found that 85% of first-generation Greek immigrants to Sydney, Australia were involved in food catering businesses. Mirroring contemporaneous events in South Africa at the time, Janiszewski and Alexakis (2019) refer to the importance of the gold rush in Australia on the establishment of Greek-operated food businesses:

> "During the Australian gold rush era (1850s–1890s) "golden Greeks" such as Spiro Bennett, Mark Gless, Andreas Kourouklis, Spyridon Magnarisi and James (Ioakeim) Zannis, opened up stores, taverns or small hotels. Recognising that gold digging was essentially a lottery, they directed their attentions towards servicing miners' needs on the fields, including the supply and preparation of food — regular income was almost guaranteed through such enterprise whilst the goldfields lasted, or better still, became permanent settlements. Greek involvement with food catering in Australia had commenced" (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2019, p. 187).

In both South Africa and Australia, the younger – usually male – relatives of Greek food business owners would be brought over from Greece to work in the businesses, and it was this process of 'chain migration' that led to the ever-increasing size of the Greek population in the countries in the first few decades of the 20th century (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2019; McDuling & Barnes, 2012). Moreover, Avgoulas and Fanany (2018) identify food as one of the four factors, along with language, religion, and culture, instrumental in maintaining Greek heritage in Australia.

Johannesburg remains a city with a noticeable number of Greek food spaces. A search on restaurant database Zomato presents almost 50 search results for Greek restaurants in Johannesburg, ranging from self-proclaimed authentic Greek-owned establishments, to more unusual chains (one of which features a sushi menu as part of its offering). Johannesburg also has a number of Greek delis and supermarkets that stock a range of imported ingredients and ready-made or frozen Greek delicacies, such as *The Cheese Place* in the suburb of Linden, *Emporio Meze* in Senderwood, and *Meraki* in Birnam. In addition to these typical food spaces in Johannesburg, a number of Greek cultural events could also count as foodscapes as they involve the ritualised consumption of certain foods. For example, Greek Orthodox Easter celebrations always involve a meal of roasted lamb, a game[20] involving hard boiled eggs that have been dyed red (that are then eaten afterwards), and copious amounts of *tsoureki*, a braided sweet bread usually adorned with red eggs and sliced almonds.

[20] After selecting a red egg, participants each get a chance to try to crack one another's eggs. The person whose egg survives the game unscathed is said to have good luck for the next year. The practicalities of the game may differ slightly between families but the gist remains the same.

It is common for a certain dish or ingredient to come to index a particular cultural identity (Tran, 2021), and Greekness in Johannesburg is no exception. Figure 10 and Figure 11 below are from an old Johannesburg newspaper called the *Rand Daily Mail*[21], which no longer exists but has provided me with many interesting instances of discourse by and about Greek South Africans in the city in the 20th century. The examples here indicate a few stereotypical food associations with Greece: namely an abundance of wine and tomatoes, slow and languid lunches by the sea, and an insinuation that vegetables cooked in South Africa are bland, unlike those cooked "the Greek way" (*Rand Daily Mail*, 13 September 1984). The indexicality of certain types of food also play a major role in the linguistic landscapes of spaces of Greekness in Johannesburg, as discussed in the following section.



Figure 10: Rand Daily Mail, 7 May 1970

(Source: Rand Daily Mail Archive)

[21] The newspaper ran from 1902 until 1985, when it was shut down by the South African government because of its outspoken anti-apartheid stance (*Rand Daily Mail* Archive). All issues of the newspaper over its 83-year run are available digitally via the *Rand Daily Mail* Archive, to which Wits University subscribes.



Figure 11: Rand Daily Mail, 13 September 1984

(Source: Rand Daily Mail Archive)

Like Renos, many other participants also raised the topic of food in a number of interviews. In some instances, participants referred to the ways they use food as a way to maintain their Greekness. Panos Dairopoulos, the owner of *The Greek Taverna* restaurant, for example, described himself as "very cultural" and notes that he deliberately opened his restaurant in the "heart of the Greek [community]", next door to SAHETI school[22], on the property of the Greek Sporting Club:

> "I'm very cultural. I want everything to be cultural. My kids must learn the Greek way – the *ethos*, we call it" (Panos Dairopoulos, 2022).

Panos emphasised that his intentions in opening a Greek restaurant where he did were in an attempt to "bring back the Greek community to what it used to be". Thus, for Panos, his restaurant plays an important role in cultural maintenance for the Greek community in the area, and for his own family. For him, it is important that his restaurant is "proper Greek" and that

[22] A Greek day school that follows the mainstream South African private school curriculum. The school admits students from a range of backgrounds, but it nevertheless has a large contingent of students of Greek heritage and classes on Greek language and culture are compulsory for all students.

everything you get at the restaurant is as it would be in Greece – as he says: "You walk into any Greek restaurant in Greece and that's what you're going to get":

> "We come from a little island called Ithaca – my wife does, at least – and we go there every year and through the years I've become very, well, good friends with restaurateurs there. I help them during the holidays sometimes as well. And this one particular restaurant that we go to, I enjoy certain stuff that they made. And I said, 'You have to show me how to make this; I want to take it back to South Africa.' He [the restaurateur] says, 'Go. I've got the *yiayia* [grandmother] in the kitchen and she'll show you.' [...] Even the *frappé*[23] I learned from a bar in Greece. The *proper frappé*, not what… just coffee" (Panos Dairopoulos, 2022).

Here, Panos reminisces about the time he spent on the island of Ithaca, where his wife's family is from, learning about the "proper" way to make a certain dish – in this case, *kolokithokeftedes*[24]. For him, his commitment to being able to reproduce the food and drinks of Greece in South Africa signals that his restaurant is 'authentic'; and by virtue of being 'authentic', it serves to bring together the Greek community of Johannesburg, thereby serving as an important tool of cultural maintenance.

Thalia G.[25], whom I interviewed for this research, brought up the issue of not being able to escape "Greek" as an identity marker in South Africa:

> "I cook a lot. Agh, you know, my friends are always expecting me to make them the Greek lamb and the tzatziki and everything. [...]And you know, the thing is with your identity in South Africa, if you're Greek or Lebanese or Portuguese or Italian and somebody needs to refer to you with your identity, they don't say, 'Well Mark, the engineer from Bedfordview.' The first

[23] An iced coffee drink typically made by mixing together instant coffee, water, sugar, and milk in a shaker until thickened and frothy (Mabbett, 2007). It was accidentally invented by a Greek Nescafé employee and then made popular throughout Greece and Cyprus through targeted Nescafé marketing campaigns (Souli, 2018). It is widely available at cafes in Greece and Cyprus and is an important feature of Greek coffee culture (Mabbett, 2007; Souli, 2018).
[24] Courgette fritters.
[25] This is a pseudonym as this particular participant did not want me to use her real name in my thesis. She did, however, give me permission to quote her verbatim.

> thing that comes up, '*the Greek!*' 'Oh *ja*, the Greek, the Greek architect.' So that's your identity. Your identity, it's always based on something which is if you're not English or Afrikaans. [...] So I've found that with a lot of people. Oh, you've got a temper; oh, you really like cooking, or you said that like that? Oh, it's because you're Greek" (Thalia, 2022).

For Thalia, being Greek comes with certain expectations – especially around food: her friends expect her to cook Greek food for them and her enjoyment of cooking is attributed to her Greek heritage. Another interviewee, Michelle Kondogiannis, reported a similar experience: when she lost her job in the travel industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a friend "suggested [she] start baking Greek, because [she's] Greek and [she] bake[s]". Unlike Thalia, however, Michelle acknowledges the importance of food as a tool to communicate and perform her Greekness:

> "I try and bring it into every conversation. Because I'm quite proud to be Greek. And I'm proud of my heritage. And so everybody knows I'm Greek, like, you know, if I bake something it's generally Greek; if I have a party, it'll be like Greek food, or a Greek theme [...] It's important to me. I'm always trying to bring it into my life" (Michelle Kondogiannis, 2022).

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which Greekness is inscribed in Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg through an analysis of data in the form of photographs of the signs found in these spaces. The notion of Greekness is inherently linked to the concept of national identity and it is important to consider that inscriptions and performances of Greekness are necessarily inscriptions and performances of a particular type of diasporic nationalism to the 'homeland'. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) emphasise the performative nature of nationhood, which is enacted and prescribed via signs – "neatly packaged distillations of the nation" (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008, p. 539) – like flags, anthems, statues, and (as I have argued throughout this chapter) food. The signs, including food, play an important role in invoking links to the 'home' nation of a diaspora, and reproducing this nation in a new location. The presence of these signs in Johannesburg's foodscapes indicates that they are signs of what Billig (1995) terms 'banal nationalism' – that is, they are everyday, bottom-up signs "embedded in routines of life" (*ibid.*,

p. 38) that signal links to a particular national identity. My analysis of Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg indicates that particular food items, the use of the Greek language, and deliberate allusions to Greece form a semiotic assemblage of Greekness in these spaces.

5.3.1. Greek food as the embodiment of Greekness

Certain food items play multiple roles in inscribing Greekness in foodscapes. As discussed previously in this chapter, particular dishes or ingredients may come to index certain national identities (Tran, 2021). Greek restaurants make use of certain "Greek" food items such as feta, halloumi, olives, yoghurt, lamb, olive oil, and wine to inscribe Greekness in the selection of items available on the menu, the use of iconic representations of these items as decorations, and in the names of some of the restaurants.

As I have mentioned, Johannesburg is home to a large number of Greek restaurants, including small family-run establishments to larger chains, and are scattered around all corners of the city. In addition, there are a couple of Greek delis, which specialise in Greek, often imported, pantry items and ready-made foodstuffs. These spaces constitute the 'food spaces' that are the subject of my research here. The inclusion of certain, typically Greek food items on the menus of restaurants is unsurprising. The associations with these foodstuffs as Greek are so strong as to make them an indispensable part of any Greek restaurant's offering – just as the inclusion of Pho in the menus of Vietnamese restaurants in Canada is necessary to inscribe 'authentic' Vietnameseness (Tran, 2021). While there is not just one dish or ingredient that signals Greekness as overtly as Pho signals Vietnameseness, a similar argument for the inclusion of *meze* could be made. *Meze* is the Greek equivalent of Spanish *tapas*, small plates of food designed to be ordered *en masse* and shared amongst a group of people. In Johannesburg, the menus of Greek restaurants will inevitably have a *meze* section (see Figure 12 for example),

featuring items such as grilled or fried halloumi, various dips, pita bread, olives, small pies (spanakopita, for example), falafel, and meatballs. In these foodscapes, *meze* plays an important role as an icon to communicate Greek national identity, thereby communicating that these restaurants are 'authentic'.



Figure 12: Menu of Meraki, a Greek restaurant and deli in Birnam

Moreover, lamb – which is not usually included in a *meze* menu, but rather as a main course – is also synonymous with Greekness. It is offered as a dish in many forms at almost every Greek restaurant (see Figure 13). Throughout the data collection phase of this research, I formed a salient part of another important foodscape – Greek Easter celebrations at the Hellenic

Community of Germiston (see Figure 14[26]). Unlike *meze* and the ingredients that constitute *meze*, which are used to represent Greekness iconically – in other words, using images that closely resemble the item in question to represent a particular concept (see Scollon & Scollon, 2003) – in restaurant decorations and in the names of certain restaurants, lamb is only used as a symbol of Greekness via its inclusion on the menu. This is possibly due to several reasons. Firstly, lamb has an almost sacred association for religious Greek people due to its associations with Jesus, the "lamb of God" (hence its prevalence at Easter time). Secondly, it is a difficult thing to represent iconically as, cooked, it has a rather indistinct shape. Scollon and Scollon (2003) describe icons as a type of sign that closely resembles an object. In their framework of geosemiotics, they note that icons "achieve their meanings through properties of indexicality" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 28) as they serve to index particular meanings. It would be difficult to create an iconic representation of lamb, despite its ability to index Greekness, due to its indistinct and varied appearance. Thirdly, lamb is not associated with idealised idyllic Greek life and food habits in the same way as *meze* dishes are.

[26] Note that this image depicts whole lambs roasting and so may be disturbing to some.



Figure 13: Part of the menu of Emporio Meze in Senderwood



Figure 14: Rows of whole lambs roasting over hot coals to form the main part of the Easter meal at the Hellenic Community of Germiston Easter celebration in 2022

As a *meze* offering plays an important role in inscribing Greekness in the menus of Greek restaurants, the individual ingredients that make up many of these dishes are also frequently used in the decor of these spaces. In Figure 15, for example, olives, wine, Greek coffee, grapes, ouzo, and the word 'feta' (in "best feta forever") feature on a decorative wall hanging in *The Greek Taverna*, a restaurant in Senderwood on Johannesburg's East Rand (see CHAPTER 6: for an in-depth discussion of this item). In Figure 16, olive oil tins are used as decorations in *The Cheese Place*, a Greek deli in Linden, while Figure 17 shows images of olives, *spanakopita* (spinach and feta pies), and halloumi adorning the deli's shop window.



Figure 15: A decorative wall hanging in The Greek Taverna, Senderwood



Figure 16: Olive oil tins on display in The Cheese Place, Linden



Figure 17: The shop front of The Cheese Place in Linden

Many food items, particularly those associated with *meze*, also feature as markers of Greekness in the names of some Greek restaurants in Johannesburg. Möhring (2008) notes the importance of restaurant names in signalling their identity as what Tran (2021) refers to as an 'ethnic foodscape'. Greek restaurants that are not named after a word in Greek (such as *Meraki*, *Orexi*, *Mythos*, *Kolonaki*, *Parea*, and *Ethos*, which are discussed further on in this section) are generally named after a food item. A notable example of this is *Feta & Olives*[27] (see Figure 18), whose name – through the use of two particular, quintessentially Greek items, feta and olives – serves to signal 'authentic' Greekness.

[27] *Feta & Olives* used to be called *Plaka*. Its name change thus took it from one category of restaurant name (those using Greek words) the another (those using food).



Figure 18: Feta & Olives in Cresta

5.3.2. The Greek language as a marker of geosemiotic identity

Operating alongside food in these Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg to index Greekness is use of the Greek language. This manifests in two main ways: firstly, in the names of restaurants; and secondly, in the menus of the restaurants. Restaurants with names that are Greek words abound in Johannesburg: *Meraki*, *Orexi*, *Mythos*, *Parea*, *Nostimo*, and *Ethos*, to name a few. The meanings of the words used in the names of these restaurants are associated with the conviviality of eating out: *Orexi* (όρεξη) means 'appetite', *Mythos* (μύθος) means 'myth' or 'legend', *Nostimo* (νόστιμο) means 'delicious', and *Ethos* (ήθος) means 'ethos'. *Meraki* (μερακι), according to the menu of the restaurant, means "to do something with soul, creativity or love" (see Figure 19). *Parea* (παρέα) essentially means '(with) company/companionship', but is described in a much more poetic way on the restaurant's website:

"PAREA is one of those great Greek terms used daily in our conversations that is nearly impossible to translate. It describes a group of people who derive great pleasure simply being together. It is a phenomenon, most often spontaneous and always a celebration of a group" (https://www.parea.co.za/about-us).



Figure 19: The back side of the menu of Meraki, Birnam

The restaurants *Soul Souvlaki*, *Souvlaki Box*, and *Mr Souvlaki* indicate that there is also a whole genre of restaurants with names involving *souvlaki* (meat, usually lamb, skewered and cooked over coals), which includes both categories of restaurant names mentioned here – those which make reference to food and those that use Greek words.

Many of these restaurants also have slogans that appear as part of their logos and other branding. It is interesting to note that there is a lot of overlap between restaurants when it comes to these slogans – in other words, many restaurants have the same slogan: *Orexi*, *Soul Souvlaki*, and *Souvlaki Box* all have "Greek street food" as their slogans. Two other restaurants that I discuss further on in this section, *Kolonaki* and *Kalamaki,* both have "a/the taste of Greece" as their slogans. These slogans serve to explicitly index Greekness by referring to Greek/Greece.

As in Figure 19 above, a few restaurants include references to the Greek language in their menus as well. *The Greek Taverna* (see Figure 20 below) includes vocabulary relating to convivial Greek eating in their menu, providing the word *kefi* (κέφι) with the following definition:

> "1. the spirit of joy, enthusiasm and passion
>
> 2. the Greek way of life"

While the word is more accurately (albeit less figuratively and poetically) translated as "fun/mirth", the inclusion of it on the front of the menu of *The Greek Taverna* serves to further inscribe Greekness. In addition, the type of word included here also speaks to the generally merry romanticised image of Greekness that is frequently performed in Greek spaces in Johannesburg (see CHAPTER 6: In many instances of Greek words appearing in menus, the use of the Greek alphabet serves to augment the inscriptions of 'authentic' Greekness. *Kolonaki*, a restaurant in Parkhurst, for example, stylises their name in their logo so that it includes the Greek letter omega in place of the second "o" (see Figure 20).



Figure 20: The front of the menu at The Greek Taverna, Senderwood



Figure 21: Kolonaki logo in Parkhurst

In addition, many of the restaurants' menus make use of Greek words when referring to certain dishes as well as to various categories of dish (see Figure 13 above and Figure 22 below).

Figure 22 below is an image of a section of the menu of *Emporio Meze*, a restaurant and deli in Senderwood in eastern Johannesburg, in which most of the dishes – categorised "traditional Greek foods" – are listed by their Greek name and accompanied by a description of the dish in English. Figure 13 depicts the section of the menu for the same restaurant that details items made on the grill, next to the Greek word for barbecue, written in the upper-case Greek alphabet: ψησταριά.



Figure 22: Part of the menu of Emporio Meze in Senderwood

5.3.3. References to Greece in the construction of Greekness

Finally, many restaurants make use of deliberate allusions to Greece in their menus and/or names as another way to inscribe 'authentic' Greekness in these foodscapes. *Kolonaki* and *Kalamaki* are two examples of restaurants with names that invoke Greece: *Kolonaki* is the name of an area in Athens and *Kalamaki* is the name of a town on the Greek island of Zakynthos. Figure 23 below shows yet another section of *Emporio Meze*'s extensive menu. Here, the breakfast options and omelette options are named after Greek islands. I discuss the links to Greek geography in more detail in CHAPTER 6:



Figure 23: A section of Emporio Meze's menu

In sum, my analysis of Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg has indicated that particular food items, the use of the Greek language, and deliberate allusions to Greece form a semiotic assemblage of Greekness in these spaces. The following section presents a smellscape –

following Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) – of a Palm Sunday event at *The Greek Taverna* restaurant.

5.3.4. A note on performativity

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the acts of eating, preparing, and discoursing about food appear to be an essential component of the performance of Greekness. This performativity of Greekness is evident in the Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg as well. Interactions around and through food are necessarily embodied and represent an instance of performativity in Greek diasporic spaces and in the discourse about and by members of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg.

We might consider performativity theory, as it has been applied in food tourism studies (cf. Harwood & El-Manstrly, 2012; Wang, 1999, 2020; Larsen, 2010), including food tourism (cf. Rabbiosi, 2016; Everett, 2008, 2019; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Ikäheimo, 2020), as a way to account for the nature of foodscapes in diasporic spaces. As Everett (2019) notes, "in placing specific emphasis on "things" (such as food) and their importance in tourism performance in the way they enhance the physicality of the body, such research stresses the inescapable hybridity of human and non-human worlds, the material and the non-material" (Everett, 2019, p. 7). These types of studies in performativity in tourism also "present opportunity for greater insights relating to how bodies are both inscribed by discourse, while also able to spatially perform both normative and transgressive identity practices" (De Jong & Varley, 2017, p. 220). In addition, Wang (1999) notes that embodiment – the physical presence of human bodies – is an important aspect of authenticity in tourism (see Chapter 7). Wang's (1999) interest lies in the communication of authenticity and thus pays particular attention to the performativity of authenticity.

Thus, the presence of physical bodies eating Greek food in Greek food spaces in Johannesburg plays an important role in inscribing Greekness in the material world and this performance is therefore an important sign of Greekness in these spaces. In addition, discourse around the links between Greekness and food is used in the form of decorations in Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg, such as in Figure 10, further entrenching the notion that this performance around food is a necessary part of the inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg.

Another salient part of the performativity of Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg is that of the restaurateurs. Greek restaurants in the city often host Greek events that include live music, Greek dancing, plate smashing, and other activities that are designed to enable patrons to perform and enact an 'authentic' Greek experience. However, the restaurant owners themselves – like Panos – often perform exaggerated Greekness as part of the hospitality experience at the restaurant, greeting customers enthusiastically in Greek, kissing regulars on both cheeks, speaking loudly and ebulliently in Greek and English, and moving from table to table to chat with and jovially tease customers. In my interview with him, Panos stated that he wants his restaurant to feel like you have walked into a "Greek home"and his conviviality is part of achieving this. Once again, this kind of performance around food is an important part of the inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg.

5.4. Smellscape of Palm Sunday at The Greek Taverna

The foodscapes involved in my research inevitably involved the presence of food, and its preparation and consumption. The presence of food and the activities around it provide us with a number of sensory and semiotic resources. Food is most obviously associated with taste and, as I have shown in the previous section, can function as an important visual feature in a semiotic landscape. Pennycook and Otsuji (2015), however, encourage the consideration of an oft-

overlooked sense: smell. In this seminal paper, the authors assert that "smell is an important means by which we relate to place" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015, p. 191). Smells serve as important resources in a semiotic landscape and "open up a different terrain of semiosis, one that associates meaning with objects, people, affect and places in a different way" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015, p. 209).

In this section, I consider the role smells played in a particular foodscape – a Palm Sunday celebration at *The Greek Taverna* restaurant in Senderwood – and present an 'olfactory ethnography' thereof. First, I discuss the origins and value of smellscapes as an ethnographic approach before moving onto my own account of the smellscape at *The Greek Taverna* on Palm Sunday.

5.4.1. Smellscapes as ethnographic approach

The term 'smellscape' predates Pennycook and Otsuji's (2015) use of the word by a few decades (Porteous, 1985) and, in fact, has been used fairly commonly since its creation, particularly in the context of geography, urban planning, and architecture (cf. Xiao et al., 2018; Xiao, 2018; McLean, 2019, 2020; Tolaas, 2010).

> "The study of urban smells provides an additional dimension to our understanding of cities, enriches our sensual experience and provides input for urban design and architecture to communicate and understand the invisible city" (Tolaas, 2010, p. 153).

In the same tradition as 'foodscape', 'smellscape' follows the same construction of Appadurai's (1996) *scapes* (namely ethnoscapes, mediascapes, financescapes, technoscapes, and ideoscapes), and refers to spaces, environments, and landscapes that are characterised by the presence of smells. Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) make use of the term and apply it to a semiotic landscape/geosemiotic study of a multicultural suburb in Sydney, Australia. This application stems from a lengthy analysis of prior scholarship attesting to the "relations

between language, smells and place" (*ibid*., p. 192), based on the fact that "every place bears an olfactory trace" (Drobnick, 2005, p. 272).

Increased interest in more 'physical' senses, such as smell, Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) posit, follows centuries of Western scholarship characterised by a "mind/body division" (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015, p. 192):

> The mind/body division in European thought divided up the senses, so that the eyes and ears were invited to accompany the mind, while mouth, nose and skin were assigned to the body. One of the legacies of the European Enlightenment was therefore an ideali[s]ation of the senses deemed to be involved with language and thought (sight and sound) and a relegation of the lesser senses that involved the body (touch, taste, smell). The gendered, classed and racial hierarchies of the time linked the more bodily, sensual and less controllable senses (touch, smell, taste) to animals, women and other classes and races [...] and the higher intellectual senses (sight and hearing) to the peak of social and biological evolution (white, upper middle class men)" (*ibid*., pp. 192-193).

Thus, the authors note, "if we wish to incorporate those other senses that have been overlooked in the European male sensorium [...] we need to approach semiotic landscapes not only with a focus on multimodality but also a more embodied engagement with multi-sensoriality" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015, p. 199). Moreover, they advocate for the inclusion of smell as a semiotic resource to be considered in such studies to allow for a "broader understanding of the semiotic landscape" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015, p. 198).

Pertinent to my own research, Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) consider the implications of practically conducting an 'olfactory ethnography' of a place:

> "Smells take us into a different set of interpretive relations: not only do our research processes have to be different (rather than the instant recording of the digital image, we have to work with different types of description) but smells as signs are associational and interpellative, varying

> widely from simple associations (this smells like vinegar) to complex relations of place (it reminds me of the fish and chips we used to eat after swimming at the local pool). The intersectional spatial repertoire of such places allows us to see how languages are emergent among other forms of semiosis" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015, p. 200).

Smells thus present a host of obstacles that do not feature in visual semiotics, most notably that there is no equipment with which to record scent, nor are there many words in English with which to describe scents. Like Pennycook and Otsuji, I had only a notebook and my memory with which to record my olfactory observations. However, while Pennycook and Otsuji managed to recruit "several sets of noses, and noses that were differently attuned" (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015, p. 203), I had only my own nose at my disposal. I also had only my own Greek sensibilities to guide my observations. Thus, the account that follows in the next subsection is possibly better described as an olfactory autoethnography.

5.4.2. Palm Sunday at The Greek Taverna

It is, firstly, important to situate my olfactory ethnography of Palm Sunday at *The Greek Taverna* within the context of the South African Greek community and Greek Orthodox Christianity, as well as reflect on how it was that I came to attend such an event. *The Greek Taverna*, as I have mentioned in prior sections of this chapter, is a Greek restaurant that sits on the grounds of the Greek Sporting Club in Senderwood, a suburb in eastern Johannesburg with a sizable Greek population. The owner of the restaurant, Panos Dairopoulos, who was interviewed for this research, prides his restaurant on its offering of "proper" Greek food and considers himself "very cultural". He and his family are also practising members of the Greek Orthodox Church, and attend church services at the nearby Greek church (at SAHETI school) regularly. The Palm Sunday special meal is an annual event at *The Greek Taverna* that is advertised on the restaurant's social media pages. The event takes the form of a lunch feast in honour of Palm Sunday – celebrated one week prior to Easter – that observant Greek Orthodox

Christians generally attend after a Palm Sunday church service. Fish is commonly eaten on Palm Sunday and is a Greek Orthodox tradition on this day (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 2021).

Palm Sunday is commemorated by Christians of all denominations. It marks the day when, according to Christian lore, Jesus enters Jerusalem after having performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead (Nicholls, 2007). John 12: 12-13 reports that upon entering the city atop a donkey, Jesus' disciples lay palm leaves upon the ground around him:

> "The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!'" (John 12: 12-13)

This scene – commonly termed the "Triumphal Entry" – marks the beginning of the last week of Jesus' mortal life before his crucifixion and ultimate resurrection (Nicholls, 2007). The significance of the palm leaves and branches is reproduced in Palm Sunday commemorations by the creation and distribution of little crosses made of palm fronds and the presence of palm leaves as decorations in churches and at events. For Orthodox Christians, Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week – the week up to and including the Easter weekend (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 2021).

