

Being Raised by a Domestic Worker: A Postmodern Study

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Being Raised by a Domestic Worker: A Postmodern Study

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I declare that this research project is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

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Abstract

This study focuses on exploring the relationship between domestic workers and the children they help to raise from the child's perspective, using attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) and psychoanalytic theory (referring specifically to Klein (1952) and Fairbairn (1952/2006) as some theoretical bases). Also, the concepts of the social unconscious (Weinberg, 2007) and social ghosts (Gergen, 2000) are used to provide a link to the relationship having social implications and functions in the South African context. All theories were used in an anti-essentialistic, reflexive and heuristic way, without reification or objectification of the various terms and concepts within the theories. Also, the paradigmatic point of departure for this research is postmodernism (Apignanesi, Sadar, Curry & Garrat, 2003), focusing on the contextual and socially constructed view of knowledge production. From this point of departure, the methodology is qualitative and the research design autoethnographic (Bochner, 1997; Ellis 1998; 2000; Muncey, 2005; Holman Jones, 2005). My own story is presented where I have used various data sources such as my own memories, a letter (Babbie & Mouton, 2008), and photographs which were analysed according to the principles of visual narrative analysis found in Riessman (2008) primarily. Further data was collected through the use of two radio talk shows, where participants were invited to share their stories with regard to being raised by a domestic worker. This data was analysed using thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008), in which the narratives (kept as whole as possible) were analysed, each case in turn, using themes from the narratives themselves and deductive psychoanalytic themes. Some of the themes elicited were possession (where charges felt in possession of

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their domestic worker), absence (in relation to the child's biological mother experienced both by domestic workers biological children and the domestic workers charges), loss (especially in relation to a caregiver), the male caregiver (a paternal figure to his charges), the politicisation of the relationship (the relationship between domestic worker and charge as product of a political system), reconciliation and action (a call for empathy and change), and an intertwining of cultures (where black and white, male and female, rich and poor exist inextricably linked with one another as a product of segregation). I have also maintained a consistent critical and reflexive stance throughout. In conclusion I have presented the contribution of this work to social science and society. Similarly, some limitations of this study are presented, as well as directions for further research.

Keywords: domestic worker, South Africa, postmodern, narrative, psychoanalysis, social constructionism, Klein, Fairbairn, attachment theory, social ghosts, social unconscious, autoethnography, radio, reflexivity, thematic narrative analysis, visual narrative analysis

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For my mothers.

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Chapter One – The Introduction

Inception and Impetus

This project finds its inception and impetus in my own life and experience, in my relationship with Sophie, the domestic worker who helped to raise me when I was a little girl.

When I was twenty-two, Sophie, who had worked for my family from when I was three weeks old until I was sixteen, died very unexpectedly. I was completely inconsolable and consumed with grief, regret and guilt. I felt as if I had lost the woman who was like a mother to me, as if the pain I felt because of losing her would never dissipate. I felt my actions towards her during the latter part of her life were not reflective of the depth and importance of her influence on my life. I did not initiate contact with her often enough and while I was overjoyed when she came to visit, I was consistently too busy to spend lengthy amounts of time with her. Therefore, in conjunction with the grief I felt in losing the woman who raised me, the guilt I felt over not treating her as a maternal figure was unbearable. At her funeral, in a far-flung small town nestled among mountains, I realised that the only way I would be able to contend with my grief and guilt would be to take some kind of action. I vowed on the ten hour ride home from her rural burial that I would indeed make some kind of plan.

I had been contemplating the concept of domestic workers raising white children for a while before she died. I remember considering the notion, in an acting workshop. My thoughts were then (and much of this I still feel) that the reason we did not have a

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civil war in South Africa was because such a large proportion of white children were (partially) raised by black women. I began to think that our loving, caring maternal experience of the other race, was the one part of our conflict which set us apart from other conflicts around the world. For instance, Israelis do not raise Pakistani children, and vice versa. Similarly, Catholics do not raise Protestants in Northern Ireland. I believe on some level that this relationship is what made us, on some psychological level, unable to resort to war. This thought is by no means anything other than my own musings. It also only serves to provide a description with regard to the process I moved along in order to arrive at this topic.

I started, soon after Sophie's death, to consider ways in which I could make known how meaningful our relationship was to me and I interviewed various domestic workers, trying to find out what domestic workers' feelings were towards the children they helped to raise. This project (initially called *Beauty Saved the World*), was short lived, and apart from a few taped interviews, and a myriad of sentiments running through my mind and heart, nothing came of it.

Later my plan centred on building a school in Sophie's home town with the help of a friend who was completing her masters degree in architecture. But funding was necessary and I had no experience in completing such a large project. This meant that I needed to find a way to make reparation using my own strengths and abilities. Therefore, I decided to elucidate the relationship between domestic workers and the children they help to raise through academic research.

In 2007 I started the first part of this project by examining the attachment of domestic workers to the children they helped to raise in an honours research project (Van

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der Merwe, 2007). The project focused on the premise that an attachment relationship was possible between domestic workers and the children they help to raise, provided that the right conditions were present. Indeed, the possibility of an attachment relationship was confirmed by the research.

This year it stands to reason that I explore the other side of the relationship, namely, the experience of the *children* in relationship to their domestic workers. The experiences of these children will be included retrospectively (i.e. the memories of an adult who was raised by a domestic worker when she was a child). This research therefore aims to explore the relationship between domestic worker and child from the child's point of view. This, in some sense, is also a way in which I could feel as though my story may be shared by others, that my relationship with Sophie will somehow become greater than just my own felt experience. This will be done by hearing the stories of other South Africans who have had similar experiences.

In Justification

I suspect we would not search for grounds save for the fact that someone challenges us to justify our actions. Having grounds is a form of self-protection, and [therefore] a means for claiming superiority over others (Cisneros-Puebla, 2007, p. 11).

It would seem as if the act of delineating a justification for this work would, on some level, imply a claim in the direction of superiority, which is not at all the intention here. What is intended, however, is to delineate the reasons of import on a personal and social level with regard to this research.

As may be presumed, this research finds its basis in a very personal justification. I think I consider this work partly as a way in which I can try to expunge my desperate white guilt. So, first and foremost, this work is justified in the sense that it arises from a deeply personal relationship that I wish to explore, and remember.

On a wider and more overtly social level, domestic workers are still “one of the largest single sectors of the South African labour force” (Ally, 2008, p. 1), but because they work “behind closed doors [and] within private spaces” (Ally, 2008, p. 1), research work – concerning their duties, lives and experiences – is relatively sparse. Therefore, on a purely contributory level, this work hopes to be important in terms of adding to the descriptions of these women’s lives.

Aims and Objectives

This research also hopes to fulfil multiple aims. The primary aim is encapsulated by the following quote:

By emotionally binding together people who have had the same experiences, whether in touch with each other or not, the collective story overcomes some of the isolation and alienation of contemporary life. It provides a...community, the linking together of separate individuals into a shared consciousness. Once linked, the possibility for social action on behalf of the collective is present, therewith, the possibility of social transformation (Richardson quoted in Etherington, 2006, p. 11).

Therefore, this research aims to create a collective story. In reality, we are all locked into our own lives in a solipsistic way; there exists no community of people (partly) raised by domestic workers; no group or space in which we all gather to share our experiences; no collective action we all take part in as the charges raised by our caregivers. Perhaps, too,

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this linking and sense of community may add to the legitimising and explication of the experience and relationship, enabling us to share the experience with each other. Also embedded in the abovementioned quote is the sense of social transformation. In some sense this transformation can only occur if there is a banding together and a collective story. This can be used as a tool in which our social and political context can be transformed.

Finally, I hope this research proves useful in terms of providing others with some kind of narrative to explain their unique experience. If the caregiving role of domestic workers is elucidated as primary by this research, this could form the basis of a move to changes in remuneration, social perceptions, and public policy regarding domestic workers. This is critical as domestic workers “are [presently] one of the most vulnerable and exploited sectors in the labour market...” (Congress of South African Trade Unions [COSATU], 2001, p 1). Thus, this research will hope to add to the literature focusing on domestic workers in general and specifically by examining their relationship with the children they help to raise, from the adult child’s point of view.

The Research Question

In the initial writing of this chapter, I forgot to include what the research question was, possibly because of the personal nature of this project. It seems so strange to try to encapsulate all I want to explore into one research question but this is the question I started out with:

What is the relationship between domestic workers and the children they help to raise, in terms of the psychological effects on the child, and in terms of the

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relationship being a product of South Africa's historical and contemporary context?

The primary nodes of importance with regard to this question, and the research which follows, is: (a) the focus on the relationship between domestic worker and child, (b) the psychological effects of this relationship on the child, (c) with both the relationship and its effects being contextualised in terms of the broader South African context.

Chapter Two – My Epistemology

To write or speak is not to express an interior world, but to borrow from the available things people write and say and to reproduce them for yet another audience (Gergen, 2000, p. 105).

Organising my (Anti) Epistemology

In considering how I come to know in general and how I have come to understand this research in particular, my own highly influential epistemological point of departure is complex and multiple in nature. Drawing on this notion of multiplicity - bricolage (the putting together of various elements (Mottier, 2005)), and pastiche (Gergen, 2000) - I come to know, primarily, from a postmodern position. Postmodernism has formed the epistemological umbrella under which various other more specific (and perhaps paradoxical) epistemological elements (social constructionism, the narrative and psychoanalysis) find their place. Thus, I have included various elements from different theories that coexist within and under what is referred to here as my postmodern umbrella.

The epistemological organisation expanded on henceforth, has been an experience of “crawl[ing] inside” (Cisneros-Puebla, 2007, p. 6) these worldviews, in order for me to be able to see the world through them. I found an immediate resonance with many of the principles, but primarily, the writing of this chapter has been a process of integration (where possible), and also a celebration of the paradoxes inherent in such an organisation of epistemological thought.

Important to consider here is also where I find my justification for such an epistemological organisation. Primarily, this justification is found in the postmodern

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theory concerning the notion of “irreducible plurality” (Dey & Nentwich, 2006, p. 15), which implies that nothing can be reduced to a fundamental state of integrity and wholeness. Just so, my epistemological point of departure has drawn on many theoretical bases.

Along with the notion of irreducible plurality, eclecticism presides where “all [my] ‘tastes’ and all [my] ‘needs’ are attended to” (Apignanesi, Sadar, Curry & Garrat, 2003, p. 79). This means that all my epistemological *needs* will be attended to by using various elements from different theories to support this project on an epistemological level.

Also, “there has never been a unified science and...there has always been, however oblique, a multitude of practiced sciences, which more often than not stood in harsh contrast with each other” (Dey & Nentwich, 2006, p. 15). In this sense I believe it presumptuous and reductionistic to presume that I come to know through one narrowly constructed scientific paradigm only.

Lastly, Kenneth Gergen (2000) claims that the postmodern scholar “is free to combine and synthesise [theories and genres] in any way that communicates effectively” (p. 113). This means that my epistemology becomes a combination of all my experiences from various fields in the arts, literature and psychology, in order to explore the research problem in an aesthetic (Dey & Nentwich, 2006), creative and reflexive way.

The Postmodern Umbrella

I consider myself as essentially postmodernist, and as with the movement itself (Abrams, 1999), my postmodern stance developed through literary channels. I have been

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profoundly influenced by the study of language and literature, especially postmodern literature and this has to a great degree informed my views. This would mean that I am particularly interested in words, dialogue, and text. Texts are considered as “all practices of interpretation which include but are not limited to language” (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 79).

This influence of text and words brings in Jacques Derrida’s notion of deconstruction (Abrams, 1999). Deconstruction is ultimately a subversive activity where one tries, through rigorous enquiry and questioning, to show how all text is conflicting and indeterminate. Also, deconstruction promotes the concept that nothing “**reasoned** is ever universal, timeless and stable. Any meaning or identity (including our own) is provisional and relative, because it is **never exhaustive**, it can always be traced back to a prior network of deferences” [emphasis not mine] (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 79). This would imply that I view texts (by implication identity, and this research etc.) as ephemeral, constructed, indeterminate and built upon the notions of difference.

Also, the structuralist notion of binary oppositions becomes important to note as well, within this context. It would seem the case here that domestic workers and their charges “carry meaning only in relation to each other” (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 70). This would mean that the concept of the *domestic worker* does not exist with the same meaning if seen without the binary opposition of the child whom she helps to raise. Only when these two are placed in relation to each other do they carry meaning in this context.

Also, the idea of intertextuality, where no text exists without the influence of other texts, is crucial in terms of my approach, as my words do not exist in a vacuum but they have been created out of previous words that have been read, thought, or heard. In

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some sense, my words are not even my words. The words I use are not unique to me and are constituted through every other word or text I have come into contact with. Therefore, this work does not hold onto any notions of uniqueness. It has contextually been created through contact with other texts. Also, “texts are never simply unitary but include resources that run counter to their assertions and/or author’s intentions” (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 80). This would imply that this text finds its meaning in relation to other texts. To highlight this notion of intertextuality – to make this notion plain and overt – I have chosen, often, to include extensive verbatim quotations from the work of others, in order to construct this work with an open interaction of voices and texts.

In relation to both the concept of intertextuality and the notion of binary oppositions, Derrida’s concept of *différance* becomes important. This concept is built upon the definition of meaning within a text. Here “meaning includes identity (what it is) and difference (what it isn’t) and it is therefore continuously being ‘deferred’.” (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 80). This would imply that meaning is never unitary, or singular.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that “knowledge and power are closely related and mutually dependent. This means that a naturalist account of objectivity is totally inappropriate for social science” (p. 40). Therefore, I endeavoured to be consistently aware of the power relations between myself and the participants, as well as the power relations between myself and the research process and theoretical grounding I have chosen.

Also, more specifically considering Michel Foucault’s conceptualisations of the relationship between power and knowledge, I have become aware of the “overlapping

and interactive series of **legitimate vs. excluded** histories” [emphases not mine] (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 83). I feel as if this part (the relationship between domestic worker and charge) of my personal and our collective history has been marginalised and excluded. This work therefore aims to legitimise the history of the relationship between domestic workers and their charges.

Most prominently however, postmodernism goes against metatheory, metanarratives and the “grand narrative of positivism” (Weisenfield, 2000, p. 5) and these are “the supposedly universal, absolute or ultimate truths that are used to legitimise various projects, political or scientific” (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 102). Not only are absolute truths rejected but any kind of objective claim to truth is questioned. Therefore, this research will be presented as knowledge that is contestable, and will not be assumed to provide an objective, generalisable ‘truth’, but rather a subjective exploration of my own experiences and the experiences of others in relation to domestic workers. Furthermore, this work is anti-essentialistic, in the sense that I do not believe the relationship between domestic workers and their charges to be a ‘thing-in-itself’ which can be objectively observed. The relationship, the experience of the relationship and the telling of the experience in whichever form, is influenced by me as the observer and it only becomes what it is as it is observed. Therefore this research does not intend to be a “true portrayal...of what is there” (Gergen, 2000, p. 89).

In linking with the notion that postmodernism is against metanarratives and universality claims, a further basic assumption of postmodernism is the following: “Social scientists are intrinsically linked to their social and historical contexts. This implies that any form of value-free social inquiry is mistaken and impossible” (Babbie &

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Mouton, 2001, p. 40). So, this project will be contextualised within the power and racial relations, both past and present, within South Africa.

Furthermore, this research is contextualised within my own personal history and I intend for my personal voice to be heard throughout this piece of work both as a contextualisation and as a tool for reflexivity – reflexivity also being a predominant postmodern principle. Etherington’s (2006) work has been a very useful guide in terms of becoming reflexive throughout the research process, and the following quote provides an adept summary as to how I have tried to implement this concept in here: “Reflexivity doesn’t mean simply to “reflect on”...but is an immediate critical consciousness of what one is doing, thinking or writing” (Apignanesi et al., 2003, p. 73). The following quote seems to adequately justify and embody my stance on the concept of (self) reflexivity:

New interpretive turns in living the life of a social science researcher call for researcher self-reflexivity...alternative modes of writing...and integration of scholarly and personal voices in researchers’ textual representations in the social sciences/humanities...This conscious positioning of authors within their texts opens up possibilities for evocative, innovative ways in which researchers may represent realities, themselves and their research participants in their texts (Maguire, 2006, pp. 1-2).

Therefore, (self) reflexivity and general awareness allows me to attempt a more creative and aesthetic research text (Dey & Nentwich, 2006).

Social Constructionism

The meanings we ascribe to our world do not inhere in the things of the world, rather they emerge as we interact with them; meaning and truth are not there to be revealed but to be constructed from our interactions. We and the objects of our study are embedded in a cultural matrix that refuses to be torn asunder and are bound in the on-going construction of meaning. The aim of constructionism is

not to discover the truth as revealed but the truth as constructed and imbued with meaning (Cisneros-Puebla, 2008, p. 3).

A further basic assumption of the postmodern paradigm according to Babbie & Mouton (2001) states that “social reality is constructed and social scientific knowledge is similarly a construct of social inquiry. There is no independent, social reality that exists outside of human reflection and inquiry” (p. 40). This neatly ties postmodernism to the notions and theoretical groundings of social constructionism.

In trying to gain a clear delineation of what social constructionism is and is not I found Burr (1995) particularly useful in terms of crystallising the primary tenets of social constructionism. Firstly, social constructionism re-emphasises the cultural and historical specificity of the way in which we understand the world. Also, the way in which knowledge is created is also historically and culturally specific. Therefore, the production of this form of knowledge is subject to my own historical and cultural sphere. Knowledge production is also “sustained by social processes” (p. 3), which means that knowledge is created, maintained and produced through social interaction between people. This means that knowledge production is shared and negotiated between us as social beings. When considering the above, this work is created and negotiated through the interaction between myself and others. To describe it differently, “knowledge is acquired through our engagement with the world...and as we ascribe meaning to our perceptions of the world. Thus, meaning is ours to make...” (Cisneros-Puebla, 2008, p. 3). The knowledge and meaning produced in this text emerges from an interaction between me, the participants, my supervisors, other societies and texts.

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Burr (1995) also indicates how social constructionism is different from other paradigmatic points of departure. In addition to being anti-essentialistic (as discussed above), social constructionism is also anti-realism, and therefore knowledge is not and cannot ever be a direct reflection of reality. In other words “we construct our own versions of reality (as a culture or society) between us” (p. 4). Also, “to accept this notion of co-construction of reality requires that we reject the rigid objectivism as required by positive science” (Cisneros-Puebla, 2008, p. 3).