Having seen the advertisement for the Palm Sunday meal at *The Greek Taverna* on social media, I decided to attend as part of my data collection process, which was ongoing at the time. In 2022, Orthodox Easter[28] occurred one week after Catholic Easter so this Palm Sunday event

[28] The dates of Orthodox Easter are usually different from the dates of mainstream Catholic Easter due to the fact that they are determined using different calendars: Orthodox Christians use the Julian calendar to determine the dates of Easter, while mainstream Catholics use the Gregorian calendar (Smith, 2022).

took place on the 17th of April. I recruited my parents, sister, and husband to accompany me and so it was that we arrived, empty-bellied, at *The Greek Taverna* on the appointed rainy Sunday.

Stepping out of the car into the parking lot of the restaurant at the Greek Sporting Club, I was not initially intending to conduct an olfactory ethnography of our time there. It was only a short while later when I caught the scent of a wood fire and cooking fish that I decided to focus on the smells. The source of the smell became more obvious as we followed it down the path, towards the entrance to the restaurant and caught sight of massive barbecues a few metres away, tucked into a corner to protect the fire from the weather.



Figure 24: A table setting for Palm Sunday at The Greek Taverna

The inside of the restaurant was significantly warmer than outside and was abuzz with activity as waitering staff bustled about to show us to our table and put the finishing touches on the table setting (see Figure 24). We were the first group to arrive at the restaurant. As we sat down at our table in a flurry of puffer jackets and umbrellas, I noted the scent of the crisp, clean tablecloth and the vegetal smell of the decorative fresh palm fronds on our table. Although rather minimal, the inclusion of the palm leaves on the table indicated that this was a special occasion and not just an everyday restaurant visit. This was compounded by the presence of a special menu, printed on ordinary printer paper (see Figure 25), with the scent of the ink still lingering. Unlike the glossy, robust everyday menus that are usually at the restaurant, the paper menu is ephemeral; meant only for use on this particular day by the people seated at our table.

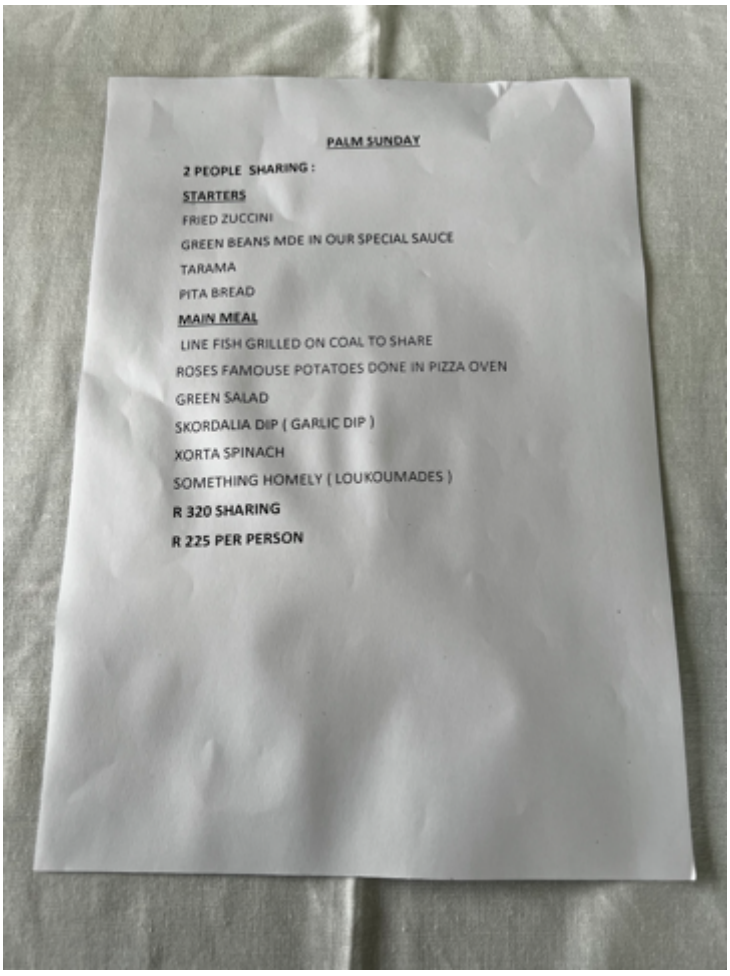

Figure 25: Palm Sunday menu

While sitting at the table awaiting the arrival of the first few dishes – the starters, or *meze* – I became aware of the smell of the pizza oven which, I saw on the menu, was being used to make Panos's wife Rose's famous roast potatoes. I was not the only person who noted this: almost as soon as I had the thought, my father exclaimed, "Smells good!", and announced that the smell was making him hungry. Other patrons started arriving, bringing the smell of the rain inside with them, and similar comments about the pleasant smells inside the restaurant echoed around the room. I noticed that my table of irreligious people was slightly less well-dressed than the other patrons, indicating that they had likely all come straight from a church service. While there was no restriction on the event, nor was it affiliated with any religious organisation, I got the distinct impression that the Palm Sunday event was specifically crafted to cater to this crowd, for whom the palm leaf decorations and food items themselves have deeper symbolic value than for me and my party.

The sound of Greek music drowned out the sound of the rain outside and from where I was sitting, I could make out conversations happening in English and Greek around me. The scent of food growing more pronounced and an excited din in the restaurant signalled the arrival of the *meze*. As our waitron placed the plates of food on the table in front of us, I took in the yeasty smell of pita bread and the sharp scent of the green beans cooked in tomato sauce, as well as scents of fried zucchini and lemony-fishy *taramasalata*[29]. The smell of the green beans evoked memories of my grandmother's version of the same dish, which I love. We made our first gustatory choices with our eyes and our noses and quickly polished off the *meze* – eating is as much about our sense of smell as it is about our sense of taste. The main course arrived, heralded by the smell of lemon from the fish, potatoes, and *horta*[30] and pungent garlic from the

[29] A dip made of fish roe.
[30] A type of wild spinach, usually eaten boiled and dressed with lemon juice and olive oil.

skordalia[31]. The main course was devoured similarly to the starters. The end of the meal brought sugar-scented *loukoumades*, fried balls of dough drenched in syrup, and strong-smelling Greek coffee which wafted behind the waitrons as they carried the cups around the room to their destinations.

Thus, smell "does a lot of important semiotic work, particularly in its interpellative and associational capacities: It evokes memories, people, activities and places" (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015, p. 208). In my approach to the Palm Sunday meal as an olfactory ethnographer, the foodscape also becomes a smellscape, indicating the inextricable link between food – and how we consume it – and scent. It also illustrates the importance of scent in relation to spatiality in the restaurant: the preparation of food necessarily fills a space with the related smells. While it is more likely than not that these smells are pleasant, they are unavoidable and thus form part of the "unintended sensory landscape" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015, p. 199).

Moreover, smell at this particular event holds additional symbolic value for the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg. Scents of typical Greek foods – such as lemon and garlic – carry important cultural significance, while the smell of the fish in that context in particular carries added important religious significance. It is also worth noting the relationship between the smell, memory, and emotion here. Several studies in psychology and sociology have shown that smells are "particularly powerful autobiographical cues" (Zeitlyn, 2016, p. 171), and are especially effective at triggering the recollection of memories and emotions in the smeller (cf. Chu & Downes, 2000). Thus, in addition to the cultural and religious significance of the scents at the Palm Sunday event, these smells also serve to evoke memories and, by extension,

[31] A dip made of either mashed potato or white bread and an absurd (but necessary) amount of garlic.

emotions in the patrons, in whose historical bodies are likely encoded these sense-memory-emotion links. As a result, these smells, plus the other semiotic resources in the space (i.e. visual and auditory) serve to create a place where this particular contingent of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg feels comfortable, or "at home" (Law, 2005, p. 239).

5.5. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I have examined the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city (such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets) as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness.

Firstly, food is a salient site of semiosis. There are strong links between food and immigrant (or diasporic) identity (Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Ternikar, 2020). Moreover, food can function as a meaning-making tool to index cultural identity (Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Århem, 1989; Weller & Turkon, 2015). The symbolic power of food has made it the subject of rich scholarship across a number of different disciplines (cf. Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Ternikar, 2020; Weller & Turkon, 2015; Baderoon, 2002, 2014; Århem, 1989 and others referenced here), culminating in the development of a specialised food studies discipline (cf. Lewis, 2015, 2016, 2019). Much work has been done on food both in a South African context (cf, Lewis 2015, 2016, 2019; Baderoon, 2002, 2014; Govinden, 2000; and Van Niekerk, 2014) and from a sociolinguistic perspective (cf. Diemer & Frobenius, 2013; Fuller et al., 2013; Al-Abodi, 2022; Thomas & Selimovic, 2015; Chiaro, 2013). The links between food and diasporic identity mean that food is an important part of many LL/SL studies of superdiverse spaces (cf. Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Lou, 2010, 2017; and Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017; Abas, 2019; Tran, 2021). My own research on food in the context of a diaspora in South Africa augments

the existing canon of previous South African food research (which focused primarily on Indian food), as well as that of food-centred LL/SL studies.

Secondly, I explored the links between Greekness and food. Food spaces have played an important role in the Greek diaspora of South Africa (McDuling & Barnes, 2012; Chaldeos, 2020), mirroring similar patterns of Greek immigration to Australia (Alvanoudi, 2018; Keays, 2004). In addition, there are general associations between Greekness and food that are widely depicted in popular culture and in memes distributed by social media pages targeting the diaspora. These food associations with Greekness are also evident in the context of the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg in a number of articles from the *Rand Daily Mail*, and from my interactions with my participants.

Thirdly, I presented an analysis of inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg foodscapes. As a sign, food plays an important role as a sign of what Billig (1995) terms 'banal nationalism' that signals links to a particular national identity. My analysis of Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg indicated that particular food items, the use of the Greek language, and deliberate allusions to Greece form a semiotic assemblage of Greekness in these spaces.

Finally, I presented a smellscape – an olfactory ethnography – of a Palm Sunday event at *The Greek Taverna* restaurant. My analysis found that scent is an important semiotic resource in this particular foodscape as it serves to create a space in which the members of the Greek community feel at home, as it carries both cultural and religious significance. Thus, it indicates the semiotic powers of scent in a foodscape.

In the following chapter, I explore how the term *syncretism* – borrowed from anthropology and religious studies – presents a useful way of describing how Greekness is visually inscribed in Johannesburg. I argue that it can be applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the ways in which signs and symbols from various, sometimes incompatible, aspects of Greek history and identity – including philosophy, mythology, superstition, Orthodox Christianity, and political nationalism – are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogenous and authentic Greekness.

CHAPTER 6: Syncretic Inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg

In the preface of his verse drama *Hellas* (1822), famed English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley proclaims:

> "We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece – Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters…" (Shelley, 1886, pp. viii-ix).

The notion that Greece is the birthplace of myriad aspects of modern human life is by no means specific to Shelley alone (cf. Stewart, 1991, 1999; Adrahtas & Triantafyllopoulou, 2010). Ancient Greekness is often described as being multifaceted, having influenced everything from literature to medicine, and the ways in which contemporary Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg mirror this multiplicity. In this chapter, I introduce the concept of *syncretism* as a semiotic descriptor that may be applied to describe how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg through the use of multiple, sometimes contradictory, categories. The co-occurrence of gilded icons of the Virgin Mary, reproductions of ancient Greek amphoras depicting Zeus' exploits, excerpts of Aristotelian wisdom, images of picturesque villages beside tranquil azure seas, and numerous depictions of the evil eye, for example, all indicate that 'authentic' Greekness is syncretic.

The origins of the term syncretism lie first in religious studies and later in anthropology (Stewart, 1999). Its essential use in cultural and religious studies is to describe instances in which discrete, often conflicting aspects of several mythologies are combined to co-occur within a single belief system (Stewart, 1999). A number of belief systems, including for example Haitian Vodou (cf. Rey & Richman, 2010) and, as I discuss later in this chapter, Greek Orthodox Christianity (Stewart, 1999, 2008), have been described as syncretic by theologians

and cultural anthropologists (cf. Shaw & Stewart, 1994; Stewart, 1991; Lambropoulos, 2001; Tziovas, 2001, 2008; Danforth, 1984; Adrahtas & Triantafyllopoulou, 2010; Ogunnaike, 2020; Apter, 2004; Wirtz, 2007; Herskovits, 1971; Desmangles, 1975). The main arguments for Greek Orthodox Christianity being considered syncretic relate to the inclusion of both canonical Christianity and traditional Greek folklore (Stewart, 1991, 1999, 2008; Tziovas, 2001, 2008). In a few of these cases, the word 'syncretic' has been either applied or perceived as a pejoration. The allegedly pejorative application of the term *syncretic* stems from the implication that a syncretic system is necessarily a hodgepodge, bastardised, or 'impure' form of a mythology – in other words, a syncretic belief system is one that was once pure and authentic but has now been tainted by the farcical insertion of aspects from other, sometimes incompatible, systems.

Building on the idea of syncretism as a way to describe the co-occurrence of discrete aspects of a number of competing systems, this chapter explores how the term presents a useful way of accounting for how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg. I argue that the term *syncretism* can be applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the ways in which signs and symbols from various, sometimes incompatible, aspects of Greek history and identity – including philosophy, mythology, superstition, Orthodox Christianity, and political nationalism – are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogenous and 'authentic' Greekness. In other words, it involves assembling possibly contradictory concepts and imagery from various Greek-related sources. A survey of literature on the syncretic nature of Greek Orthodox Christianity (cf. Shaw & Stewart, 1994; Stewart, 1991, 1999, 2008; Lambropoulos, 2001; Tziovas, 2001, 2014; Danforth, 1984; Adrahtas & Triantafyllopoulou, 2010) – as discussed in section 6.2 – illustrates that this syncretism has emerged from years of deliberate nation-building efforts by Greece since it gained independence from the Ottoman

Empire in 1830 (Stewart, 1999). I examine how these nation-building efforts which employ deliberately constructed syncretism have carried into the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, where they have been amplified and concentrated in order to signal both authentic Greekness and homogenous diasporic identity.

The format of this chapter is as follows: first, I provide an overview of the historical and contemporary usage of the term *syncretism*, including in religious studies and anthropology. I also look at some of the most salient instances in which this term has been applied, particularly in reference to religious systems in the Caribbean as a result of the Atlantic slave trade. I then move on to look more closely at the links between syncretism, as used in religious studies, and Greekness – in particular, Greek Orthodox Christianity, which has been described as syncretic in much of the literature on the religion. Thereafter, I present some data, analysis, and discussion to illustrate how syncretism may be applicable to describe how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg. Here, I unpack the discrete units that operate *syncretically* to signal South African Greekness in Johannesburg, including – amongst others – antiquity, Ancient Greek mythology, superstition, Orthodox Christianity, and political nationalism. Finally, I provide a summary of the chapter.

6.1. Origins of the term

Given the subject matter of this study, it is fitting, albeit unsurprising, that the word *syncretism* has its origins in Ancient Greek: *syn*, a prefix denoting 'with', and *krasis* 'mixture' combine to form the word *syngkrasis* 'a compound, mixing together' (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). The first use of the word *syngkretismos*, a form more similar to the English *syncretism*, appears in the first century in Plutarch's *Moralia*, a collection of the philosopher's essays and speeches (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). Plutarch uses the word in a chapter of the *Moralia* titled 'On Brotherly Love',

in which he praises the fraternal loyalty amongst the Cretans (*kretoi*) (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). As such, it is possible that his use of the word *syngkretismos* is a play on the words *syngkrasis* and *kretoi*, to imply the communality of the Cretans (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). The word *syncretism* was only used again several centuries later during the Renaissance in the 15th century, in which time there was renewed and increased interest in classical Greek philosophy and the 'syncretic' occurrence of classical elements in Christianity (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). The virtues of this particular instance of syncretism were extolled most enthusiastically by Renaissance philologists, who viewed the co-occurrence of antiquity and Christian theology favourably (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). Thus, the earliest attestations of the word *syncretism* to refer to the co-occurrence of discrete aspects from disparate belief systems had positive connotations.

As has been the case with many terms and concepts over the centuries, colonialism and theology are jointly responsible for the negative turn taken by the word 'syncretism' until the 20th century (Stewart, 1999; Shaw & Stewart, 1994). Widespread Christian mission across most of the Southern Hemisphere led to the creation of a number of hybridised belief systems involving a mixture of the (often polytheistic) local religions and the brand of Christianity particular to the missionary majority in the colony. An example relevant to a South African context is the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), which is an African Initiated Christianity (AIC) with its roots in both traditional forms of European Christianity and typical folkloric Bantu belief systems (Müller, 2013; Anderson, 1991; Kruger & Saayman, 2016). Anderson provides a useful elaboration on the duality of the ZCC belief system:

> "[Members of the ZCC] preach deliverance from sickness and the oppression of evil spirits, and especially a message of receiving the Holy Spirit. This message, which promises power to cope with what is often perceived as a hostile spirit world, was a welcome one. The new and enthusiastic type of Christianity provided concrete answers to African problems, covering every

> area of human life and fulfilling felt needs. One of the reasons for the remarkable growth of Zionist churches in South Africa and Pentecostal types of AIC in other parts of Africa has been their ability to adapt themselves to the African context" (Anderson, 1991, p. 3).

Established forms of Christianity were "concerned to safeguard the integrity of [their] doctrine and practice throughout the world" (Stewart, 1999, p. 46), especially in the colonies, where these hybridised religions were commonplace. Thus, *syncretism* came to be used disparagingly by theologians "to castigate colonial local churches that had burst out of the sphere of mission control and begun to 'illegitimately' indigenise Christianity instead of properly reproducing the European form of Christianity they had originally been offered" (Stewart, 1999, p. 46). With this usage, syncretism became synonymous with impurity, and joined the arsenal of words used by the colonials in the West – or what is now referred to as the Global North – to 'other' the hybrid Christianities, cultures, and beliefs of what is now referred to as the Global South.

Lambropoulos (2001) also acknowledges the fraught history of the term *syncretism* before extolling its advantages in cultural study:

> "The oldest model for the study of socio-cultural mixture is the one that deserves the greatest scrutiny, namely, the syncretist view. Although it has a long and contentious history, when brought into the conversations on cultural studies it can make a substantial contribution in both epistemological and methodological terms" (Lambropoulos, 2001, p. 223).

Stewart (1999) notes that "anthropologists implicitly accepted that syncretism was a theological concern" (Stewart, 1999, p. 46) and distanced themselves from the use of the term, instead inventing a plethora of other terms to refer to the same phenomenon: the mixing of disparate aspects of multiple mythologies in a single belief system. *Bricolage*, *hybridity*, *cultural mixture*, *creolisation*, *selective conservatism* – synonyms or near synonyms for *syncretism* abound. When confronted with the term *syncretism* in the early 20th century,

anthropologists were initially loathed to use the term in their own work, most likely in an effort to distance themselves from theology. Nevertheless, the term slipped into use in anthropology beginning in the 1940s, where its use has become an important – and ongoing – debate (Stewart, 1999; Lambropoulos, 2001). Stewart (1999) attributes the amelioration of *syncretic* as a cultural descriptor to the "mutual isolation" (Stewart, 1999, p. 47) of British and American anthropologists in the first half of the 20th century. There was relatively little scholarly exchange between British anthropologists and their counterparts in the United States; moreover, each group had laid claim to a portion of the globe: British anthropologists "had largely monopolised research" (Stewart, 1999, p. 47), amongst other things, in Africa, whereas American anthropologists "carried out a majority of studies in the New World" (Stewart, 1999, p. 47).

Thus, anthropological use of the term *syncretism* was led by the Americans, who were largely conducting their research in societies that "had already gained independence in the preceding century and had long been engaged in attempts to consolidate national cultural identities" (Stewart, 1999, p. 47), such as the Pacific islands. The American tradition of anthropological research, particularly that of Franz Boas and other Boasian anthropologists "made a clear distinction between 'race' and culture" (Stewart, 1999, p. 47). Whereas previously the assumption of a hierarchy of races had dominated anthropological thought, Boas and his students' research among diverse cultures revealed to them that no biological or evolutionary difference between races existed (Stocking, 1989). Rather, cultural differences which resulted from exposure to a variety of political, social, economic, and other material conditions (Stocking, 1989) meant that they adopted overall "a positive attitude toward cultural mixture" (Stewart, 1999, p. 47) due to its role in nation-building. Thus, syncretic systems were largely not viewed as 'impure' pastiches of Western religions – as had been the case for the British

anthropologists – nor as being in an in-between stage before full assimilation with the colonial powers (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). Moreover, syncretism provided a useful lens with which to glean "a far more intricate and inclusive picture of human interaction" (Lambropoulos, 2001, p. 221) when the "emergence of mixture [became] a central concern for numerous domains" (*ibid*, p. 223).

The American scholarly monopoly on societies in the Americas means that the most salient studies of syncretism are situated in this area, particularly in the Caribbean. For example, Candomblé – an Afro-Brazilian religion – has been described as 'syncretic' as it possesses characteristics of traditional Yoruba and Fon religions and Roman Catholicism (Ogunnaike, 2020; Apter, 2004). The development of Candomblé began in the 16th century as a result of the Atlantic slave trade, when the Portuguese colonisers and slaves from West Africa were in close contact with one another, and Roman Catholic missionaries were extremely active (Ogunnaike, 2020). Another religion, Santería, developed in a very similar manner in Cuba around the same time as Candomblé. Santería also involves aspects of Roman Catholicism and West African, most notably Yoruba, religions (Wirtz, 2007). A third example of a religion that has been described as syncretic is Haitian Vodou (or Vodun), which mixes the predominant Christianities of the island's colonisers – namely Roman Catholicism and Freemasonry – with the beliefs of the predominantly West African slaves brought there (cf. Rey & Richman, 2010; Herskovits, 1971; and Desmangles, 1975).

Relevant to the following discussion of syncretism as it may be applied in a geosemiotic analysis of Greekness in Johannesburg is the historical use of *syncretism* as a term with no "fixed meaning, but one which has been historically constituted and reconstituted" (Shaw & Stewart, 1994, p. 6). Shaw and Stewart (1994) and Stewart (1999) emphasise the flexibility

and dynamism of syncretism as a term, which, to me, makes it perfectly suited to descriptions of human phenomena – humans tend to be flexible and dynamic, thus so too are human inventions such as religion, culture, and identity. Following Stewart (1999), I will "proceed with the broadest and most general definition of syncretism: the combination of elements from two or more different religious traditions within a specified frame" (Stewart, 1999, p. 58) in order to make my argument for its use in semiotics. Lambropoulos (2001) offers a similar, albeit wordier, definition of syncretism which is no less relevant:

> "The term "syncretism" refers to the cultural mixture of diverse beliefs and practices within a specific socio-historical frame; to the congruity of dissent within such a frame, despite differences of opinion; to the nonorganic solidarity of heterodoxy which constitutes a collective worldview; to the forging together of disparate, often incompatible, elements from different systems; and to their intermingling and blending. Syncretism connotes not juxtaposition (the early postmodern idea of comparison) or fusion (the late postmodern idea of comparison) but mixing and mingling. It is by definition a cultural term that presents operations as inter-cultural and intra-cultural ones (since there is a possibility of syncretism within a culture and not only through contact among cultures)" (Lambropoulos, 2001, p. 225).

Lambropoulos (2001) also reiterates that "syncretism has a flexible meaning, offering a wide range of applications, since this process has been historically constituted and revised" (Lambropoulos, 2001, p. 225).

The flexibility of the term *syncretism* is evident in the number of ways it has been used, first in religious studies, then in anthropology, and subsequently in a number of other fields of study. By way of illustration, Krueger (2007) employs the term in his examination of theatre in post-apartheid South Africa. He describes theatre "as an ideal site for investigations into the cultural negotiations required in the delineation and transformation of identities" (Krueger, 2007, p. 51) and argues that "instead of seeking to represent identity as a completed totality in terms of a particular ethnic identity, the theatre should rather embrace unstable, uncertain and

insubstantial identifications which are as yet unknown, which are discovered in identity" (*ibid*, p. 52). Krueger (2007) criticises plays that present the experiences of a particular ethnic group as "a kind of tableau" (Krueger, 2007, p. 55) about a culture and, thus, play no role in transforming South African theatre. He posits that syncretic theatre – or theatre that "favours a notion of identity as composite, fragmented and undecided" (Krueger, 2007, p. 55) – is capable of producing identity, as opposed to "attempting to 'rediscover' it" (*ibid*, p. 56).

In addition, the term *syncretism* has also been applied in literary studies. For example, Klímová (2013) explores syncretic narrative forms and language in the work of West Indian writer Samuel Selvon:

> "Fluent transition from poetic passages or archaic language to more oral tone of ballads interspersed with Trinidadian expressions, tongue-in-cheek calypso humour contrasting with philosophical or moralising passages, unexpected juxtapositions of several registers in one paragraph or even within one sentence, all that forms the specific language and style characteristic for Selvon's novels" (Klímová, 2013, p. 100).

For Selvon, an immigrant from the West Indies to the United Kingdom in the 1950s, syncretic techniques allowed him to illustrate the "omnipresent irony of the displaced exile, who does not fully possess any of those traditions, yet his or her whole identity is weaved out of them" (Klímová, 2013, pp. 100-101).

My use of syncretism in relation to Greekness is not without precedent: several scholars during the 1990s and early 2000s employed the term in relation to Modern Greek studies. Charles Stewart (1999; Shaw & Stewart, 1994; and others), Vassilis Lambropoulos (2001), and Dimitris Tziovas (2001, 2014) have all been drawn to syncretism as a way to make sense of Modern Greek culture, religion, history, and literature. The following section explores the links between syncretism and Greekness in more detail.

6.2. Precedent for syncretic Greekness

In the previous section, I mention that syncretism has been applied to Greek Orthodoxy, particularly in the 1990s and early 2000s. This section explores this in more depth. Charles Stewart, an anthropologist who has carried out most of his ethnographic research on Modern Greek culture on the island of Naxos, is particularly prolific in his discussions of syncretism in relation to Greek Orthodoxy, a branch of Eastern Orthodoxy in which the ecclesiastical language is Greek (Stewart, 1991). His earlier work, however, explicitly renounces syncretism as a way of analysing Greek belief (cf. Stewart, 1991). In his book *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Stewart, 1991), based on his doctoral thesis, Stewart explores the role of *exotiká* – "an array of sometimes benevolent, but more often malevolent demons, fairies, and spirits" (Stewart, 1991, p. xv) – and the Devil in the belief system(s) of the people in Naxos. His aim was to "reveal the similarities and differences between doctrinal and local conceptions of ambiguity and evil" (Stewart, 1991, p. xvi) in a Modern Greek community. Stewart (1991) employs an ethnographic approach to this research, combining "a philological understanding of religious and other texts with the results of empirical fieldwork" (Stewart, 1991, p. xvi) to identify the particular spheres of contemporary Greek life in which the *exotiká* are most relevant. In contrast to his later work, as I show later in this section, Stewart notes that although the co-occurrence of *exotiká* and Greek Orthodoxy in the mythology of Naxos natives may "be labelled syncretism by anthropologists" (p. 6), this is a lens of analysis he rejects:

> "The process whereby people select elements from two (or more) vital cosmologies and mingles them in their religious practice-perhaps creating a third cosmology-has been labelled syncretism by anthropologists. The view of some of the above-mentioned survivalists suggests that religion in Greece may today be understood as syncretistic. I do not think this is accurate. No doubt elements of ancient Greek religion are discernible in contemporary Greek religious experience,

> but Orthodox Christians everywhere in Greece conceive of themselves as just that: Orthodox Christians" (Stewart, 1991, pp. 6-7).

In his later work in the same decade, Stewart does, however, promote the view that the co-occurrence of these pagan *exotiká* in Modern Greek life in Naxos is "a clear example of syncretism" (Stewart, 1999, p. 57) (see Figure 26 below):

> "The panoply of demons that I studied, like the Hindu deities within Buddhism, do not perhaps conform to the letter of Christian doctrine, but they do not contradict the basic kernel of Christian Orthodoxy. I considered them tolerable variations, the stuff of local religion, but not elements that fall outside the frame of Christianity. Thus I deem the coexistence of non-Christian demons within the basic structure (or frame) of Orthodoxy to be a clear example of syncretism" (Stewart, 1999, p. 57).

This is a view that he seems to have held onto since then, as his work on syncretism – well into the 2010s – usually takes for granted that Greek Orthodoxy is an obvious example of a syncretic religion. It is, however, important to note that Stewart operates within an anthropological – as opposed to theological/religious studies – framework, actively distancing himself from the earliest theological connotations attached to the word *syncretism*, which painted hybridised religions as bastardised forms of 'pure' Christianity. He views syncretic religions neither as 'impure' versions of an 'authentic' religion, nor as transitory stages towards full assimilation with a pure form of a religion. In fact, his work is less concerned with the terminology used (although he does show a preference for *syncretism*) than it is about "the hermeneutic problem pertaining to the coexistence of Orthodoxy and ancient Greek religiosity", which "can only be solved through the consideration of the political strategies regarding (a coherent and consolidated) national identity in the context of the Modern Greek State" (Adrahtas & Triantafyllopoulou, 2010, p. 198).



Figure 26: St Marina beating a demon with a hammer. An icon by Lazaros, 1857. Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens

Much of the literature on the syncretic nature of Modern Greeks and/or Greek Orthodoxy points to the fact that the co-existence of these systems is "so deeply assumed that no one debates or discusses it" (Stewart, 2008, p. 4). Greek Orthodox Christianity and, by extension, the notion of "belief" is deeply entrenched in the history and traditions of Greece – as Stewart (2008) notes:

> "Greece, one of the first areas to convert to Christianity; a country now speaking a language directly descended from the Koine Greek of the New Testament. The vocabulary for terms like belief (*písti*), God (*Theós*) and devil (*diávolos*) are exactly what they were in the time of St. Paul. The Creed, beginning 'I believe in one God…' (*Pistévo eis éna Theó…*) is learned by children and recited every Sunday in church. It would be hard to deny that such professions of belief expressed anything other than, well, belief. If belief means anything and can be found anywhere then Greece, the *fons et origo* of western civilization, might be a place where we can accept that people do master the concept of 'belief' – in God, at least" (Stewart, 2008, pp. 3-4).

In addition, Stewart (2008) notes that "people mix and match their religious ideas and worry about logical/theological inconsistencies only if they have to" (Stewart, 2008, p. 2) and so "come to hold a great number of suppositions about gods and spirits that can be identified as religious, but they acquire them in the course of childhood socialisation and everyday life" (Stewart, 2008, p. 2) that they acquire as part and parcel of their social habitus. He notes:

> "It is only when someone asks [someone] if they believe in one idea or another that they isolate them and denominate them as beliefs, in a sort of command performance. Ordinarily the majority of people just operate in a world where various religious ideas are taken for granted as common social knowledge" (Stewart, 2008, p. 2).

Belief as "common social knowledge" (Stewart, 2008, p. 2) is linked to, per Stewart, belief as "a matter of social solidarity" (*ibid*, p. 6). He notes a particularly interesting exchange with a young man, an atheist, who was attending Easter mass at a Greek Orthodox Church for no reason other than that he was Greek.

Two other anthropologists have also studied syncretic aspects of Greek communities fairly prolifically. Danforth (1984) pays close attention to rural Greece, analysing the discourses used by researchers to classify the co-existence of ancient Greek culture and Greek Orthodox Christianity. He criticises these discourses as "reduc[ing] the contemporary culture of the people of rural Greece to an exotic anachronism" (Danforth, 1984, p. 53), particularly with reference to the practice of the Anastenaria, a pre-Christian firewalking ritual performed in parts of rural Greece. He emphasises that the Anestenarides (those who practise the Anestenaria) would "tell us that they are Christian" (Danforth, 1984, p. 85) in addition to practising a ritual associated with the worship of the ancient Greek god Dionysus, and so constitute an important part of the "complex and rapidly changing culture of modern Greece" (*ibid*) – a culture that is inherently syncretic. In addition, Herzfeld (1981) proposes the idea of 'disemia' to "define and explain the counteracting process that the Modern Greeks employ

whenever they represent themselves, on the one hand as descendants of the ancient Greeks, and on the other as Orthodox Christians" (Adrahtas & Triantafyllopoulou, 2010, p. 198).

At this point, it is important to introduce the concept of *Hellenism*, which is relevant to the discussion and analysis in the next section as it indicates another tenable conceptual link between Greekness and syncretism. *Hellenism* is a term that is widely used to denote general Greekness. It is etymologically linked to the word *Hellenes* (Έλληνες), which in turn is linked to the word *Hellas* (Ελλάδα), the Greek word for Greece, although the term *Hellenes* is usually applied to Greek Cypriots and members of the Greek and Cypriot diasporas as well[32]. *Hellenism* is used fairly widely, particularly amongst the diaspora, as a catch-all term for everything that is Greek, including values, thought, aesthetics, mythology, and language. It refers to things that are in some way linked to Ancient Greece, as well as invokes connotations of political nationalism and loyalty to the Greek 'homeland'. In so being, it implies a syncretic array of aspects of Greekness. *Hellenism*, or something that is *Hellenistic*, is so because it harks to a panoply of features of Greekness, including: the mythology, arts, philosophy, political thought, and aesthetics of Ancient Greece, when it was at the zenith of its cultural and political power; the ability to speak Greek; and loyalty to *Hellas*, or Greek (or Cypriot) political

[32] There is evidence to suggest that Mycenaean Greek-speaking people settled in Cyprus in the Bronze Age (Iacovou, 1999). These ancient links to the Greek mainland, coupled with the linguistic similarities between Cypriot Greek and that of Greece are enough to warrant Greek Cypriots falling under the umbrella of 'Hellene'. The more recent geopolitical situation between Greece and Cyprus is however much more complex (Mirbagheri, 2009). After Cyprus became independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, it was taken over by British rule, causing a divide between the two predominant ethnic groups on the island – the Greek Cypriots, who advocated to become part of Greece (a phenomenon termed *enosis*), and the Turkish Cypriots, who were initially in favour of British rule (Mirbagheri, 2009; Mallinson, 2009). In the 1950s, the Turkish Cypriots joined Turkey to develop a policy known as *taksim*, which called for the division of Cyprus along ethnic lines and the establishment of a Turkish polity in the northern part of the island (Mirbagheri, 2009; Mallinson, 2009). Following a bout of violence, Cyrpus was granted independence in 1960 (Mirbagheri, 2009; Mallinson, 2009). However, violence between Turkish and Greek nationalists continued continually over the following couple of decades and culminated in the invasion of the northern part of the island by Turkey in 1974 (Mallinson, 2009). This is the source of continued disputes in the country, where there remains a large contingent of Greek Cypriots who are loyal Hellenists and are still in favour of *enosis* (Mirbagheri, 2009; Mallinson, 2009). A full account of the history of Cyprus is beyond the scope of this study and can be found in Mallinson (2009) and Mirbagheri (2009).

nationalism. As such, Hellenism may be described as syncretic itself as it encapsulates the multifaceted nature of Greekness. A discussion of Hellenism as it pertains to the analysis of syncretic Greekness in Johannesburg is relevant to this chapter and is discussed in more depth throughout the analysis in subsequent sections.

6.3. Syncretism and linguistic landscapes

The main aim of this chapter is to explore how the notion syncretism presents a useful way to account for the multi-faceted way that Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg. Building on the non-judgemental anthropological concept of syncretism as a way to describe the co-occurrence of discrete aspects of a number of competing systems, I argue that syncretism can be applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the ways in which signs and symbols from various, sometimes incompatible, aspects of Greek history and identity – including philosophy, mythology, superstition, Orthodox Christianity, and political nationalism – are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogenous and authentic Greekness. In other words, the inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg always involves assembling possibly contradictory concepts and imagery from various Greek-related sources.

Syncretism does not currently form a part of any linguistic landscape studies. My goal with this chapter is to illustrate how syncretism could be a way of describing how the inscription of a certain cultural or national identity, such as Greekness, requires the inclusion of signs indexing a variety of different aspects of that cultural or national identity. Issues related to the multitudinous types of signs and artefacts that appear in a space, and the varied ways in which these signs and artefacts are engaged with, however, do form part of linguistic landscape studies. Central to this is perhaps Pennycook and Otsuji's (2017) conception of the notion of *semiotic assemblages*, which accounts for the ways in which diverse objects and elements

converge “in particular assemblages of material and semiotic resources” (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017, p. 435) in a space, thereby giving it meaning. In their study of two diasporic Bangladeshi shops in Tokyo and Sydney, Pennycook and Otsuji (2017) focus on fish, phones, and phone cards as ‘assembling artefacts’, which “mediate across geographies, environments, culinary traditions and histories” (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017, p. 434). Several studies have since looked at conglomerations of myriad other types of elements and artefacts in the same vein: Pennycook (2022) looks at the different elements that give meaning to street art and explores how we “understand the interactions of artworks, streets, viewers, politics, and discourse that render a work of art a happening rather than an object” (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017, p. 563). In addition, Lamb (2020) considers the semiotic assemblages involved in a particular human-animal interaction, namely human interaction with sea turtles, and proposes a ‘green applied linguistics’ as a way to “offer empirical insights into the role of language and discourse in mediating diverse human relationships with animals and nature” (Lamb, 2020, p. 922).

The aforementioned linguistic landscape research indicates that there is value in considering different ways of accounting for semiotic multiplicity. In my own application of syncretism within the framework of geosemiotics, I use the term to describe the particular *visual* semiotic assemblage that is required to inscribe Greekness.

6.4. Johannesburg and syncretic Greekness

In previous sections of this chapter, I traced the origins of the term *syncretism* and its use in religious studies and anthropology, as well as its particular use in relation to Greek Orthodox Christianity. I emphasised the broadest possible meaning of *syncretism* put forth by Stewart (1999) as “the combination of elements from two or more different religious traditions within a specified frame” (Stewart, 1999, p. 58). The analysis that is presented in this section relies

on the fluidity and dynamism of syncretism as a cultural descriptor and, as per Lambropoulos (2001), the fact that "syncretism has a flexible meaning, offering a wide range of applications, since this process has been historically constituted and revised" (Lambropoulos, 2001, p. 225). Here, I introduce the concept of *syncretism* as a semiotic descriptor that may be applied to describe how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg.

The proceeding analysis builds on the concept of syncretism as describing instances of co-occurrence involving discrete aspects of several, often competing or incompatible, systems and so is a useful and suitable way of accounting for how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg. I illustrate how the term *syncretism* may be applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the way in which signs and symbols from various aspects of Greek history and culture are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogenous and authentic Greekness. In other words, it is a process that necessarily involves assembling possibly contradictory concepts and imagery from various Greek-related sources. The co-occurrence of gilded icons of the Virgin Mary, reproductions of ancient Greek amphoras depicting Zeus' exploits, excerpts of Aristotelian wisdom, images of picturesque villages beside tranquil azure seas, and numerous depictions of the evil eye, for example, indicates that the portrayal of 'authentic' Greekness is syncretic. In addition, a survey of literature on the syncretic nature of Greek Orthodox Christianity illustrates that this syncretism has emerged from years of deliberate nation-building efforts by Greece since it gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830 (Stewart, 1999). I examine how these nation-building efforts which employ deliberately constructed syncretism have carried into the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, where they have been amplified and concentrated in order to signal both authentic Greekness and homogenous diasporic identity.

By way of preliminary illustration, Figure 15 (in Chapter 5) shows a wall decoration that hangs in *The Greek Taverna*, a Greek restaurant in Bedfordview, a suburb in eastern Johannesburg that has a large Greek population. *The Greek Taverna* is located on the grounds of the Greek Sporting Club, which neighbours the sports fields of SAHETI school – a (non-exclusive) Greek day school that follows the mainstream primary and secondary education curricula of the Independent Education Board (IEB), which governs many of the private schools in South Africa. The Greek Taverna is owned by a South African-Greek man, Panos Dairopoulos, whom I interviewed for this research. In our conversation, Panos – who was born in South Africa and spent a few years in Greece as an adolescent – emphasised the authenticity of the restaurant and told me that many of the recipes served there were learned on his travels as a tourist to Greece in adulthood. The restaurant is decorated with many different elements of Greekness, as I show later in this section, but the sign in Figure 15 represents a condensed summary of a number of elements of Greekness and so is the perfect starting point in this discussion. The heart-shaped wall hanging displays a number of images and phrases meant to convey Greekness; these are: a couple of variations on the typical Greek meander[33] pattern – a motif of a single line that "meanders" in labyrinthine right-angles; the blue and white striped flag of Greece; *tavli* boards, checkers/tiles, and dice – *tavli* is a Greek board game similar to backgammon; carafes or jugs of wine; the phrase "A day without Greek coffee is like…just kidding. There is no such thing"; the word "GREECE"; a couple of variations of images depicting silhouetted olives; typical Grecian columns; an image of a type of windmill commonly found on the island of Mykonos[34]; an image depicting an anchor surrounded by a

[33] The Greek meander pattern is also referred to as the Greek key pattern, Greek fret, or Greek lines (Kerenyi, 1996).
[34] http://www.inmykonos.com/see-and-do-in-mykonos/landmarks/3172-windmills-of-mykonos.html (last accessed 28 February 2023).

laurel wreath; a few images of a ship's helm (steering wheel); the phrase "The blood of Hellas[35] flows through my veins, and sometimes…it's ouzo[36]"; a couple of images of sailing boats (a boat also appears in the logo of the restaurant, visible in the top-middle section of the heart shape); the phrase "The Greek definition of BFF – best feta forever"; the phrase "Time to drink ouzo and dance on the table", which is also repeated on the back of the T-shirts worn by the waiters at the restaurant; a Parthenon[37]-type façade; a *briki*, a specialised stovetop pot used to brew Greek/Turkish coffee; a tall tumbler, often used to serve ouzo; and a bunch of grapes.

Each of the images in the display is linked to a particular category of Greekness, which co-occur in this decoration (and in the restaurant more generally) and other Greek spaces to inscribe authentic Greekness in Johannesburg. More specifically, the flag of Greece, the word "Greece" displayed in all capital letters, and use of the phrase "the blood of Hellas" are linked to Greek political nationalism – loyalty to the delineated piece of Europe that constitutes the country of Greece. The Greek meander patterns, recognisably Greek columns, and the silhouetted Parthenon-type building façade are all linked to ideas of Greek antiquity, which is a particularly salient aspect of syncretic depictions of Greekness in Johannesburg. Moreover, there are a number of nautical motifs – namely the anchor surrounded by a laurel wreath, the sailing boats, and the icon of a ship's helm, or steering wheel – which, along with the Mykonos windmill, invoke idyllic geographical aspects of Greece (especially the Greek islands). The *tavli* boards, *briki*, wine carafes and grapes, and the allusions to "[dancing] on the table" are linked to typical Greek pastimes, namely playing *tavli*, brewing coffee, winemaking, and general merriment respectively. The *briki* and winemaking-related icons along with other

[35] *Hellas* is the Greek word for Greece.
[36] An alcoholic beverage with a strong anise flavour that is widely consumed and produced in Greece.
[37] The Parthenon is an Ancient Greek temple dedicated to the goddess Athena, built atop the Acropolis in Athens.

allusions to Greek coffee, olives, ouzo, and feta are also linked to another category commonly employed in depictions of Greekness: food (and drink), which was explored in-depth in CHAPTER 5: It is also worth noting that the wall hanging has been composed and printed in blue and white – a colour combination that, as I discuss further on, is almost synonymous with "Greek". Each of these categories exists in isolation, but all of them are needed to convey Greekness in Johannesburg. Thus, these inscriptions of Greekness are syncretic.

The photograph in Figure 16 (in Chapter 5) was taken in The Cheese Place, a Greek deli and supermarket in Linden, a fairly central suburb of Johannesburg. Much like the wall decoration in Figure 15, the display in The Cheese Place is syncretic – it also incorporates the political nationalism motif in the form of the Greek flag[38] hanging prominently on the wall, as well as contains representations of idyllic geographical aspects of Greece and Cyprus. Furthermore, the row of blue and red and white olive oil tins and the display of cheeses and bowls of olives in the glass counter are reminiscent of the food and drink motifs that are visible in Figure 15. In addition to the similarities between the displays of Greekness evident in Figure 15 and Figure 16, the latter contains evidence of additional categories that are important in the inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg, namely Greek Orthodox Christianity and superstition. The former is evident in the presence of two icons (*ikones*, εικόνες) and a cross made of palm leaves (a common feature of Palm Sunday church services in Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism). Superstition is evident in the display of trinkets with an evil eye (máti, μάτι) motif, in the typical blue and white, in the foreground of the photograph.

[38] The Greek flag hangs between the flags of Italy and South Africa. The presence of the Italian flag is interesting. It is there because, according to the owner, as another Mediterranean diaspora, there is a contingent of Italian customers who come to *The Cheese Place* to purchase imported ingredients used in both types of cuisine.

It is important to note here that these elements – religion and superstition – also appear in The Greek Taverna, as will become evident further on in this chapter. The images that have been used in the initial discussion here (Figure 15 and Figure 16) have been chosen because they contain a wide range of the important categories used to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg within a single snapshot.

The idea of Greekness involving a myriad of different things is fairly common and forms the basis of a lot of discourse about Greece and Greekness as the place of origin for a number of things that are still relevant today. Percy Bysshe Shelley, the 19th century Romantic English poet, for example, is quoted at the beginning of this chapter in an excerpt from his dramatic verse *Hellas* (first published in 1822):

> "We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece" (Shelley, 1886, pp. viii-ix).

A similar sentiment was expressed by Panos Dairopoulos, the owner of The Greek Taverna, in my interview with him, shortly before I took the photograph in Figure 15:

> "It's the strongest culture. [...] If you look back through history, you look back through anything, it's Greek everywhere. Your letters, your words, your inventions – *everything is Greek*. So such a small, little country and it's well-known. That's very powerful."

Moreover, as a more farcical albeit equally relevant example, in the 2002 film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, the protagonist Toula's father, Gus, is committed to "educat[ing] non-Greeks about being Greek" and takes any opportunity to extol the virtues of Greekness. For example, he tells his daughter that "the Greeks invented pottery" when she tells him she is attending a pottery class and his favourite game to play at the dinner table and in the car begins with: "Give me a word, any word, and I show you that the root of that word is Greek." Throughout the course of the film, he manages to provide Greek etymologies for a number of words, including *Miller* (the surname of Toula's fiance, Ian) and *kimono*.

Additionally, SAHETI School's website also makes use of this type of discourse about Greek as a universal place of origin:

> "SAHETI boasts a unique offering in that it promotes the timeless, universal ideals of Hellenism through a "live education" approach. The study of Greek language, civilisation and culture enables pupils to understand the origins of democratic thinking, independent thought and a love for academic achievement. Such concepts are everyday features of school life at SAHETI" (SAHETI School, *Spirit of Hellenism*[39]).

These ideas of Greece – as the birthplace of "everything", as a land of both God and the gods, as a pioneer in philosophy, medicine, science, and the arts, and as a place where you can luxuriate by the seaside with wine, feta, and olives – are pervasive and crop up repeatedly in literary works by Greeks and non-Greeks (such as Shelley) and political and cultural discourse. Indeed, the co-occurrence of these, sometimes contradictory, ideas is necessary in order to inscribe (authentic) Greekness in Johannesburg and is also likely a symptom of over a century of deliberate nation-building efforts by Greece since independence. The fact that these categories are being employed by a diaspora is also an important facet to consider here – as Stewart (2006) notes: "When people admire one's homeland that much, it does discourage one from abandoning identification with it" (Stewart, 2006, p. 64). The following discussion explores each of the aforementioned categories used in tandem to inscribe Greekness in turn in order to account for not only *how* Greekness is inscribed syncretically in Johannesburg, but also explore *why* these categories came to be used to do so.

6.4.1. Antiquity

The most salient category of Greekness used to inscribe it in Johannesburg is antiquity, which I am treating quite broadly in this discussion to refer to anything related to Ancient Greece

[39] https://www.saheti.co.za/about-us/spirit-of-hellenism/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).

including, as will become evident, polytheism, mythology, and several aspects of art, architecture, culture, politics, and scholarship. Antiquity refers to the aesthetics, ideals, thoughts, and beliefs of Greek civilisation spanning a number of centuries from the 12th century BC until about 600 AD (Stewart, 2006; Tziovas, 2014). In the literature, this rather lengthy expanse of time is referred to variously as Classical Greece, Ancient Greece, and the Hellenistic Period – although some of these terms have also been used by historians to refer to specific segments between the 12th century BC until the 1st century AD (Tziovas, 2014). I have thus chosen the very generic term *antiquity* as an all-encompassing word to refer to *anything* that is linked to this period in Greek history – this includes Ancient Greek mythology (the exploits of the gods and other mythological figures), the classical philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, art and architectural aesthetics, and other aspects associated with what is viewed as the golden age of European civilisation. Once again, we can turn to Percy Bysshe Shelley, ever the Philhellene[40], and his essay *A Defence of Poetry* (originally written in 1821) to summarise this sentiment:

> "[…] never at any other period has so much energy, beauty, and virtue, been developed; never was blind strength and stubborn form so disciplined and rendered subject to the will of man, or that will less repugnant to the dictates of the beautiful and the true, as during the century which preceded the death of Socrates. Of no other epoch in the history of our species have we records and fragments stamped so visibly with the image of the divinity in man" (Poetry Foundation[41], 2009).

Stewart (2006) notes that, similarly to China, Greece has been "mythologised out of proportion" (Stewart, 2006, p. 64) such that has come to be seen as the "*fons et origo* ["source and origin"] of Western civilization" (Stewart, 2006, p. 64). Moreover, Tziovas (2014) argues that "Greece has been at the forefront of such efforts to come to terms with its past, due to its

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[40] One who has a penchant for anything Hellenic.

[41] https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69388/a-defence-of-poetry (last accessed 28 February 2023).

widely acclaimed ancient culture, which has been much debated over the years and has been seen alternately as an asset and a burden" (Tziovas, 2014, p. 1). Tziovas (2014) then goes on to highlight the importance of antiquity in both Greece's nation-building efforts as well as its attempts to become involved with the rest of modern (Western) Europe:

> "Antiquity has often been perceived as the source of Greece's modern achievements, as well as its frustrations, with the continuity between ancient and modern Greek culture and the legacy of classical Greece to Europe dominating and shaping current perceptions of the classical past. What allowed educated Greeks to see themselves as distinct from the rest of the Balkan populations under Ottoman rule or other members of the Christian Orthodox Millet-i Rum was their classical past, which gave them the sense of a privileged relationship with Europe. On the one hand, the Greeks themselves were divided between seeking a return to their ancient past and fighting for inclusion in the European modernity and on the other hand, the Europeans' claims on Greece lay in their knowledge of its past" (Tziovas, 2014, p. 2).

Once Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830, the new powers instituted a rather rigorous nation-building campaign to unify the people and establish a homogenous and legitimate Greek national identity (Tziovas, 2013). Using the rich and grand history of Ancient Greece was a logical way to achieve this: by establishing a sense of continuity between a time of such political and cultural grandeur and power and the newly-established modern state of Greece, the Greek government could re-assert its relationship to the birthplace of civilisation while simultaneously ingratiating itself with the rest of Western Europe, who had "ignored the modern Greeks" (Tziovas, 2014, p. 3) and their political and cultural liminality of the time "to avoid contaminating the classical ideal" (*ibid*). Modern Greece thus established "the link with antiquity as first and foremost among the grounds for the legitimacy of the modern nation state" (Tziovas, 2014, p. 10). Through the construction of these links with antiquity and the deliberate creation of a sense of continuity between ancient and modern Greece, Tziovas (2014) argues, antiquity was hellenised to suit the nation-building agenda of modern Greece during the nationalist era.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hellenism is a catch-all term used to refer to anything to do with Greece and Greek (thus incorporating Cyprus and the diaspora as well) (Tziovas, 2014; Kaplanis, 2014). *Hellenisation*, by extension, refers to efforts to hellenise or "make Greek" certain aspects of history or culture (Tziovas, 2014; Kaplanis, 2014). As part of its nation-building efforts, Greece hellenised many things as a way to create a particular image of itself, including – saliently – antiquity. Ancient Greece was characterised by large-scale geographical expansion and imperialism, which declined rather precipitously after the 1st century AD, when Rome began its own expansion and empire-building endeavours (Stewart, 2006; Tziovas, 2014). Thus, there is significantly less overlap between the "borders" of Ancient Greece and what is now the modern country of Greece, but the triumphs, virtues, and assets of Ancient Greece (which stretched south all the way to Africa and east all the way to India at one point [Stewart, 2006]) have been claimed as *Hellenic* and Greek in the sense of belonging to the country. Interestingly, the term *Hellene*, which is now used to refer generally to people of Greek heritage and is evidently the root of *Hellenism*, has a peculiar history. In fact, *Hellene* "as a term of self-identification" only appeared in 1791 and was then emphasised in the context of Greek nation-building, as aforementioned (Kaplanis, 2014).