Furthermore, Kenneth Gergen (2000) states that social constructionism as paradigm is also an anti-epistemology. This is because constructionism “undermines the very idea of truth claims of any kind, [and therefore] it also undermines truth claims of its own” (Cisneros-Puebla, 2008, p. 6). To clarify what I mean by truth in this context, I have assumed that knowledge is situated and therefore I cannot present an objective truth, but I can present a ‘truth’ from my viewpoint. The following quote captures my ideas in relation to truth:

There is no view from ‘everywhere’, except for God. There is only a view from ‘somewhere’, an embodied, historically and culturally situated speaker... Rather than decrying our sociohistorical limitations, then, we can use them specifically to ask relevant (useful, empowering, enlightening) questions (Richardson in Sparkes, 2002, pp. 27-28).

Social constructionism also has a particular emphasis on language. Firstly, “language... is a necessary pre-condition for thought” (Burr, 1995, p. 5). This means that the way we understand the world, its categories and concepts, only develops with and through the acquisition of language (which is in itself a social construction). So, too, “words are not mirrorlike reflections of reality but expressions of group convention” (Gergen, 2000, p. 121). Therefore, because language is a precondition for thought, and in

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turn, language is created through the social matrices of society (which are power- and value-laden), there is “no perspective-free position” (Gergen, 2000, p. 121) that reflects a neutral objective reality.

In a slightly different vein, viewing this research through a lens with some social constructionist elements in it, allows me to emphasise the importance of the social environment. Social constructionism presupposes that “the social dimension is prior to that of the ‘individual’ perspective of the subject” (Reichertz & Zielke, 2008, p. 2). Therefore, my starting point, in terms of exploring perceptions of the relationships between domestic workers and their charges, is social. The relationship was and is birthed out of a specific historic and cultural context, which helps to sustain the socially constructed meanings surrounding the relationship. This means that I don’t believe the relationship can be divorced from its context and generalised to other forms of caregiving, like day-care centres or au pairs in Europe (though admittedly there are similarities, most notably that the caregiver in each case is not the biological mother of the child).

In conjunction with the postmodern idea of the link between power and knowledge as well as legitimate versus excluded histories, social constructionism “aims to unravel imbalances in power and social inequality” (Reichertz & Zielke, 2008, p. 2). This paradigmatic foundation justifies a certain social advocacy stance which I cannot deny. This aspect became stronger and stronger as the research process progressed through time. I would like to reiterate and re-perform the importance of the child raising duties of domestic workers. I would like a wider audience to become aware of the important role domestic workers have in raising children. In this reiteration, perhaps power imbalances will be shifted, destabilised or at the very least represented, as a wider

audience becomes aware of the important relationship between domestic worker and charge.

Can Narrative and Psychoanalysis be Used as Part of an Epistemology?

At this stage, there should be some clarity with regard to why I consider the idea of the narrative and psychoanalysis as part of this epistemological construction, under the postmodern epistemological umbrella.

Let me focus on the concept of the narrative first. The reasons are personal first and foremost and they genuinely reflect how I come to know and understand, and also to some extent what I deem worth knowing. I come to know and understand people through their narrative which gives me an understanding of their identity.

Secondly, I consider the construction of the self through psychoanalytic structures as a heuristically useful tool in trying to conceptualise this identity which I come to understand through narratives. Because of my training, and early interest in psychoanalytic theory, I have come to understand and know people as individuals through the lenses these psychoanalytic theories provide. This does not mean however that I presume these theories to be an ultimate truth, just a useful and existing (as existing within me prior to the embarkation of this research) lens through which to view identity and selfhood.

This means that narrative and psychoanalysis through my training, education and upbringing have become part of this epistemological construction, as both the foundation of this study and the way in which I have come to conceptualise and know the

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information presented here. In addition to this narrative and psychoanalysis will also be used as “theor[ies]... in use” (Mattes & Schraube, 2004, p. 6), since they also form part of my methodology.

The Narrative

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting..., stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind [sic] and there nowhere has been a people without narrative...it is simply there, like life itself (Barthes as quoted in Riessman, 2008, p. 4).

To begin with, I seem to understand the world through the telling of stories. To clarify, it becomes important to distinguish narrative from other exchanges. The content of narratives need to have some “consequential linking of events or ideas” (2008, p.5) in a meaningful pattern in order for a narrative to be considered a narrative. Also, narratives are often organised temporally and centred on a topic. To differentiate between narratives and the popular notion of story, a story is always a narrative but narratives also include more than what is indicated by the term story. Hereafter, the terms story and narrative will be used interchangeably.

Every endeavour of my life has involved stories and narratives of some kind. I have engaged in the dramatic arts in which stories are performed, the literary arts in which stories are written and psychology where individual and social stories are delivered in the therapeutic space and through research methods. I think that the most prominent link between all these fields is the fact that they all tell stories in different ways and it is

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the story, the narrative which fascinates me and helps me to come to know and understand.

On a more theoretical level, Riessman (1993, 2008), whose work has been an invaluable resource in terms of narrative theory and analysis, expounds on what narrative is and what narrative does. The narratives investigated here, among others, include images, tales, theories, and loose snippets of lives centred on a topic. The narratives investigated will take the form of the stories the participants and I tell about our relationships with our domestic workers. Furthermore, this work attempts to deliver “a story about stories” (2008, p. 6), in which I hope to tell the story of the research process in a reflexive manner. It is also important to note that while these stories will primarily be the stories of individuals, “identity groups, communities, nations, governments and organisations construct preferred narratives about themselves” (2008, p. 7). Social constructionism has given the epistemological grounding for the narratives collected during the process. This enables highlighting of the historical, contextual and social aspects of their production and reception (which has consistently been a focus).

When considering the effects and purpose of narratives, as opposed to other forms of communication, individuals and groups use narratives in different and overlapping ways. “Individuals use the narrative form to remember, argue, justify, persuade, engage, entertain and even mislead an audience. Groups use stories to mobilise others, and to foster a sense of belonging” (2008, p. 8). Also, stories as used by groups serve to highlight the “flow of power in the wider world” (2008, p. 8). Most importantly however, in terms of this work, narratives expose truths about human experiences and autobiographical narratives (like those primarily used in the data collection here) are

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closely linked to identity constructions. Therefore, “private constructions of identity must mesh with a community of life stories...Connecting biography and society becomes possible through...stories” (2008, p. 10). In this way an epistemological focus on stories, in conjunction with many of the principles of postmodernism, social constructionism and psychoanalysis, provides me with an exciting basis from which to examine the psychological effects on the identity of children (partly) raised by domestic workers.

The Psychoanalytic Self

Freud was a transitional figure between the romantic and modernist sensibilities, and his significance is largely due to his ability to unify the opposing discourses...Not only had the deep interior of the mind become a matter of fact...[but] Freud was [also] moved by modernist demands for objective evidence of the unconscious. However, the romanticist drama of personal depth remained firm and the analysand of today continues to quest for a self of a century past (Gergen, 2000, p. 27).

I started reading Freud when I went into high school. During this period I started to firmly consider ways in which the self is constructed and viewed by others, as well as how I viewed myself, and my own identity. At the time I remember thinking that there was an uncontrollable, mystical part of myself which I can now liken to the Freudian concept of the id. As Gergen (2000) suggests, it is precisely this romantic, ‘unscientific’ part of psychoanalysis which I resonate/d with. Since then, and throughout my training as a clinical psychologist, my life and my own psychotherapy, a psychoanalytic view of the self has been constructed and therefore, to a large extent, I have begun to see identity in terms of psychoanalytic principles. These principles are roughly divided into

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conscious and *unconscious motivations*, and different structures of the *ego* or *self*. These concepts will be discussed further in chapter three.

But, the psychoanalytic view of identity and selfhood comes with modernist implications, and perhaps it is useful to clarify the way in which I have used psychoanalysis throughout this text. The psychoanalytic theories have been used heuristically, in the sense that they help to facilitate understanding, (as I do not believe in the theories as anything other than constructions). I also do not presume that any of the stories, analyses or theories presented here are used in an objective sense. I hope I have made my subjective approach to this work clear, as it implies that these theories are used intertextually, subjectively and without reification.

Also, as Parker (1997, 2005) states, psychoanalytic principles have become so entrenched within our culture that it becomes difficult (for me) to think of a self without considering psychoanalysis as the birthplace for the self as a concept. As Parker states in his book *Psychoanalytic Culture* (1997):

Psychoanalysis is barely a century old, yet it appears to stretch back to human prehistory at the same time as it extends into the deepest interior of the self in contemporary culture. For many people psychoanalytic...concepts structure how they understand themselves and social relationships (p. 1).

In precisely the same way, psychoanalysis has been the most primary influence in terms of how I see myself, others, familial and social interactions and therefore it becomes important to consider it as part of the way in which I view the world.

Chapter Three – The Literature Review

Waiting for sleep I thought of her Xhosa hand on me, dry and warm. Usually she smelled of cleaning, love, onions, and the sweat of each day melting into her starched uniform...she was most especially for me, I had decided, even though I was only one of her daily duties, albeit the most taxing. Her abundant brownness became my instant refuge. I claimed her. And she me. More than once I smeared myself in mud from head to toe, caking it on to be brown like her (Gien, 2007, p. 30).

The Domestic Worker: Sketching the Context

I aim to provide you, reader, with a broad historical and contemporary context in which to conceptualise the positioning of domestic workers both within this research and within the current socioeconomic climate. This will be examined in three sections. In the first I will deal with the historical and the contemporary context in which domestic work has arisen within South Africa. Secondly, other studies focusing specifically on the relationship between domestic workers and their charges will be discussed as a context in which the relationship and research on the relationship can be viewed. Also, because of my interest in the arts, the domestic worker and how she has been portrayed in some forms of art and literature will briefly be considered. While I am aware of the fact that South Africa is not unique in terms of a ‘nanny culture’, I have chosen to focus exclusively on the South African phenomenon, in all its specificity.

The historical and contemporary context. Having examined the literature available on domestic workers in South Africa (Bénil & Morange, 2006; Bozalek, 1997; Cock, 1980 & 1987; Hickson & Strous, 1993; Kruger, 2001), the focus of much of the

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research on the topic seems to be the exploitation and oppression of domestic workers under the apartheid system. What follows is a description of the domestic working system, with an indication of how this system changed since the first democratic elections in 1994 (which implies racial equality).

Still evident today, is the “class distinction...maintained along racial lines... [where] the domestic worker in a White home is almost always Black” (Hickson & Strous, 1993. p. 109). This is changing, however, since more and more black families are employing black domestic workers, who perform tasks similar to those performed by domestic workers for white families. No longer are employers solely white, but employees, on the other hand, remain, predominantly black females.

Fish (2006) makes us aware that not only are there racial divisions present but also, “class and gender divisions [which] continue to define this social institution as the ‘last bastion of apartheid’.” (p. 107). Accordingly, black women are, through this form of employment, consistently linked with traditional feminine roles, as well as subservience and poverty.

The primary tasks domestic workers are expected to perform encompass cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking and other general housekeeping tasks. Secondly, they are often expected to take care of the children of their employers. This secondary duty is often ill defined, including bathing, dressing, feeding, night time rituals, helping with homework, babysitting and being a night nurse. These primary and secondary duties often imply that these women work long and irregular hours (COSATU, 1999, p. 6), where “approximately 18% of full time domestic workers work more than a 45 hour

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working week. Almost 9% of full time domestic workers work 56 or more hours per week” (COSATU, 1999, p. 6). Overtime is often not paid.

The suggested minimum wage for domestic workers is an hourly rate of R8, 12 which is considered to be a living wage (Mdladlana, 2008). Many of these women have families of their own to support and are often the sole breadwinners. With regard to the minimum living wage, the amount here is certainly questionable. This amount should be subject to annual increases, overtime and night time hours being calculated accordingly and additional payments-in-kind (like live in accommodation and food) being over and above this minimum wage, according to the COSATU recommendations (1999, 2001).

Dinat and Peberdy (2007) in their survey of almost 1100 domestic workers in Johannesburg, found that most were migrant workers as mentioned above. 86% of the workers stated that they had a home elsewhere in the country, besides Johannesburg, where 70% of the sample had children of their own who did not live with them. Since they are unable to live with their children, they leave them in the care of a grandmother or other relative, to return to work as little as a few weeks after birth (Cock, 1987). Despite leaving their own children, domestic workers continue to care for the children of their mostly white employers, often as they would for their own, since “many Black women claim that they remain in this line of work because of their attachment to their employers and their employers’ families” (Hickson & Strous, 1993, p. 111). Conversely, however, the pain of not living with their children may “be amplified for the black women employed as nannies to care for the children of their employers and who are separated from their own children” (Cock, 1987, p. 136). This may result in resentment towards the child that the domestic worker helps to raise, even though this may not be conscious.

Another problem domestic workers may face with regard to their role as caregiver is their lack of authority in the home with regard to the child. “Although the Black nanny is expected to take a great deal of responsibility for the well-being of White children, she generally lacks the concomitant authority” (Hickson & Strous, 1993, p. 111).

Furthermore, it is not uncommon for white children to treat the domestic worker as their personal servant, giving orders and so on, without reprimand from their parents. The domestic worker, in turn, because of low job security (COSATU, 1999, 2001), may not wish to exercise the required disciplinary authority for fear of losing the job. This would highlight the power relationship present between domestic workers and their charges, where the boundaries between who carries the authority becomes blurred.

In general, domestic workers have particularly low levels of education. “Almost 10% of domestic workers have no education. Just over 12% have a Standard 5 [Grade 7]. Slightly less than 70% have a Standard 6 [Grade 8] or less” (COSATU, 1999). In addition to this, domestic workers usually have a different mother tongue to the children. Indeed, it was found in my previous research that some domestic workers communicated with their charges in Xhosa (the domestic worker’s mother tongue), and this increased the uniqueness of their relationship and functioned to differentiate this relationship from the child’s other caregivers (Van der Merwe, 2007).

Domestic work is also a very important form of job creation within South Africa, which is much-needed since the unemployment rate within this country is at a staggering 25,6 % (Statistics South Africa, 2006). Also, domestic work has been and still is the largest employment sector for black females in South Africa, with many of these women

being mothers themselves, who move into domestic work in order to be able to support their own families (Kruger, 2001).

Other explorations of the relationship as context. I think it is important to include a summary of my previous research (Van der Merwe, 2007) as this present work, for all intents and purposes, has been a building upon and refining of the process of research, as well as the results obtained in 2007. The purpose of the research was to examine the relationship between domestic workers and the children they help to raise, from the domestic worker's point of view. In summation, seven domestic workers were interviewed according to a modified version of Zeanah, Benoit and Barton's (1993) Working Model of the Child Interview (WMCI). The interviews were transcribed and analysed using the principles and methods of content analysis. The analysis and discussion included themes which were theory and data led. After careful analysis, it was concluded that five of the seven women presented with secure attachment relationships.

To expand a little with regard to the themes that were prominent to me, it was ascertained that the relationship from the domestic worker's perspective was primarily maternal, where one domestic worker commented that she is "like a mother to them [her charges] and... [she] will die a mother to them". The women described this maternal relationship further in the sense that the children became likened to their own children. It also appeared that the women intended to have relationships with their charges into the future, even after formal employment ended, which indicated the long lasting nature of their relationship. The women also perceived the children as loving and adoring of them, which in the context of the 2007 study, indicated a perception of the children's

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attachment to the domestic worker. Domestic workers and their charges both seemed to become anxious at being separated from each other and their reunions were characterised with much joy. The women were involved intensely with the children, were sensitive to their needs, knew and managed their routines, and they feared for the general safety and well-being of the children. Interestingly, however, these women experienced the boundaries between being a family member and an employee blurred and difficult to manage. In addition, the number of years with the family, the biological mother's employment and having their own children, were postulated to affect the ability for an attachment relationship to grow and flourish between the domestic worker and their charges in different ways.

Barring my own research, another study was found which deals specifically with the relationship between domestic workers and their charges, from the children's point of view in a retrospective manner. Even though much of this present study was conceptualised before reading Goldman (2003), it is astounding to see the similarities in our approaches. Entitled *White Boy Under Apartheid: The Experience of Being Looked After by a Black Nanny*, Sarron Goldman (2003) reflects on the colonial history of black women being paid to act as caregivers, and reflects on white men's memories of being looked after by their family's domestic workers during the apartheid era. The results of his work indicated two primary themes which emerged during the interviews he conducted – *remembered black hands* and *kaffir se plek* (literally translated as *nigger's place*). In the first theme (remembered black hands) "recollections [of the domestic worker] were imbued with tenderness, love and care; these were heart warming stories of what it was to be the object of the nanny's ministrations" (p. 8). The second theme

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(kaffir se plek) indicated narratives which reflected social order, where the “nanny’s personhood counted for nothing, that she was dispensable and that she had a distinct, lesser place in the social order” (p.8). Goldman notes that these two narratives/themes are conflicting and competing, and he captures the ambivalence within the relationship with a great amount of acuity.

The domestic worker in arts and literature. In one of the numerous, exhaustive conversations I have had with countless friends and family members about this research, the most enlightening suggestion came to investigate the band called *Hot Water*, since they had written and performed a song all about the experience of being white in South Africa and raised by a black domestic worker. After making contact with the band, the parts of the song entitled *Thembi* (Visser & Copley, 2005) are reprinted here with their permission and enthusiasm.

Thembi my African mother
You took care of me like no other
Instilled in me from youth
The desire for honesty and truth

Now the ancestors are strong in me
I see them in the mountains and in the streams
The ancestors are strong in me
I see them in the shadows and in my dreams...

For my small years - Lord, I thank you
For my small years – Lord, I thank you
For my small years – Lord, I thank you
I thank you – For you give and you give and you give and you give

Thembi my African mother
You took care of me like no other
You instilled in me from youth
The desire for honesty and truth

And I thank you.

What comes through in the lyrics here is a sense of gratitude for this African caregiver, and importantly, a feeling that Thembi had contributed to the values and integrity of the boy she raised. Also, it appears there is a blurring of cultures, where ancestors, a black South African concept, is adopted by the child in the song, with gratitude. The generosity of the domestic worker's giving is also emphasised. A copy of the song is available on CD 4.

While the above covers the domestic worker as depicted in music, one award-winning dramatic play (later converted into a novel) beautifully captures not only the relationship between domestic worker and charge, but the socio-political climate of South Africa during the apartheid era. Patricia Gien's *The Syringa Tree* (2007) centres around a white, part-Jewish family living in the suburbs of Johannesburg. This family, while considered liberal, are still constrained by the oppressiveness of the apartheid regime. The story is told from Elizabeth's point of view, a white girl raised by her domestic worker. While illegal at the time, Elizabeth's parents allow Salamena (the domestic worker who takes care of her), to give birth to and raise her daughter (Mosileng) in the white suburbs. Mosileng, eventually needs to be removed from her mother, and the home, and Elizabeth's bereavement at this loss is almost palpable. This work is an artistic testimony, which resonates so deeply with my experience, that writing about it can never capture the experience of actually reading the words, although written by someone else, as if they could have been my own.