At this point, I also want to emphasise that "Greece is unusual in having a past that is almost as highly valued internationally as it is nationally" (Tziovas, 2014, p. 1). Greece made a wise decision when they decided to (re-)claim antiquity in their endeavours to engage with Western Europe and construct their national image as Western Europe – most notably Germany and Britain – had an established preoccupation with Greek antiquity. Germany's rediscovery and subsequent preoccupation with Greek antiquity is largely attributed to the work of 18th century-art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and then further entrenched by *Sturm und Drang* poets such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller (Geary, 2014) in the first

half of the 19th century. Winckelmann praised the "artistic perfection" (Geary, 2014, p. 11) of Ancient Greece, rejecting the hitherto emphasis on Ancient Roman Latin humanism and arguing that the Romans were a weaker derivative of the Greeks (Geary, 2014). Winckelmann's focus was initially on Ancient Greek aesthetics, specifically in relation to art, but it was instrumental in establishing Ancient Greece as a source of inspiration for subsequent German – and later English – artists, writers, and musicians. Schiller completed a translation of Euripides' play *Iphigenia in Aulis* and wrote a number of poems about certain Ancient Greek figures and events, both factual and mythological – most notably *Die Kraniche des Ibykus* and *Der Ring des Polykrates*[42]. Much of Goethe's poetry makes use of elements of Greek mythology – notably in poems such as *Prometheus*, *Das Lied des Parzen*, and *Lied und Gebilde*[43]. German Romantic Hellenism spread to England around this time as well, leading to a rediscovery of antiquity in the art and literature of Britain, especially England (Geary, 2014), where Ancient Greece had previously been invoked in the works of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare. English Romantics in the 19th century were particularly enamoured with Ancient Greek imagery. Many of the works of William Blake, an early Romantic, present allusions to Greek antiquity, which became even more prominent in the work of later Romantic poets such as Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. The cultural authorities of Western Europe, Germany and England, were thus abuzz with antiquity in the 19th century. To augment this renewed interest in Hellenism, Greece was also one of only a handful of countries that were safe to visit and accessible during the Napoleonic Wars in the first 15 years of the 1800s. Such was the backdrop against which Greece began its nation-building efforts in the early part of the same century.

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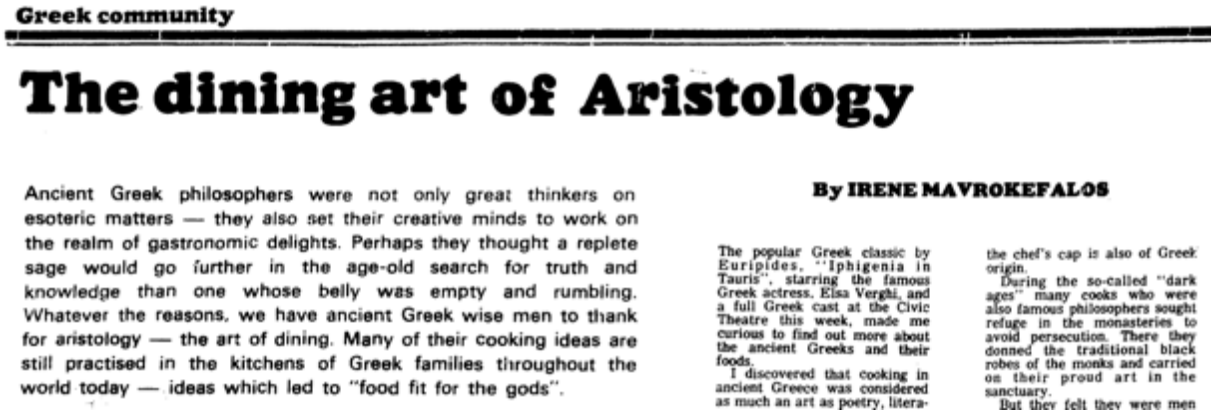
[42] *Die Kraniche des Ibykus* is called *The Cranes of Ibycus*/*Ibycus' Cranes* in translation and refers to the murder of Ibycus, and Ancient Greek poet. *Der Ring des Polykrates* – or *Polycrates' Ring* – tells the story of Polycrates, the so-called tyrant of Samos, a Greek island.

[43] *Prometheus*, *The Song of the Fates*, and *Song and Shaping*, respectively.

These efforts were evidently effective as aspects of antiquity have been and still very much are an integral component in the syncretic inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg. References to features of Greek antiquity appeared quite frequently in the "Greek Community" section of the *Rand Daily Mail*[44], a Johannesburg-based newspaper published from 1902 until it was shut down by the South African government in 1985 for being outspokenly anti-apartheid. Figure 11 (in Chapter 5) and Figure 27 below, for example, both make reference to "food fit for the gods" – particularly in reference to Greek food – thus linking ideas of Greekness with Ancient Greek polytheistic mythology. Figure 27 also makes reference to another important aspect of Ancient Greece that crops up frequently in writing (and discourse more generally) about Greece and Greekness: Ancient Greek philosophy. The "great thinkers" of Ancient Greece form an integral part of the way antiquity is used to inscribe Greekness.



Greek community

The dining art of Aristology

Ancient Greek philosophers were not only great thinkers on esoteric matters — they also set their creative minds to work on the realm of gastronomic delights. Perhaps they thought a replete sage would go further in the age-old search for truth and knowledge than one whose belly was empty and rumbling. Whatever the reasons, we have ancient Greek wise men to thank for aristology — the art of dining. Many of their cooking ideas are still practised in the kitchens of Greek families throughout the world today — ideas which led to "food fit for the gods".

By IRENE MAVROKEFALOS

The popular Greek classic by Euripides, "Iphigenia in Tauris", starring the famous Greek actress, Elsa Verghi, and a full Greek cast at the Civic Theatre this week, made me curious to find out more about the ancient Greeks and their foods.

I discovered that cooking in ancient Greece was considered as much an art as poetry, litera-

the chef's cap is also of Greek origin.

During the so-called "dark ages" many cooks who were also famous philosophers sought refuge in the monasteries to avoid persecution. There they donned the traditional black robes of the monks and carried on their proud art in the sanctuary.

But they felt they were men

Figure 27: Rand Daily Mail, 18 June 1981

In addition, Figure 28 (below) is an advertisement for The South African Bank of Athens, whose logo features the bust, in profile, of an archetypal Ancient Greek soldier in a style reminiscent of the paintings seen on Ancient Greek vases, or amphoras, for example. Two other advertisements from the *Rand Daily Mail*, Figure 29 and Figure 30 below, extol the wonders

[44] All excerpts from the *Rand Daily Mail* were accessed and downloaded from the online *Rand Daily Mail* Archive, via institutional access provided by the University of the Witwatersrand.

of travelling to Greece on holiday, and make reference to how Greece "ooz[es] with history" (24 April 1985) and "has a cultural heritage thousands of years old" (17 May 1978).



Figure 28: Rand Daily Mail, 4 June 1981



Figure 29: Rand Daily Mail, 24 April 1985



And now for sunny Greece

Flair

GREECE is not only a country of peace and relaxation, sun-bathing or watersports — it has a cultural heritage thousands of years old. The Greeks have preserved their treasured past as an integral part of the present. Jet away with us and spend days sightseeing among ruined temples or Byzantine basilicas, soak up the glorious warm sun or spend traditional evenings dancing the graceful syrtaki or sipping ouzo at a harbourside taverna.

Figure 30: Rand Daily Mail, 17 May 1978

Moreover, throughout the newspaper – particularly in the food- and travel-related sections – an experience related to Greekness or Greece is referred to as an "odyssey" (see Figure 31 and Figure 32 below), a word that is inextricably linked to the legendary Ancient Greek hero Odysseus, whose adventures are described in Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*, written around the 8th century BCE. It is the name of the poem that gave rise to the use of the English word *odyssey* to refer to a long and eventful journey. Given the origins of the word in Ancient Greek literature, particularly pertaining to Ancient Greek mythology, it is connected to Greekness itself. It is also interesting to note that the 2007 autobiography of the late George Bizos, a notable anti-apartheid figure and Nelson Mandela's lawyer during the Rivonia Trial, is entitled *Odyssey to Freedom*. This title invokes not only Bizos's position as a member of the Greek diaspora in South Africa (he lived in Johannesburg) but also parallels the title of Nelson Mandela's own autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, first published over a decade prior in 1994. Perhaps by virtue of being Greek, Bizos's journey to freedom – or journey to anything,

for that matter – was necessarily an odyssey. It is also interesting to consider that these linkages – between Greece/Greek/Greekness and elements of antiquity – are made and interpreted unquestioningly.



BEAUTIFUL BACLAVA . . . a taste of Rhodes Picture: DAN SIMON

My culinary Odyssey

Figure 31: Rand Daily Mail, 14 Aug 1984

A gastronomic Odyssey in the Greek tradition

GOING Greek in Johannesburg is always an adventure. Although the several Greek restaurants in the city serve the popular dishes — dolmadhes, mossaka and the various lamb dishes, the formulation is never quite the same.

The individuality of each cook is imprinted on every offering. There is no standardisation; perhaps therein lies the charm of the Greek cuisine which is a way of cooking, not a discipline.

When you go to a Greek restaurant — and I recommend that you do not deny yourself this gastronomic experience — you must first make up your mind whether you are going for the food alone, or whether you are going for the fun.

If it is only the food you are seeking, get there about 8,30 in the evening.

But if you want to be charmed

Dining out



Maurice Lorenz

Figure 32: Part of a review of a restaurant, called Poseidon, in Joubert Park, Johannesburg

(Source: Rand Daily Mail, 18 Dec 1981)

Markers of antiquity, such as those discussed above, are used frequently in contemporary Johannesburg to inscribe Greekness.

I now examine some of my photographic data and break down the signs of antiquity used to inscribe Greekness therein. The most salient aspects of antiquity that emerged from the data were the use of Grecian architecture – in particular, the use of Greek-style columns – and artwork and sculpture that emulate those of Ancient Greece.



Figure 33: An assortment of Grecian columns on the grounds of the St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church in Krugersdorp, western Johannesburg



Figure 34: Sign at the entrance to St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, where the Hellenic Community (ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ KOINOTHTA) of Germiston community organisation is based, in Primrose, Germiston, eastern Johannesburg[45]

Figure 33 and Figure 34 above depict a number of instances in which Grecian-style columns are visible as inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg. Figure 33 presents four photographs that were taken on the grounds of the St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church, located in Krugersdorp, where there is a sizable Greek community. The church is also where the West Rand Hellenic Community, a community organisation, is based. Figure 34 is a photograph

[45] The panel between the columns lists other community groups and clubs based on the premises: the Federation of the Hellenic Communities of South Africa, Pan-Cretan Association of South Africa, Epnek (Hellenic Cultural Movement), and the Lemnian, Imvrian, and Macedonian Brotherhoods of South Africa.

taken on the street outside the St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Germiston, eastern Johannesburg. The east of Johannesburg is home to a large number of Greeks and the church is, according to one of my interviewees, Evie Eleftheriades – an active member of the SAHETI Ladies Committee and other community organisations – "a draw card" for the members of the Greek community who live in the surrounding areas. This church is on an enormous plot of land, spanning an entire large block in the suburb of Primrose, which also houses the headquarters of a number of community organisations, a vast community hall equipped with a stage and sound equipment, a number of spaces that can be used for catering purposes (such as a bar and professional kitchen), an outdoor seating area, a games room, a generous parking lot, and a large garden. In both figures, the columns are recognisably Greek and are reminiscent of the columns on a number of iconic buildings in Greece, such as the Parthenon in Athens.

There are three types of Grecian column – Doric, ionic, and Corinthian (Jenkins, 2006). These three categories differ predominantly in terms of their level of ornateness: Doric columns are the most simplistic; ionic columns display a slightly more elaborate feature in the form of scroll-shaped carvings at the top; and Corinthian columns are the most ornate of the three, with very elaborate carvings – usually in a leaf pattern – at the top (Jenkins, 2006). Based on the reproductions of columns that I have observed and photographed in Johannesburg and elsewhere, ionic columns occur the most frequently as a way to signify Greekness, Corinthian columns are used, albeit less frequently than ionic, and Doric columns do not really appear at all. This is possibly because the ionic columns are ornate enough to be immediately recognisable, but not too ornate that they are overly complicated to reproduce or represent graphically. The columns in Figure 33 and Figure 34 are all ionic, as is the column in the topmost sign – in the logo of a legal firm – in Figure 35 below, and on the wall hanging in Figure 15. The ionic column, characterised by scrolls at the top, is thus a style that is

unquestionably Greek and so has likely been used, together with the telling choice of the blue and white colour scheme, in these spaces to deliberately convey the message that these are spaces of Greekness.



Figure 35: Signs at a shopping centre (which has a wing of offices) on Chaucer Rd, Senderwood, a suburb in eastern Johannesburg with a substantial Greek presence

Not every use of Grecian-style columns is a deliberate attempt to inscribe Greekness – some instances, such as the use of Corinthian and ionic columns on universities and academic libraries, inadvertently inscribe Greekness. This is the case at the University of the Witwatersrand, the urban central district of Braamfontein, for example, where Corinthian columns feature prominently on the façade of the Great Hall (see Figure 36) and ionic columns on that of the William Cullen Library (see Figure 37). These spaces are not spaces of Greekness, but the use of this type of iconic Grecian column in places of higher learning is undoubtedly the result of an association having been made between Ancient Greece and the development of advanced knowledge (see Goff, 2005; Lambert, 2013). This association is

widespread: Wits University is one of thousands of universities across the world that make use of Grecian columns in their architecture, and the shape of the façade – the row of columns topped by a narrow triangular – is often used as an icon of a university, or anything to do with tertiary education. This is the same shape used in Figure 34 to specifically signify Greekness, thus this link is worth noting. Moreover, although not deliberately signalling Greekness, this form does signal antiquity and the 'golden age' of philosophy and other scholarship in Ancient Greece.



Figure 36: The Great Hall at Wits University[46]

[46] Image source: https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/general-news/2022/2022-03/wits-celebrates-100-years-of-excellence-.html (last accessed 28 February 2023).



Figure 37: The William Cullen Library at Wits University[47]

In addition to architectural inscriptions of Greekness in the form of the columns mentioned above, the meander pattern is also an important sign used to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg. As mentioned previously, this is the geometrically labyrinthine motif that appears in many visual inscriptions of Greekness, including in Figure 15. Variations of the meander pattern have been attested in the art of a number of civilisations in the Northern Hemisphere, including (modern-day) Greece, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, China, and across the Roman Empire (Kerenyi, 1996). In what is now called Greece, the pattern was used even before the establishment of any "Greek" communities in the region (Kerenyi, 1996). Use of meander patterns flourished, however, in the Greek Dark Ages (900-700 BC), when Greek art was in its Geometric phase (Kerenyi, 1996). Meander patterns were typically used as borders

[47] Image source: https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/origins-and-architecture-william-cullen-library-wits (last accessed 28 February 2023).

on vases and sculptures, in paintings and friezes, and in architecture. It is likely that the boom in use of the pattern during this time is responsible for firmly establishing it as a (Ancient) *Greek* motif (Kerenyi, 1996).

The meander pattern can now be seen in a number of forms as a way to convey Greekness, ancient and contemporary, including in Johannesburg. It features prominently on the wall hanging in Figure 15, as well as on the pillars at the entrance to the Greek Sporting Club in Bedfordview (see Figure 38) and on the front of the counter at Meraki, a Greek restaurant (see Figure 39). Finally, Ancient Greek-style painting and sculpture are used to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg. Many Greek spaces in the city include some reference to Greek amphorae – vases often painted with a white-on-black image. For example, in Figure 40 below, the plate on the top left is reminiscent of this particular style of painting, that is closely associated with Ancient Greece. These signs are instrumental in inscribing these spaces as spaces of Greekness, as they are an overt visual queue from which people read Greekness. In Scollon and Scollon's (2003) framework of geosemiotics, visual semiotics is associated with the level of modality conveyed by a certain sign. To reiterate, modality "signals the degree of veracity, authenticity, or naturalness of the representation of an image to the phenomenon in real life" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 100). It is these visual references to Ancient Greek art and architecture that enable the producers of these spaces to inscribe 'authentic' or 'natural' Greekness in them and spatialise them as unquestionably Greek.



Figure 38: Pillars with a meander pattern at the entrance to the Greek Sporting Club



Figure 39: A meander pattern at Meraki, a Greek restaurant in Birnam



Figure 40: A display of Greek art at The Greek Taverna in Bedfordview

This preoccupation with antiquity in contemporary inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg says something interesting about time, implying that Greekness may involve accessing ancient time or rendering it timeless. The notion of time as being represented in the semiotic landscape has recently become more present in sociolinguistic work (cf. Blommaert, 2016; Baro, 2017, 2018; Malinowski, 2020; Dong, 2021; Canakis, 2021), in which Bakhtin's (1981) concept of the *chronotope* has taken centre stage. For Blommaert (2016), the inclusion of this concept is to more easily assess complex systems and "objects that are no longer linguistic in the strict

disciplinary sense of the term, but more generally semiotic, complex objects" (p. 106). He proposes the use of chronotopes "as an instrument for developing a fundamentally historical semiotics" (Blommaert, 2016, p. 106) to further enable investigations into the historical complexities and historical meanings of signs. The use of antiquity therefore functions as a chronotope, indexing to a particular time and space, that operates to construct a sense of historical continuity within these spaces, thereby inscribing 'authentic' Greekness.

6.4.2. Religion and superstition

In addition to signs of Greek antiquity, another important component of the syncretic inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg is the use of signs and symbols that evoke religious and superstitious beliefs. There is a wealth of linguistic landscape research on the linguistic landscapes of religious spaces all around the world (see Coluzzi & Kitade, 2015; Coluzzi, 2016; Inyang, 2019; Wafa & Wijayanti, 2018; Esteron, 2021). In addition, several LL studies make reference to the ways in which various religions are indexed in the linguistic landscape of a particular place (see Alsaif & Starks, 2019, 2021; Kochav, 2018; Coluzzi, 2016). Much like the ways in which Jewish Orthodoxy is inscribed in the linguistic landscape of Safed in Israel (Kochav, 2018), the prevalence of religious signboards in Ado Ekiti in Nigeria (Inyang, 2019), and the use of Jawi – a language derived from Arabic and written in Arabic script – to index Islam, the predominant religion in Brunei, Malaysia (Coluzzi, 2016), Greek Orthodox religion and traditional Greek superstition are represented in the linguistic landscape of Greek spaces in Johannesburg. However, these signs of religion do not only occur in religious spaces (cf. Alsaif & Starks, 2019, 2021; Wafa & Wijayanti, 2018), but are displayed prominently on other types of Greek spaces, including in food spaces like restaurants and delis.

With regards to religion, the occurrence of Greek Orthodox icons is most common, such as those displayed in Figure 41 below, although other artefacts such as prayer beads and candles

are also fairly common (see Figure 40). Several sources (Stewart, 2008; Greeka (n.d.)[48]; United States Department of State, 2019[49]; Evason, 2019; Pew Research Centre, 2017) place the percentage of the population of Greece that ascribes to the Greek Orthodox Church as being somewhere around 90-98%. This number is initially jarring but is indeed unsurprising given that since the country became independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1827, membership to the Greek Orthodox Church has been subtly mandated in the Constitution of Greece, which declares "the Eastern Orthodox Church as the 'prevailing' religion or 'religion of the State'" (Papastathis, 1996, p. 816). Since the same time, there has been little separation between church and state (Alivizatos, 1999; Papastathis, 1996; Zambeta, 2000; Kyriazopoulos, 2001; Diamantopoulou, 2012) and "the church is becoming more and more involved in secular issues, including major policy decisions" (Alivizatos, 1999, p. 23). As a result, several legal studies scholars have been interested in issues regarding religious freedom in Greece given its fairly narrow and sometimes contradictory constitution (cf. Papastathis, 1996; Kyriazopoulos, 2001; Pollis, 1992; Androutsopoulos, 2021). Alivizatos (1999) also notes that "the Greek Orthodox religion and the Greek language have been the fundamental pillars of its modern identity" (p. 33) and have played an instrumental role in the country's deliberate nation-building attempts. This raises many interesting questions about the relationship between Greek Orthodoxy and ethnic identity, which is worth exploring further but is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study. Thus, the ubiquity of religiosity in the way the diaspora inscribes its Greekness is hardly surprising.

In the syncretic makeup of these landscapes of Greekness, religious icons co-occur with signs of antiquity, discussed in the previous section. In fact, in the far right of Figure 41, a terracotta

[48] https://www.greeka.com/greece-culture/religion/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).
[49] 'Report on International Religious Freedom: Greece', available online at https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/greece/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).

amphora can be seen atop a shelf, right alongside the religious display on the adjacent wall. Icons can also be seen in *The Cheese Place* in Figure 16, where they are also available for purchase, as they are at most Greek delis or supermarkets and other shops: Figure 42 shows some icons for sale at Meraki, a Greek restaurant and deli on Corlett Drive in Birnam, northern Johannesburg; and Figure 43 shows some icons for sale at *Zettas*, an accessory shop in Edenvale. These icons and images are all reminiscent of those that adorn Greek Orthodox Churches (see Figure 44).



Figure 41: Religious displays at The Greek Taverna



Figure 42: Icons for sale at Meraki, a Greek restaurant in Birnam



Figure 43: Icons for sale at Zettas, a jewellery and accessory shop in Edenvale



Figure 44: Icons adorn the interior of Pantanassa Church, a Greek Orthodox Church in Melrose Estate, northern Johannesburg

In addition to signs of the Greek Orthodox Church being used to inscribe Greekness, and contributing to the syncretic nature of these inscriptions, is the use of signs of Greek superstition that almost always occur alongside the religious icons. This is an obvious example of syncretic juxtaposition – in this case between Orthodox Christianity and pre-Christian (pagan) superstition. This superstition is most visible in the form of the evil eye (μάτι, 'máti'), which is a ubiquitous part of any space that inscribes Greekness. The term 'evil eye' has a dual reference: first, it refers to "the phenomenon where certain individuals, usually thought to be envious, are said to transmit a form of energy to fellow human beings" (Roussou, 2011, p. 86) that causes the receiver physical and mental affliction and general bad luck; secondly, it also refers to material objects depicting an iconic representation of an eye, usually but not

necessarily blue, that serve as "prophylactic amulets" (*ibid*.) to ward off the effects of the evil eye. It is obviously the latter sense to which I refer here. Evil eyes can be seen in the foreground of Figure 16, and also occur alongside the icons in Meraki (in Figure 42) and Zettas (see Figure 45 below). At *Zettas*, the evil eye is visible on everything from jewellery to wall hangings, key rings, clothing, and cushions. The owner of *Zettas*, Zetta Dale, who I interviewed as part of this research, says that "most of [her] products have got evil eyes" and that she receives requests from customers to put evil eyes on the products that do not have them. She also noted that, although a lot of her customer base is Greek, she also has a sizable non-Greek clientele – often consisting of people who have visited Greece and are familiar with the evil eye symbol. It is also possible that the evil eye has wider appeal than icons, for example, because it lends itself to more secular interpretation and consumption.



Figure 45: A range of products with evil eyes available at Zettas

The evil eye, particularly in blue and white, as all the ones shown thus far are, is incredibly salient in Greek spaces in Johannesburg. It is visible in every Greek space I visited for this research and is also a prominent feature used to inscribe Greekness in people. Many of the

members of the Johannesburg Greek diaspora I interviewed were wearing an item of jewellery displaying an evil eye. Moreover, by virtue of having a Greek grandmother, my sister and I also possess collections of evil eye jewellery, as do our mother and grandmother herself. I also found myself feeling the urge to wear an evil eye necklace or bracelet when I went for interviews for this study, possibly as a way to signal my own Greekness to my interviewees. In addition, I have noticed that younger members of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg often have the evil eye emoji in the 'bio' section of their Instagram profiles; and there is even a beauty salon on Chaucer Rd in Senderwood, called Malia Mou[50], that specialises in gel manicures featuring evil eye nail art.



Figure 46: Lambades, Greek Easter candles, on sale at Emporio Meze in Senderwood

Perhaps the most interesting instance of religion and superstition co-occurring that I saw whilst collecting my data was at *Emporio Meze*, a Greek deli and restaurant in Senderwood. Just

[50] *Malia mou* means "my hair".

before Greek Easter, they were selling *lambades* – long, thin candles that are usually decorated with ribbon and charms or toys, to be lit during Easter church services and processions – decorated with evil eyes (see Figure 46 above). Here, the syncretic nature of inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg via these two things – Greek Orthodox Christianity and pagan superstition – is obvious.

6.4.3. Idyllic landscapes

In addition to signs of Greek antiquity, religion, and superstition, another important component of the syncretic inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg is the use of depictions of idyllic Greek landscapes, both natural and man-made. I initially noticed this in Greek recipe books, where pages of recipes and photographs of food are interspersed with images of beaches with crystal-clear water, groves of olive or orange trees, the iconic blue and white buildings of Santorini, and other postcard-like photographs of Greek landscapes — most of which are distinctly nautical. It later became apparent that the use of such images extended beyond recipe books and into physical spaces, as another way to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg.

Figure 47 and Figure 48 below illustrate two such instances in Johannesburg. Figure 47 depicts a book open to a photograph of a busy harbour, surrounded by rocky hills, that is on display on a countertop in The Greek Taverna. Figure 48 shows a mural in the outdoor seating area of Emporio Meze. The mural, much like the book in Figure 47, depicts a nautical scene – with a boat and a strikingly blue-green sea. There are also tables and chairs and a bougainvillaea in the foreground, possibly to mirror the actual tables and chairs in the restaurant and give the illusion that the restaurant stretches beyond the patio in Johannesburg and towards the idyllic Greek seaside.



Figure 47: A book on display in The Greek Taverna



Figure 48: A mural on a wall in the outdoor seating area of Emporio Meze, Senderwood

About his restaurant, its decor in particular, Panos Dairopoulos says: "We're a very authentic restaurant, family-oriented restaurant. It's a taverna, not a restaurant, so we wanted that basic, simple taverna, not this…you walk into a top brand restaurant and you're scared to sit. We want you to walk in here and we welcome you, and you sit, you eat. [...] It's a very home feel. So you must walk into a Greek home." Here, Panos emphasises that he wants his restaurant to feel like a "Greek home", but it appears to be more than that – this Greek home is *in Greece*. As part of the process of inscribing Greekness syncretically in Johannesburg, one needs to construct Greece as an imagined setting for a space. These landscapes are necessarily idyllic, displaying only the most desirable, enviable even, landscapes of Greece. It is unlikely that these images would include, for example, the banking district of Athens, a school, or a commercial farm. Furthermore, all instances of the use of these images to inscribe Greekness – or Greece, at that – observed during my data collection were of a seascape. Thus, it is a very particular part of Greece that is being constructed in Johannesburg: Greece as a place for slow living,

summer holidays, and luxuriating by the sea. It is possible that this sort of image is linked generally with expectations and associations with general 'mediterraneanness' and not only Greekness in particular.

Another image of Greece that is proliferated as a means to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg is that of the island of Santorini, one of the larger Cyclades islands, which is famous for its iconic white and blue houses. It is an extremely popular tourist destination, because of its beaches and overall aesthetic, and features prominently in a number of movies involving Greece. Santorini is, thus, perhaps the ultimate idyll and so represents a distillation of everything that is most desirable about Greece. The most striking allusion to Santorini that I encountered during my data collection was in the bathroom at The Greek Taverna, shown below in Figure 49. The bathroom has been done in blue and white and contains little model replicas of a typical Santorini house. The floor of the bathroom is stone, mirroring the stone streets of Santorini towns, and the light fitting resembles a fishing net – most likely a nod to one of the main activities on the island. Upon returning to the table after a trip to the bathroom in Figure 49, my (non-Greek) cousin remarked that "the bathrooms here are more Greek than the ones in Greece." The bathrooms also include other markers of Greekness analysed here, including an Ancient Greek-style statue on the soap dish, a marble basin, and a number of evil eyes. These features plus the use of blue and white in the bathroom give one the sense of being overwhelmingly Greek – there is no chance that someone would enter and wonder what effect the decorators were going for.