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This discussion would not be complete without highlighting two forms of visual art. Firstly, the comic strip *Madam and Eve* created by Stephen Francis and Rico (www.madamandeve.co.za) deserves a mention. This hugely popular cartoon is famous for its socio-political satire and comedy. Its storyline centres on the characters of a white madam (Gwen Anderson) and her domestic worker (Thandi Sisulu). Through endless puns and glorious wit, the creators highlight the contradictions, tensions and similarities between this too-familiar pair. Below an example of their work:

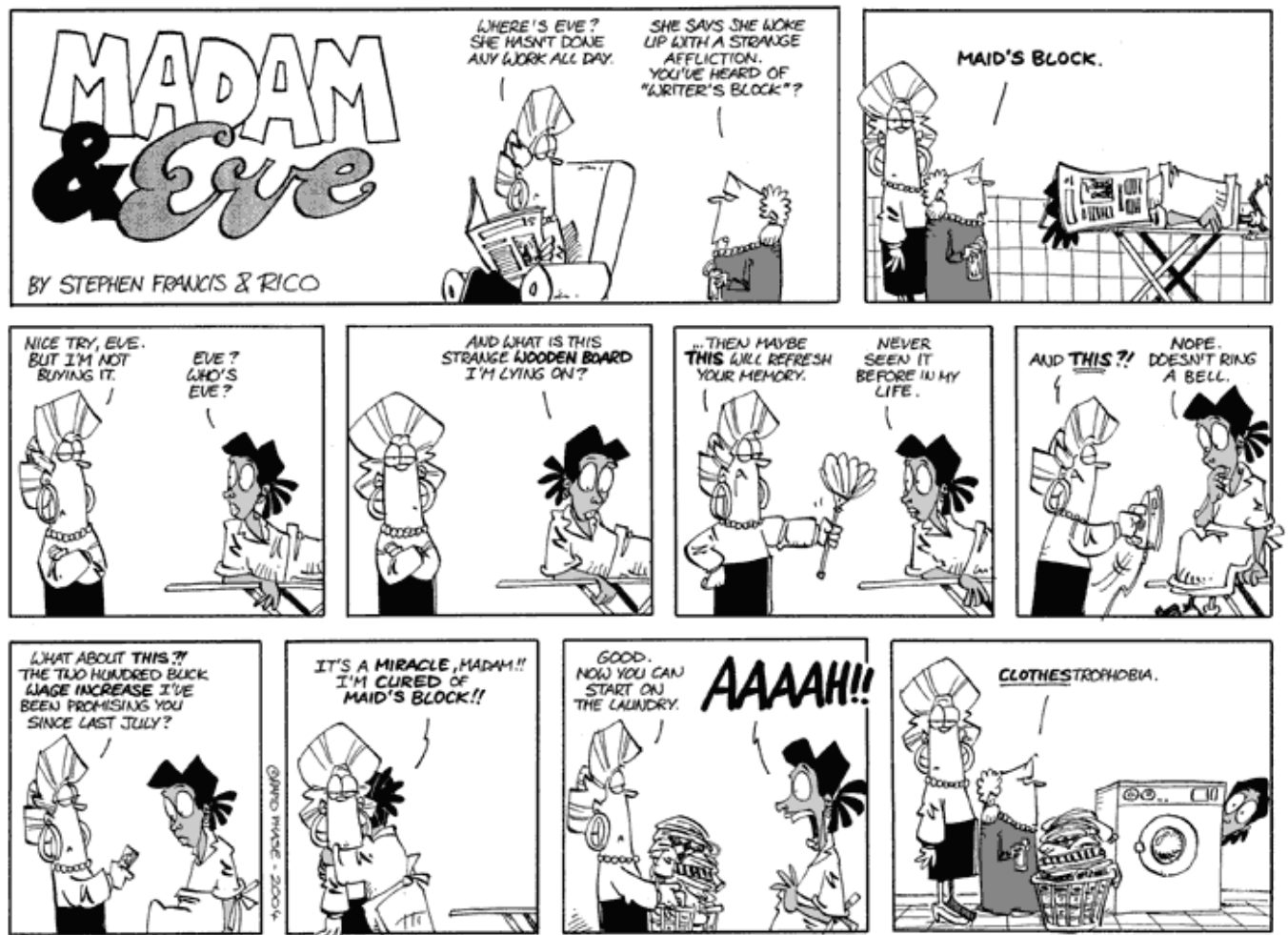


Figure 1. This figure illustrates the witty social commentary evident in the popular cartoon strip *Madam and Eve* (Francis & Rico, 2004).

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Lastly, I came across the work of a young South African artist, Mary Sibande, in an article by Sean O'Toole (2009) in *The Sunday Times*. At the time of writing she is exhibiting her work (a multimedia exhibition focussing on the character of Sophie who is a domestic worker) at a local gallery in Johannesburg. I'm not sure I can explain her art better than she does herself:

My work deals with the section of women in society that is often off centre stage, namely maids. Although there has been a political change in our country, there are some conditions that are still prevalent, that are direct results of apartheid. I intend to investigate the shadow of apartheid that still lingers in South African society. Although one can argue the freedom of our country under the new democratic dispensation, many members of the South African society are not free in their minds, haunted by lingering self-doubt.

My work also looks at the ideals of beauty and femininity represented by examples of privileged members of society, and the aspirations of the less fortunate women to be like them. The Victorian dress worn by *Sophie* is her aspiration that reveals or hints at the history of servitude of black people in South Africa. In addition, I use silhouettes as these are the maid's projected fantasies in a cast shadow. My work is influenced largely by the colonial Victorian costume and I use these costumes as my starting point because of the colonial influences in South Africa. The costume has been carefully replaced by a maid's fabric and pattern (which is well known in South Africa) while respecting the formal elements of the Victorian era (Sibande, 2007).

Herewith, too, some examples of the work (Fig 2, 3, 4 and 5) which I found particularly powerful, besides the fact that Sibande's heroine, like mine, is named Sophie. I so enjoyed her juxtapositions between opulence and servitude and I often had the sense that this was done in a humorous way. The idea of Sophie (both as my caregiver and the character used in Sibande's work) being a superhero was so thrilling to me, especially in relation to the idea that it was domestic workers, because of their ability to penetrate the white world, which saved South Africa from a sense of almost certain ruin.

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Figure 2.



Figure 3.

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Figure 4.



Figure 5.

The Domestic Worker as Part of the Identity of the Children They Help to Raise

I have used psychoanalytic literature, attachment theory (birthed from psychoanalytic literature) and the concept of social ghosts as the basis from which to approach the relationship between domestic workers and the children they help to raise. It is important to note *again* that psychoanalysis and attachment theory will be used hermeneutically to aim for “deeper understanding of the research material” (Parker, 2005, p. 117). This means that even while using these theories as a literary base in which to couch this research and as heuristic themes in terms of analysing the data, I insist that the use of these theories remains anti-essentialist (Parker, 2005). In keeping with an anti-essentialistic approach, I do not mean to reify and objectify various psychoanalytic terms such as the *ego*, the *self*, the *psyche* and the *unconscious*. I will thus “remain sensitive to the parochial forms of reality which these terms sustain” (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004, p. 239).

The theories used here focus on early experience and the roles of caregivers in the psychological and social development of an individual. It is interesting to note that there seems to be a progression in the chosen literature in terms of the depth of psychological presence of the primary caregiver in terms of the individual’s psyche. Attachment theory describes the importance and long-lasting nature of original relationships with primary caregivers. Kleinian theory suggests that these care-giving figures become part of the internal world of the individual through introjection and object-relations theory, referring specifically to Fairbairn, who suggests that the primary maternal caregiver creates the ego structure or the self of the individual. The concept of the *social unconscious*, stemming

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from group analytic psychotherapy, gives me a foundation through which to remove the individualising notion of psychoanalysis in general (Parker, 2005), and place the maternal relationship of domestic workers with the children they help to raise within a social sphere. Lastly, the concept of *social ghosts* ties in with the notions of the social and the individual within the self, emphasising the social process of the creation of an individual identity. These five theories will be examined henceforth. For this examination, the feminine pronoun *her* will be used for the purpose of simplicity.

Attachment theory. Before I give an exposition of attachment theory, I would like to story why I like the theory, and why I think it is useful in terms of conceptualising identity. I came across attachment theory in my undergraduate studies and became particularly interested in how interactions with a maternal figure continue to play out throughout a person's life. I became more interested and comfortable with the theory during my honours year, when it was used as a theoretical basis for my research project. There is also something in the word *attachment* which so aptly describes the closeness of a relationship between an adult and a child. To be attached means to somehow be inseparable, regardless of how that attachment looks. But let us now turn to the basics of attachment theory.

Bowlby's (1988) theory of attachment is used as one of the bases in discussing the *maternal* relationship between the child and the domestic worker. Bowlby's theory of attachment refers to an affectional tie that one person forms to another specific individual. According to Bowlby attachment is discriminating and specific. He also allows for the attachment bond to be applicable to non-maternal caregivers as well as to mothers

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(Bowlby, 1970/1984). In addition he discusses how children look for protection, comfort and assistance from the caregiver and this is a primary feature of his theory of attachment behaviour.

Also, Bowlby (1988) proposes an *attachment control system* that “maintains a person’s relation to his or her attachment figure between certain limits of distance and accessibility” (p 3). *Regulation of proximity* is maintained once the child is mobile, through clinging or following the caregiver (Ainsworth, 1969). Regulation of proximity and the activation of the attachment control system are necessarily achieved through distance, which needs to be traversed by the child or mother. Upon this precept is based the idea that when infants find the caregiver physically or emotionally unavailable because of distance or inaccessibility, an enormous amount of stress is felt by the infant. When linking this with my own research, it was found that domestic workers experienced severe amounts of anxiety in being separated from their charges and that they perceived that the children they helped to raise also experienced severe anxiety in being separated from them (Van der Merwe, 2007).

In the following quote the four phases of attachment behaviour is explained by Ainsworth (1969):

Bowlby distinguishes four main phases in the development of attachment behaviour: Phase 1, orientation and signals without discrimination of figure; Phase 2, orientation and signals directed towards one or more figures; Phase 3, maintenance of proximity to a discriminated figure by means of locomotion as well as signals; Phase 4, formation of a reciprocal relationship (p 1003).

Orientation here refers to the visual and aural tracking of the caregiver. Signalling refers to ways in which an infant can attract the caregiver to him/her by, for example, crying, cooing, smiling, calling etc. (Ainsworth, 1969). Here we also see that attachment

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behaviour is discriminatory (relating to primary caregivers) as well as reciprocal (indicating that the attachment relationship proceeds from both the maternal figure as well as the child).

With regard to attachment classifications, Mary D. Salter Ainsworth and others have built upon Bowlby's attachment theory. In her work she focused more upon attachment behaviour and exploration. These concepts were studied using the strange situation technique. "*Attachment behaviors* are behaviours which promote proximity or contact" (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970, p.50) like calling, crying or the flailing of arms. Also, different situations increase or diminish the amount of intensity of attachment behaviour. *Exploratory behaviour*, in turn, allows the child to learn and explore the world, while keeping the attached object in view. Also, attachment behaviour needs to be balanced with exploratory behaviour and this balance can be studied using the strange situation technique.

To expand a little on the strange-situation technique, "[t]he strange-situation procedure provides...an opportunity to observe how exploratory behavior is affected by the mother-present, mother-absent, or other conditions" (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970, p. 52). Ainsworth's strange situation is characterised by eight episodes of three minutes each, which increase the stress levels of the child. During these intervals, the mother leaves and is reunited with the child on two occasions. The child's corresponding attachment and exploratory behaviours are checked. Also, a female stranger is slowly introduced to the child, checking for the child's responses (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). The child is then classified accordingly into one of four attachment classifications.

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The four types of attachment classifications are: *secure*, *resistant*, *avoidant* and *disorganised* attachments. “A securely attached infant actively explores while alone with the mother and may be visibly upset by separations. The infant *often greets the mother warmly when she returns and, if highly distressed, often seeks out physical contact with her*, which helps to alleviate that distress” [emphasis not mine] (Shaffer, 1999, p.413). The infant is said to use the mother as a *secure base* from which to explore the world.

Resistant attachment is a type of insecure attachment, which is “characterised by strong separation protest, and a tendency of the child to remain near but resist contact initiated by the caregiver, particularly after separation” (Shaffer, 1999, p. 413). Also, there is very little exploration on the part of the infant of his/her environment when the mother is present and the child is also wary of strangers even when in the presence of the mother.

A further type of insecure attachment displayed by infants is avoidant attachment, where the infants show “little separation protest and a tendency of the child to avoid or ignore the caregiver” (Shaffer, 1999, p. 413). These infants often display similarly avoidant behaviour with strangers after a period of friendliness.

Lastly, disorganized attachment is also an insecure attachment “characterised by the infant’s dazed appearance on reunion or a tendency to first seek and then abruptly avoid the caregiver” (Shaffer, 1999, p. 414). This classification is the most insecure of all the attachments. The abovementioned classifications are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1	
<i>Ainsworth Attachment Classifications</i>	
Classification Type	Characteristics

Secure	Distressed when left by mother; excited at reunion; mother is secure base; infant seeks physical contact with mother
Resistant	Insecure; separation protest; infant resists contact
Avoidant	Insecure; infant shows little protest at separation; avoid/ignore caregiver
Disorganised	Insecure; seek and then avoid caregiver on reunion

In order to classify caregiving parental attachment, Benoit et al. (1997) have created three categories, which describe mothers' representations of their relationships to a particular child when being assessed by means of the Working Model of the Child Interview (WMCI) (Zeanah et al., 1993). These categories were also found to reciprocally predict the attachment of the respective children. The three categories are: Balanced adult attachments (secure), disengaged (insecure) and distorted (insecure). Balanced adult attachments are characterised by coherence in descriptions of the infant, acceptance of the infant's individuality and "a sense of being engrossed in the relationship with their infant" (p.111). Disengaged relationships are characterized by emotional distance, or indifference. During descriptions of the infant, the caregiver uses few details. "In extreme cases, actual aversion to the infant is present" (p.112). Distorted representations "are characterized by several types of distortion imposed on the representation of the infant and/or relationship with the infant" (p. 112). Also, these

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caregivers have unrealistic expectations of their infant or may attribute malicious intentions to the infant. The abovementioned classifications are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 <i>Caregiving Parental Attachment</i>	
Classification Type	Characteristics
Balanced	Coherent descriptions of infant; acceptance of individuality; engrossed in relationship
Disengaged	Insecure; emotional distance; indifference; no details; aversion
Distorted	Insecure; distortions imposed on descriptions of infant; unrealistic expectations; attribute infant with malicious intent

More contemporary theories based on attachment theory allow for a greater variety in terms of the levels of attachment relationships available to a child. Mary J. Levitt (2005) proposes The Convoy Model, which allows for a greater social network within the child’s attachments. The convoy of relationships in a child’s life “is conceptualized empirically as a hierarchy of three concentric circles surrounding the individual. Inner circle relations are those to whom the individual feels so close that life cannot be imagined without them...Persons who are less close, but still important are found in the middle circle. Those who are not as close as the others, but still important in the individuals life occupy the outermost circle” (p 39). The inner circle relations are

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considered to be attachment relations and these relations are considered to “be stable across age and time” (p39).

The Social Network Model is “defined schematically by a matrix in which different social objects (e.g. mother, father, peers) typically satisfy different social needs or functions, including protection, care giving, nurturance, play, exploration/learning and affiliation” (Lewis, 2005, p 12). This model regards the view of a single adult attachment figure with scepticism, saying that infants may become attached to other adults who are not their family, with relative frequency, providing there is the right amount and type of exposure.

In an attempt to combine attachment theory and the social network theory the Affective Relationships Model was developed by Keiko Takahashi (2005). In her theory she states that significant others, although not necessarily primary caregivers, are structured in a systematic way in relation to the infant in terms of the affective relationship between them. “[A]ffective relationships are defined as those interpersonal relationships that satisfy our needs for emotional interactions with significant others; they include our needs for emotional support, exchanging warm attention, and giving nurture” (p 54).

The Convoy Model (CM), Social Networks Model (SNM) and the Affective Relationships Model (ARM) all serve the purpose of providing more room for infants to be attached to a biologically non-maternal, non-familial caregiver like the domestic worker. Furthermore, the CM and the ARM both provide the basis for a hierarchical approach to close relationships, which allows for the fact that even though an attachment relationship between the domestic worker and the child may not be present, the

relationship may still form part of the child's close, important and relatively stable relationships.

Kleinian psychoanalysis. My personal stance regarding Kleinian psychoanalysis is one of love and admiration. When I came across Klein in my honours year I felt as if I found a theoretical conceptualisation of the self and its development that made sense to me. I was also able to understand myself better using the concepts below. What I particularly resonate with is Klein's idea that children (and indeed adults too) may try to compartmentalise their world in terms of the *good* and the *bad*. Incidentally, this concept of nothing being either all good or all bad is a very postmodern idea, even though Klein is by no means considered a postmodern theorist. This tactic of splitting experience into good and bad compartmentalisations may be employed to try and make sense of contradiction. The ultimate challenge according to Klein is to be able to hold contradiction and ambivalence together and realise that all things and all experiences are both good and bad, all at the same time. What follows are some of the basic tenets of the theory which has shaped so many of my thoughts and concepts about psychology in general and identity in particular.

Klein maintains that during feeding, the child begins to relate to his first *part-object*, the *breast* or by extension possibly a *bottle*, whereunto "both oral-libidinal and oral-destructive impulses...are directed" (Klein, 1952, p. 62). This means that both *libidinal* (life giving forces) and *destructive impulses* are directed towards the breast/bottle, which could be conceptualised here as becoming an extension of the domestic worker. When the child experiences gratifying impulses from the breast/bottle,

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the breast/bottle is conceived as being, and when, on the other hand the breast/bottle is a source of frustration “it is hated and felt to be ‘*bad*’.” (Klein, 1952, p. 62). Through the mechanism of *introjection* (a process through which the world and its objects is incorporated into the self), the infant *internalises* the breast or bottle as either good or bad. These prototypes of the good and bad breast are established within her psyche.

According to Segal (1973), the infants’ first aim “is to try to acquire and to identify with the *ideal object* [good breast/bottle], seen as life-giving and protective, and to keep out the *bad object*” (p. 26). This primary aim is driven by a *primary anxiety* which “is that the *persecutory object* or objects will get inside the *ego* and overwhelm and annihilate both the ideal object and the *self*” (p. 26). This means that, as a general rule, bad impulses are projected outward, or expelled, and good impulses and experiences are introjected and protected internally.