Figure 49: Scenes in the bathroom at The Greek Taverna

6.4.4. The colour blue

Linked to the aforementioned depictions of the azure sea, it is at this point prescient to highlight the sheer amount of blue used in inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg. Almost every space of Greekness (some churches being the exception) features some blue in its decor – a quick flick through the images included in this study will indicate that everything from the evil eyes on sale at *Zettas*, to walls and floors at *Meze Emporio* and *The Greek Taverna*, tabletops at *Meraki*, and decorations in most sites are blue. It is unclear if this colour association with Greekness has been influenced by the Greek flag (which is blue and white), or if it is rooted in more nuanced sociohistorical events. It is also interesting to note that it is a particular kind of blue that is used to inscribe Greekness. Like the use of other aspects in the syncretic inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg, the association with Greekness and blue seems to be interpreted by people – Greek and not – unquestioningly.

6.4.5. Political nationalism

Flags – symbols of political nationalism that signal belonging to a particular country – are another common facet of the syncretic inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg. The Greek flag and, slightly less often, the flag of Cyprus appear to be a ubiquitous feature of spaces of Greekness in Johannesburg. The Greek flag can be seen on the wall hanging in The Greek Taverna in Figure 15 and is also hanging in The Cheese Place in Figure 16. In addition, the Greek flag and the Cypriot flag flank the flag of South Africa on the sign outside St John's in Figure 34 (the Cypriot flag is to the right of the South African flag but is not clear in the photograph because of how the wind was blowing). In Figure 50 below, a humongous Greek flag can be seen spanning the ceiling above the outdoor seating area at *Emporio Meze*.

In addition, I also noticed the Greek flag inside a number of churches as well as in some of the merchandise on sale at *Zettas*. In Figure 51 below, stickers of the iconic Greek evil eye and Cypriot flag appear alongside stickers of the flags of South Africa and Israel (likely because Edenvale, where the shop is located, also has a large Jewish population). The co-occurrence of the evil eyes and Cypriot flag with symbols related to South Africa and, in the case of the flag of Israel, a particular part of Johannesburg serve to inscribe that this is a Greekness within a diasporic context. It inscribes that this Greekness exists within a South African context, occupying the same geographical space as another prominent community in Johannesburg. Customers of *Zettas* may therefore have a number of political allegiances – they may display political nationalism to Greece, and also to South Africa and/or Israel. Zetta herself emphasised that her stock is dictated by her customers and emphasised that everything in the shop is there because a market exists for it.



Figure 50: A massive Greek flag adorns the ceiling of the outdoor seating area of Emporio Meze, a restaurant and deli in east Johannesburg



Figure 51: A display of stickers on sale at Zettas

The idea of a 'nation' and, by extension, of 'nationhood' and 'nationalism', is inherently complex. Nationalism is defined by Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) as "the project to make the

political unit, the state […] congruent with the cultural unit, the nation" by recasting "the mosaic of diverse peoples within the boundaries of the state […] into a uniform and unified national whole" (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008, p. 536). They also emphasise the performative nature of nationhood, which is enacted and prescribed via symbols in the form of "neatly packaged distillations of the nation" (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008, p. 539). Flags are perhaps the most overt symbol of a nation and it is evidently an important aspect of the syncretic inscription of Greekness in Johannesburg. It is also interesting and important to consider how this links with Anderson's notion of the 'imagined community' (see Anderson, 1991). In his book *Imagined Communities*, first published in 1983[51], Anderson introduced the concept of the 'nation' as a social construct, premised on a feeling of belonging to an imagined community: he notes that "it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). Within the context of nationalism amongst members of the Greek diaspora, there is an added level of distance between the community and its 'imagined' community. The imagined community is also an imagined homeland – a place many members of the diaspora have never been to or lived in, and yet display intense nationalistic attachment to.

6.5. Syncretic Greekness in South Africa and Greece

The use of these various categories to syncretically convey Greekness is done largely unquestioningly on the part of the Greek diaspora. Panos, as quoted earlier in this chapter (section 6.4.3.), employs the use of these myriad symbols of Greekness to ensure that his restaurant recreates Greece. While discussing the décor of the restaurant, he stated, "We try to

[51] My copy is a revised edition published in 1991, and it is to this that I refer throughout.

be as Greek as possible. People must see." With this, it is clear that Panos attempts to communicate Greekness and recreate Greece by deliberately clustering the various symbols and icons that inscribe Greekness syncretically in one space. In my interview with Thalia G., however, she noted that there is a stark difference between Greece and South African Greekness, regardless of the ways in which Greekness is communicated in Johannesburg:

> "When you go to a Greek event here, or when I'm around Greeks, I don't get that great feeling I get in Greece. It's absolutely different. The South African Greek feeling is a feeling, but it's not the same as in Greece. As soon as you step out that plane and smell that air, it's something. It's not in Joburg. You can try and replicate it…but obviously you can't. Even if you go to a wedding and you listen to that music, it's not the same. It's beautiful and I love it, but it's something else. It's a Greek *South African* Greekness…something else and it's great too, but it's not…" (Thalia G., 2023)

It is, at this point, important to ponder how this syncretic representation of Greekness (and ostensibly of Greece itself) by the Johannesburg diaspora would be perceived in Greece. Greece's nation-building efforts, as described above, have also translated into a destination brand strategy used to advertise Greece as "an archetypal destination for classical antiquities and summer holidays" (Kouris, 2009, p. 168) – a description that parallels the way Greece is depicted by the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg. As a country, Greece has relied heavily on these syncretic elements first in its nation-building efforts and, now, as part of its tourism industry, on which the economy of the country relies heavily (Bisa, 2013). Recent research into the way the Greek tourism industry brands the country indicates that the symbols and icons described above are used to represent a narrow, tourist-oriented "brand image centered upon the seaside and cultural (antiquities) features" (Kouris, 2009, p. 174), that does not align with the country's more diverse reality. Kouris (2009) and several other scholars (cf. Bisa, 2013; Kavoura, 2013; Lagos et al, 2020; Panagiotopoulou, 2012) who have examined the image of

Greece that is proferred by the government and tourism industry in Greece note the disparity between this image and the reality of the country. All authors note that the over-reliance on symbols of antiquity, Greek Orthodoxy, and the summer *dolce vita* serves to erase several aspects of the population, landscape, and culture of Greece. As a South African, I find advertising and souvenirs that brand South Africa as purely a safari destination kitsch and reductive, so too does it seem Greeks from Greece would find the South African diaspora's reliance on these syncretic symbols (cf. Kouris, 2009; Bisa, 2013; Kavoura, 2013; Lagos et al, 2020).

6.6. Summary of chapter

In summary, this chapter focused on how *syncretism* can be used to describe how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg. I defined syncretism as the co-occurrence of discrete, often conflicting, categories of Greekness and emphasised how the term lends itself to flexible application. I began the chapter with an overview of the origins of the term in religious studies and, later, in anthropology and paid particular attention to how the term has previously been applied to Greek Orthodox Christianity. I emphasised how the syncretic elements making up Greekness are part of deliberate nation-building and branding efforts on the part of the Greek government post-independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. These nation-building efforts which employ deliberately constructed syncretism have carried into the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, where they seem to have been concentrated to signify both authentic Greekness and homogenous diasporic identity. Each category exists independently but all are needed to convey Greekness convincingly. This collection of visual signs that are needed in order to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg represent a particular visual semiotic assemblage (cf. Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017; Pennycook, 2022) of elements of Greekness.

I then presented an analysis and discussion of the most salient aspects that operate within a single space to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg: antiquity, religion and superstition, geography/landscapes, and political nationalism. Antiquity was the predominant category as it has the broadest scope, encompassing everything related to Ancient Greece, including for example architectural elements and art. Antiquity was leveraged especially in the nation-building efforts of post-independence Greece as they needed to both win political favour in the rest of Europe and establish a national identity. These efforts conveniently coincided with a period of widespread Panhellenism in Western Europe; thus Greece made a concerted effort to Hellenise – or "make Greek" – the most desirable aspects of broadly Greek history. Thereafter, I looked more closely at religion and superstition, which arose most prominently in my data in the form of Greek Orthodox icons and evil eyes, respectively. Next, I presented evidence of efforts to (re)construct an idyll by making use of appealing images of Greek landscapes, often ones featuring the ocean. The island of Santorini, with its very renowned white and blue buildings, also features prominently. Finally, I examined political nationalism as a category used, syncretically with others, to inscribe Greekness. This was particularly evident in the use of the Greek (and sometimes Cypriot) flag, which often occurred alongside the South African flag, thus contextualising the Greek diaspora within the broader South African context.

In the following chapter, I explore the concept of authenticity in relation to the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg. I examine the ways in which authentic Greekness is inscribed in Greek spaces in the city and propose that one way for understanding how authenticity may be 'read' is by looking at sound.

CHAPTER 7: Inscribing Authenticity in Greek Spaces in Johannesburg

SAHETI is a school located in Senderwood, eastern Johannesburg, a suburb with a sizable Greek population. While the school was established by and for the Greek community, it is a mainstream school that follows the national private school curriculum and does not have any sort of exclusionary admissions practices. Standing on the school premises and visible from the road that runs past the school is a large billboard depicting happy school children holding up handwritten signs saying 'know thyself' (see Figure 52), which is the school's motto. An entire section of the school's website is dedicated to unpacking the meaning of this motto[52] (SAHETI, 2023), featuring poems by students and reflections on the topic by the former principal, prefects, alumni, and teachers. The former principal acknowledges the philosophical origins of the phrase, noting that it "dates back to ancient Greece and was expounded upon by the likes of Socrates" (SAHETI School website). It is, in fact, one of the three aphorisms said to have been inscribed at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi (Morgan et al., 2009), and the philosophical meanings attributed to it and interpreted from it are numerous and it continues to be the subject of historical and philosophical inquiry (Burgess & Rentmeester, 2015). One of the main concepts with which this phrase is associated in existential philosophical literature is that of *authenticity* (cf. Burgess & Rentmeester, 2015; Cohen, 2008). Interpretations of authenticity as self-knowledge and trueness to one's intrinsic humanity abound and, while this use of the term is fairly common in everyday parlance, there remains another common use of the term: to refer to objects and experiences that are traditional, or true to an original (Varga & Guignon, 2020). While we can infer that the notion of authenticity as self-knowledge and truth is an important message for the school and its pupils, the latter sense of authenticity is particularly relevant to a study of the ways in which Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg.

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[52] See https://www.saheti.co.za/about-us/know-thyself/ (last accessed 28 February 2023).



Figure 52: SAHETI School billboard on the school's premises displaying its motto, 'know thyself'

Johannesburg contains many restaurants, shops, buildings, experiences, and communities that proclaim to be or are described as "authentic", as a way of signalling that they are faithful to traditional Greekness and, as a result, good and worthy of attention or patronage (cf. Baro, 2017, 2018; Ivanovic, 2014; Opfermann, 2021; Ramoshaba, 2016). This is the case for many of the Greek spaces in Johannesburg, especially restaurants and churches, where proclamations of authenticity are distinctly visible in the linguistic landscape. This is where this chapter takes its cue, to explore authenticity in relation to the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg. As Van Leeuwen (2001) notes, it is important to "take a semiotic approach" (Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 396) to authenticity; and "to ask not: 'How authentic is this?', but 'Who takes this as authentic and who does not?', and 'On the basis of which visible or *audible* cues are these judgements made?" (*ibid*.; emphasis added). While looking at the ways in which authenticity

has been semiotically constructed *visually*, I also look at how this is achieved in Greek spaces in Johannesburg using sound. Furthermore, recent scholarship (see Ari & Mittelberg, 2008; Moriarty, 2014, 2015; Lamb & Sharma, 2019; Baro, 2017, 2018) indicates a shift in the ways in which authenticity has been approached in the social sciences and it is therefore important to unpack the social construction of the term before it is used in my analysis of the semiotic landscape. Socially constructed terms like these are, paradoxically, useful and necessary as well as complex and problematic. It is therefore our duty as scholars to interrogate and problematise them in our work – a process that was referred to as 'concept vetting'[53] in a recent conference I attended. I use the first section of this chapter to 'vet' the concept of authenticity by providing an analysis of the term and the origins of its varied usage.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: first, I analyse the concept of authenticity. Thereafter, I examine the use of the term "authenticity" in relation to both diasporic identity and sociolinguistics. In the fourth section of this chapter, I provide an analysis of how authenticity is used in the linguistic landscape to inscribe Greekness, and some of the discourse around authenticity and Greekness. I then look at the role of sound in inscribing authenticity and present a soundscape of a space of Greekness, Chaucer Rd Shopping Centre in Senderwood, a suburb in eastern Johannesburg. Finally, I provide a summary of the chapter.

7.1. Concept vetting 'authenticity'

As mentioned above, *authenticity* is not a neutral term; it is socially constructed and thus requires a bit of problematisation before it can be used in later sections of this chapter. As Baro

[53] I would like to credit Rima Elabdali for this term, which became a recurrent theme in many of the lively discussions at the conference and impressed upon all the attendees the importance of thinking through and beyond many of the concepts we often take for granted.

(2017) asserts in his account of how authenticity is discursively constructed in heritage spaces in Johannesburg:

> "There is nothing natural about what is presented as authentic: it is socially constructed by people in power, who seek to dictate what a reading of history should be and add layers of meaning to a commodified aesthetic of the past" (Baro, 2017, p. 232).

Authentic is used as a descriptive term applied to a variety of entities and experiences in a plethora of disciplines, including sociology and anthropology (cf. Erickson, 1995; Handler, 1986; Lindholm, 2002), geography and urban planning (cf. Yeh, 2007; Bold et al., 2017; Zukin, 2009), literature (cf. Cohen-Hattab & Kerber, 2004; Eversley, 2004; Castrillon, 1993), art, (cf. Dutton, 2005; Newman & Bloom, 2012), education (cf. Smilan & Miraglia, 2009; Clark & Estes, 1999; Saunders & Hill, 2007; Akerdad et al., 2022), and tourism (cf. Ari & Mittelberg, 2008; Ning, 2017). There are varying degrees of engagement with the term *authenticity* in this work – many scholars use the term without problematising it, to describe entities that are traditional or representative of an original, others may include a brief acknowledgement of the complexity of the term and define it as they will use it in their study, and some include comprehensive discussions of the term and the implications of its use in their study. Following the lead of the latter set of scholars, who actively problematise authenticity in their work, this section outlines the use of the term and its place in the present chapter.

Originally used to refer to a characteristic of people, authenticity has its origins in existential philosophy, notably the works of German philosopher Martin Heidegger and his contemporaries and those he influenced, notably Søren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Friedrich Nietzsche, Erich Fromm, and Theodor Adorno (Guignon, 2008; Varga & Guignon, 2020). To this day, authenticity remains a salient aspect of much philosophical scholarly work (cf. Steiner & Reisinger, 2006; Guignon, 2008; Newman & Smith, 2016; Varga & Guignon, 2020).

In *Being and Time* (1927), arguably his *magnum opus*, Heidegger (2001)[54] introduces the concept of *Dasein* to describe human existence. Literally translating from the German to "being-there" (Varga & Guignon, 2020), Dasein conceives of human existence as relational, linked to the "temporal structure of human existence in general" (Guignon, 2008, p. 285):

> "Dasein is not a type of object among others in the totality of what is on hand in the universe. Instead, human being is a 'relation of being', a relation that obtains between what one is at any moment (the immediacy of the concrete present as it has evolved) and what one can and will be as the temporally extended unfolding or happening of life into an open realm of possibilities. To say that human being is a relation is to say that, in living out our lives, we always care about who and what we are" (Varga & Guignon, 2020, n.p.).

Unlike Kierkegaard, Heidegger does not view human beings as subjects who serve as "spectator[s] of objects" (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016, p. 2) but saw subject and object as intrinsically inseparable (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016; Guignon, 2008; Varga & Guignon, 2020). Fundamental to Heidegger's view of human existence is the concept of *Geworfenheit*, often translated as "thrownness" (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). He posits that humans are 'thrown' into a world that is absurd, or devoid of meaning (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016), and presents 'authenticity' as a way to live that allows us to navigate this absurdity (Guignon, 2008). It is an "ideal way of life characterised by such traits as integrity, intensity, lucidity, coherence, and honesty" (Guignon, 2008, p. 277).

Varga and Guignon (2020) elaborate on Heidegger's original use of the word *Eigentlichkeit*, a word he invented himself that is commonly translated and referred to as 'authenticity':

> "The word we translate as 'authenticity' is actually a neologism invented by Heidegger, the word *Eigentlichkeit*, which comes from an ordinary term, *eigentlich*, meaning 'really' or 'truly',

[54] *Being and Time* was originally published in German as *Sein und Zeit* in 1927; my copy of the 1962 Macquarrie and Robinson English translation of the book was printed in 2001 and thus it is to this edition that I refer throughout.

> but is built on the stem *eigen*, meaning 'own' or 'proper'. So the word might be more literally translated as 'ownedness', or 'being owned', or even 'being one's own', implying the idea of owning up to and owning what one is and does" (Varga & Guignon, 2020, n.p.).

It is thus this idea of constant reflection back to oneself that characterises Heidegger's conception of 'authenticity'. Indeed, the earliest definitions and applications of the term were in relation to people, to describe a particular way of living. Dutton (2005) describes authenticity as "committed personal expression" (Dutton, 2005, p. 5) and notes that "an authentic life is one lived with critical and independent sovereignty over one's choices and values" (*ibid.*).

However, the number of possible applications of the term has expanded since Heidegger popularised its use, evidenced by the number of disciplines to which it can be applied:

> "Authenticity has taken on a different meaning that has little to do with origins and a lot to do with style. The concept has migrated from a quality of people to a quality of things, and most recently to a quality of experiences" (Zukin, 2009, pp. 2-3).

As mentioned previously, the use of 'authentic' to describe various artefacts and experiences is extremely common in scholarship across a number of disciplines (see Ari & Mittelberg, 2008; Moriarty, 2014, 2015; Lamb & Sharma, 2019; Baro, 2017, 2018; Mannur, 2007; Oum, 2005; Yeh, 2007; Lee & Lou, 2019; Zhao, 2021; Mei & Van Liempt, 2022). Given the varied nature of the application of the term, several scholars have undertaken to distinguish between various types of authenticity – there is almost a cross-disciplinary obsession with categorising authenticity into different taxonomies. In structural studies of art, for example, a distinction is made between nominal and expressive authenticity (Dutton, 2005). Nominal authenticity refers to the "correct identification of the origins, authorship, or provenance of an object, ensuring that an object of aesthetic experience is properly named" (Dutton, 2005, p. 2), while expressive authenticity, reflecting the Heideggerean definitions of the term, has to do with an "object's character as a true expression of an individual's or a society's values and beliefs" (*ibid.*).

However, the latter type of authenticity, while most relevant to the discussion of how authenticity is semiotically constructed around Greekness in Johannesburg that follows, requires even further unpacking.

Drawing on the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, Grayson and Martinec (2004) differentiate between indexical authenticity and iconic authenticity. Similar to nominal authenticity, judgements of an item as indexically authentic are based on 'spatiotemporal cues', in other words, based on space and time. For example, verifying that a World War II uniform did in fact belong to or was worn by a real soldier or that a particular artwork was in fact produced by Pablo Picasso. Iconic authenticity, on the other hand, "refers to whether or not an item fits with an observer's expectations about how the item should appear and is often used synonymously with verisimilitude" (Newman & Smith, 2016). Similar phenomena are termed pure authenticity and approximate authenticity, respectively, by Beverland et al. (2008), who also theorise the existence of moral authenticity based on an analysis of participants' responses to beer advertisements. Pure authenticity occurs when an item is "completely unchanged from the original" (Beverland et al., 2008, p. 7), while approximate authenticity refers to items that invoke a feeling of tradition based on prior expectations of how something should appear (Beverland et al., 2008). Moral authenticity considers the intentions of the producers of a particular item and is applied in cases where there is evidence to suggest that they are "genuine in their intent" (Beverland et al., 2008, p. 12) and "motivated by love of the task, rather than the possibility of financial reward" (*ibid*.).

In addition, Carroll and Wheaton (2009) differentiate between type authenticity and moral authenticity, based on their analysis of restaurant reviews. Similarly, to iconic and approximate authenticity, type authenticity refers to trueness to a particular category or genre, for example,

whether food served at a Greek restaurant is construed or conveyed as being true to the genre of Greek cuisine. Their definition of moral authenticity is similar to that of Beverland et al. (2008) and refers to the degree of sincerity in the intentions of the producer. Thus, "[w]hen engaged in assessing [moral] authenticity, people are less likely to attend to the immediate properties of the food and are more likely to evaluate the processes, values, and goals of the producer" (Newman & Smith, 2016, p. 611).

Moreover, Wang (1999) applies a tourism lens and proposes three types of authenticity: objective, constructed, and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity is much the same as nominal, indexical, and pure authenticity, and refers to judgements of the authenticity of an item or experience based on spatiotemporal history. Constructed authenticity is a particularly interesting category of authenticity to consider in the current study and refers to authenticity that is "projected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism producers in terms of their imagery, expectations, preference, beliefs, powers etc." (Wang, 1999, p. 351). Wang (1999) also introduces the concept of existential authenticity that is "concerned not with verifying attributes of objects but with achieving a certain personal and inter-subjective state of being" (Newman & Smith, 2016, p. 612). In her definition of the latter, Wang (1999) brings in the concept of embodiment – the physical presence of human bodies in engagements with authenticity. She thus pays attention to the performative nature of authenticity, which is something that is especially relevant to my own work, as I discuss in Chapter 5 and again later in this chapter. In addition, Wang's work is particularly relevant to my study as it deals broadly with the communication of authenticity.

Newman and Smith (2016) posit that systems of classification of the various types of authenticity are always organised along two axes: the target of the authenticity description

(object or agent) and the source of information that is consulted (external or internal) (Newman & Smith, 2016, p. 613). Furthermore, they note a number of convergences between the various pre-existing theories. Along these lines, they reanalyse and combine several theories of classifying types of authenticity and propose their own comprehensive system of classification that distinguishes between historical authenticity, categorical authenticity, value authenticity, and self-authenticity (Newman & Smith, 2016). Historical authenticity judgements target the object and are based on an external reference (Newman & Smith, 2016). This category is borne out of the convergence of indexical, nominal, objective, and pure authenticity and refers to assessments of authenticity based on spatiotemporal history (Newman & Smith, 2016). Categorical authenticity also has the object as the target but is based on internal reference (Newman & Smith, 2016). It refers to assessments of category or genre membership and thus represents the convergence of iconic, type, constructed, and approximate authenticity (Newman & Smith, 2016). Similarly to expressive and moral authenticity, value authenticity targets the agent, or producer, and refers to assessment of values based on external references (Newman & Smith, 2016). Conversely, self-authenticity represents a type of self-authentication, wherein the target is the agentive self, and is based on internal references (Newman & Smith, 2016). My objective in the remainder of this chapter is to explore how authenticity is semiotically constructed in inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg and Newman and Smith's (2016) model of the four types of authenticity judgements provides me with a useful framework within which to do so. As a socially-constructed concept, discussions of authenticity tend to lack rigour – an issue that can be overcome with the use of a framework such as Newman and Smith's (2016). While frameworks for the analysis of dimensions of authenticity do exist in sociolinguistics – Coupland's (2003) five-part model is a notable example – I pay particular attention to a model developed for use in tourism studies as it is well-suited to a geosemiotic analysis of cultural authenticity. The next section examines the

relationship between authenticity, diasporas, and sociolinguistics in the present canon of literature on the subjects.

7.2. Authenticity, diasporas, and sociolinguistics

Previous chapters of this dissertation have illustrated how diasporas are often either on the periphery of or examined prominently in sociolinguistic studies of superdiverse spaces (see CHAPTER 2: In much the same way that diasporas are inextricably linked to studies of globalised spaces, discussions of or references to authenticity are often prominent in studies of diasporas. As such, the convergence of sociolinguistics, authenticity, and diaspora represents a robust and salient area of research. This section lays out some of the major debates and themes that have emerged from this literature, in an effort to situate my own analysis to be presented later in this chapter.

The link between sociolinguistics and authenticity is multifaceted. The term 'authentic' was initially used in variationist sociolinguistics to refer to an 'authentic speaker', what Eckert (2003) refers to as the "dialectological poster child" (Eckert, 2003, p. 392), the "spontaneous speaker of pure vernacular" (*ibid*.) who provides sociolinguists with "direct access to language untainted by the interference of reflection or social agency" (*ibid*.). Eckert (2003) refers to concepts such as authenticity, that scholars frequently accept and use unquestioningly and without problematisation, as the "elephants in the room" (Eckert, 2003, p. 392) – these are concepts that are in widespread use in a particular discipline or group of disciplines but are never really acknowledged or tackled head-on themselves. Eckert's (2003) main issue with authenticity as an unconsciously accepted concept is its implicit inflexibility, which is anathema to the inherent fluidity of language and its use:

> "Authenticity implies stasis - the 'real' peasant is just like the peasant that came before. But neither social locations and identities, nor language, are static. Is the person who remains

> centrally located in what is viewed as prototypical practice more authentic than the person who is pushing the envelope? Should our focus be solely on those who reproduce the meanings from which social locations are constructed, or should we also be focusing on those who are at the vanguard of the production of new social meaning? I would argue that a crucial part of the meaning-making enterprise in variation takes place in this vanguard; hence studies of speakers who push, for example, the gender envelope [...], should take [centre] place in sociolinguistics" (Eckert, 2003, p. 393).

She maintains that "sociolinguistics should be located not at the edge of social variability, but squarely in the [centre]" (Eckert, 2003, p. 396):

> "This means that we have to view language and the social world - including the social locations that provide our ideological map of that world - as a continuous human production. And it is up to us, above all, to explore the nexus between that world and whatever that linguistic system is that resides in our most ingrained [behaviours]" (Eckert, 2003, p. 396).

Eckert (2003) also raises the issue of gender ideology with regards to authenticity in sociolinguistic studies. Women are seen as being more adept at acquiring multiple languages and speaking multiple languages with high proficiency – more so than men. This has resulted in men being more likely to be termed 'authentic speakers' of a language than women, meaning that men are more likely to be the focus of sociolinguistic studies (Eckert, 2003). In addition, Eckert (2003) criticises the legacy of structuralism in the sociolinguistic study of authenticity, meaning that "authenticity implies stasis" (Eckert, 2003, p. 393) but, she notes, "neither social locations and identities, nor language, are static" (*ibid*.). Investigations of authenticity in and of itself are, therefore, especially welcome in post-structuralist studies – a framework into which LL/SL studies fit quite comfortably. As Baro (2017) notes, "the resurgence and recent obsession of people with authenticity as a key organiser of social life discourse suggests that scholars should take it on as a topic of study to question how certain spaces, people, or cultural items are authorised and authenticated through discourse, often for consumption purposes" (Baro, 2017, p. 242). Authenticity now forms a major part of a number of linguistic landscape

studies, many of which feature diasporas prominently. Some studies include no acknowledgement of the ideologically constructed nature of authenticity (Lamb, 2019, for example), while others may put the word in inverted commas to indicate its fraughtness, but not include any further discussion (cf. Mei & Van Liempt, 2022; Moriarty, 2015; Zhao, 2021, for example).