During the fifth month of development the infant starts to integrate her experiences by integrating her ego. During this phase of development the infant learns to view the breast as both good and bad and also, that the breast is part of the object called *mama*, meaning that part objects begin to be viewed as *whole objects*. The infant begins to introject the mother (or the domestic worker here), as a whole person. The introjection of complete whole objects provides the basis for the various aspects within these objects to be viewed together as part of the same object. The domestic worker as a person will then be integrated with the bottle, as an experience of one of the people who care for and feed the infant. This would mean that the domestic worker could be considered as one of the primary objects with whom the child interacts during early stages of living, and according to Kleinian theory, these early experiences and relationships become crucially

important in the development of a person, since they become internalised and therefore form part of the child's inner world.

Fairbairn's object relations. While Fairbairn's basic theoretical tenets are included here, I have found it difficult to use more than the mere basics of his theory in practice. What he does provide however, is a sense of the self as a pastiche of the internalisation of others, the process through which the ego is formed. Here follows an explication of his theory.

Fairbairn's (1952/2006) conception of the structure of the ego is a fragmentary one. The ego is split into six respective structures by the process of internalising the *pre-ambivalent object* (an object which has not been split into good and bad parts as yet). This discussion presupposes that one of the original objects that a child comes into contact with could be the domestic worker. This means that "the object originally internalized is not an object embodying the exclusively 'bad'" (p. 134) aspects of an object but this original pre-ambivalent object embodies both the good and the bad aspects of the mother (or the domestic worker as a maternal figure), which constitutes the infant's first relationship with a *whole object*. Through this internalisation of the pre-ambivalent object, "the unsplit ego [i.e. the ego that is present within the infant from birth] is confronted with an internal ambivalent object" (p. 135) which gives rise to an *external ambivalent object*. In this sense internalisation is used as a *defensive operation* by the infant "to deal with his original object...[one original object being the domestic worker] in so far as it is frustrating" (Fairbairn, 1963, p. 224).

After internalisation of the pre-ambivalent object, which gives rise to feelings of ambivalence (i.e. feelings of ‘love’ and ‘hate’ simultaneously), the infant *splits off* two aspects of the object. The aspects which are split off refer to the aspect of the internalised object which is both *over-exciting* and *over-frustrating*. This splitting and rejection of aspects of the internalised object gives rise to “two repressed internal objects, viz. the exciting (or libidinal) object and the rejecting (or antilibidinal) object” (Fairbairn, 1963, p. 224). The ego still remains cathected to the original internalised object and the process of splitting and rejecting gives rise to the *splitting of the ego*, with the *libidinal ego* (attached to the exciting object) and the *antilibidinal ego* (which is attached to the rejecting object) being rejected and ultimately repressed.

Furthermore, the remaining part of the ego, referred to as the *central ego*, remains attached to the *ideal object*. This ideal object “assumes the form of a desexualized and idealized object which the central ego can safely love” (Fairbairn, 1952/2006, p. 135) and constitutes the nucleus of the internalised object “shorn of its original over-exciting and over-frustrating elements” (Fairbairn, 1952/2006, p. 178).

Fairbairn’s theory would provide the possibility for the domestic worker as an original object in the child’s life, which becomes part of the basis of the individual’s ego, and indeed part of the basis of the self.

The social unconscious. I was introduced to the concept of the social unconscious while being trained in group psychotherapy. The concept of an unconscious that was shared between members of the same society was foreign and yet fascinating to me. I realised that I had been thinking in terms of individuals for the most part and in

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investigating this idea, I have come to further appreciate that we share certain implicit unconscious details amongst ourselves as members of the same culture. The aforementioned theories focus primarily on caregiving as an individualistic experience. The following exposition on the social unconscious provides a basis for conceptualising the relationship between domestic workers and their charges as a social phenomenon.

The most all encompassing definition of what the social unconscious is follows below:

The social unconscious is the co-constructed shared unconscious of members of a certain social system such as a community, society, nation or culture. It includes shared anxieties, fantasies, defences, myths, and memories. Its building bricks are made of chosen traumas and chosen glories (Weinberg, 2007, p. 312).

Here we see that the social unconscious is a process of co-construction which is shared and exists between, within and through members of a specific social grouping. This definition allows for variations of the social unconscious to exist within different communities and cultures, and importantly, the domestic worker and her charge may have similarities, differences and interactions pertaining to their social unconscious.

Anxieties, fantasies and defences are unconsciously re-lived and re-enacted “in present emotions related to past events of their society...these unconscious fantasies and anxieties...impact the behaviour of society-at-large” (Weinberg, 2007, p. 309).

So, too, myths and memories are transmitted as a “cultural inheritance, a transmission from generation to generation, from the earliest days onwards” (Foulkes, 2004, p. 252). A chosen trauma is defined as “the shared mental representation of a massive trauma the group’s ancestors suffered” (Hopper, 2007, p. 319) and these chosen traumas are re-activated, defended against and re-experienced throughout the nation’s history. I would speculate that an example of a chosen trauma which may impact on the

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relationship between the domestic worker and the child may be the apartheid regime. It would seem as if there is a great likelihood that this oppressive, racially based political system still perpetuates itself within the relationship in various ways. Similarly, chosen glories (like perhaps the release of Nelson Mandela from prison) are the victorious reifications that stand as a binary opposite to chosen traumas. These chosen glories are also reactivated and re-lived, and shared by specific communities and cultures.

According to Bledin (2004), the social unconscious is imbued with “a fear of isolation and ostracism...a fear...of not belonging” (p. 486). This fear is as a result of the social unconscious being a term used to refer to social taboos “which signal that certain thoughts and feelings are socially unacceptable” (p.486). So, we can see that the social unconscious is a concept which implies some sort of social control which, if not adhered to, implies fear of not belonging to the group which imposes this control.

Furthermore, the social unconscious “refers to the *constraints* of social objects that have been internalized” (Hopper, 2007, p. 286). Initially it would seem as if these internalised social objects would function in a similar way as the above mentioned social taboo, but “‘constraint’ is not meant to imply only ‘inhibition’ and ‘limitation’, but also ‘facilitation’ and ‘development’.” (Hopper, 2007, p. 286). This means that the internalisation of social objects has both an inhibiting function, relating to social control, but also an additional shaping and developing function. The following quote illustrates the process of internalisation of external social objects:

Social objects are internalized in the same way that all external objects are internalized: on the basis of both negative processes involving identifications with aggressors...and positive processes involving identifications with loving nurturing objects...the internalization of social objects requires processes of engagement by the other in general and the mother in particular (Hopper, 2007, p. 287).

This would imply that in order to internalise social objects, there needs to be some sort of social sanctioning process involved, where the social objects are engaged with by the mothering one, in this case particularly the domestic worker and others in general with whom the individual comes into contact. It may be interesting to consider that the domestic worker and her charge (because of the culturally and racially disparate groupings they belong to), may have different social objects, and there may be an interaction between them found within the relationship.

To the above definition, social taboo, fear of not belonging and the notion of constraints, one can also add Dalal's (2001) concept of power relations that are present within the social unconscious. According to him, social relations and therefore the social unconscious, is necessarily imbued with power relations. This occurs in the following way:

a particular individual is born into a pre-existing social milieu; thus the 'I' of the individual must of necessity be built out of the existing 'we'; however a 'we' can only exist in relation to something designated 'not-we'; the relation between the 'we' and 'not-we' is always a power relation. Therefore the individual [and the implied social unconscious] is constituted at the deepest of levels by pre-existing power relations in the world (p. 547).

This would mean that power differentials are transmitted through the inheritance of the social unconscious, from one generation to the next, and in a similar way, they are re-lived and re-experienced as if from the very first.

Also, Brown (2001) states that the social unconscious is manifested in four specific ways. These are adapted below:

1. Assumptions – that which is taken for granted and natural in society.
2. Disavowals – disowning knowledge and responsibility for things that are

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unwelcome.

3. Social defences – what is defended against by projection, denial, repression or avoidance.

4. Structural oppression – control of power and information by competing interests in society and the international community can insure that awareness is restricted.

Point 4 relates well to Dalal's (2001) notion of power imbued in the social unconscious, and points 1-3 relate to the general operations of defences, and unconscious operations.

Lastly, in terms of Foulkes' (2004) notion of the four levels that operate within a group at any given time, the social unconscious seems to function as a backdrop to all of the following levels (Weinberg, 2007, p. 310): the current level (experiences in and outside a group), the transference level (where familial relationships are lived out within a group), the projective level (the projection of part objects and the relations of primitive phantasies and object relations) and the primordial level (universal level, collective unconscious and archetypal images). In terms of Weinberg's thought, the primordial level contains a selected number of archetypal images, which was termed the collective unconscious by Jung, and this now forms only a part of the social unconscious. The social unconscious functions obviously at the primordial level, but "when analyzing the social unconscious we should relate all these levels and look for unconscious hidden aspects shared by members of a social system at each level" (Weinberg, 2007, p. 310). This means that on a primordial or archetypal level, the archetypal image of a mother and child may be slightly shifted for some unconsciously, where the mothering one and child

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are contrasted by having different skin colours – the domestic worker, black and the child, white.

It may be useful to consider the difference between the individual and the social unconscious in the context of psychoanalytic literature at this stage. The most often cited quotation in recent literature (post 2000) regarding the difference between the individual and the social unconscious is used here as a useful starting point in trying to untangle the difference between the concepts:

...the group analytic situation, while dealing with the unconscious in the Freudian sense, brings into operation and perspective a totally different area of which the individual is equally unaware. Moreover, the individual is as much compelled and modelled by these colossal forces as by his own *id* and defends himself quite strongly against their recognition without being aware of it, but in quite different ways and modes. One might speak of a social or interpersonal unconscious (Foulkes, 2004, p. 52).

From the above, one is able to see that originally Foulkes draws a likening and distinction between the individual unconscious and the social unconscious, but both operate in different ways. Both types of the unconscious are described as colossal forces, which are defended against, repressed and kept out of conscious awareness.

According to Dalal (2001) the social and the individual unconscious are distinct and separate. It is argued that the very term (social unconscious), “suggests the presence of an unconscious that is *not* social, or prior to the social, or outside the social in some way” (p. 542). To clarify, Dalal (2001) likens the levels of the unconscious to “the analogy of sculpting with clay. The clay stands for the raw material provided by nature (constitutional aspects that one is born with), which is the moulded into particular shapes by social forces” (p. 543).

In contrast Dalal (2001) also states that “the id itself is acculturated”, and that there is no distinction between the individual and social unconscious, since the individual unconscious is created and shaped by the social. Stated differently:

...the individual is permeated by the social to the extent that there is no separation: individual is social and social is individual. This means that...innate drives, instincts, the internal systems of the id, ego and super ego, [and by implication, therefore the unconscious] are all culturally [or socially] defined. This is particularly striking in relation to the id, the primitive pool of desires and impulses that is assumed to arise from the deepest unconscious of the individual: this too is a product of culture [or society] (Nitsun, 2006, p. 110).

Along a similar vein, Knaus (2006) states that “*each individual’s unconscious is groupal*” [emphasis not mine] (p. 163), which means that the individual unconscious is necessarily social by its very nature and is organised and defined and structured by the social. This means that on a very basic level, even individual unconscious is social in origin.

Here it becomes important to distinguish between the superego as a structural part of the individual unconscious and the concept of the social unconscious. Firstly, the superego “is the child’s internalization of parental culture” (Weinberg, 2007, p. 313), and it is individualistic, meaning that the internalisation of these parental and familial norms differ from one person to another. Also, “the interpretation of these social taboo’s change from one individual to another” (Weinberg, 2007, p. 313), and therefore the child would internalise an interpretation of social taboos as his/her superego, instead of the social taboo’s themselves. As will be expounded upon below, the social unconscious is a shared and common element to all individuals within the same society.

At this juncture it becomes important to note that even though different contemporary theorists have varying views on the levels of separation between the

individual and social unconscious, it does seem as if separating the terms is heuristically useful, but that they are indeed inextricably intertwined (Hopper, 2002). Therefore, we can assume that both the individual unconscious intertwined with the social unconscious, operates as part of the way in which I heuristically conceptualise identity, on both a personal and social level. In relation to the domestic worker and the child, it seems as if the distinction between, and intertwining of, an individual and social unconscious, leaves us with the room for exploring the fact that even though these relationships have unique aspects for individuals, perhaps there may also be a shared element (within our social unconscious) of this relationship.

The postmodern concept of social ghosts.

In an important sense, as social saturation proceeds we become pastiches, imitative assemblages of each other. In memory we carry others' patterns of being with us. If the conditions are favourable, we can place these patterns into action. Each of us becomes the other, a representative, or a replacement. To put it more broadly, as the century has progressed we have become increasingly more populated with the character of others (Gergen, 2000, p. 71).

Mary Gergen's work on social ghost as quoted in her husband's work *The Saturated Self* (2000), postulates that all of us have real or imagined internal voices where "each of the selves we acquire from the others can contribute to inner dialogue, private discussions we have with ourselves about all manner of persons, events and issues. These voices... [are] vestiges of relationships both real and imagined" (p. 71). The roles these social ghosts play in individuals' lives are generally as figures who are admired, who set behavioural standards, which are often strived to be emulated. Often these social ghosts also function purely as someone to converse with, to ponder upon.

When relating this concept to the present work, building on all stated above, it would seem as if the domestic worker, if conceptualised as becoming one of the selves participating in an internal dialogue, would be one of the selves populating the individual. It is possible that the domestic worker, therefore, may have become a consistent point of internal reference, a self within the individual who is admired, and conversed with.

It is also thought that with the expansion of the amount of social ghosts we carry with us, it increases the amount of social expectation upon us in terms of what is *good* and *proper* in terms of social expectation and social norms. What may also be interesting to consider is whether the charges of domestic workers internalised the (often) different social norms of their domestic worker who, although a member of the same society, is not a member of the same narrower cultural grouping as their charge.

Also, Mary Watkins (1986, 1999) and her concept of *invisible guests* adds to the idea of social ghosts and internal dialogues created by the population of the self by one's continual interaction with others. With regard to the notion of invisible guests, however, Watkins' focus is on the structure of thought, where thought is "a mosaic of voices in conversation" (1999, p. 1).

Pertaining to this, Watkins (1999) states the following:

Imaginal dialogues do not exist separately from the other domains of our lives...Here I am trying to underscore the interpenetration of dialogues with imaginal others, with dialogues with oneself, one's neighbours, within one's community, between communities, and with the earth and its creatures (1999, p. 15).

This means that she emphasises not only the internal dialogue between parts of the self or a person's intrapsychic reality, but also, the dialogue between the self and the other, and between the self and the broader community. This would mean that perhaps the dialogue

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here is not only internal with the domestic worker as a *self* but perhaps the dialogue, and perhaps this very dialogue here, may become a way in which a conversation is held between communities, between white children and the domestic worker.

Chapter Four – The Methodology

What has held psychology together and defined it as a distinct discipline is its *method*, the way it goes about knowing those it observes and regulates....In its method psychology has helped to make its objects of study into the kind of ‘subjects’ who can be known, so the stakes of control and resistance are much more than simple images of what people are. This means that *radical research in qualitative psychology is the subversion and transformation of how we can come to know more about psychology*” [emphases not mine] (Parker, 2005, p. 1).

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research has to be read, not scanned; its meaning is in the reading. It seemed foolish at best, and narcissistic and wholly self-absorbed at worst, to spend months or years doing research that ended up not being read and not making a difference to anything but the author’s career (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 960).

It may be somewhat obvious by this stage that this study is qualitative, based on gaining descriptions of the relationship between the participants (the term is used here broadly to indicate all forms of data collected by all the means in which people shared their stories) and their domestic workers, by focusing on the participants’ perspective, within the participants’ context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The social context of the research (my personal involvement, as well as the historical and social context of domestic work in South Africa) as expanded upon in the preceding chapters function to note “what came before or what surrounds the focus of study” (Neuman, 1997, p. 331), as a feature of qualitative research.

Neuman (1997) also mentions the following as characteristics of qualitative research:

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1. Capture and discover meaning once the researcher is immersed in the data.
2. Concepts are in the form of themes, motifs, generalisations and taxonomies.
3. Measures are created in an ad hoc manner are often specific to the individual setting or researcher.
4. Data are in the form of words from documents, observations, transcripts.
5. Theory can be causal or noncausal and is often inductive.
6. Research procedures are particular and replication is very rare.
7. Analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalisations from evidence and organising data to present a coherent, consistent picture (p. 329).

I feel as if I embarked on this research already immersed in the data, since it is birthed from such a personal place. However, immersion into the data has been a priority with regard to data gathering and analysis. Also, the analysis of the data centred mainly on the gleaning of themes, using transcripts primarily. It may already be evident, too, that this study is particularly specific, where most aspects of this research (like the construction of my epistemology) are specific to this research. Data analysis in this case is both deductive (where themes from psychoanalytic, attachment and postmodern theories will be used to extract themes relating to identity and selfhood from the data) and inductive (where the data will be allowed to ‘speak’ – primarily in a narrative sense – for itself).

It will also serve to emphasise here, again, the importance that qualitative research places on being non-positivistic. In addition to qualitative research’s non-positivistic nature, the actual research process has been nonlinear and cyclical. This means, on a theoretical level, “a *cyclical research path* makes successive passes through steps, sometimes moving backward and sideways before moving on. It is more of a spiral, moving slowly upward but not directly” (Neuman, 1997, p. 331). To allow for a moment of reflexivity, it seems as if I have moved through the broad outlines and planning of each chapter first, whereafter I have written chapters in more detail, always doubling back, adding and subtracting words and comments from relevant or irrelevant sections,

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while constantly reading and gathering data. The project has expanded and shrunk throughout the last year and a half of working, and has remained a dynamic interplay of absorbing and creating.

In summation, the primary thrust of this research, and of qualitative research in general, is in “describing the actions of the research participants in great detail, and then...attempting to understand these actions in terms of the actors’ own beliefs, history and context” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 271).

Research Design

Autoethnography blurs distinctions between social science and literature, the personal and the social, the individual and culture, self and other, and researcher and subject (Ellis, 1998, p. 49).

To pin down this study in terms of a one singular research design was particularly arduous. Initially, I considered that I was dealing with a case study, where each relationship between domestic worker and charge would be one of the cases in question. But, the study evolved in such a way that my personal voice and story became prominent, more so than expected, and far too prominent to remain unaddressed. Also, no in-depth work, besides that on my own life was conducted with the other participants from the radio shows.

This led me to consider autoethnography as the research design which best suited what this study has become. I found the works of Ellis (1998, 2000), Bochner (1997), Muncey (2005), and Holman Jones (2005), particularly helpful in organising my thoughts regarding to the design.

Firstly, having an autoethnographic research design allows me to link the personal and the cultural. I have hoped to depict an alternating emphasis on “*the research process (graphy), on culture (ethnos)...[and] on self (auto)*” [emphasis not mine] (Ellis, 2000, p. 12). This means that by “describing concrete and intimate details of a particular life lived, autoethnographies also show social processes, conceptualisations, and ways of life experienced more generally by groups of people living in similar circumstances” (Ellis, 1998, p. 49). Primarily, I have reflected on the research process in chapter ten, myself in chapter six, and society and culture in chapters seven and eight. While these chapters are each more focussed on one aspect of autoethnography (i.e. the research process, culture and the self) than others, there are aspects of all three facets of autoethnography throughout the text.