Studies of touristic linguistic landscapes remain a salient area in which authenticity is examined in sociolinguistics (cf. Ari & Mittelberg, 2008; Moriarty, 2014, 2015; Lamb & Sharma, 2019; Baro, 2017, 2018). Wang's (1999) work indicates that tourists represent a group prone to making judgements on the authenticity of an experience or artefact, and that the tourism experience as a whole is characterised by the performance and interpretation of various activities and objects as 'authentic'. The presence of tourism experiences in sociolinguistic work on authenticity is therefore unsurprising. Moriarty (2015), for example, analyses the linguistic landscape of Dingle, a tourist town in Ireland, to explore how "the Irish language together with other semiotic resources of Irishness are being drawn upon and [mobilised] as a means to authenticate Dingle as a 'real' Irish space" (Moriarty, 2015, p. 199). She argues that "the value of Irish is recontextualized as a resource for the commodification of authentic Irishness ripe for touristic consumption" (Moriarty, 2015, p. 196), noting that the linguistic landscape is an important semiotic resource for tourists especially. Her analysis indicates that the touristic linguistic landscape of Dingle is symbolically constructed through use of the Irish language, Celtic font, the colour green, and other "culturally salient symbols" (Moriarty, 2015, p. 210) such as a pint of Guinness and the *bodhrán*, a traditional Irish instrument.

Baro (2018) looks at authenticity in the context of *The Sheds*, a trendy market in Johannesburg, which, he argues, "is made up and follows a worldwide trend for authentic consumption"

(Baro, 2018, p. 49). He views this trend "as an aspiration for a 'gentrified' aesthetic of authentic urban experience" (Baro, 2018, p. 49), which stems from Western ideals that are deemed desirable by the "post-apartheid middle class in Johannesburg" (*ibid*.). Baro's (2018) study takes the form of a linguistic landscape analysis of *The Sheds*, with an emphasis on what he terms the *chronoscape*, "which implies that the semiotic landscape […] of the market needs to be investigated from the perspective of time, in order to understand how the meaning of the space came to be" (Baro, 2018, p. 49). He notes the use of signs relating to time to convey a "sense of progress" (Baro, 2018, p. 60) and notes that "the construction of a future landscape hides uncomfortable events from the past" (*ibid*.). He assesses the importance of the interaction order (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) in the space in question:

> "Indeed, the interaction order between the consumers, the venue and its produce is performed as authentic because it gives a sense of going back to an ancient way of consuming - straight from the producer - in an environment containing multiple signs of the past, which help to curate the experience. People with the means to consume the products sold at the Sheds go there hoping to have a ready-made 'authentic experience, as they buy from small businesses, see their food being made in front of them and presented with handmade displays, as in imagined pre-modern times. The Sheds is not meant to be experienced as a museum, as items are not put on displayed to be enjoyed, but rather to be consumed, and the oldness of the warehouse is merely used to convey a sense of an authentic old environment" (Baro, 2018, p. 67).

Here, Baro (2018) emphasises the role the social actors play in the performance of authenticity, which I deal with in relation to my own research later in this chapter.

There is also a body of work on authenticity in diasporic spaces from the perspective of linguistic or semiotic landscapes. Matwick and Matwick (2019), for example, explore authenticity in the context of the linguistic landscape of a Japanese supermarket in Singapore. Based on their analysis of the "cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, and cross-culinary exchanges

that occur in food spaces" (Matwick & Matwick, 2019, p. 532) and on a visual analysis of promotional signs in the Japanese market, they find that there is a "dominant discourse of authenticity" (Matwick & Matwick, 2019, p. 532). They find five types of authenticity, based on those theorised by Gilmore and Pine (2007): original, natural, influential, referential, and exceptional (Matwick & Matwick, 2019). Given that their analysis is focused on a food space, they theorise an additional type of authenticity – health (Matwick & Matwick, 2019). Health authenticity "draws on science to inform consumers of the nutritional information and makes it relatable and applicable through folklore and cooking ideas" (Matwick & Matwick, 2019, p. 537), which serves to cause consumers to view the product as valuable and, therefore, encourages them to buy it:

> "A discourse of authenticity reassures consumers of the integrity of the food products through the use of language, images, and positioning of signs in relation to the food products. While the store and its products are not necessarily true to their more original forms in Japan, the original form is not necessarily the best form. Instead, authenticity may be more about the present, how the person conceives of authenticity in the moment. Daily shopping experiences provide such moments of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural exchanges every day, offering enriching opportunities to learn about and taste new foods and cultures" (Matwick & Matwick, 2019, p. 550).

Like my own study, Matwick and Matwick's (2019) study includes a salient food aspect and looks at the ways in which discourses of authenticity are constructed around food and in food spaces.

Moreover, Lyons and Rodríguez-Ordóñez (2015) look at the linguistic landscape of Pilsen, an area in Chicago in the USA. They look at issues relating to authenticity and inauthenticity in relation to the occurrence of English and Spanish in this predominantly Hispanic area. Pilsen is currently undergoing a process of gentrification, which has resulted in an increase in the white, English-speaking population in the neighbourhood (Lyons & Rodríguez-Ordóñez,

2015). The authors take a primarily quantitative approach to their study, applying a version of Coupland's (2012) theory of frames to analyse their corpus of 414 signs according to frames of authentication processes (Lyons & Rodríguez-Ordóñez, 2015). Their results indicate that "those areas undergoing advanced gentrification show a stricter alignment to categorical representations of authentication processes that index heritage and collective memory" (Lyons & Rodríguez-Ordóñez, 2015, p. 11).

In addition, Nguyen (2022) explores indexicalities related to Vietnamese writing and imagery in the linguistic landscape of Manchester in the UK. Nguyen (2022) proposes a taxonomy of these indexicalities as a way to account for the ways in which Vietnamese authenticity is indexed in the linguistic landscape of this city. The author also incorporates scale analysis into the study and makes the case for its inclusion in linguistic landscape studies more generally.

Wu et al. (2020) also look at authenticity in a diasporic space in the form of a newly emerging Chinatown in Bangkok, Thailand. Using multimodal data in the form of "data from field trips, photographs, interviews, questionnaires, focus group and documents" (Wu et al., 2020, p. 794), they re-examine the concept of authenticity in relation to Chinatowns and identify "a number of distinct discourses revealing opposing conceptions of authenticity" (Wu et al., 2020, p. 794). The authors posit that whether the newly emerging Chinatown in question "can be considered an authentic Chinatown is inextricably linked to the production of Chinese space in Thailand" (Wu et al., 2020, p. 798). They also posit that linguistic landscape studies should move beyond merely looking at the ways in which these spaces are perceived to include an analysis of how they are conceived:

> "This study rejects any notion of a generic template for those enclaves referred to as Chinatown. It calls for the necessity to move beyond the linguistic landscape as perceived, recognising that perception may not be the ultimate determinant of a community's authenticity. The diverse

> ways communities are conceived is sometimes overlooked in the LL literature and suggests a broad taxonomy of enclaves labelled Chinatown. These differences in conception also influence how communities are experienced and what may qualify as authentic. The study expands the discussion of authenticity in the linguistic landscape of Chinatowns, and unveils the co-existence of multiple authenticities in a single lived space. The question becomes not 'What is authentic' but rather 'whose authenticity is it'" (Wu et al., 2020, p. 808).

This suggestion is hardly novel in linguistic landscape research (cf. Blommaert, 2013), but it is worth emphasising that a consideration of the producers and consumers of signs in a space is an important aspect of LL studies of authenticity.

The commodification and authentication of a culture and the construction of authenticity are important to my own analysis of the Greek community in Johannesburg. While not always necessarily operating within tourism spaces, diasporas also tend to resort to the use of language and "culturally salient symbols" (Moriarty, 2015, p. 210) to construct themselves as 'authentic' (see CHAPTER 6: Coupland and Garrett (2010) note that "there are always debates around (in)authenticity in discussions of heritage" (Coupland & Garrett, 2010, p. 24) and, paraphrasing Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), that "heritage framing is one mechanism of the invention of tradition" (Coupland & Garrett, 2010, p. 24). In their fascinating examination of a Welsh community in Gaiman, Patagonia, Coupland and Garrett (2010) conduct a frame analysis of Welsh language and culture in the area. They focus their attention on what they term the 'Welsh heritage frame', which dominates the linguistic landscape of Gaiman and functions to mark "cultural Welshness" (Coupland & Garrett, 2010, p. 30) – what the authors refer to as the "Cymrification[55] of social space in Patagonia" (ibid.):

> "Heritage is the frame most closely attuned to the priorities and symbolic opportunities of a highly mobile and consumerist world — the contemporary circumstances of late-modernity. In

[55] 'Welshification'

> the context of Welsh heritage tourism in Patagonia, we have seen how the linguistic landscape creates and exploits possibilities for the commodifying, branding, and marketing of cultural Welshness. [...] What we see in contemporary Patagonia is a sort of revitalization of cultural Welshness, but Welshness of a heritagized variety that need not and can not feed directly off "the real Wales back home" [...]. In the Welsh heritage frame in Patagonia, *Wales is clearly re-imagined and reinvented as much as it is remembered*" (Coupland & Garrett, 2010, pp. 31-32; emphasis added).

Handler (1986) notes the links between authenticity and "Western notions of the individual" (Handler, 1986, p. 2) which, in turn, has resulted in links between authenticity and notions of cultures as "individuated entities of world society" (*ibid.*):

> "The bonds uniting authenticity and individualism remain tight in both commonsense and anthropological ideas about culture, even though we usually consider discussions of culture to focus on collective aspects of human existence rather than on individual persons. This is because cultures are imagined as discrete, bounded units, each unique – like a personality configuration – and all of equal value, at least in the abstract. [...] Thus nationalist ideologies as well as anthropological thought attach authenticity to cultures just as the larger 'consumer culture' that we live in attaches it to individual human beings" (Handler, 1986, p. 2).

Much like Welshness is constructed homogeneously by the diaspora in Patagonia, so too are the essences of many diasporic cultures all over the world, including Greekness in Johannesburg, as discussed later in this chapter and was discussed in CHAPTER 6:

Issues of authenticity and diaspora are demonstrably intrinsically linked (cf. Ari & Mittelberg, 2008; Mannur, 2007; Oum, 2005; Yeh, 2007; Lee & Lou, 2019; Zhao, 2021; Mei & Van Liempt, 2022). Evidence from a variety of studies indicates that several diasporas actively construct their diasporic identity around authenticity, which is often played out in the linguistic landscape of 'ethnic' areas of a city, such as Chinatowns (cf. Lee & Lou, 2019; Zhao, 2021; Mei & Van Liempt, 2022). It is not only in linguistic landscape studies where these links are evidenced, however, and a number of other disciplines are also concerned with the relationship

between diasporas and authenticity. Mannur (2007), for example, explores the links between authenticity, tradition, nostalgia, and nationalism via a literary study of Indian cookbooks. Similarly, Oum (2005), a sociologist, looks at authenticity in relation to food and Korean-American diasporic identity. She notes that "the first and most important criterion for vetting a Korean restaurant or a Korean cookbook seems to be authenticity" (Oum, 2005, p. 114). As I show in my own analysis of the ways authenticity is constructed by the Greek community in Johannesburg further along in this chapter, Oum (2005) points out that ethnic restaurants "tend to proclaim authenticity as though authentic is synonymous with 'good'" (Oum, 2005, p. 114). As Heldke (2016) notes, 'authentic' food implies that the dish is not only true to its country of origin, but that it is novel and exotic when compared to the everyday food of the place in question. Or, as Bell Hooks notes in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Hooks, 1992): "Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (Hooks, 1992, p. 366). Oum (2005) argues that the criteria for authentic food are "tenuous and contradictory, and are all based on the idea of mythical, exotic others" (Oum, 2005, p. 114), a sentiment that is also expressed by Mannur (2007) with regard to Indian cookbooks and the members of the diaspora themselves:

> "If India is reified as that mythic space 'back there', the originary point from which the Indian immigrant to the United States emerges, it is because recipes contained in cookbooks such as [*An Invitation to Indian Cooking*] strategically mobilise nostalgic memories of the past to enhance the value of the recipe for a readership hungry to consume 'authentic' difference" (Mannur, 2007, p. 14).

Moreover, geographer Yeh (2007) explores issues of authenticity with regard to the Tibetan diaspora in the USA. Looking at several groups of Tibetans based on the routes they took to get to the USA (namely: refugees who left Tibet in 1959 and exiles born in South Asia; those who left Tibet for India and Nepal in the 1980s; and those who left Tibet and immediately went to the USA), Yeh (2007) accounts for the "embodied performance of Tibetan-ness" (p. 666)

by diasporic Tibetans. She notes that many Tibetans in the diaspora rely on a sense of homogeneous Tibetan-ness to be able to recognise and perform it in their lives:

> "In short, the habitus, or set of 'durable disposition', is a bodily inscription of the places and national locations through which differently positioned Tibetans dwell and travel. However, such dispositions are often unexpected; each group of Tibetans imagines that Tibetan-ness will always be easily recognizable through familiarity if not through selfsameness. It is the very visceral reaction to unfamiliar embodied aspects such as style of clothing, taste in music, and language usage that causes exile Tibetans to be disappointed by the apparent alienness of Tibetans from Tibet. This then becomes a lost opportunity to forge connections between exile and homeland" (Yeh, 2007, p. 666).

The idea of the inscription or construction of authenticity as something that relies on preconceived senses of homogeneous culture-ness and that involves performance is highly relevant to my own analysis of Greekness in Johannesburg later in this chapter.

Much of the literature at the nexus of sociolinguistics (linguistic landscapes, in particular), authenticity, and diaspora looks at Chinatowns across the world (cf. Amos, 2016; Leeman & Modan, 2009; Lou, 2010; 2016; Wu et al., 2020; Mei & Van Liempt, 2022; Lee & Lou, 2019; Zhao, 2021). Lee and Lou (2019) adopt the framework of geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), as I do in my own work, to examine the Chinatown of Incheon in South Korea. They note that the interplay between the "spectacle" (Lee & Lou, 2019, p. 2) of Chinatown and the banality of everyday South Korean life is what "enables the production of a 'Chinatown' to begin with" (*ibid*.):

> "On the surface, this spectacle of Chinatown appears to be the opposite of 'ordinariness' – the theme of this special issue. It is 'unordinary' in the sense that it is marked as conspicuously 'different' from the rest of Korea and thus 'unordinary' to local Koreans. It is also 'unordinary' in that the concept of a 'Chinatown' does not exist in China proper, and as such it is potentially 'unordinary' to Chinese who visit Korea. Finally, it might therefore be argued that it is perhaps 'unordinary' in the sense that, because of the conspicuousness of its linguistic, visual, and

> architectural features, it is an 'unordinary' experience more universally, not dependent on a particular cultural background or geopolitical vantage point" (Lee & Lou, 2019, p. 2).

Their focus on this relationship between the 'ordinary' and 'unordinary' brings up interesting issues pertaining to authenticity and nationhood, or 'nationness' (Lee & Lou, 2019, p. 14), as well. Lee and Lou (2019) argue that the ways in which Incheon's Chinatown is constructed and performed 'resurrects' the "boundaries between 'languages' and 'nations'" (Lee & Lou, 2019, p. 14) by relying on "linguistic, visual, and material means" (Lee & Lou, 2019, p. 14) associated to a hegemonic ideal of 'authentic' Chineseness.

In addition, Zhao (2021) presents a geosemiotic analysis of another Chinatown, *Triangle de Choisy* in Paris, and the role the area plays in assisting new Chinese immigrants to the French city orientate and settle themselves. The inclusion of Chinese writing on shop signs, for example, serves both to semiotics the space as authentically Chinese, as well as provide newcomers with a way to navigate a new place in a familiar way (Zhao, 2021). An interesting issue of authenticity occurs in Zhao's (2021) account of the lack of an identifiable Chinese-style archway – typically used to identify Chinatowns in cities outside of China – at the entrance to *Triangle de Choisy*:

> "Apart from the representation of purposeful demarcation, the importance of such archways is observed as the 'invented tradition' [...] to semiotise a Chinatown with the 'authentic' Chineseness [...]; and the lack of such an object in Triangle de Choisy has made this Chineseness and its territoriality less identifiable" (Zhao, 2021, p. 17).

There are seemingly two issues of authenticity here: one relating to the conveyance of authentic Chineseness and another relating to notions of authentic Chinatowns. Zhao (2021) notes that one of her participants, a recent immigrant to the city, found the absence of an archway discombobulating as he was at first uncertain about the whereabouts of the Chinatown, until he saw the Chinese characters on shop signs. Once again, many perceptions or judgements of

authenticity are based on the expectations we have and our ideas of homogeneous cultures as "individuated entities of world society" (Handler, 1986, p. 2).

Thus, the convergence of linguistic landscape studies, diasporas, and authenticity provides an interesting and robust space in which to conduct research. From earlier uses of 'authentic' in relation to ideal speakers in variationist sociolinguistics studies, authenticity has since come to hold an important place in linguistic landscape studies of diasporas and tourism spaces – with varying degrees of engagement with the complexities of the term itself. Recent scholarship on authenticity in linguistic or semiotic landscape studies has looked at the ways in which authenticity is communicated in the material world, through signs in place (cf. Baro, 2017, 2018; Moriarty, 2015). My own goal with this chapter is to add to this canon of literature, in which there is – to my knowledge – no representation of the Greek diaspora in South Africa. Diasporas discursively construct and perform authenticity in a number of ways, often playing into the idea of cultures as homogeneous, or as "discrete, bounded units" (Handler, 1986, p. 2). The next section looks at how the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg constructs authenticity in some spaces. An additional goal of this chapter is to add an original theoretical contribution to the field of linguistic/semiotic landscape studies on authenticity by introducing sound as means through which to analyse how authenticity is inscribed in the material world. The origins of authenticity in sociolinguistics are linked to problematic notions of the 'authentic speaker' in variationist sociolinguistic studies. In the approach that I implement here, I 'go back' to these sound-oriented links with authenticity, but from a post-structuralist perspective, to look at the ways that sound contributes to the construction of authenticity in a diasporic setting.

7.3. Constructing authentic Greekness in Johannesburg

Thus far in this chapter, I have outlined a number of philosophical approaches to authenticity, as well as demonstrated where my own discussion of the subject in relation to Greekness in Johannesburg fits within an established canon of literature on the convergence of authenticity, sociolinguistics, and diaspora.

This section examines how authenticity is semiotically constructed in spaces of Greekness in Johannesburg. I also attempt to link Newman and Smith's (2016) model of the different types of authenticity judgements (repeated below for ease of reference), particularly historical and categorical authenticity, to the ways in which authenticity is constructed in relation to Greekness in Johannesburg. Newman and Smith's (2016) classification of authenticity distinguishes between: historical authenticity, judgements that target the object and are based on an external reference; categorical authenticity, judgements based on internal reference in the form of assessments of category or genre membership; value authenticity, judgements that target the agent, or producer, and refer to assessment of values based on external references; and self-authenticity, a type of self-authentication, wherein the target is the agentive self, and is based on internal references (Newman & Smith, 2016).

7.3.1. Asserted authenticity

The most obvious way that authentic Greekness is conveyed in Johannesburg is through assertion – in other words, something is explicitly labelled as 'authentic'. This asserted authenticity occurs frequently in Johannesburg, and is a strategy used by restaurants in particular. The word 'strategy' here may imply some conniving, but that is not my intention by using the word. The assertion of the authenticity of a place, object, or experience is a strategy as it is merely a method used by the producers of the signs to construct authenticity around the

entity in question. People tend to use the word 'authentic' uncritically in everyday parlance (Guignon, 2008; Varga & Guignon, 2020) and, impressionistically, it is a fairly common adjective. It is therefore unsurprising that it occurs frequently on signage relating to cultural entities.

As mentioned previously, asserting the authenticity of a place explicitly is a strategy commonly used by Greek restaurants in Johannesburg. Figure 53 below shows the sign at the entrance to *Mythos*, a restaurant at *The Zone* in Rosebank[56]. Here, the name of the restaurant is displayed prominently alongside the slogan "authentic greek [sic]". Another sign that juts out above the door to the restaurant, slightly left and down from the one in Figure 53, displays another version of this proclamation of authenticity: "authentic greek [sic] cuisine" (see Figure 54 below).

[56] Since taking this photograph in mid-2020, *Mythos* has rebranded and no longer uses the slogan 'authentic Greek (cuisine)' and have replaced it with 'live our myth'. It is also interesting to note the agrammaticality of the slogan, which consists of two adjectives – *authentic* and *Greek* – with no noun. Maybe the producers of the sign opted for brevity as a stylistic choice to emphasise 'Greek', while assuming that *food* or *cuisine* was implicit. I was unfortunately not able to get in touch with the owners of Mythos and so do not know their thinking behind the slogan or why they changed it.



Figure 53: The sign at the entrance to Mythos at The Zone shopping centre in Rosebank



Figure 54: Another sign at Mythos at The Zone in Rosebank, displaying the slogan "authentic Greek [sic] cuisine"

The prominent display of the word 'authentic' in the *Mythos* signage and on their menu (see Figure 55 below) serves as a way to explicitly assert the restaurant's authenticity. This is indicative of the restaurant owners' own process of self-authentication (Newman & Smith, 2016), based on the history of the establishment. They address their own use of the term in the "Our Story" section of their website[57], the URL for which even includes 'authentic-Greek-cuisine':

> "Mythos has fast become renowned for its authentic Greek cuisine, and 'authentic' is not a term we use lightly. Our Head Chef brings with her a wealth of family recipes, and insists upon importing all her key ingredients from Greece. This authentic culinary approach has garnered us the title of Best Greek Restaurant in Joburg, Pretoria and Ekurhuleni at the Best of Awards from 2013 to 2019" (source: https://mythos.co.za/authentic-greek-cuisine/).

[57] www.mythos.co.za (last accessed 28 February 2023).

It is interesting that they choose to define, and so justify, their use of the adjective. By their definition, the restaurant is authentic because its chef is Greek and she uses her own family recipes and imported ingredients from Greece. This links to what Newman and Smith (2016) refer to as historical authenticity – judgements based on spatiotemporal history. The chef and her ingredients are authentically Greek because they physically come from Greece.



Figure 55: The meze section of the menu at Mythos at The Zone in Rosebank

Figure 56 below shows a sign at *Meze Emporio*, a Greek restaurant and deli in Senderwood, advertising their 'Emporio Nights' events. The restaurant remains open later than usual (it usually closes before dinner time) for these 'Emporio Nights', at which there is often a performance by a *bouzouki*[58] player or a band that performs cover versions of popular Greek music. Some events may also include plate smashing and a set menu. Much like the *Mythos*

[58] A traditional Greek string instrument similar to a mandolin.

signage, this sign asserts the authenticity of these 'Emporio Nights' by stating outright that they are "authentic Greek evenings".



Figure 56: Advertisement for 'Emporio Nights' at Meze Emporio

However, explicitly asserting that something is authentic is not always done through the use of the word 'authentic' itself. It is a word that is associated with myriad others, with which it is used interchangeably, in the linguistic landscape of Greekness in Johannesburg (and elsewhere). By way of illustration, Figure 57 below shows the cover of a recipe book belonging to my mother, written by the Salisbury Hellenic Club in Zimbabwe (called Rhodesia at the time). Here, 'classical' has the same implications as 'authentic'. It implies something that is rooted in tradition and created by someone who hails from Greece.

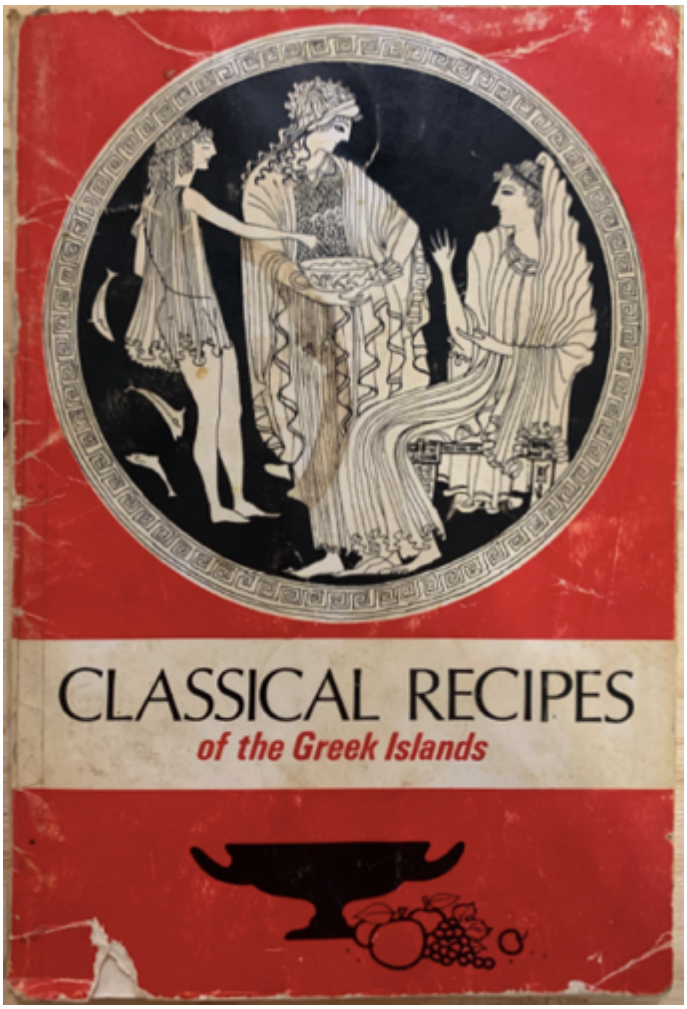

Figure 57: The cover of my mother's much-used recipe book Classical Recipes of the Greek Islands

Another word that is used synonymously with 'authentic' is 'traditional'. 'Traditional' is another word that is closely linked to studies of culture and heritage (Vertovec, 2004; Agbe-Davies, 2017). Baro (2017) highlights the conceptual link between authenticity and tradition:

> "Similarly to the notion of tradition […], authenticity implies that something, from a distant or recent past, has remained, as if what is qualified as authentic is directly connected to its origin, untainted. If it is authentic, it means it is being compared successfully to something ancient being used as a norm; everything deviating from that norm will be deemed inauthentic" (Baro, 2017, p. 241).

Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) notion of 'invented' tradition is also relevant here. In *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983), the authors emphasise that many traditions have no historical basis, but have instead been invented for political reasons,

including nation-building and the propagation of nationalist sentiment. They argue that many Western countries use these invented traditions as a means through which to connect with an imagined past in an effort to legitimise their power (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Following this logic, the use of 'traditional' as a way to describe food on menus at Greek restaurants serves to create a chronotope that legitimises and authenticates these food items as being authentically Greek.

In Figure 58 below, it is used to delineate a particular genre of food on the menu of *Meze Emporio*. While the whole menu contains food that is recognisably Greek, this particular section carries an extra marker of authenticity in the form of the word 'traditional'. The foods listed here are the types of dishes typically associated with 'mother's home cooking' – hearty, starchy, and meaty dishes. Once again, there is evidence of a conceptual link between authenticity, tradition, and the notion of "the home" as an obvious justification for something's authenticity. There is also an interesting chronotopic duality between 'traditional' and 'vegan' visible in Figure 58, as if 'old', 'traditional' food cannot be vegan, and vegan dishes are a product of late modernity. However, it is interesting to note that the menu paints 'vegan' as being synonymous with 'nistisima', a term denoting the types of food that observant Greek Orthodox people may eat during fasts, namely food involving no meat or dairy. This contradicts the previously noted chronotopic duality between 'traditional' and 'vegan' by equating 'vegan' with something rooted in sacred religious tradition.



Figure 58: A portion of the menu of Meze Emporio, displaying the 'traditional Greek foods' section

Finally, another word that is used to explicitly signal that something is authentic in this context is the word 'Greek'. Many products, restaurants, and experiences are labelled 'Greek', which serves as a marker of their authenticity. In Figure 53 and Figure 54 above, the signs at *Mythos* assert that the cuisine on offer is (authentically) Greek and in Figure 55 that the consumption of *meze* is an (authentically) Greek experience. The same assertion about the Greekness of the 'Emporio Nights' is evident in Figure 56 and about traditional foods in Figure 58. The assertion that something is Greek serves to construct it as authentic in these instances. The reliance on the word 'Greek' – or on 'Greece' – to communicate authenticity is fairly common in Johannesburg. It is particularly evident in the slogans or little sub-headings under the names (in the logos) of Greek restaurants in the city. I came across three restaurants in my field work – *Orexi* in Fourways, *Soul Souvlaki* in Rosebank and Parktown North, and *Souvlaki Box* in Blairgowrie – that all state "Greek street food" as part of their branding (see Figure 59, Figure

60, and Figure 61 below). *Souvlaki Box* also includes the phrase "authentically Greek" in their branding. Moreover, two restaurants in my field work – *Kolonaki* in Parkhurst and *Kalamaki* in Bryanston – include the phrase "taste of Greece" in their branding (see Figure 62 below).



Figure 59: Orexi, a Greek restaurant serving "Greek street food", in Fourways, a suburb in northern Johannesburg



Figure 60: Soul Souvlaki, a restaurant serving "Greek street food" in Rosebank, a central suburb of Johannesburg



Figure 61: Souvlaki Box, a restaurant serving "Greek street food" in Blairgowrie, a suburb in north-western Johannesburg



Figure 62: Kalamaki, a Greek restaurant in Bryanston, northern Johannesburg

Thus, asserted authenticity through the use of words such as 'authentic', 'traditional', and 'Greek'/'Greece' is an important strategy in the construction of authentic Greekness in Johannesburg. These words appear to be used interchangeably and are often justified by links

to a ‘home’. These links to a home in Greece, or the home cooking of one who hails from Greece, illustrate Newman and Smith’s (2016) concept of historical authenticity, which posits that people make judgements about authenticity based on spatiotemporal cues, such as facts about where something has come from. In the construction of authenticity by and of various Greek spaces, objects, and experiences in Johannesburg, the use of explicit terms about the origin of an entity serve to construct and inscribe historical authenticity.

7.3.2. Visually constructing authentic Greekness through churches

As mentioned previously in this chapter, there is a tendency to conceptualise cultures as essentialised “discrete, bounded units” (Handler, 1986, p. 2). In the construction of authenticity in Johannesburg, Greekness is imagined as such a homogeneous unit; a category of visual resources that can be drawn upon to communicate authentic Greekness. In Newman and Smith’s (2016) model, categorical authenticity refers to judgements on authenticity based on assessments of category membership. In their model, people judge the authenticity of an entity by assessing how much certain characteristics thereof match their expectations of a particular category or genre (Newman & Smith, 2016). In this case, however, categorical authenticity is employed as a mechanism through which to construct and convey authentic Greekness in Johannesburg. As such, authentic Greekness in Johannesburg is trueness to an established category.

In CHAPTER 6: I unpacked this category of Greekness and all the semiotic resources within it that combine syncretically to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg. The items discussed in CHAPTER 6: which include symbols and allusions to Greek antiquity, religion and superstition, the landscape of Greece, and political nationalism, are all drawn upon to communicate that a particular space, item, or experience is authentically Greek. Restaurant

patrons, for example, who will judge the level of authenticity of a Greek establishment base their judgements on their expectations of what the genre entails. In turn, these semiotic resources are drawn on and used as symbols by the owners of the establishments to construct themselves as authentically Greek. I will not repeat this analysis here, instead I focus on another type of space in Johannesburg in which authenticity is visually constructed: Greek Orthodox churches.

There are around 13 Greek Orthodox churches in the greater Johannesburg area, and they are generally identifiable as such – in no small part due to their architectural style and instantly recognisable interior adornments. Greek Orthodox churches are typically quite distinctive in appearance, usually built in a Byzantine style (Yiannias, 2003). While in Greece and Cyprus there are several different styles of Greek Orthodox church, it is this Byzantine one – featuring a basilica-style layout, vaulted ceilings, a rounded apse, and a dome (Yiannias, 2003) – that has become popular in Johannesburg. This is most likely because it is so distinctive-looking and thus conveys its links to Greek Orthodoxy immediately. Greek Orthodox churches have a fairly long history in South Africa, given that the first Greeks only arrived in the country in the second half of the 19th century. While the first Greek Orthodox church was established in Cape Town in 1903, arguably the most important church – the one that holds cathedral status – is the slightly younger Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen on the corner of Wolmarans and Nugget Streets in Hillbrow, central Johannesburg (see Figure 63 and Figure 64). Built in 1912 and officially opened in January 1913, the church was designed by Lithuanian-born architect Hermann Kallenbach, whose other great claim to fame was his extremely close relationship with Mahatma Gandhi. The church gained cathedral status in 1927. When it was built and throughout the majority of the first half of the 20th century, the Cathedral of Sts Constantine and Helen served as the main meeting point for the Greek

community of Johannesburg, who were concentrated in Hillbrow and the neighbouring areas of Berea (where my own grandparents lived and where my father was born) and Yeoville. Hillbrow, Berea, and Yeoville – and indeed much of the inner city for that matter – are now considered by middle-class Johannesburgers to be some of the most dangerous places in the city and the Greek residents of these places have long since moved away from the city centre, mostly east to the suburbs of Bedfordview, Edenvale, and Germiston. One of my interviewees for this research, Maria Dzerefos (a presenter on the Johannesburg-based Greek community radio station), remains a committed parishioner of the cathedral and has known the priest there, Father George Kokonas, for most of his 64-year vicarage. Maria told me that the cathedral's congregation is much smaller than it was a few decades ago, but there is still a small group of congregants at the weekly services, most of which are conducted in Greek.

Interestingly, the cathedral was commissioned and designed to look like a smaller version of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Built in 537 in what was then Constantinople, which was the main city in eastern Orthodoxy at the time, the Hagia Sophia operated as a Greek Orthodox church until the 1453 conquest of the city by the Ottoman Empire (Meyendorff, 1982; Jamaleddine, 2020). The Hagia Sophia was a "hallmark of Byzantine architecture" (Yiannias, 2003, p. 3) and is a common source of inspiration for subsequent Greek Orthodox churches:

> "The dome was put to its most spectacular use in Constantinople, in the emperor Justinian's great Church of the Divine Wisdom, Hagia Sophia, raised in a phenomenally short time, less than six years (532-537); for many centuries it was the largest church in Christendom. The architects, Anthemius and Isidorus, created a gigantic, sublime space bounded on the lower levels by colonnades and walls of veined marble and overhead by membranous vaults that seem to expand like parachutes opening against the wind. The climactic dome has forty closely spaced windows around its base and on sunny days appears to float on a ring of light" (Yiannias, 2003, p. 2).

After the Ottoman conquest, the Hagia Sophia was converted into a mosque and minarets were added to the building (Meyendorff, 1982; Jamaleddine, 2020). Up until its conversion, the Hagia Sophia had been "the largest church in Christendom" (Yiannias, 2003, p. 2). It remains a bone of contention observable especially in the online interactions of members of the Greek community in Johannesburg, who are – along with many other Greek Orthodox Christians and Christians of other denominations – actively lobbying to have the mosque returned to the Greek Orthodox Church.



Figure 63: Early photograph of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen, before its completion in 1912



Figure 64: The official blue plaque at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen, marking it as Johannesburg heritage site under the auspices of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation

Figure 65 below shows a recent photograph of the cathedral. The fact that the building is reminiscent of the Hagia Sophia in particular is important in the construction of its authenticity. The cathedral is not reminiscent of Greek Orthodox churches generally, it is reminiscent of the most important and iconic Greek Orthodox church in history.



Figure 65: The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen in Hillbrow, central Johannesburg[59]

Many churches in Johannesburg have similar designs: they feature perfectly rounded domes or, in the case of those built more cheaply, octagonal 'domes' with pointed roofs and have also been constructed in a Byzantine style. Figure 66 shows the church on the grounds of SAHETI School, Ypapandi, built in 1998, which also has the typical dome at the back. It also has another common feature of Greek Orthodox churches in the form of the bell tower, upon which sits a small dome and a cross. Figure 67 depicts the St Andrew's Greek Orthodox church in Krugersdorp, western Johannesburg. St Andrew's also has a 'dome', constructed as an octagon with a more common pointed roof.

[59] Image source: https://2summers.net/2022/11/17/hidden-joburg-the-greek-orthodox-cathedral-of-saints-constantine-and-helen/



Figure 66: Ypapandi, the church at SAHETI School in Senderwood, eastern Johannesburg

(Source: Saheti Chapel – "Ypapandi" page on Facebook)



Figure 67: St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Church in Krugersdorp, western Johannesburg

In addition, the interiors of the churches are also very important in the construction of authenticity in Johannesburg. Yiannias (2003) notes that Greek Orthodox churches always have more elaborate and adorned interiors than exteriors, which is a hallmark of this type of church. From the churches I have seen in Johannesburg, this is most definitely the case. The exteriors of the buildings, while aesthetically pleasing in their own right, are dull compared to the gilded interiors. Religious iconography plays a major role in Greek Orthodox Christianity (see CHAPTER 6:

> "[T]he Orthodox Church holds the use of images to be an apostolic practice, and it attributes the earliest icons of the Virgin and Christ to Saint Luke. It also records that Christ created the first image of Himself by impressing His features on a piece of cloth – the *Mandylion* – that

> was later enshrined in the city of Edessa. In the Orthodox view, the concept of the image is central to Christianity" (Yiannias, 2003, p. 4).

Greek churches around the world are adorned with images of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels, often painted in bright colours and gold (Yiannias, 2003). These images initially had a predominantly instructive purpose – to educate people about various stories and lessons in the Bible – but are now equally important as decorative items. Many of the paintings and decorative items in the Greek Orthodox churches in Johannesburg are antiques that have been brought over from Greece. This is the case in the Cathedral of Saints Constantine and Helen and Pantanassa, a large Greek Orthodox Church in Melrose Estate.



Figure 68: Icons on the walls inside St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox church at the Hellenic Federation of Germiston, in Primrose



Figure 69: Icons inside Pantanassa church in Melrose Estate

These icons (as in Figure 68 and Figure 69 above) are an important part of Greek Orthodoxy and so are important in constructing authentic Greekness – and authentic Greek Orthodoxy – in Johannesburg. They are relevant to Newman and Smith's (2016) classifications of historical and categorical authenticity. The former because some of them have been brought over from Greece and so are spatially authentic, having been brought over from the place that is being reconstructed; and the latter because they form an important part of Greekness as a broad category, and Greek Orthodox Christianity more specifically.

It is interesting to note, based on this analysis of Greek Orthodox churches in Johannesburg, the importance of architecture and the built environment as a modality that is used to construct

Greek authenticity. The creators of these churches deliberately use the architecture as a means to communicate and inscribe Greekness by creating buildings that reproduce certain typical features of Greek Orthodox churches in Greece.

7.4. Soundscapes of authenticity

Previous sections in this chapter have examined some applications of authenticity, in sociolinguistics and other disciplines, as well as explored the ways in which authentic Greekness is constructed in Johannesburg, paying close attention to Greek Orthodox churches. However, I have up until now only considered visual resources and language in my discussion. In this section, I consider the role that sound plays in constructing authentic Greekness in Johannesburg. As I have mentioned before, Van Leeuwen (2001) notes that it is important to "take a semiotic approach" (Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 396) to authenticity; and "to ask not: 'How authentic is this?', but 'Who takes this as authentic and who does not?', and 'On the basis of which visible or *audible* cues are these judgements made?" (*ibid*.; emphasis added). While the ways in which authenticity has been semiotically constructed *visually* and *discursively*, I focus on Van Leeuwen's (2001) inclusion of "audible cues" (Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 396) by considering 'soundscapes', and their role in the construction of authenticity.

'Soundscape' – much like 'foodscape' (see CHAPTER 5: and 'chronoscape' (see Baro, 2017, 2018) – is a term coined after Appadurai's (1996) *scapes* (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, financescapes, technoscapes, and ideoscapes). It refers to a space, or landscape, that is being looked at or is defined by the sounds present there. Schafer (1970, 1993), a composer and musicologist, is often credited as being the first to encourage the inclusion of 'noise' in the study of a space, as well as the first to use the term 'soundscape':

> "Schafer's contribution has informed the work of almost everyone who has written on the phenomena of sound since, and it has gained widespread popularity beyond the scholarly world,

> as well. It regularly appears in the titles of books, chapters, and articles, in the names of CDs, in the monikers of performance ensembles, in pieces by sound artists, depictions of field recordings and field recording techniques, in the vocabulary of sound design for theatres, museums or amusement parks, and even in descriptions of the work of companies that specialise in home theatre installation. [...] In its near-ubiquity, the term has come to refer to almost any experience of sound in almost any context" (Kelman, 2010, p. 214).

Sound as a salient modality is already in fairly widespread use in both semiotic/linguistic landscape studies and other disciplines but has been ascribed different definitions depending on its application. In acoustics and architecture, for example, it is used to refer to spaces that have been specially engineered for sound to travel in a particular way, such as cinemas, theatres, and auditoriums (see Thompson, 2002; Porteous & Mastin, 1985; Hong et al., 2010; and Guastavino, 2006). In sociolinguistics, the term is frequently used to refer to "the spoken environment" (McLaughlin, 2015, p. 215) – in other words, to refer to the languages that can be heard spoken in a particular space. McLaughlin (2015), for example, compares the languages visible in the linguistic 'warscape' of Mali to those that are audible in the linguistic soundscape of the same geographic space. She notes a disjunction between those that are written and those that are spoken, where the soundscape is dominated by languages that infrequently – if ever – appear in the visual linguistic landscape (McLaughlin, 2015). Soundscape studies focusing on urban spaces are particularly prevalent (cf. Hu, 2018; Mora, 2009; Lin & Lam, 2010; Scarvaglieri et al., 2013; Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010). Like McLaughlin (2015), Hu (2018) also considers a soundscape in the form of the spoken environment and analyses audio announcements at railway stations in Taiwan. He focuses on the ideologies expressed in the announcements as well as the reception of the announcements by travellers. Mitchell (2010) examines the soundscape of an area in Pittsburgh, paying close attention to the prevalence of spoken Spanish as an indication of the number of Mexican

immigrants in the area. He finds that Spanish is not as prevalent as had been reported in the media (Mitchell, 2010).

From a theoretical perspective, Scarvaglieri et al. (2013) propose the method of 'linguistic soundscaping' to "compensate for the neglect of spoken language" (Scarvaglieri et al., 2013, p. 45) in linguistic landscape studies. They propose a functional pragmatic approach to documenting and analysing "linguistic sounds" (Scarvaglieri et al., 2013) – in other words, spoken language – as a way to "make spoken multilingual communication perceptively accessible and describable" (Scarvaglieri et al., 2013, p. 45) and investigate linguistic diversity.

The analysis of sound as a semiotic resource in linguistic landscape studies is illustrative of the widened (and continuously widening) "scope of meaning-making practices that LL research seeks to encompass" (Lamb & Sharma, 2021, p. 2). Shohamy and Gorter (2009) include sound in their argument that "LL is a broader concept than documentation of signs; it incorporates multimodal theories to include sounds, images, and graffiti" (Lamb & Sharma, 2021, p. 4). Increasingly, linguistic landscape work has focused on senses other than sight (see CHAPTER 5:), towards an "analytic focus on the material sets of objects, artefacts, places and bodily senses – sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations – that are strategically mobilised alongside the materiality of spoken language to form commodifying discursive-material assemblages" (Lamb & Sharma, 2021, p. 3).

Thus far, all the studies mentioned here seem not to have dealt with the symbolic value of sounds explicitly, instead focusing on the ways in which spoken language may be analysed in order to determine the levels and types of linguistic diversity that exist in a particular place. Most similar to what I am hoping to achieve in this chapter is Colombijn's (2007) profile of

the soundscape of cities in Indonesia – to "provide an acoustic panorama of the Indonesian city" (p. 269). Approaching his data anthropologically, he categorises the sounds of Indonesian cities into four themes: sounds of the street, power, modernity, and intimacy (Colombijn, 2007). The main aim of Colombijn's study is to present a portrait of the sounds of Indonesian cities in order to make the case for the introduction of "soundscapes as a valid and fascinating research topic, using an anthropological-historical methodology" (Colombijn, 2007, p. 269). He notes, despite not being a linguist nor involved in linguistic landscape studies himself, the symbolic power of sound (Colombijn, 2007) and notes that sound plays an important role in urban landscapes and should therefore be included more intentionally in such studies. While the scope of his study was very wide (Indonesian cities in general), his study is nonetheless relevant to my own.

The symbolic power of sound is irrefutable, and its meaning-making powers are worth thorough investigation. I treat sound as a semiotic resource that plays an important role in constructing authenticity around the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg. Unlike many of the sociolinguistic soundscape studies to date, I am not interested in only spoken language as a way to analyse linguistic diversity. Instead, I focus on the salient sounds – most notably, the sounds of people talking as well as music – in two particular spaces of Greekness in Johannesburg and the ways in which these sounds aid in the construction and performance of authenticity. In the same vein as Pennycook and Otsuji's (2015) 'olfactory ethnography' (see CHAPTER 5: I present an 'aural ethnography' of these spaces. Due to ethical concerns, I did not make any audio recordings and instead relied on my sound-related field notes. The first soundscape example is of a small shopping centre on Chaucer Road in Senderwood, a suburb in eastern Johannesburg with a large Greek population. In this social space, sound has a strong indexical function, particularly in constructing the authenticity of Meze Emporio, a restaurant

and deli located in the shopping centre. The second soundscape is of my experience at an Easter mass at Pantanassa, a Greek Orthodox Church in Melrose Estate, northern Johannesburg. In addition to being a social space, the church is also a ritual space, where sound plays an important role in the performance of authenticity (De la Pradelle, 2006; Wang, 1999) and can therefore be analysed within the geosemiotic framework of the interaction order (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

7.4.1. Indexing authenticity: Soundscape of Chaucer Rd Shopping Centre

Chaucer Rd shopping centre is a small shopping complex in Senderwood, eastern Johannesburg. It is where the previously mentioned *Meze Emporio* restaurant and cafe is situated and also contains a number of other shops, including a *Mimo's* restaurant, a jeweller, a pharmacy, and a nail and hair salon. The suburb of Senderwood is also the location of SAHETI School and is home to a fairly large number of Greek people. The shopping centre also attracts Greek people from other parts of Johannesburg, who come to *Meze Emporio* for meals and to stock up on Greek treats and snacks, ingredients, and imported items from Greece and Cyprus. It is a place that draws many members of the Greek diaspora, who gather there regularly and have done so since the establishment was first opened.

The parking for the shopping centre is limited and so most people park in the street. The first sound upon arriving and getting out of one's car is therefore the sound of the other cars manoeuvring in and out of parking spots or driving past. A greeting from an informal parking attendant is the other sound here. Upon nearing the Meze Emporio, the sound of Greek pop music and the distant chatter of people becomes more audible. The seating at the restaurant is on a large, covered patio and it has always been near full when I have been there. On this occasion, I was with my father, who is of Greek extraction, and my husband, who is a South

African Indian. We were seated beside a table at which the patrons were audibly speaking Greek to one another, and throughout our time at the table I picked up a few more conversations happening in Greek around me. The waitstaff are all black South Africans, and conversations between them and the patrons always occurred in English. The mellow sounds of cutlery against crockery and indistinct chatter in the busy restaurant was occasionally punctuated by my dad taking a slurp of his Greek coffee[60] beside me – Greek coffee is typically slurped as opposed to sipped daintily so as not to upset the settled coffee ground sludge at the bottom of the cup by tilting it too much. After our lunch, we went into the deli section of *Meze Emporio*, which is in a separate little shop off to one side of the restaurant seating area. Once again, several conversations between customers in the shop were in Greek, while interactions with the tellers occurred in English.

At this shopping centre, which attracts Greek inhabitants from the area as well as elsewhere in Johannesburg, the authentic nature of the space is in part communicated by its soundscape – as I overheard one patron say, "If you close your eyes, you could be in Greece!". Greek music plays continuously throughout the restaurant and deli and Greek can be heard spoken by many of the patrons. In addition, the obvious presence of spoken Greek by the patrons serves as a means to authenticate the Greekness of the space. Just as the presence of Chinese people in Chinatowns (see Mei & Van Liempt, 2022; Lee & Lou, 2019; Zhao, 2021) is read as a sign of authenticity, so too is the presence of Greek people – recognisable through the language that they are speaking – in this Greek restaurant read as a sign of authentic Greekness.

[60] Traditional Greek coffee, such as is served at Greek restaurants in South Africa, is brewed in a small pot called a *briki* until very strong and almost thickened.

Within the framework of geosemiotics, the interaction accounts for the importance of the physical occurrence of people in the material world and adds to the meaning making processes within a space (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). The people in Meze Emporio both construct the space and interpret the space as Greek through the act of listening or hearing. The people who speak Greek while occupying the space contribute the sounds of Greekness in the space and this audible act of speaking Greek forms part of the personal front of these social actors. The sounds of spoken Greek are then, along with other sounds of Greekness such as the music, 'read' by other patrons as Greek via listening.

7.4.2. Performing authenticity: Soundscape of Easter mass at Pantanassa

The Greek Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary, commonly called Pantanassa (an epithet for the Virgin Mary), is a large Greek Orthodox Church on Glenhove Road, a busy thoroughfare in the northern Johannesburg suburb of Melrose Estate. Built in the mid-1990s, the church occupies a large corner property. In addition to the main church building (built in a modernised Byzantine style, replete with a large dome and bell tower), the property also houses a function venue, bookshop, library, offices for church staff, and Sunday School facilities (see Figure 70 below). The church has a large, loyal congregation, who live predominantly in northern and central Johannesburg.



Figure 70: Pantanassa church in Melrose Estate, northern Johannesburg.

(Source: Pantanassa Church Melrose Johannesburg's Facebook page)

I attended an evening Easter mass on Greek Orthodox Good Friday in April 2022, accompanied by my sister, father, and paternal grandparents. Each mass performed at the Easter weekend has a special name and forms part of the wider commemoration of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The mass my family and I attended was the evening mass on Holy Friday, which is referred to as the 'Lamentations of the Tomb' (Alexiou, 2002). This particular mass involves a full service, after which an embroidered cloth icon of the dead body of Jesus – called the *epitaphios* – is carried around the church building in an ornate bier decorated with fresh flowers, called a *kouvouklion*.

Before the mass began, people were filtering into the church, lighting candles at the entrance on their way in, and taking their seats in the pews. While the atmosphere was rather solemn,

especially around the lighting of candles at the entrance to the church, there was also an air of festivity about. In the pews around us, we could hear people greeting and conversing with each other in English and Greek, and there were general sounds of activity as people queued to kiss the *epitaphios*. There was also the sound of camera phone clicks as parents took photographs of their children in front of the *kouvouklion*. One of the traditions at this mass is for little girls to toss flower petals onto the bier after the service. These children all dress in white and wear flower crowns on their heads – a sight which elicited much delighted cooing from their relatives and other attendees. The sounds of a Greek Orthodox mass are distinctive. The entire service is conducted by chanting or singing in Greek – there is no regular speech. This chanting was thus the most salient sound at the Good Friday mass at Pantanassa, punctuated frequently by the ringing of a small bell – which symbolically serves to summon the faithful to the service (Alexiou, 2002). This chanting and bell ringing continues during the procession around the outside of the church, with the aid of a microphone feeding to a speaker that made the procession audible to people all over the church grounds. Like Catholic masses, certain portions of the Orthodox mass take the format of call and response, in which the priest (or other officiant) chants a sentence, after which the audience responds with another, or "amen".

The interaction order in this space is therefore most relevant in an assessment of the construction of authenticity, which is inherently performative (cf. De la Pradelle, 1995, 2006; Knudsen & Waade, 2010; Zhu, 2012). In his study of a market in Provence in the south of France, De la Pradelle (2006) illustrates how the social actors – vendors and visitors to the market – perform authenticity in a way that satisfies the expectations of an old-fashioned farmer's market. He notes that there is renewed interest in this type of archaic market, characterised by engagements with 'real' food items and their producers/purveyors and reminiscent of a 'simpler time' (De la Pradelle, 2006). The people involved in the market are

responsible for performing accordingly in order to construct this idyllic type of market atmosphere, thereby creating a more 'authentic' experience for all involved. Much like the people at the markets described by De la Pradelle (2006), the people at the Greek Orthodox Easter mass are performing authenticity – in this case, authentic Greekness. The soundscape of the mass, particularly the call-and-response format, is especially illustrative of the performative nature of authenticity. The priests and congregants all "[act] out roles" (De la Pradelle, 1995, p. 368) and perform a spectacle (cf. Lamb, 2021; Gendelman & Aiello, 2010; Lasansky, 2004; Sebba, 2010) for those who are not versed in this soundscape, including my sister, father, and I, who are all not religious. This sound-based performance is necessary to construct a particular atmosphere, reminiscent of 'authentic' Greek Orthodox masses in Greece, for example, while being virtually on the other side of the world, in South Africa. This harkens to the ways in which the marketgoers and vendors described by De la Pradelle (2006) attempt to construct the air of a market driven by a 'peasant' economy while being a profit-driven exercise of free market capitalism.