Also from Ellis (2000), I came upon a confirmation of the writing style (as representative of the research design chosen) I had been using where *I* write in the first person, directly to *you*, reader, about the world *we* live in (us and we). This work also hopes to create a co-constructer of the research out of the reader, who is invited to participate in the research by evaluating the life they have lived, in terms of the lives and experiences depicted here.

Furthermore, autoethnographic research mostly centres on narratives of loss, which is, ostensibly, where this work finds its inception and impetus (Ellis, 1998). It appears that the “experience of loss shatters the meaningful world people have assembled for themselves. Often we have a strong desire to understand, manage, and recover by creating an account that makes sense of loss and puts the pieces together again” (Ellis, 1998, pp. 49-50). There remains no doubt in my mind that much of this work was

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embarked upon, to put back together the pieces of my life, to readjust it in order to create a sense of personal harmony.

Holman Jones (2005) gives some really compelling definitions of the autoethnographic design, quoted in full here:

Autoethnography is...

Setting a scene, telling a story, weaving intricate connections among life and art, experience and theory, evocation and explanation...and then letting go, hoping for readers who will bring the same careful attention to your words in the context of their own lives.

Making a text present. Demanding attention and participation. Implicating all involved. Refusing closure or categorisation.

Witnessing experience and testifying about power without foreclosure – of pleasure, of difference, of efficacy.

Believing that words matter and writing toward the moment. The moment when the point of creating autoethnographic texts *is* to change the world...[a] performance text...turning inward waiting to be staged (p. 765).

To add to the above definitions Holman Jones (2005) states that, autoethnographic texts are emotional, in order to highlight what can be known. The primary way in which life can be known autoethnographically is through narratives which link and perform the personal and the cultural. She also mentions the term *ekphrasis* which “describes our attempts to translate and transmute an experience to text and text to experience” (p. 769). There also seems to be a blurring of art and life, where the aesthetic and evocative are merged with truth, fiction and theory.

What autoethnography as research design does, too, is collapse the divide between the academic and the personal (Bochner, 1997). I came to realise that it would be impossible for me to research this phenomenon without allowing myself to speak,

without interweaving my heart and voice within these words. My voice is no longer veiled – it feels free and apparent.

Gathering the Data: Data Gathering Strategies and Participant Selection

Data for this research took primarily two forms: (a) two talk radio shows including three hours of talk time (analysed in chapter seven and eight), and (b) my own story including written and visual narratives as data (analysed in chapter six). All of the data collection strategies have focused on my own and other peoples' experiences related in the form of a story or narrative, the narrative being used as the primary data source.

The radio talk shows. I became particularly intrigued with the idea of using talk radio as a medium for collecting a poly-vocal set of data so that many participants' voices could be heard within a relatively short period of time (1 hour). This idea was birthed by listening to the radio (primarily talk radio) during my 3 hour daily commute from the city I live in (Johannesburg) to the city I work in (Pretoria).

I emailed various presenters of a local regional talk radio station (Talk Radio 702, hereafter simply referred to as 702) and a national radio station (SAfm, hereafter simply referred to as SAfm) attaching a letter stating the purpose of my request. This request was to use radio as a tool to gather data on the topic of people's experiences or stories of being (partly) raised by a domestic worker (the letter as seen in Appendix A). This letter was supplemented by a copy of my previous research in an article format, as well as the completed and approved research proposal.

A presenter from both radio stations and their respective teams agreed to host the show in a 1 hour format, where my research would be discussed. I would be a guest in studio and listeners were invited to call in to both programmes to talk about their experiences and to tell their stories, which I or the presenter commented upon in real time. Both shows were recorded and I was given a copy of both shows afterwards.

The participants who called in to share their stories were made aware of the fact that the show was conducted as part of my research and therefore they chose to participate out of their own free will. Ethically speaking participants were “able to invite themselves into the discussion” (Weller, 2006, p.309). The talk shows functioned to broaden the scope of this research, placing it, firmly, within the social and cultural domain. Also, it made topical a relationship which may have been ignored or denied.

Lastly, recorded shows were transcribed verbatim, using transcribers initially, whereafter I rechecked and edited the various transcripts, a method indicated as acceptable in Parker (2005).

The autobiographical story.

Writing the self produces transformation of the self, and potentially, of the world in local and particular contexts (Gannon, 2006, p. 479).

A[n]...autoethnography might embrace multidimensionality, might aim to construct texts that are not easily ingested, that turn around and around so that we are encouraged (or forced or led) to a place of thinking differently and with more complexity about the world and our places within it (Gannon, 2006, p. 488).

My own story, written from my personal memories of my interactions with our family’s domestic worker, Sophie, can be found in its entirety in chapter six. The content of this

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narrative was gathered through my memories (Boufoy-Bastick, 2004), jotted down into my research journal as they were remembered, whereafter I joined them into a coherent story. In this way “the authority for the story begins with the body and memories of the autoethnographic writer at the scene of lived experience” (Gannon, 2006, p. 475). This story formed a basis to which further memories were added, as well as self-reflexive commentary (through the writing and rewriting of the chapter). These memories were built upon moments of my life that served as “snapshots” (Wall, 2006, p. 5). The result is a “patchwork of feelings, experiences, emotions and behaviours that portrays a more complete view of [my relationship with Sophie]” (Muncey quoted in Wall, 2006, p. 5). I took the following quote from Ellis (1998) as the basis of the methodological procedures for writing this part of the text:

The first version of the text poured out of me uncensored. It seemed important to me to get it “all” down and contextualized, so that it might have some sense of “what had been”. I wrote with the confidence that I could delete anything at anytime....Over time I allowed myself more dramatic license to tell an evocative story, since it was clearly not so much the “fact” that I wanted to redeem, but rather an articulation of the significance and meaning of my experiences. I became less concerned with “historical truth” and more involved with “narrative truth”....Narrative truth seeks to keep the past alive in the present. Through narrative we learn to understand the meanings and significance of the past as incomplete, tentative, and revisable according to the contingencies of present life circumstances and our projection of our lives into the future (p. 53).

Admittedly, though I consider myself to be creative, creating a narrative truth out of my memories was the most difficult part of constructing this text. Creating a moving, aesthetic piece of work is an art, not a skill. I seem to believe that writing a good academic text is a skill that can be learnt, while trying to produce an evocative narrative is an artistic talent that needs to be cultivated. I also had trouble being critical of the work, in changing and adding to it. Having never produced such a piece of writing I was

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unsure of where to go and how. I can only hope that the final product produces a feeling of riding beside me, on my emotional journey. I hope I have painted the pictures and evoked the emotions necessary to allow participation, on your part, reader, to happen.

I also used emotional recall as I wrote, a concept expanded upon in Ellis (1998, 2000), and one which I frequently used while acting. Emotional recall is a process of recollection; recollecting the emotional experience by imagining oneself back into a memory. By doing this I found that I remembered and felt things I had not expected or recalled on a cognitive level. I also found this experience (the emotional reliving of events) therapeutic, as it helped me work through them, seeing these events from different perspectives.

Also, autoethnographic writing “is ir/rational, embodied, it proceeds elliptically and tentatively, in a fractured style, with the voices of others wound about the author and with the greatest respect, with love as its imperative” (Gannon, 2006, p. 491). This means that often, especially during my reflections on the story, the voices of other characters like my father, my mother, my sister (unknown to you, reader) can be found resonating within my writing, as my voice is only my own because it is made up of other voices.

The primary rationale for the inclusion of this type of data gathering was to collapse the distinction between the subject and object of social research, where data is then found in “the body/thoughts/feelings of the (auto)ethnographer located in his or her particular space and time” (Gannon, 2006, p. 475). There also seems to be the inversion of binary opposites, like for example, between the “individual/social, body/mind, emotion/reason, and lived experience/theory in academic work” (Gannon, 2006, p. 476).

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Lastly, my story was included as a way in which I could possibly heal myself, by examining the relationship I had with Sophie, through expression and reflection (Gannon, 2006).

The letter. Also included in chapter six is a letter, written in Afrikaans (one of my mother tongues) and then translated into English. This letter, considered to be a “sentimental letter” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 289), is seen as a tool which can be used to revive the feelings I felt for Sophie in a more visceral way. It must be kept in mind that this letter is artificially produced since it was written for the purpose of this project. Therefore, the letter will “have a dual audience – the writer and the recipient” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 302), where I become both researcher and researched, writer and recipient. Also, the use of a letter will demonstrate a different tone – a personal conversational address (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The images.

Interpreting images [and textual narratives] is just that, interpretation, not the discovery of their ‘truth’....Multiple readings are always possible; there is not a single ‘correct’ reading of an image, or of a spoken or written text. Although visual materials make a compelling appeal to realism, they, like oral and written narratives, are produced by particular people living in particular times and places. Images may be composed to accomplish specific aims, but audiences can read images differently than an artist intended – an entry point for narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008, p. 179).

At some stage, quite early on, perhaps during the writing of my literature review, I began considering archetypes (in line with the concept of the social unconscious) and what, if

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anything, could be a visual depiction of this relationship in an archetypal way. I began thinking about the mother and child, the Madonna, where in my Western mind, the mother and child were always lily-white. I also came across various photos of me, naked and joyous being held by Sophie, pitch-black. I was suddenly struck by the idea that archetypally, the image of a black woman and white child may be imbedded somewhere within our social unconscious, both as individuals raised by domestic workers, and as a collective.

On a more theoretical level, Riessman (2008), Pink (2007), Clandenin and Connelly (2000), Chalfen (1998) and Collier (1986) influenced the use and analysis of photographs in this work. While only some of the previously listed authors are quoted here directly, all influenced my use and analysis of this type of data.

Riessman (2008) states (resonating my own feelings) that “visual representations of experience – in photographs...can enable others to see as the participant sees, and to feel” (p. 142). The use of visual data was therefore included since it precedes words and communicates feeling, in some instances, far more accurately and instantly than words, which is primarily what this text is about. Also, the inclusion of photographs serves to stabilise “a moment in time, preserving a fragment of narrative experience that otherwise would be lost” (p. 179). This means that we would actually see a snippet of the stories narrated in my story.

Chalfen (1998) calls the kind of photographs included here *home mode photographs* which are central to communicating family stories. These home mode photographs also function as memorabilia, as a way in which memories are triggered – snapshots of experiences worth remembering.

I delved into my photographic archives and chose pictures depicting what I believed were quintessential scenes of Sophie and me together.

The Data Analysis of Multiple Narratives: Variations in the Analysis of Narrative

The question is not whether a particular argument is correct or incorrect, but whether it is a plausible argument that makes sense in relation to the material and the chosen theoretical framework (Parker, 2005, p. 10).

The analysis of the various narratives was conducted under the broad category of narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993, 2008). Firstly, the narratives (comments on the show, and the autobiographical narrative including the letter and images) were used “as data through which it is possible to access the world of the storyteller” (Etherington, 2006, p. 80). The analysis of these stories was based on both the “concepts derived from previously known theories” and “concepts derived from the data” (Etherington, 2006, p. 80). Attachment theory, psychoanalysis, the social unconscious and the postmodern notion of social ghosts, in this case, were used to derive deductive themes in terms of how the relationship between the domestic worker and child, becomes part of the child’s self. The data was also allowed to ‘speak for itself’, where themes emerged inductively, without the pre-imposition of a known theory.

Thematic narrative analysis. To expand a little further on the various types of narrative analysis employed during this research, thematic narrative analysis, as seen in Riessman’s (2008) hugely informative and inspiring work, was used to analyse the narratives present in the radio talk shows. When following the principles of thematic

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narrative analysis, the content of the narratives “is the exclusive focus” (p. 53). Also, I have endeavoured to keep each story as whole as possible “by theorizing from... [each] case rather than from component themes (categories) across cases” (p. 53). This implies that thematic narrative analysis is case-centred. Each narrative (meaning each caller on the radio show) will be discussed and analysed separately, with one show per chapter. Not all stories or comments made on either show were used for analysis.

My rationale for using this type of analysis is because “thematic analysis can be applied to a wide range of narrative texts; thematic analysis can be applied to stories that develop in interview conversations and group meetings, and those found in written documents” (Riessman, 2008, p. 54). Furthermore, this thematic narrative analysis allows for theory to inform analysis and for more inductive themes to emerge from the data itself.

I have historicised the stories, meaning that I have embarked on the analysis of each group of stories by providing a description of the historical and temporal context for the generation of the story.

I find the experience, in terms of the actual methodological steps I took to analyse the stories, worth mentioning here. Once the transcriptions were finalised, through a re-listening and a rewriting, I began to compartmentalise each story as a story, narrated by the storyteller (except where I wanted to show how the narratives were co-produced). Thereafter, I read and reread all the stories, finding similarities in some cases, and differences in others. I tried to make sense of how I could put the stories together in a way that would somehow make sense to the reader. I then examined each story in turn, allowing the voices within the story to be heard inductively. I wrote my initial draft, once

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again, as a process of getting my ideas onto the page. A while later, after giving myself some distance from the stories, and after having intense and illuminating conversations with my supervisors, I revisited the stories, having just refreshed my mind as to the possible deductive themes available in the literature review. This second round of reading and writing was a process of trying to see whether the theories explicated were applicable to all the various sides of the relationship between domestic workers and the children they help to raise, as illuminated by the shows. After this, the writings were refined and edited.

Autobiographical narrative as knowledge in itself. Lastly, my own story will be represented as autoethnographical knowledge, where I have re-constructed “a coherent and resonant story” (Etherington, 2006, p. 81), based on my own memories, experiences and reflections. No ‘interpretation’, as such, of my own story and reflections on my story will be made as the knowledge from the story will be found in its mere production, and the interaction the reader has with it.

Visual narrative analysis. Riessman (2008) also provides the details pertaining to conducting visual narrative analysis. Firstly, I expect the visuals included here, to speak for themselves, to resonate with each ‘reader’ (as these visuals become narratives to be interpreted), as they are experienced on a feeling and intuitive level.

Along with the images ‘speaking for themselves’, I have endeavoured to provide a context and interpretation of these images. The images selected are archival, meaning that they existed previous to and were not produced for the sake of this text.

The basic visual narrative analytic process followed here is summarised below:

[There are] three sites for visual analysis...: the story of the production of an image, the image itself, and how it is read by different audiences. The first interrogates how and when the image was made, social identities of the image-maker and recipient and other relevant aspects of the image-making process. The second interrogates the image, asking about the story it may suggest, what it includes, how component parts are arranged, and use of color and technologies relevant to the genre (e.g. a photograph [or a] painting). The third focus is the “audiencing” process – responses of the initial viewers, subsequent responses, stories viewers may bring to an image, written text that may guide viewing (e.g. Captions), where the spectator is positioned and other issues related to reception (p. 144).

I investigated the details and story of the production, as best I could, by speaking to family members and wracking my memory. I also tried to identify the social identity of the person who took the photograph (in all cases that person was my father). I also analysed each image in terms of its own very specific details; details of colour, composition and positioning. I have responded reflexively to each photograph.

Strategies to Ensure Quality Research

Truths are always partial – committed and incomplete. Nevertheless, students in the social sciences have to make arguments to persuade audiences about the trustworthiness of their data and interpretations – they didn’t simply make up the stories they claim to have collected, and they followed a methodological path, guided by ethical considerations and theory, to story their findings (Riessman, 2008, p. 186)

Various strategies suggested by Babbie and Mouton (2001) have been used to ensure quality research. Credibility has been attempted by: (a) *prolonged engagement* (remaining “in the field until data saturation occurs [although data saturation is questionable]” (p. 277)), (b) *persistent observation* (“consistently [pursuing]

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interpretations in different ways....Look[ing] for multiple influences” (p. 277)), (c) *triangulation* (the use of multiple methods or perspectives), and (d) *referential adequacy* (recording radio shows).

With regard to prolonged engagement, I stopped gathering the data when I felt personally saturated with the amount of information I was able to sift through. This occurred earlier than I had expected. I do not however feel that the topic has been saturated, but has certainly opened up for further, more detailed questions to be asked.

During the process I was consistently challenged by my supervisors and my own critical eye, to examine the data collected from multiple points of view, to highlight the contradictions and tensions, similarities and differences within the data collected. This is how I practiced persistently observing, not only the data gathered, but also the research and meaning making process.

Triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple theories as presented in my literature review and multiple methods of data gathering. I feel as if I have made a collage of my theoretical bases, and this collage informed the choices I made in terms of data collection, leading me to choose very public (radio shows) and very private (my own stories, photographs and the letter) forms.

It is left open to the reader/listener to decide upon my referential adequacy, with the inclusion of both radio shows in disc format (CD 1, 2 and 3). I have tried, as much as possible, to retain and preserve the spirit of the interactions in my private life and on the shows.

The category of referential adequacy relates somewhat to Barker, Pistrang and Elliott’s (1996) category of openness. In this regard, researchers are expected to “clearly

describe their theoretical orientation or biases” (p. 80). The criteria of openness lead me to position the chapter discussing my epistemology (i.e. where I come from in terms of my primary theoretical orientation) as second only to discussing my research problem. I have also endeavoured to be open about the means in which the data was gathered and analysed, in being explicit about the processes.

This openness also links with the criteria of grounding (Barker, Pistrang & Elliott, 1996), I hope to have provided “enough examples of...[my] raw data to illustrate the themes or categories obtained and to allow the reader to evaluate the...findings....[This would mean that I have stayed] close to the data” (p. 81). In fact, readers are invited to listen to both shows, as they unfolded, on CDs 1 (*Safm* with Sydney Baloyi), 2 and 3 (702 with Kieno Kammies).

Neuman (1997) mentions, in addition, the question of the integrity of the qualitative researcher and various checks to keep this integrity intact. One of the checks valid in terms of this research is the fact that written notes in the form of a research diary have been kept and referred to throughout the research process. These notes include “detailed verbatim description[s]..., notes including references to the sources, commentaries by the researcher, and key terms to help organise the notes” (p. 333).

A further check I hope to have accomplished within this work is the way in which I present the data I have gathered. I hope to have spun “a web of interlocking details, providing sufficient texture and detail so that the readers feel that they are there.... [It] provides a sense of immediacy, direct contact, and immediate knowledge” (Neuman, 1997, p. 333). Also, as I have been rather explicit about my own personal involvement in

this research process, I have attempted to make known all my personal values, by emphasising researcher subjectivity.

The criterion of replicability (Barker, Pistrang & Elliott, 1996) entails describing methods in detail to allow for replication. While this work has been described in as much detail as possible, it is unlikely, however, that it will ever be replicated, since the nature of this study is so personal and so infused with my own subjectivity, it becomes unlikely that others will be able to reproduce that element of this research.