7.5. Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I aimed to explore authenticity in relation to the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg. In doing so, I took "a semiotic approach" (Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 396) to authenticity in order to examine how it is constructed and performed in Greek spaces and by the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg. I began the chapter by 'concept vetting' authenticity, an inherently problematic and non-neutral term that is nevertheless in widespread use across a number of disciplines. Authenticity as a descriptor of people has its origins in existential philosophy, particularly in the work of Heidegger (Guignon, 2008; Varga & Guignon, 2020), but its use has since been extended to describe objects or artefacts and experiences. Newman and Smith (2016) have proposed a model for the classification of types of authenticity

judgement, which – I have shown – are also relevant to the ways in which authenticity is used as a modality in the linguistic landscape. I then looked at the intersections between authenticity, diasporas, and sociolinguistics to identify where in this canon of literature my study is situated, as this is the canon to which my own research will contribute.

In my discussion of the ways in which authentic Greekness in Johannesburg is visually constructed, I paid particular attention to asserted authenticity – which is conceptually linked to Newman and Smith's (2016) notion of historical authenticity – and the visual features of Greek Orthodoxy – which is conceptually linked to Newman and Smith's (2016) notion of categorical authenticity. In many Greek spaces, especially restaurants, the authenticity of the establishment is asserted in its branding through the use of the word 'authentic' and its synonyms 'classical', 'traditional', and in this case 'Greek'. Greek churches in the Johannesburg Greek diaspora tend to be modelled on Byzantine architecture, particularly the Hagia Sophia. In addition, the interiors of the churches are ornately decorated with religious icons, which are a hallmark of Greekness. The categorical authenticity of these spaces is based on the expectations of and associations with the particular genre – Greekness – by both those who produce the spaces and the signs therein and those who consume them.

Finally, I introduced the idea of how we might analyse sound as a semiotic resource that aids in the construction and performance of Greekness. Soundscapes have a fairly long history in sound studies and acoustics and have also recently been examined within the context of linguistic landscape studies. In linguistic landscape studies, soundscapes are predominantly used to assess the linguistic diversity of a space, and in comparisons with the written linguistic landscape. To my knowledge, the relationship between sound and authenticity has not yet been explored. I took a semiotic approach to sound and presented two case studies to illustrate how

it is, first, used as an index of Greekness at the Chaucer Road shopping centre in Senderwood, and, secondly, how it is also an important aspect of the performance of authentic Greekness at an Easter mass at Pantanassa church in Melrose Estate.

In the following chapter, I provide some concluding remarks and summarise the findings of my study. I also present some suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

In this dissertation, I set out to analyse how the now mostly South Africa-born members of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg negotiate and perform their Greek identity and how Greekness is inscribed in various spaces in the city of Johannesburg. Using multimodal data which I analysed using Scollon and Scollon's (2003) geosemiotics toolkit, I explored the history and context of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg and analysed several pertinent aspects of the inscription of Greekness in the city. In particular, I analysed the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city, such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets, as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness. I also introduced the concept of *syncretism* as a useful term that can be applied in a semiotic sense, to describe the ways in which signs and symbols from various, sometimes incompatible, aspects of Greek history and identity – including philosophy, mythology, superstition, Orthodox Christianity, and political nationalism – are deliberately displayed side-by-side in a space and operate in aggregate to communicate homogeneous and 'authentic' Greekness. Finally, I took a 'semiotic approach' (Van Leeuwen, 2001) to authenticity and analysed how authenticity in the Greek diaspora is semiotically constructed both visually and aurally, using sound, in Greek spaces in Johannesburg.

In this concluding chapter, I briefly summarise the main contributions and innovations of my research, before recapitulating my aim and research questions, main theoretical and methodological considerations, and the location of my research in relation to existing scholarship. Additionally, I provide a more detailed summary of the findings of each of my chapters and discuss how these contribute to answering my research questions. Finally, I present some recommendations for future research.

As noted earlier, the main aim of my research was to examine how Greekness is inscribed in various spaces in the city of Johannesburg. More specifically, I aimed to answer three research questions: (i) how are certain spaces in the city of Johannesburg materially constructed as Greek spaces?; (ii) how is Greekness semiotically constructed?; and (iii) how is this constructed Greekness experienced by social actors, in the context of a European diasporic community in Johannesburg, a city in the Global South? My study was firmly rooted in the field of LL/SL studies, for which I used Scollon and Scollon's (2003) framework of geosemiotics as a methodological toolkit with which to analyse Greekness in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg. The Scollons note the importance of studying the "invisible, almost banal, systems of meaning which form the sociopolitical systems that so closely define us and our actions in the world" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 6), and argue that it is the most banal of signs that carry the most social, political, and historical meaning. Geosemiotics, underpinned by three systems of analysis, therefore allowed me to account for the ways in which Greekness is inscribed in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg empirically. In my analysis, I made use of multimodal data in the form of photographs of the linguistic landscape, ethnographic field notes, interviews with members of the Greek diaspora, and newspaper articles from the *Rand Daily Mail*, a now defunct South African newspaper.

This study not only contributes to the field of LL/SL studies, but also augments the canon of diaspora studies literature, and that of the global Greek diaspora in particular. Therefore, it is at the convergence of the concepts of linguistic/semiotic landscapes and diasporas – and their respective fields of study, sociolinguistics and diaspora studies – that this study is epistemologically and theoretically located. In the context of South African diaspora studies from perspectives other than sociolinguistics, there is a wealth of literature on the various communities that contribute to the 'rainbow nation' status of the country. While most of this

work focuses on the Indian diaspora (see Rastogi, 2008; Dickinson, 2015; Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2007, 2012, 2021; Hofmeyr et al., 2016; Bhat & Narayan, 2010; Hofmeyr, 2007a, 2007b; Hofmeyr & Williams, 2009, 2011), there are also studies of the Chinese (see Harrison et al., 2012; Laribee, 2008), Jewish (see Adler, 1979; Frankental, 1998), other African (see Crush et al., 2015; Inyang, 2019), and – most relevant to my own study – Mediterranean European (see Glaser, 2010, 2012; Gupta, 2007, 2018; Adinolfi, 2019; Bini, 1957; Sani, 1989; Marchetti-Mercer & Virga, 2021) diasporas. This study, while from a sociolinguistic perspective within the field of linguistic/semiotic landscapes, nevertheless forms a part of an established and ever-growing canon of diaspora studies literature. Additionally, diasporas feature fairly prominently in sociolinguistic research, both globally and in South Africa, particularly from the perspective of LL/SL studies. A large proportion of this research focuses on Chinatowns in various parts of the world (cf. Lou, 2010, 2016; Lee & Lou, 2019; Zhang et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2020; Zhao, 2021; Mei & Van Liempt, 2022; Li & Kroon, 2022; Amos, 2016; Li & Marshall, 2020; Xu & Wang, 2021), but other diasporic spaces have naturally also been analysed (cf. Woldemariam & Lanza, 2015; Baranova & Fedorova, 2019; Tran, 2021; Nguyen, 2022; Karapetian & Gulludjian, 2021; Edmond, 2017; Mirvahedi, 2019; Paffey, 2019). This study constitutes the first LL/SL study of the Greek diaspora so, while it augments the canon of work done from this lens on diasporas in the country and the rest of the world, it also serves to establish a canon of SL/LL literature on this subject. Previous work by McDuling (2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012) has examined the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg from a sociolinguistic perspective, with a focus on language shift and maintenance in this community. The study presented in this dissertation differs significantly in approach, shifting the focus from language use to an analysis of the signs used to assert and inscribe Greekness in the city of Johannesburg, thereby drawing this subject matter into the contemporary realm of LL/SL studies.

At this point, I provide a summary of each chapter of this dissertation. After introducing the aims of my research in the first chapter of the dissertation, in Chapter 2, I provided an overview of literature relevant to this study of how Greekness is inscribed in the linguistic landscape of Johannesburg, highlighting the previous studies that have informed it and the canon of literature to which the present study adds – at the nexus of sociolinguistics and diaspora studies. First, I looked at the development of diaspora studies as a field in its own right, including a brief overview of the term *diaspora* and its usage, and the status of diaspora studies in a South African context. I then presented a discussion of diasporas in general sociolinguistics, including those that have been conducted in a South African context. In order to illustrate where my study is anchored, I next presented an overview of the emergence of linguistic or semiotic landscape studies, focussing on the debates surrounding the name of the field and the resultant questions around what constitutes a sign. I traced the emergence of the field from the early foundational work by De Saussure and Peirce, to the 'first wave' of quantitative linguistic landscape research, the critiques thereof, and the resultant 'qualitative turn' in the field. I also discussed Jaworksi and Thurlow's (2010) argument for the renaming of the field to 'semiotic landscapes' and illustrated how my study is aligned with this broader, redefined concept. Within this section, I also included discussions of how diasporas are positioned within LL/SL studies worldwide as well as in South Africa, and briefly discussed LL/SL studies that have been conducted on Greece. Thereafter, I turned to focus on how the Greek diaspora has been studied in global sociolinguistic research. Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I presented the literature that has been conducted on the Greek diaspora in South Africa, specifically – both sociolinguistic and from the perspectives of other disciplines.

In Chapter 3, I presented the main analytical and methodological considerations of my research. I first provided a theoretical and historical overview of the emergence of semiotics,

beginning with the early foundational work by De Saussure and Peirce and those they influenced, which paved the way for further developments in the study of signs. I then presented the main tenets of Scollon and Scollon's (2003) framework of geosemiotics, which I employed in this study as an analytical toolkit to analyse Greekness in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg. I also discussed the method I employed to collect data for this study – ethnography – and made the case for why this was the chosen method in my study, as well as in semiotic landscape research more generally. Thereafter, I enumerated the types of data I collected for this study. Finally, I followed the tradition of contemporary self-reflexive scholarship and presented some relevant information on my 'historical body' – the 'baggage' that I bring with me into this study as the researcher (Blommaert, 2013; Milani, 2014) – and briefly reflected on my experience of the data collection process.

Chapter 4, which addresses the history and context of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, as well as Chapters 5, 6, and 7, which comprise the analytical or empirical part of this dissertation, each contributed to answering the aim and research questions set forth in Chapter 1. As such, I include each of these four chapters in this discussion.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the history and context of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, focusing on how this community came to be concentrated in the city. I first provided an overview of Greek immigration to South Africa, starting in the second half of the 19th century, looking at how the epicentre of the community shifted from the Cape to Johannesburg following the gold rush, before moving onto an examination of the South African Greek diaspora in the context of apartheid. The latter included some accounts by my interviewees of their experiences as Greek South Africans. While this chapter is not one of my analytical chapters, I mention it here as it provided an important starting point for answering my third

research question, which concerns how Greekness is experienced by social actors in the context of a European diasporic community in a city in the Global South.

The three analytical chapters of this dissertation, Chapters 5, 6, and 7, all contribute to achieving the aim of my research and answering my three research questions, as set forth in Chapter 1. In Chapter 5, the first analytical chapter in this dissertation, I examined the role food plays in inscribing Greekness in Johannesburg through an analysis of the Greek foodscapes in the city (such as Greek restaurants and supermarkets) as well as the food-centric elements used in other Greek spaces to communicate Greekness. This analysis was particularly valuable in relation to unearthing how Greekness is semiotically constructed. In this chapter, I noted that food is a salient site of semiosis; illustrated the tenable links between food and diasporic identity (Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Ternikar, 2020); and examined how food can function as a meaning-making tool to index cultural identity (Gabaccia, 1998; Parasecoli, 2014; Århem, 1989; Weller & Turkon, 2015). The links between food and diasporic identity mean that food is generally an important part of many LL/SL studies of superdiverse spaces (cf. Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Lou, 2010, 2017; and Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017; Abas, 2019; Tran, 2021), but is particularly relevant in the context of the Greek diaspora in South Africa, for whom food spaces have played an important role historically (cf. McDuling & Barnes, 2012; Chaldeos, 2020). The semiotic construction of Greekness in Johannesburg also relies on a number of general associations between Greekness and food that are widely depicted in popular culture and in memes distributed by social media pages targeting the diaspora, as evident in several articles from the *Rand Daily Mail*, and from my interactions with my participants. In this chapter, I also presented an analysis of inscriptions of Greekness in Johannesburg foodscapes. As a sign, food plays an important role as a sign of what Billig (1995) terms 'banal nationalism' that signals links to a particular national identity. My analysis

of Greek foodscapes in Johannesburg indicated that particular food items, the use of the Greek language, and deliberate allusions to Greece form a semiotic assemblage of Greekness in these spaces. Finally, I presented a smellscape – an olfactory ethnography – of a Palm Sunday event at *The Greek Taverna* restaurant. My analysis found that scent is an important semiotic resource in this particular foodscape as it serves to create a space in which the members of the Greek community feel at home, as it carries both cultural and religious significance. Thus, it indicates the semiotic powers of scent in a foodscape. The semiotic resources that are drawn on to inscribe Greekness in food spaces in Johannesburg also contribute to answering how certain spaces in the city are materially constructed as Greek spaces.

In Chapter 6, I focused on how *syncretism* can be used to describe how Greekness is inscribed in Johannesburg. I defined syncretism as the co-occurrence of discrete, often conflicting, categories of Greekness and emphasised how the term lends itself to flexible application. This chapter addresses how certain spaces in Johannesburg are materially constructed as Greek spaces, and also considers some of the visual aspects that contribute to the semiotic construction of this Greekness. I began the chapter with an overview of the origins of the term in religious studies and, later, in anthropology and paid particular attention to how the term has previously been applied to Greek Orthodox Christianity. I emphasised how the syncretic elements making up Greekness are part of deliberate nation-building efforts on the part of the Greek government post-independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. This deliberately constructed syncretism has carried into the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg, where it has been concentrated to signify both 'authentic' Greekness and homogenous diasporic identity. Each element exists independently but all are needed to convey Greekness convincingly. This collection of visual signs that are needed in order to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg

represents a particular visual semiotic assemblage (cf. Pennycook & Otsuji, 2017; Pennycook, 2022) of elements of Greekness. The most salient aspects that operate within a single space to inscribe Greekness in Johannesburg are: antiquity, religion and superstition, geography/landscapes, and political nationalism. Antiquity was the predominant category as it has the broadest scope, encompassing everything related to Ancient Greece, including for example architectural elements and art. Antiquity was leveraged especially in the nation-building efforts of post-independence Greece as they needed to both win political favour in the rest of Europe and establish a national identity. These efforts conveniently coincided with a period of widespread Panhellenism in Western Europe; thus Greece made a concerted effort to Hellenise – or 'make Greek' – the most desirable aspects of broadly Greek history. I then examined religion and superstition, which arose most prominently in my data in the form of Greek Orthodox icons and evil eyes, respectively. Next, I presented evidence of efforts to (re)construct an idyll by making use of appealing images of Greek landscapes, often ones featuring the ocean. The island of Santorini, with its very renowned white and blue buildings, also features prominently. Finally, I examined political nationalism as a category used, syncretically with others, to inscribe Greekness. This was particularly evident in the use of the Greek (and sometimes Cypriot) flag, which often occurred alongside the South African flag, thus contextualising the Greek diaspora within the broader South African context.

In Chapter 7, the third and final analytical chapter of this dissertation, I aimed to explore authenticity in relation to the Greek diaspora of Johannesburg. In doing so, I took "a semiotic approach" (Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 396) to authenticity in order to examine how it is constructed and performed in Greek spaces and by the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg. I began

the chapter by 'concept vetting' authenticity, an inherently problematic and non-neutral term that is nevertheless in widespread use across a number of disciplines. Authenticity as a descriptor of people has its origins in existential philosophy, particularly in the work of Heidegger (Guignon, 2008; Varga & Guignon, 2020), but its use has since been extended to describe objects or artefacts and experiences. Newman and Smith (2016) have proposed a model for the classification of types of authenticity judgement, which – I have shown – are also relevant to the ways in which authenticity is used as a modality in the linguistic landscape. In my discussion of the ways in which authentic Greekness in Johannesburg is visually constructed, I paid particular attention to asserted authenticity – which is conceptually linked to Newman and Smith's (2016) notion of historical authenticity – and the visual features of Greek Orthodoxy – which is conceptually linked to Newman and Smith's (2016) notion of categorical authenticity. This analysis provides interesting insights into how certain spaces are materially and semiotically constructed as Greek. In many Greek spaces, especially restaurants, the authenticity of the establishment is asserted in its branding through the use of the word 'authentic' and its synonyms 'classical', 'traditional', and in this case 'Greek'. Greek churches in the Johannesburg Greek diaspora tend to be modelled on Byzantine architecture, particularly the Hagia Sophia. In addition, the interiors of the churches are ornately decorated with religious icons, which are a hallmark of Greekness. The categorical authenticity of these spaces is based on the expectations of and associations with the particular genre – Greekness – by both those who produce the spaces and the signs therein and those who consume them. Lastly, I introduced the idea of how we might analyse sound as a semiotic resource that aids in the construction and performance of Greekness. Soundscapes have a fairly long history in sound studies and acoustics and have also recently been examined within the context of linguistic landscape

studies. In linguistic landscape studies, soundscapes are predominantly used to assess the linguistic diversity of a space, and in comparison with the written linguistic landscape. The relationship between sound and authenticity has not yet been explored. I took a semiotic approach to sound and presented two case studies to illustrate how it is, first, used as an index of Greekness at the Chaucer Road shopping centre in Senderwood, and, secondly, how it is also an important aspect of the performance of authentic Greekness at an Easter mass at Pantanassa church in Melrose Estate.

The evidence presented in my analytical chapters, as summarised above, supports the following overall concluding statement: the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg seeks to construct spaces in the city as recognisably and undeniably Greek, deliberately distinguishing themselves from the rest of the city, including other South Africans and other diasporas, by using a constellation of multimodal and multisensorial signs to convey a sense of homogeneous Greekness. The Greek diaspora in Johannesburg communicates a sense of Greekness as being broad, encompassing several syncretic signs from Greek antiquity, geography, language, religion, superstition, political nationalism, and food that are deliberately positioned within a space to mark it as identifiably Greek. This constructed broad sense of Greekness is ubiquitous in Greek spaces in Johannesburg, and so the ways in which Greekness is inscribed in the SL of the city are predictable. Moreover, the 'authenticity' of these spaces is often asserted, which serves to mark them as 'Greek-Greek' as opposed to 'South African-Greek'. Links to the 'homeland' are therefore emphasised by the Johannesburg Greek diaspora as a way to distinguish them from the country in which they now live and from the people amongst whom they operate. These signs of Greekness in the semiotic landscape of Johannesburg are therefore representative of

the "neatly packaged distillations of the nation" (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008, p. 539) used by members of the diaspora not merely just to perform their cultural heritage but to *proclaim* it as a significant part of their identity. Moreover, the types of signs that are used to inscribe Greekness are all linked to the desirability – and by extension superiority – of Greek culture, heritage, and history. Allusions to the idyllic landscapes of Greece, references to the 'Greek way of life' as something inherently relaxing and luxurious, and reminders of the links between (ancient) Greece and human ingenuity and intellectual achievement all communicate that having a cultural or heritage link to Greekness is enviable and somehow aspirational. Greek spaces in Johannesburg are, therefore, marked out not only as being different from the rest of the city but also representative of something *better* – more luxurious, more historically important, more aesthetically pleasing, godlier, and more culturally rich.

The congruency between Greek spaces in Johannesburg suggests that Greekness is a homogeneous category and, by extension, the Greek diaspora in the city is a homogeneous community. Contemporary studies of diasporas, conducted with an orientation to Diaspora Studies as a field in its own right, come with a warning to avoid falling into the trap of essentialism by classifying people according to homogeneous groups based only on a "common attachment to their homelands" (Özkul, 2016, p. 42). Said (1994) notes that "all cultures are involved in one another; none is simple and pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic" (p. xxv) and indeed this is now largely axiomatic across the social sciences. Previously in this dissertation I have noted that contemporary diaspora studies seek "to de-emphasize group solidarity and cohesiveness in favour of recognizing internal complexities" (Cohen and Fischer, 2019, p. 2), by recognising diasporas "as communities that

are constantly negotiated and constituted" (Amelina and Barglowski, 2019, p. 31). Therefore, from the perspective of Diaspora Studies, the self-imposed and self-constructed homogeneity inscribed by the Greek diaspora in the SL of Johannesburg proves to be an interesting case. While from my own perspective and experiences of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg – both as a researcher and as a member myself – the "internal complexities" (Cohen and Fischer, 2019, p. 2) of the community are quite obvious, the responsibility of constructing and communicating Greekness in the city falls to those for whom homogeneity is either most desirable or convenient. In other words, it is much easier to communicate and inscribe a category that is static and homogeneous than one that is dynamic and complex.

It can therefore be argued that the ways in which Greekness is inscribed by the diaspora in Johannesburg rely on a process of self-exoticism (cf. Iwabuchi, 1994; Shay and Sellers-Young, 2003; Coutts, 2004; Nikolaidou, 2020). Savigliano (1995) provides a deft explanation of exoticism as it is typically used to refer to the process of the West orientalising or romanticising the East:

> "Exoticism is a way of establishing order in an unknown world through fantasy; a daydream guided by pleasurable self-reassurance and expansionism. […] Exoticism is a practice of representation through which identities are frivolously allocated. It is also a will to power over the unknown, an act of indiscriminately combining fragments, crumbs of knowledge and fantasy in disrespectful, sweeping gestures justified by harmless banality." (Savigliano, 1995, p. 189)

By 'exoticising' themselves, the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg also turns to "fragments, crumbs of knowledge and fantasy" (Savigliano, 1995, p. 189) about Greekness and Greece –

in the form of banal signs in the semiotic landscape of Greek spaces in the city – in order to distinguish themselves as 'other' from the rest of Johannesburg.

I would like to conclude by discussing some recommendations for future research. Just as the work of Added (1973), Mantzaris (1978, 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 2012), and McDuling (2014; McDuling & Barnes, 2012) paved the way for research on the Greek communities of South Africa, the latter from a sociolinguistics perspective, it is my hope that my own research paves the way for further LL/SL studies on the Greek diaspora. Future researchers may wish to examine the ways in which Greekness is inscribed in other cities in South Africa and the rest of the world, and how these compare to the findings of my own research in Johannesburg. There are currently no other LL/SL studies of Greekness in diasporic spaces, but – as I hope I have illustrated in my own research – this remains a field that could glean a wealth of rich and interesting insights. From a South African perspective, although Johannesburg is home to the majority of the South African Greek diaspora, there are nevertheless not insubstantial Greek communities in other parts of the country – both in other major cities, such as Cape Town and Durban, and in smaller towns. Greek restaurants, in particular, are ubiquitous throughout the country and would provide future researchers with ample spaces of interest, in which to collect data for further studies on the inscription of Greekness in South Africa. In addition, there are large contingents of Greek people which make up thriving diasporic communities in many other countries worldwide. There are, for example, sizable Greek diasporic communities in Australia (cf. Tamis, 1986; Papademetre, 1994; Avgoulas & Fanany, 2018; Alvanoudi, 2018; Mavroudi, 2020), the USA (cf. Georgitsoyanni, 2020), and Canada (cf. Panagakos, 1998) and these would no doubt also serve as interesting sites of investigation in LL/SL studies, similar

to my own. As I pointed out earlier in this dissertation, the history of Greek immigration to South Africa has a number of parallels with that to Australia (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5), especially when it comes to the role of food spaces in the establishment of the Greek communities in each country. Thus, I would argue that food is another particularly interesting area worth further global scholarly investigation in this regard.

In addition, while valuable LL/SL work on various diasporic communities across the world exists (cf. Budarina, 2017; Blommaert, 2013; Colomé & Long, 2012; Gonçalves, 2012; Woldemariam & Lanza, 2015; Zhao, 2021; Mei & Van Liempt, 2022; Li & Kroon, 2021; and many more referenced throughout the course of this dissertation), much of the world remains a complex and superdiverse place and there is no shortage of interesting material worth studying when it comes to diasporas. There are not many studies on diasporas from an LL/SL perspective that have been conducted in a South African context (for a notable exception, see Deumert & Mabandla, 2013), and so this country in particular constitutes largely uncharted territory in this regard, despite being home to a vast number of diasporas from all over the world. The city of Johannesburg presents a particularly complex, multi-layered case study in superdiversity, in which various diasporic and non-diasporic communities cohabitate (not always peacefully). As such, Johannesburg alone would provide researchers with ample subject matter for LL/SL studies of diasporic spaces. As I have mentioned in other sections of this dissertation, Johannesburg is home to sizable diasporas from other parts of the Mediterranean, notably Portuguese (see Glaser, 2010, 2012) and Italian (see Marchetti-Mercer & Virga, 2021), as well as various groups from north-western Europe, south and east Asia, South America, and other parts of Africa, including Zimbabwe (see Crush et al., 2015) and Nigeria (see Inyang,

2019). Each of these groups occupies a particular part of the city, both geographically and sociopolitically, and so studies of how they are represented in Johannesburg's linguistic landscape would be most interesting and insightful. A more expansive and robust canon of LL/SL literature on the various diasporic communities of Johannesburg would provide us with an interesting way of reading or mapping the city, in the form of what Blommaert (2013) terms a 'signography' (p. xi), and the inherent dynamism of LL/SL as a field makes it the perfect paradigm within which to capture and trace the ever-changing landscape of a city constantly in flux – Johannesburg, the 'elusive metropolis' (Nuttall & Mbembe, 2008).

While I have thus far exclusively extolled the advantages and scholarly value of LL/SL studies of diasporic spaces in South Africa, and Johannesburg in particular, this is not to say that other sociolinguistic approaches to these communities here should be excluded in future research on the Greek diaspora (or any other diaspora). McDuling (2014) and McDuling and Barnes's (2012) work on the language maintenance and shift of Greek in the country have, until now, constituted the only sociolinguistic work on the Greek diaspora in South Africa. Even with the addition of my own LL/SL analysis of this group, there remains a wealth of other interesting avenues worth pursuing in future research. McDuling's work on language maintenance and some of the points raised by my own interviewees raise interesting questions that would be answered through a study on the family language policy (King et al., 2008) of Greek diasporic families in Johannesburg. Such a study, or studies, would augment an already robust canon of literature on family language policies in various diasporas across the world (see for example Gharibi & Mirvahedi, 2021; Gharibi & Seals, 2020; Hua & Wei, 2016; Gomes, 2021, 2022; Lanza, 1998) and would prove to be a novel and interesting avenue for future researchers of the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg to pursue. Another avenue that may prove insightful – and is conceptually linked to family language policy research – is an analysis of language

brokering, or non-professional translation situations that often occur within the dynamic of the diasporic family unit. Such research looks particularly at the ways in which the child of immigrant parents will assume the role of translator or interpreter for their parents in order to facilitate interactions between them and someone in the 'new' country, such as a healthcare worker, shop assistant, or some sort of bureaucratic official (see for example Weisskirch & Alva, 2002; Chao, 2006; Antonini, 2016; Morales & Hanson, 2005). There are therefore a number of other ways in which future sociolinguists may study the Greek diaspora in Johannesburg.

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