Parker (2005) mentions three “watchwords” (p. 144) which lead to research being considered to be good research. I particularly resonated with these three ‘criteria’ (inverted commas were used here as Parker indicates these watchwords are “beyond criteria” (p. 144)) and specifically endeavoured to strive towards their attainment and fulfilment. The three watchwords which open the way to good research will be quoted extensively below:

1. *Apprenticeship* – the ability to use existing resources and position oneself within or in relation to a certain tradition of work...
2. *Scholarship* – showing that some underlying premises and assumptions in existing relevant studies have been grasped. A very good research report...is one that brings that understanding to bear in order to construct an argument, perhaps polemical, against the limits of methodological procedures that may inhibit new ways of doing research.
3. *Innovation* – producing work that may transform the coordinates by which a problem is usually understood. An excellent research report...is one that ‘discovers’ or ‘produces’ something new and which is able to reflexively embed its account of what has happened within and against the usual taken-for-granted practices in research (pp. 144-145).

Effecting apprenticeship, I feel as if all the resources I have used were weighed and included for very specific purposes, the use of which (and I suppose I am specifically and particularly referring to my use of psychoanalytic literature) was considered in terms of the power imbedded within the use of the theory. I have also strived to become fluent in

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the language of my chosen primary discipline (i.e. psychology), and within that discipline of psychology I have tried to adhere to and position myself against various taken for granted forms of knowledge. I have, thus, aimed to position myself clearly within, for and against the discipline as a whole throughout this research process.

When considering scholarship, I have endeavoured, especially with regards to the premises of postmodernism and qualitative research in general, to construct a good reasonable argument which would serve to persuade and inform you of what I have done and why.

Most importantly, innovation was probably the watchword that most specifically resonated with me. I have wanted, first of all, for the relationship between domestic workers and their charges to be seen as a significant relationship. Secondly, that relationship can be viewed as meaningful and important in the sense that the relationship, along with other relationships, has assisted in creating who we are as children (partly) raised by domestic workers. In this way, I believe the research topic to be innovative, and unique, but I also hope that my construction of the problem, the methods of data collection, my epistemological standpoint and the methods of analysis and recording have been first and foremost reflexive and creative, through which something new (though still very humble) has been created.

When considering the value and quality of the autobiographical information provided in chapter six in particular, Holt (2003) was particularly helpful. The following criteria were aimed for:

- (a) Substantive contribution. Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social life?
- (b) Aesthetic merit. Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfyingly complex and not boring?
- (c) Reflexivity. How did the author come to write this text? How has the author's subjectivity been both a

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producer and a product of this text? (d) Impactfulness. Does this effect me emotionally and/or intellectually? Does it generate new questions or move me into action? (e) Express reality. Does this text embody a fleshed out sense of lived experience? (p. 12).

In reading the above, I hope that you would try to answer these questions for yourself, reader, and thereby judge this work. In my opinion, I have made a contribution to the expansion of knowledge regarding the relationships involved when considering domestic workers and the children they help to raise. I have tried to write evocatively, and creatively, which add to the aesthetic merits of this work, consistently reflecting both on my own experience, the research process and the effects thereof. I hope this work will impact you on an emotional and intellectual level, allowing for new patterns of thought and feeling to emerge.

Lastly, when considering criteria for autoethnographic works as performances, Holman Jones (2005) delineates some very helpful guidelines and criteria. Some overlap with those mentioned above, others are fresher in origin. These criteria listed below also place some responsibility on the reader for interaction with the material as it is performed in this text.

Firstly, participation in the research text needs to be reciprocal. Is there the sense that reader, writer and participant have taken some responsibility for the work by engaging with it? I have taken full responsibility for this work. Also, by including the stories of the participants (in the most complete form as is aesthetically pleasing) I hope that the participants' responsible voices and contributions will continue in written and aural form.

Also, Holman Jones (2005) considers "*partiality, reflexivity and citationality as strategies for dialogue*" [emphasis not mine] (p. 773). In other words, do the stories in

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the self-referential work connect and interact in a dialogical manner? I have tried to interlink the stories presented here with my own and with each other, and I believe that using radio as my primary data gathering method allowed for participants to respond dialogically to one another within the data gathering process, further enhancing this interactional criterion.

Lastly, the work should create a space for debate and negotiation, to enable participants and readers to engage on all levels with the work. I know that I have been wholly involved in the production of this work on all levels, and I believe that participants have also been involved on a personal, political, emotional and intellectual level. I have endeavoured that this text in its emotionally evocative nature will bring those in participation, both producers and receivers of this work, to action and political change.

Chapter Five – The Ethical Considerations

Ethics is now seen as a *practice* which bridges the gap between anticipation and reflection (and between means and ends) [emphasis not mine] (Parker, 2005, p. 19).

Much of this short chapter (short not because it is unimportant but much of my ethical stance has hopefully been communicated implicitly thus far) has been informed by Parker (2005), in terms of his position on assuming a responsible ethical stance when conducting research. Firstly, I assume full responsibility for this research and I do this primarily through my writing in the first person (i.e. using the personal pronoun ‘I’) on a consistent basis.

In conjunction with my stance on responsibility, I have hoped to make clear my own part in the construction of this research “so that the reader is in a better position to assess how and why they should take it seriously and even take it further” (p. 17). Therefore I have been careful to position myself, make clear my own thoughts (especially evident in the chapter which discusses my epistemology and my autobiographical narrative), clarify my use of theory (particularly with regard to my use of so-called positivistic theories), and finally to clarify power differentials between myself, participants and theories used.

As to the ownership of the stories presented in this text, I believe that all have been co-constructed, even my own. My own story has been constructed by the interaction with others, who have allowed me to become aware of various factors in my history, which I may not have storied if various interactions not occurred. On the other hand, each story from the radio shows, were constructed through the interactions of all

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who participated, and therefore are jointly owned by us all. Although, finally, my name will appear as the author of this text, I would like to make it clear that it has been constructed, by me, my family, my friends, my supervisors, the participants (both those involved in the shows' production and the listeners), other authors, texts and images.

Initially I had ethical concerns about gathering data through the means of talk radio shows. I was worried about issues of participation (i.e. who is the participant? The talk show or the listeners who call in?) and issues of confidentiality (regarding the listeners who call in). The radio shows (both *SAfm* and *702*) were asked to participate in the research by using radio as a research tool by giving them a delineation of the topic in the form of an email with a letter attached (see letter in Appendix). Using Weller (2006) as the basis of my argument, listeners invited themselves to participate in the research, which ensures that their participation is voluntary. Only the participants' first names given on the shows were used in the transcripts and in this report, since their stories, having been broadcasted, have already become public property.

But, the participants' real names were also used to give them ownership of their own voices and stories. After all, who am I as researcher, to remove their stories from them, which they shared as part of who they are and as a part of what they have experienced (Parker, 2005). I believe that the participants, since they volunteered to contribute to the conversations on air, wanted "to be recognised for the work they see themselves coauthoring" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 175).

When looking at the ethical issues pertaining to the use of my own story, Ellis (1998) made me aware of the fact that in some cases, I needed to change the identity of the people I mention in my story to protect them or the reader. On the other hand, many

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of the names used in the paper are real. There is a muddled blurring of fact and fiction. Perhaps, it is all fiction because there is no claim to an objective truth being represented by my story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). What is important to note, too, is that this work and my story have become true for me, through their construction and penning.

Finally, in the use of photographs, I found myself in somewhat of an ethical quandary. While I have no problem with my own pictures being made public in this paper, I was making known faces of people who were no longer alive or in contact with me and could not give their consent. Since this work is in honour of Sophie, and her face and body are included in this work, it is done in reverence and with gratitude. Also, the photos used are owned by me in a physical sense. They physically belong to me. They are also my history, a history which I am, by making them known, trying to come to terms with and explore.

Chapter Six – My Autobiographical Narrative

I have postponed the writing and rewriting of this chapter through severe procrastination, not because I don't want to write it, but because I'm scared to write badly, without the reader getting the point. And so I decided to tell you, reader, what the point of this chapter is, and what I have intended to convey. I'm trying to convey that Sophie was and remains a constant personal point of reference to me. Also, I would like to create a rich description of the way in which I view(ed) our relationship – as ambiguous, filled with tensions, both the good and the bad.

I'm also terrified, in a very existential sense, of once again letting down the woman this work is for because of things I have left (un)said and misunderstood. While I admit that this work is very much for me, to enable me to make something of her loss, I am also doing it in honour of her memory. Most of all I want to thank her, through the remembering and storying of this narrative, for raising me and for loving me.

As the story goes, Sophie was employed by my parents three weeks after I was born. We lived in a small two-bedroom two-bathroom flat in Windsor East, now run down, dilapidated, slum-like. My parents constantly revisit their lowly beginnings in conversations; return to where they came from and where they have ended up. Back then, however, or so I'm told, it was 'perfectly respectable' for a young family starting out to live there, and this, of course, implies that now it is no longer respectable. This being said it is clear that even young families, with no real cash to spare, could afford and used domestic help, not as a luxury but as a given.

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My mother often tells of how Sophie used to walk through a *spruit* (a relatively small body of water), which has through telling and re-telling become *rivers* (which have come to connote almost gauntlet-like water bodies), in order to get to and from work, in the bitterly-cold Johannesburg winters. She used to arrive at work, feet red and blistered, heels cracked, shoes in hand (ready to slip them on just before she reached our front door), prepared to wash my little privileged white body in the washbasin. Sophie did this (not wear her shoes to walk long distances) in order to save her shoes for wearing on special occasions, arrival at our house being one of those occasions. I still cannot seem to fathom how my parents allowed this to continue. Surely, she could be given one pair of shoes for walking and another for wearing?

She used to call me *intombazana ndala* (the big one) and my sister was called *intombazana ncini* (the little one). Apparently the first words I learnt to speak were Xhosa words – Xhosa words with big clicks. This soon stopped. Sophie was told to speak to me in Afrikaans for fear of me not learning the language. I really do miss the clicking of my tongue. I feel like, especially considering that Xhosa is now one of our official languages, it would have been beneficial for me to have been able and allowed to learn the language. But on a less practical level, I imagine would have enjoyed bonding with her in a language of our own, one that I could have shared with others like her. I still consider Xhosa to be (one of) my mother tongue(s).

I think this scene is one of the reasons why I seem to hate linguistic supremacy, and the control which language imposes when used politically. Afrikaans was imposed on all South Africans during the apartheid era, to the exclusion of all other native South African languages. Afrikaans was imposed on me, by the power it carried in a social and

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legal sense. It was so powerful that the richness of the inclusion of the other, less powerful languages was ignored. I feel desperately short-changed by this, and imagine that somehow, it has partly inspired my childish rebellion of all things Afrikaans, which started by me going to an English school during the second half of my primary school years. I chose this defiantly, against my parents, against Afrikaans, against everything that was against my love for that which I was not 'allowed' to love. In moving schools, I began to speak English at home, to my whole family, to the point that I was unable to construct a coherent sentence in my 'mother tongue' Afrikaans. I see all this now, as a small protest against the injustice of being forced to speak and describe a world in one way only.

We moved, when I was six months old, from the small flat in Windsor to a big face brick house in Jukskei Park, where we lived right opposite the Jukskei River, which still, more than twenty years later bursts its banks every summer after the rains. One summer, the Jukskei flooded our garden, breaking our wall, leaving our lawn littered with fish, gasping for breath. Sophie collected them, froze some, and prepared others. I remember we ate one of them. She was always so good at making use of everything; nothing was rubbish; nothing was useless. She made use of the items and foodstuffs we would discard. Everything was worth keeping and remaking into something useful. Perhaps this usefulness was born from the lack that poverty inspires in those living in it. I did not inherit this trait, probably because it's easier to discard the seemingly useless elements of life, when you were raised in affluence.

The following image is quintessential of Sophie and me, informally in our home along the river:



Figure 6. Sophie and Jana together in 1983.

I would like you to consider here, whether this image is one with which you resonate; an image which you understand – not because you were once like me (balanced lovingly on the knees of a black woman in an overall) or because you were the black woman (holding a child, not your own, a child of the oppressor, against your heart) – but an image which you understand because you have seen it before, one you have become so used to it that it has become part of that which you expect, here, in South Africa, past and present.

Consider whether this image is part of what I refer to as the archetypal images present in our social unconscious, that unspeakable, unknowable collective. What do you feel or

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sense when you see me there? What do you intuit when you glance at Sophie's face? Where are you left in the light of the late afternoon, streaming down on us who loved each other?

After letting your mind wonder, I'd like to inform you somewhat of the image-making process. I consulted my parents with regard to this shot and they have no specific recollections of the shot (i.e. why it was taken or certainty about who took the snapshot). What they discovered, though, was the likelihood that my father took the photograph as my mother is still unable or unwilling to take photographs and she has never really been interested in photography (though, as will be seen, she is always the one who organised the images). The time must have been the spring of 1983, as this correlates with us moving into our house by the river. We are situated in the dining room I was told, but this is also confirmed by Sophie being seated on a dining chair around the table in my parents' home.

To speak more specifically of the time in which the photograph was taken, broadly speaking, the following was the historical context of 1983, encapsulated in these primary events courtesy of Wikipedia (a free online encyclopaedia and particularly postmodern source):

January

- 26 January – One person is killed and five injured by a bomb that explodes at the New Brighton Community Council offices
- 30 January – A bomb explodes at the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court explosion

February

- 7 February – Cedric Mayson, a former Methodist minister is charged with treason and being a member or an active supporter of the African National

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Congress. The case was to resume on the 18 April but he fled to Britain while on bail.

- 10 February – Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres burn 5 square kilometres [sic] of land in the Richards Bay area in an arson attack
- 11 February – The Drakensberg Administration Board offices are damaged by a bomb
- 12 February – A bomb injures 76 people at the Free State Administration Board offices
- 20 February – Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres try to set the Pelindaba Nuclear Research Station on fire in an arson attack

March

- 12 March – A bomb on [a] railway coach on [a] Johannesburg bound passenger train explodes
- 21 March – [A] second bomb explodes at the Supreme Court in Pietermaritzburg

April

- 21 April – [A] third bomb explodes at the Supreme Court in Pietermaritzburg

May

- Two explosions cause R250 000 worth of damage to the Offices of the Department of Internal Affairs in Roodepoort
- A skirmish on the Botswana border leaves four terrorists or freedom fighters and a South African Army soldier dead
- 13 May – An explosive device (37 kg of explosives in a gas cylinder) is found and defused by police under a bridge on the Southern Freeway, Durban
- 20 May – A car bomb explodes during the afternoon rush hour period outside the South African Air Force Head Quarters, opposite a building housing military intelligence personnel in Pretoria. (19 killed and 217 injured)
- 23 May – The South African Air Force retaliates by attacking African National Congress facilities in the suburb of Matola in Maputo, Mozambique with 12 Impala MkIIs and 2 Mirage F1AZs (Operation SKERWE)

June

- 17 June – Police defuse a bomb found on a power pylon at New Canada railway station in Soweto
- 28 June – [A] bomb explodes at the Department of Internal Affairs in Roodepoort

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July

- 7 July – Two bombs are found and defused at the Durban Supreme Court while in Roodepoort two bombs detonate at 00:40 causing structural damage to the Department of Internal Affairs and the Police Station

August

- 6 August – A bomb explodes at Temple Israel in Hillbrow just before Marais Steyn is due to speak there; no injuries
- 20 August – A bomb causes R100,000 damage to a sub-station near Mamelodi
- 26 August – A Limpet mine explodes at 18:50 at the Ciskei (former Bantustan) consular generals offices in the Carlton Centre, Johannesburg; one injured

September

- 8 September – Two bombs damage sub-stations in the Johannesburg area (Randburg and Sandton)
- 11 September – More sub-stations are damaged by Limpet mines [i]n Johannesburg (Bryanston North and Fairland)
- 12 September – Ciskei offices in Pretoria are damaged by a Limpet mine
- 13 September – A bomb explodes at 19:45 in the Rowntree's factory in Umbilo, Durban
- 29 September – Police defuse...a bomb that was found on an electrical pylon in Vereeniging

October

- 11 October – Limpet mines explode at 02:20 and damage a large fuel storage tanks, three rail tankers and one road tanker at Bela Bela (previously Warmbaths). Two more devices set to explode 1 hour [sic] later were found on door of Civil Defence office. PW Botha was due to speak in Warmbaths
- 14 October – Two electricity pylons near Pietermaritzburg are destroyed by Limpet mines at 02:00 and 03:00

November

- 1 November – Buses at municipal bus depot in Durban are damaged by a bomb that explodes at midnight
 - The railway line at Germiston is damaged by a bomb
 - Police defuse a bomb on the railway line near Springs
 - The South African Defence Force launch Operation Askari
- 2 November – A bomb that explodes at 02:55 at the Police workshop in Wentworth, Durban damages vehicles and an adjacent student residence (Alan Taylor Residence)
- 3 November – The Bosmont railway station is damaged by a bomb

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- Bosmont/Newclare railway line damaged in explosion
- The railway line near Germiston damaged by explosion
- Police defuse [explosives on] the railway line near Springs...
- 22 November – Electrical pylons are damaged by two explosions near Durban

December

- 3...December – Bomb explodes at the office of Department of Community Development in Bree Street, Johannesburg
- 8 December – The railway line 1km from Bloemfontein is maliciously damaged and a locomotive and two trucks are derailed
- 12 December – Seven people are injured when a Limpet mine explodes at the offices of Department of Community Development and Commissioners Court in Johannesburg
- 15 December – Three bombs explode on the beach front outside the Natal Command H[ead] Q[uarters] in Durban
- 19 December – A bomb causes R60,000 worth of damage to the KwaMashu (Durban) township offices (Wikipedia, 2009)

I think, what becomes abundantly clear from the above list, description free, is the level of violence and antagonism present between the all-white, all-powerful National Party regime and the various constellations of opposition organisations. The word bomb occurs 23 times in the above extract (not counting those incidents indicated by the words ‘explosion’ or ‘limpet mine’). One can also roughly estimate three violent mass attacks per month. It becomes obvious to intimate the level of hatred between the opposing forces.

When considering the image in the light of the above description of the year in which it was taken, it becomes a paradox, so unlikely, and so bizarre that black and white, like a lion and a lamb, could be captured in such a carefree loving embrace. Taking the context into account, I find it difficult to insert that image into it. On which date would the image fit?

Contextualising my family at the time of the taking of the picture, my parents had started their own business that year, my mother was pregnant with her second child in

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roughly eighteen months, and they had just built and moved into a new home. On top of all this, they had to take care of a demanding infant, me, who suffered from chronic colic and thrush. I imagine that they must have been overwhelmed and exhausted by so much newness in such a short space of time. In the light of our immediate context however, the photograph emanates a sense of relief and contentment, with a graceful smiling helper, and a content, plump child.

Now the social positioning of my father as the creator of the photograph, as juxtaposed with those in the photo and the immediate and more removed social context, adds another dimension to the image. My dad – white patriarchal Afrikaner male – constructing an image combining the revered and the feared in a loving embrace, amidst all the violence and the chaos of the time, adds to the irony of the image. On the other hand, though, it does seem fitting and congruent that he would be the one to shape what is seen and not seen; that which is included and excluded from the frame, in line with the social control of the time.

When considering the recipient of the image, it was constructed as memorabilia, a moment worth remembering; a snapshot of our life and times; a snapshot of a relationship and people we deemed worthy of not forgetting. The fact that this picture has not been lost, shows its value to us as a family. Perhaps it also gives some indication of the value of Sophie for us, her value in trying to capture her personhood and presence for ourselves. It also shows that our relationship, Sophie and mine, was meaningful enough to be retained, captured, and preserved.

So what story does this image suggest? What strikes me is the informality of the photo on many levels. Firstly, the photo does not seem ‘posed’ in any way, it seems as if

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it was spontaneously taken, unedited, without forced smiles. There are no pretty outfits, I am barefooted and Sophie is wearing her daily overalls. The image seems to capture an ease in our relationship, where holding me does not include squirming or fear, but a quiet contentment. Her grip on me, where I sit on her knee, is firm and loving, almost all-encompassing, holding me with both hands clasped around me. I seem distracted by the process of taking the photograph or the person behind the camera. There is a slight sense of fascination, of newness in the experience. Sophie looks comfortable, yet the slight downward tilt in her head seems to suggest a shyness, a shying away from the process. Her gaze is penetrating as she looks right into the lens, her smile half formed; where a moment later it would have been beaming.

The informality is also suggested by the lining up of the image. Part of us is cut off from view, and the paint contrast in the background indicates that the photograph is slightly skewed, and imperfect.

It is also likely that no flash was used, as the natural light, coming from the right of the image is so prominent. I love the way that both Sophie and I are in different degrees of shadow, which on some symbolic level indicates the tensions that exemplify our relationship. The natural light also seems to give the image a 'softer' feel, emphasising its historicity of the image.

Contributing to what I call the softness of this image are the colours present: muted tones white, beige, grey, brown and pink; none of which are obtrusive or striking, all of which have a similar tone, almost blending and melting into each other.

When thinking about the audiencing of the image and its initial reception, I'm sure that its value is connected to the fact that it could be found by me. The photograph was

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kept, which indicates that it was meaningful. Besides this fact, I am struck by feelings of wanting to regress to that spot on Sophie's knee when I see that picture. I long for the soft warmth of the sun on my face and her loving firm grip around my waist. The image makes me long for the security and contentment it portrays.

The following would also indicate the impact of the reception of the image. I found the following poem on a post-it on the back of this photograph; a musing by my mother, in reflecting on her relationship with my other mother:

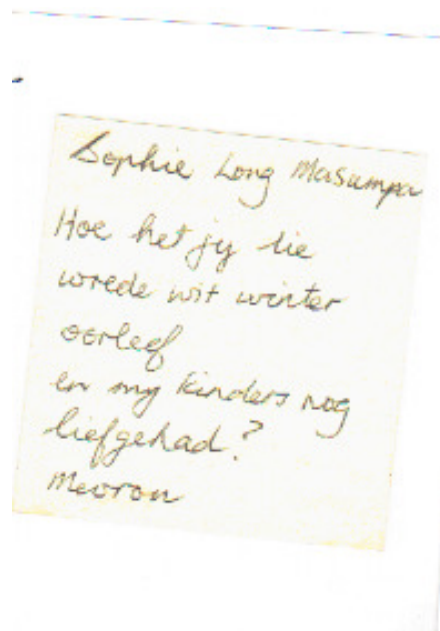


Figure 7. The post-it found on the back of Figure 6.

The above can be roughly translated to mean the following:

Sophie Long Masumpa,

How did you
survive
the cruel white winter
whilst still loving my children?

Madam

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I used this musing as part of my previous research, because finding it had such a deep impact on me. My mother apparently wrote it around seven years ago when looking through the photo albums in the hope of painting a portrait of Sophie. What struck me most deeply was my mother's gratitude, how grateful she was to her for loving us. Also, the level of empathy and insight she exhibits here is so beautiful.

What I find interesting is the use of Sophie's maiden surname (Long) as part of the address. I wondered for a long time at the impact of this inclusion. What I believe it to suggest is an independence from what marriage had brought her. It suggests that there was a Sophie before she was a Masumpa; a fully fledged woman in her own right before she married. As the story goes, her husband was unfaithful to her. He had had various extramarital affairs and children. I never met him, and she never spoke of him to me. I don't think I ever really considered Sophie as wedded, as a woman in need of male companionship – so locked am/was I in believing she existed solely for me.

The cruel white winter my mother writes of is such a textured description of the world we all lived in and the regime black South Africans lived under. What is lost in the English translation is the alliteration of "wrede wit winter", which makes the description so much more powerful in the original Afrikaans. I can't help thinking of Sophie walking barefoot in the frost, through rivers, because of white oppression, in order to get to me – in order to get to me, in order to love me. It is despite this cruel, cold, steely white oppressive regime that she continued loving me (and us) as her own, as her family. Herein lies the splendour of our relationship and the love given by others like her, to others like me.

A more formal example of us, dressed up for a photo:



Figure 8. The more formal Sophie and Jana.

This picture was taken roughly around the same time as the one above, but slightly earlier, as indicated by the winter garb. My parents and I estimate that it was taken during the winter months of 1983 (June, July or August) as indicated by our matching clothes. This means that many aspects of the image making process were similar to that of figure 6, like the socio-political climate, the immediate familial atmosphere, the social identity of the photographer and the intended recipients. What does set this image apart is its formality, as opposed to the previous photo's informality.

The story this picture suggests is a capturing of our relationship in a formal sense; a view of our relationship when the world outside our house was to see it. What I love most about this image is that we are dressed in matching outfits. I wonder if this was a conscious decision. Who made this decision? If Sophie decided to dress us alike perhaps she was trying to signify our bond on some level. This reminds me a little of the

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psychoanalytic concept of mirroring, where caregivers and infants mirror each others behaviours as a way in which relationship is established. I was dressed to mirror her, or she picked her outfit in order to mirror me. It's almost as if we are visually negatives of each other. The contrasting colours (navy and white) also seem to mirror the contrasts in our skin colours.

Also, we are standing in front of the garage of our house, as indicated by the storage in the background. I remember these steps very well as the place where I used to wait for my mother to come home from work. On one occasion, and this is probably one of my earliest memories, I was sitting on those steps up to the garage, in the rain, waiting for my mother to come home. I was wearing a baby pink jersey with pearl buttons. Sophie fetched me out of the rain and made me scrambled eggs on toast. Sophie and I therefore have a long history on those very steps, outside the garage, the space between being inside and outside.

Also, I seem to be confidently perched on her arm, but at the same time I look less comfortable in this picture, far less relaxed than in figure 6. Sophie on the other hand, looks just as constant and comfortable with me as she did when I looked more at ease. Her presence and attitude seems consistent in both photographs, in some way mirroring her consistency in my life. She was there, in full, regardless of what space I was in.

This photo reminds me so much of my early memory on those steps in the rain that I find it difficult to consider what other emotions are stirred in me by looking at the image. I feel a sense of loneliness because of its connection to this memory; a severe loneliness and sense of being abandoned, and yet, the opposite is depicted in this picture. I am being held by a woman who is present, but that presence, somehow seems to

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amplify my mother's absence. It is in moments like these, while writing here that I am confounded by the paradoxes of my relationship with Sophie, and the impact our relationship has had on my relationship with my mother. But that topic, I imagine, is enough to write a whole separate thesis.

We used to go for walks along the river, Sophie and I, her pushing me in my pram. We used to sit on the grass with other *ousies* chatting away the afternoons. This gathering of domestic workers on the grass patches is such a common occurrence still to this day. I seem to think that the pavements of Johannesburg have become the meeting place for these women who are still locked away in homes that are not their own, with children who are not theirs. I remember relishing in the attention of all these loving black gazes.

My first trip to the theatre to watch the *Wizard of Oz*, took place during this period when we lived along the river. This night turned out to be rather iconic in retrospect. My grandmother was visiting from Cape Town (oh so exciting!) and we (mom, granny and I) went, all dressed up, to experience the magic only the theatre can bring. The show, far from inducing a good response in Jana and family, turned out to become rather nightmarish, not because of the quality, but because of the content.

By the start of the second act I was entirely inconsolable and absolutely terrified, of all the characters on the stage, especially of the witch. I responded to my fear by screaming, "*Ek wil vir Sophie hê!*" (I want Sophie!) as presumably only she could dampen the terror I was feeling.

Finally, mom, granny and I waited backstage in the corridors of the Civic Theatre (as it was then known and where I have since spent much of my time) to have the all-too-

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real magic of the theatre debunked. My mother asked the witch to show me that she was not really a witch, and she did so by removing her costume. In this moment I fell in love with the theatre, which became simultaneously intertwined with my love and need for Sophie. During this experience we all, I think, realised that not only did we miss and want Sophie there during that occasion (as she was the only person who could pacify me) but also that Sophie had become a crucial part of my security and happiness as a child. Her presence was soothing and calming. She was able to identify and respond to my needs.

I remember the food we shared together during this time at the Jukskei house. This food still informs my tastes with regards to what I turn to when needing comfort and love; the food that makes me feel better, happier, satisfied just by smelling its preparation. The ultimate winner in this category has to be thick slices of white government loaf bread, with a generous helping of margarine (margarine because Sophie hated trying to spread hard butter) topped, finally and with great relish, with *Koo* apricot jam.

In second place, scrambled eggs on toast, the toast slightly soggy, the eggs rubbery, with tomato sauce. She used to prepare this meal for me when she was babysitting us at night when my parents went out. The meal was easily prepared and sufficiently childlike to induce the feeling of just having eaten a treat.

Lastly, *pap* (a stiff porridge made from maize meal), *marogo* (spinach) and sauce eaten with your hands in dimly lit, over heated servants' quarters (as the rooms where domestic workers live on the properties of white families, are still referred to, both colloquially and as a selling point by estate agents). Domestic workers were given specific kinds of meals, often meals that didn't usually involve meat and were abundant

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in carbohydrates. If meat was available this meat was referred to as servant's meat (the poorer quality off cuts). Sophie used to be able to create perfect little bites of food, compounded through the crafty movements of loving fingers, for me to chew on. I still find myself being drawn to eating with my hands – such an African tradition – in order to feel 'closer' or more 'connected' to that which I eat. I miss the freedom this custom brings; a feeling that knives and forks remove from the eating experience.

Once (I think it was a Sunday; it felt like a Sunday) my parents were working (I presume), and I decided to play 'hairdresser-hairdresser' with my sister. I made my sister stand on a small stool, (poor thing must have been about two years old and me about three and a half or four) and I wet her hair and started cutting away at it, creating what I thought must have been a beautiful hairdo. Sophie came in and was horrified. I remember she tried to discipline me but I lied, telling her my dad had said it was okay and so she didn't have the right to tell me that I was not allowed to cut *my* sister's hair. Sophie walked away. My parents came home. I received a stern warning since I pleaded ignorance of any wrong doing.

This memory highlights two tensions within our relationship. Firstly, it seems to be that Sophie was not given the authority she needed to discipline me, in conjunction with her role as caregiver, because she was primarily employed as a servant. After all, how dare a black woman reprimand a white child? Within the social setup, superiority was linked to skin colour in every instance.

My second point with regard to my cheekiness in that memory, links to a sense of entitlement which I imagine I felt. This entitlement, linked with the superiority of my white skin, seems to have been implicitly and covertly passed down. It seems to have

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pervaded all those raised here, and it becomes particularly difficult to admit to it. I think, even as a little girl, I felt entitled to the power my skin colour and social positioning as employer's child brought me. I knew, implicitly, that I was the socially accepted powerful one in the relationship, and used that social norm, that part of the social unconscious perhaps, to my advantage.

The accident changed everything. I remember very little of the actual occasion and the months following. I think I was never told, my parents wanting to spare me the trauma of the whole situation. I remember Sophie going away for a long, long time and I was not sure whether she would ever come home. I remember how abandoned I felt. I felt left behind every time she went home, but this time was different. I feared that this time she might not return. As the story goes, Sophie went home to her family in the Transkei (Herschel to be exact, a small, rural village situated in a valley) on one of her annual holidays. The driver of the bus fell asleep at the wheel, and the bus careened over a bridge. Sophie's back was broken in this accident. She was bedridden in hospital in the Orange Free State (as it was known then) for three months.

Once ready to be discharged, Sophie called my father, instructing him to have her collected. The fact that she called my father in her time of need spoke mountains about the kind of relationship they had. Their relationship was one of honesty and respect. Sophie was one of the only people that could reason with my father when he was in a fit of rage. She was one of the only people he would listen to and trust with regard to his children. She was the only woman who could ever tell my father to do anything. My father is not the kind of man who 'listens' to women.

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Nonetheless, my father, during the height of apartheid, organised a friend to fetch his injured domestic worker from the Orange Free State in his *bakkie*, and bring her back to us. She lay for fourteen hours on her back in the *bakkie* on the way home as she was unable to sit or stand. She arrived at the house on the river in Johannesburg, unable to take care of us, with us having to take care of her. My parents employed two more domestic workers, one to clean the house and take care of us, and the other to nurse Sophie back to health. I remember how she stooped and therefore seemed tiny after the accident. I remember the pain she was in. I don't think I really understood just how close I came to not having this pivotal relationship in my life. This act on my father's behalf makes him into one of the 'heroes' of apartheid for me. He insisted on humanity and compassion even when there was so little to be seen in the general atmosphere of the times.

The accident was the official inauguration of various other domestic workers into my world. I hope to introduce them to this story as I go, as they, too, played such beautiful supporting roles in this drama.

The first domestic worker assisting Sophie (that I remember) was Liesbet, though she was present before the accident, her caregiving role only became more prominent after. She cleaned mostly, but sometimes she too would baby-sit us in the evenings when my parents worked late or took a well deserved break with friends. Once, I jumped up on her, pinning her arms to her sides with the force of my embrace, making her unable to catch me. I fell backwards with my head hitting the kitchen tiles with the most incredible thud. It's almost as if I can still hear it. She tried to pacify me by baking me a potato

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with tomato sauce on top. I vomited. It was awful. My parents still refer to this incident as the moment in which I lost my mind – especially when I am being less than clever.

The first birthday party I remember was a particularly informal affair with my sister, Sophie, Liesbet and Liesbet’s husband as the stars of the show. Other characters were there too, like Rex the cat and Alf the dog. We had a lovely time eating ice-cream in the sun. The ice cream kept melting all over my hands, leaving them sticky and me frustrated. I couldn’t work out just how to eat the ice-cream quick enough so that it didn’t melt before I had had my fill. So many of my parties as a little one were spent with the helpers in our lives.

Here is the birthday party (figure 9) and my mothers note on the back of the photograph (figure 10):



Figure 9. Liesbet, Jana, Sophie and Rex celebrating Jana’s third birthday.

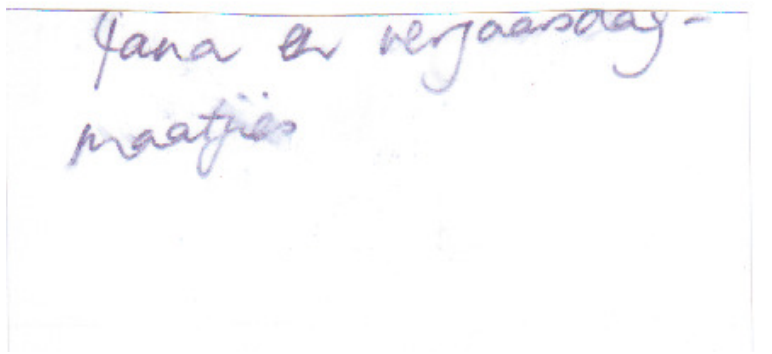


Figure 10. Caption on the back of figure 9.

This photograph was taken on 10 March 1985. I turned three. I know my father organised the gathering – he loved to buy us sugar-filled goodies. He also took the photograph. When considering the wider social climate, all that remains necessary to mention is the fact that violence in South Africa escalated throughout the 1980s, which remains the backdrop against which this photograph can be viewed. Similarly, our home environment continued to be slightly stressful, although we had settled into our new home.

My face is filled with delight, because of the treat of having a party in the presence of all those I loved. I was indulged with ice-cream and the warm autumn sun, baking down on us. I love Liesbet’s smile, almost delirious with joy and Sophie watchful with the cat, Rex, on her lap.

Turning to the reception of the photo, the comment on the back of the photograph in figure 9 is translated to mean “Jana and her little birthday friends”. As can be expected, and just to make it clear, this inscription indicates that I was the focus of all image making at the time. It was my party and therefore I was worth remembering. The two women, Sophie and Liesbet became unmentioned, unnamed ‘little birthday friends’, collapsed into the same category as the cat. That they are not named here suggests that on some level their names are not worth remembering, their faces part of the conglomerate of women called ‘domestic workers’.

But, at the same time, they are referred to as friends, not enemies as insisted by the historical climate. Being referred to as friends also suggests a sense of inclusion which could be regarded as rather endearing. Sophie and Liesbet fulfilled the role of

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being friends to me, but only for this one day, my birthday, after which they would fall back into a category somewhere between mother and servant. Also, this ‘little birthday friends’ (because of the diminutive use of the word ‘friend’ in the Afrikaans original) is reminiscent of the general pejorative terms of ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ which was used to describe black adult men and women, often those working in homes. These women were adults and I was a child. I was little and they were grown women. In some regard, by referring to them as ‘little friends’, they were made infantile in the same way as the term ‘girl’ was used to infantilise.

We moved again, this time to a house on a hill, away from the river, floods and fish. Sophie moved with us. She recovered from her accident but I remember thinking how stiff and fragile she seemed after she had broken her back. At least she could play with me again.

One of the first memories I have of our new house is of Sophie hand washing our clothes in the courtyard outside her room. I wanted to try my hand at washing clothing too, so I dug up some dolls I never played with, undressed them as best I could, found my own washbasin and there we sat, washing. During this washing experience I asked Sophie whether she was a black person or a brown person. She said she was black. She didn’t sound like she wanted to talk about it. I said that I thought she should be called a brown person because she didn’t look black to me. Sophie didn’t reply. Needless to say, I became bored with the washing and Sophie was left to hang up the clothes and re-dress the dolls, forever cleaning up after me, and reordering my mess.

I think the above illustrates just how naive and insensitive (perhaps) I was with regard to which discussions may have been (in)appropriate at the time. It’s interesting

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that I also became aware of skin colour relatively early on, knowing that it was an important distinction but having no idea why. I've always been one who tried to understand the (relatively arbitrary) categorisations we classify each other into.

I remember that I tried to learn about household chores on another occasion, too. Sophie, with her broken back, was cleaning our windows with newspaper. I thought this was fascinating and wanted to share in the activity. I was told that I was not allowed to. So, I got a chair and newspaper and did it anyway. I wondered for years why she didn't allow me to help her. I realised the other day that I wasn't helping her, I was just making more mess for her to clean. I think I have done that all my life – made messes for her to clean.

I remember coming back from school on rainy summer afternoons in the hope that perhaps today Sophie would have made me pancakes. Invariably she did. She had this knack of always being able to meet my needs. She would try, mostly, to give me that which she thought I would want, that which would satisfy me. I felt spoiled and slightly indulged by her – a feeling I still can't get enough of.

During our time on the hill we had numerous other caretakers. I believe this was because Sophie could not manage caring for such a sprawling home and two children all at the same time.

The first secondary caretaker I remember from this period, was a woman who had the highest, most defined cheekbones I had ever seen. Her name was Emma. I walked around sucking in my cheeks (fat and round as they were) to look more like her. She was so beautiful, and I'm certain that her face set the standard for what I call 'beautiful' today.

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She became a blueprint for faces that were perfect, a yardstick against which I have since measured beauty.

I also exhumed my mother's wedding dress from a mothball-ridden kist and made Emma parade in the dress for my parents to see how beautiful she looked. I remember seeing the intense embarrassment on her face, thinking it was linked to simply wearing the dress. I pushed and nagged her to do it anyway. My parents looked uncomfortable too. Only now do I realise why. I was severely reprimanded, and I knew I had done something wrong, but what my error of judgement was I couldn't understand. I retrieved the most beautiful dress, and clothed the most beautiful woman in it. Emma left us in the middle of the night, without explanation. I still don't know why and I never saw her again. She was like all my cats that just ran away.

Then there was Poppie. She had very bad skin, many pimples. I would try to put make-up on her to cover them up. Of course, I got into trouble for that. I, like so many children, had very little social sensitivity and tact. She became pregnant and left in the middle of the night. I never saw her again. I still think of her, and wonder what her child looks like. I still see the father of her child, who insisted that she stop working, but have never asked after her. I'm not sure why I have never enquired after her wellbeing. The reason could be dual – one part of me is furious at her abandonment of me – and the other part does not care enough to want to know.

Ruth was a gargantuan woman, with a very high pitched voice. She always knew where to put everything and if ever I was looking for anything, Ruth was the lady to ask. It turned out that Ruth, with help from the gardener, stole tens of thousands of Rand from a safe in our home, and confessed because she had been converted into a reborn Christian.

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Needless to say, I never saw Ruth again either. I still can't believe she did not say goodbye.

I remember the day Nelson Mandela was released from being imprisoned on Robben Island. Sophie and I sat silently on the couch watching the TV broadcast. I remember Mandela walking through the cheering crowds – a single tear streaming down Sophie's face. I actually have a lump in my throat just thinking about this event. I would not have chosen to share that moment with anyone else. I knew freedom was coming.

I started smoking cigarettes (stupidly) at a very young age. I was in standard six (grade eight), at home with severe sinusitis, and smoking in my parents' bathroom. I did not hear Sophie, with her slow, painful shuffle, coming up the stairs and so, she caught me there red-handed. She told my parents and I was furious! I didn't speak to her for a month.

In this moment I felt so betrayed on the one hand, I thought she would always keep my secrets and protect me from my parents' rage, as she had done when I was a little girl. Another part of me wanted to act out like spoilt little white brat, commanding her not to tell them because she was a servant.

When I was sixteen, Sophie retired early. I was told she needed to take care of her grandchildren, who were alone in Herschel, needing someone to care for them. I remember feeling jealous, jealous at the injustice that she cared more about taking care of them than taking care of me. I also felt that she was so entitled to the break. She told me how she dreamed of sitting in the sun all day long peeling peaches for jams and preserves. I knew that her body was tired and broken, but that did not mean that my heart would not break too.

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Sophie used to come and visit after she retired. She needed to come twice to have her cataracts removed. I had the opportunity to take care of her for a while, although I don't think I did it particularly well. She slept in the guest room on these visits, but she still helped the other workers to clean the house.

This sleeping-in-the-guestroom experience was a way of honouring a woman we all loved and respected, and yet it seemed as if she was unable to accept that role without giving us something in return, by cleaning, the only role in which she was officially allowed to participate in our family structure. None of us did anything to dissuade her – I'm not sure we could or should have. After her visits, she would return home to the Transkei to resume sitting in the sun.

I turned twenty one and I was making preparations for my big bash. Someone rang the doorbell. I opened and saw Sophie standing at our front door. I hadn't seen her in over a year. I fell to the floor with surprise and joy, crying inconsolably. Her presence was my birthday present from my father. This gift shows how aware and respectful my parents were of my relationship with Sophie – how they also validated and emphasised it. That moment feels like yesterday and I just had the most uncanny moment in which I forgot she was dead – thinking like I had done so often, that I should call her as soon I as I could. I find it so difficult to remember that she is dead.

I did not know where to seat her at my party which I held over the weekend. I decided to have a separate party with her and my father at a pub. I regret this decision more than any other in my life. It haunts me and I keep re-realising that she won't be there for any other rites of passage I may pass through. I wish she could have stayed alive to see me get married, perhaps even to love my own children once I have them as

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she did me. I wish I found a public space for her in my life. I cried desperately when she left after this visit, feeling my familiar jealousy at her returning to her family. I didn't realise it would be the last time I saw her.

As I think back, my early twenties were filled with attempts to find my inner 'blackness'. I latched on quickly to clothing brands (like *Stoned Cherrie*) which promoted the popularisation of traditional African materials and styles, and incorporated this Africanisation into the expression of my personal identity. I also found comfort in the arms of black/coloured/Indian men, whom I found infinitely more attractive than their white counterparts. Today I believe the above to be examples of how my internal black self, created by being cared for by a black woman, needed to find room for expression.

I had just finished a performance of *Dangerous Liaisons*, holding the hand of my black boyfriend at the time, when I received a call from my father. He was home early from a holiday in Zimbabwe. I thought nothing of it at the time. The next morning I was told. Sophie died almost a week ago. My father drove home the day after hearing the news. He cried all the way through his supper after hearing the news of her death. He cut his holiday short, and drove home the following morning. One of my first thoughts was related to the fact that I never told her I was on TV (as a dancer on a soap opera called *Backstage*). At least if she knew this she could have seen me on a daily basis if she chose to. She didn't know that my mother had cancer. My one mother was dead and the other dying. I entered into a very dramatic personal crisis – my heart perpetually fragile because of the loss of my black Madonna, and the possible loss of my white one.

We drove to Aliwal Noord (it seemed to me a godforsaken place) for the funeral. We slept over and had dinner at the *Spur*. I couldn't eat. I wrote a letter to put in her

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grave. I don't remember what it said. I had a fantasy that perhaps, as it decomposed so would my grief and guilt. Now, I'm still writing letters:

Liewe Sophie,

Hierdie brief bevat die laaste woorde wat ek vir hierdie projek gaan skryf. Ek is moeg en wonder of jy enigsins kan sien hoe hard ek vir ons gewerk het. Ek wonder of jy hoor hoe hard my hart skree wanneer ek sê dat ek na jou verlang! Wanneer ek sê hoe lief ek vir jou is! Ek wonder of jy my sal vergewe, of dalk al vergewe het, vir hoe onbeskof en mislik ek partykeer was. Ek is jammer dat ek so moeilik en bedorwe was en soms nogsteeds is.

Het jy die ander kinders se stories gehoor? Het jy gehoor hoe lief almal vir vrouens soos jy is? Miskien kon jy sien wat ek nie kon sien nie – 'n traan of twee wat val soos iemand hulle storie vertel. Ek wonder watter deel hiervan jou gunstelling brokkie storie sou wees?

Is jy trots op my?

Ek het ook hoopelik finaal ophou rook. Dink jy sal bly wees daaroor. Ek het elke keer wat ek daai nikotien in my lugpype aftrek gedink aan jou, veral as ek skelm rook. Ek het geweet dat iemand my sien.

Ek is ook baie opgewonde oor wat jy van Nigel sou dink. Ons gaan trou en ek wens jy kon daar wees. Hy is 'n goeie man Gogo – 'n man van liefde, en een wat mooi na my sal kyk. Hy laat my baie aan Pappa dink.

Ek dink gedurig aan hoe jy daar in Herschel onder die grond lê, hoe die reën op jou val en hoe jy dae lank in die son lê en bak. Ek wonder gedurig of jy rus kry. Ek hoop dat jy nie meer seer is nie en dat jy gelukkig neer kyk op al jou kinders – hoe ons almal, swart/wit, voort ploeg deur die lewe.

Ek kan nie meer aan jou dink nie Gogo. Ek kan nie meer die skuld deurwerk nie. My vinger punte bloei en my arms kramp van die getikery. Mag ek ophou werk en ophou huil oor ons, vir ons, oor jou, vir jou, oor en vir ons land en sy mense?

Ek voel hoe jou liefde en grasie aan my klou en ek wens jou rus toe, mamma - rus. En weet dat ek beter is omdat jy my grootmaak het. Mag ek my kinders met net soveel liefde en respek grootmaak soos jy my grootmaak het.

Al my liefde en verlange,

Jana

The letter is translated henceforth:

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Dear Sophie,

This letter contains the last words I intend to write for this project. I am tired, and I wonder whether you can see how hard I have worked for us. I wonder whether you can hear how loudly my heart screams when I say how much I miss you! When I say how much I love you! I wonder if you will forgive me, or whether you have already forgiven me, for being so rude and miserable at times. I'm sorry I was so difficult and spoilt – sometimes I still am.

Did you hear the other children's stories? Did you hear how they all love women like you? Maybe you could see that which I couldn't – a tear or two dropping as someone told their story. I wonder which part of this is your favourite snippet of story.

Are you proud of me?

I have also, hopefully, finally stopped smoking. Thought you would be pleased about that. Every time I dragged that nicotine down my airways I thought of you, especially when I smoked on the sly. I knew that someone was watching.

I'm also very excited about what you would think of Nigel. We are getting married and I wish you could be there. He is a good man, Gogo – a man of love, and one that will look after me well. He reminds me a lot of Daddy.

I think continuously about you lying underground in Herschel, about how the rain falls on you, and how you lie baking, for days, in the sun. I wonder, continuously, if you are finding rest. I hope that you don't hurt anymore and that you can look down on all your children, happily – how we all, black/white, forge through this life.

I can't think about you anymore Gogo. I can't work through this guilt anymore. My fingertips are bleeding and my arms are cramping from all this typing. Can I stop working and stop crying about us, for us, about you, for you, about and for our country and its people?

I feel how your grace and love clings to me and I wish you rest, mommy – rest. And know that I am better because you raised me. May I raise my children with as much love and respect as you raised me.

All my love and longing,

Jana

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I had bought presents and clothes for all her grandchildren. The grandchildren she was raising while their parents, like her, were working in the big cities in order to keep them alive. I felt like Santa Claus but only this time it wasn't Christmas. I felt the most extraordinary pull to make them feel valued, to give them something tangible in the loosing of such an extraordinary woman.

I met her grandchildren and they all seemed recognisable. Only later did I realise it was because they were wearing my old clothes. Clothes I had replaced with newer more expensive garments. It was an uncanny experience seeing these children who are unable to speak English and who had never been to Johannesburg, wear jackets bought in Rio de Janeiro and leather boots bought in Spain. I sent these clothes to the nameless, faceless children she took care of, never expecting to see them wear these things because they lived out of my frame of reference.

I walked through her house, our old curtains in the windows, and our old chipped plates on display. In a small back room, she lay in her coffin. It seemed like her mouth was sewn shut. I fell to my knees, from shock, knocked down by the most overwhelming wave of grief, not expecting to have seen her – so lifeless. Some inner part of me came alive in that moment and I could not bear to look down on her for one more second. I could not bear to oppress her with my gaze. I could barely breathe. Eventually, someone escorted me out of the room. I think I was holding up the funeral procedures.

A big tent was pitched, filled with villagers. We were the only Whites and the family had arranged a translator for us. The already extended service doubled in time because of this courtesy. I don't remember what was said. Just that my parents were thanked for being such good employers during such bad times. The crowds cheered and

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I felt humiliated, humiliated that we were being praised when it was Sophie who deserved it.

We had to relocate for the burial of her body. We loaded villagers and family members into my father's big expensive Land Rover. It was drizzling, cold and miserable. At the gravesite, I saw her children, some whom I had met before and others I had never even heard of, digging her grave and setting up the chairs under a quickly-constructed gazebo. My family and I were placed under the gazebo with the elders, watching her sons dig her grave. Her daughter was consoling me, gently massaging my shoulders with every sob. I threw my letter into the grave. My guilt, as evident here, has still not managed to decompose.

After the burial, there was a reception, where big pots, filled with stew and rice were served to all and sundry. Villagers stood in long winding cues for some sustenance. All villagers and family ate out of Styrofoam boxes, my family and I eating out of our old chipped crockery. No one besides us got dessert – handmade preserved peaches and ice-cream. My mother remarked how unevenly the peaches were peeled and we realised that Sophie must have peeled them, sitting in the sun, feeling her way through this chore since her eyesight was waning. I know this may seem strange but I had some kind of a religious epiphany in that moment and I felt, somewhat, as if this was a holy moment for me, as if I were taking part in the sacrament of communion, eating those peaches in remembrance of Sophie, as an extension of her person. I wonder if there are anymore of those peaches left.

On the drive home, I told my sister of one of the conversations I had had with the eldest of Sophie's grandchildren. She told me that Sophie was so looking forward to

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coming to Johannesburg for my sister's twenty-first birthday. We drove, sobbing silently, speechless, all the way home. I have never seen my sister so devastated.

And my story ends where this work begins, with a plan to do something with my grief. This plan was taken up by others in my family in other ways and I would like to finish off by showing you some sketches my grandmother (Ouma Venus) made, quite independently. She, at the ripe old age of 86, has been writing children's books, the first of which are about a grandmother and her two grandchildren, living in a forest and the adventures they embark upon.

The second story does not yet have a plot, but the ideas floating around are about a black woman, finding a white child in a field and raising him as her own (figure 11). This picture looks so much like my own internal image of a black, and African, Madonna, it's startling to see. It confirms to me how this image of black raising white stirs within our midst.

In figure 12, a big enveloping black Gogo (grandmother) is raising a multiracial family of black, coloured and white children, all clustered together, nestling in her bosom. Perhaps, as a country we could all nestle in the bosom of the great black mother, the origin of us all.



Figure 11. Ouma Venus' black Madonna.



Figure 12. Ouma Venus' portrayal of an interracial family raised by a black woman.

Chapter Seven – *Talk Shop with Sydney Baloyi*

Introducing the Context of the Show

Within this section, my social constructionist nature comes most obviously to the fore, since I believe it imperative to contextualise the show. *SAfm*, broadcasted nationally by our public broadcaster the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), reaches an audience from all around South Africa. This means that I had the opportunity (perhaps more so than on *702* which is regional) to recruit listeners from a wider variety of locations, to participate in the discussion.

The show's title is *Talk Shop with Sydney Baloyi*, and it took place from seven until nine in the evening, with my research hour scheduled from eight until nine. In meeting Sydney, I was struck at how enthusiastic he was about the topic; as if it had been something he thought about, often, but had never put into words. We built up a comfortable level of rapport and established, with ease, how the conversation between myself, the listeners and Sydney would take place. He guided me so well through the hour, I almost felt as if it was over in the blink of an eye.

However, in joining forces with the SABC, the 'authorities' in radio broadcasting, I have implicitly made myself subject to their rules of power. It is interesting to note that the theme of power and control is evident in my interaction with the host as well as my interactions with the listeners. I found myself consistently trying to assert my 'expertise', to realign the show with the topic of my work when the show, because of the participation of the listeners or because of the agenda of the host, veered 'off track'. I

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had the sense that the host wanted to reframe my topic to hear from domestic workers, something I was less interested in (because I had already dealt with the topic in my earlier work). This means that, whether wrongly or rightly so, I was very active in terms of sticking to the topic, less willing to allow a natural progression and an ‘opening up’. I became aware that I tried to close it down consistently throughout the hour.

In terms of my own preparedness and agenda, I was literally just hoping to get through the hour without sounding too inexperienced. I was terrified of embarrassing myself. What added to my nervousness was that the show, and my participation in the show, was only confirmed that afternoon. This meant I had to reschedule private plans and I felt as if I had little time to mentally prepare myself for the opportunity to be interviewed and interview listeners about something that is so close to my heart. I did not want to put the topic or myself to shame. I arrived at the studio, sweating, nervous and an hour early, exhausted from a day’s work and my daily commute (which takes three hours) hoping that something may come out of an idea I initially did not actually think I could execute. And I was certainly surprised at the number of warm genuine heartfelt stories that were elicited by allowing the topic to be discussed.

Interviewing the Researcher: Analysis of my own Spoken Story

What became most apparent after studying the transcript and re-listening to the recording was the fact that I spoke so much! A great proportion of the hour was filled by me being interviewed by the anchor of the show, which was both unexpected (since the purpose was to hear from others) and cathartic. The experience of being listened to, both on a

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one-on-one level and knowing that there was an unseen audience *out there* hearing me too, was a particularly exciting and special experience for me. It made the research feel bigger than myself - it made me feel heard and validated.

What follows are extracts from the show in which I was allowed to tell my story, where this telling paved the way for others to tell their own stories. This paving seemed to have been a continual strategy throughout the hour, to take up talk-time while other listeners phoned in. The scene also, became a co-construction, through the interaction of Sydney and me.

The first excerpt presented here is the narrative dialogue between Sydney and I, which served to introduce the topic. On a meta-level, the researcher became the researched, through the process of interviewing.

Also, to clarify, I chose not to “clean up” (Riessman, 2008) my narrative included here especially with regard to my own speech. I found that my ‘umm-ing’ and needless repetition of words is useful in the sense that it debunks the notion of researcher being all-knowing expert. It was difficult for me to think on my feet and I think the transcription, if read as spoken, shows that. I think I now feel some kind of kinship with those I have interviewed, meaning that often, putting things into words is not a fluid, faultless exercise.

Furthermore, an equals sign (=) indicates where dialogue has been edited out. Ellipses (...) indicate pauses and square brackets ([]) indicate my own additions to the text.

Sydney: Now tell me Jana. Were you raised by a black domestic worker yourself?

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Jana: Well yes. I was partly raised by a domestic worker. Umm my mother and father both worked here at the SABC actually. For ee...ummm most of my childhood and I was minded by a domestic worker.

Her name is Sophie = And when she died when I was 22 years old, which was about five years ago, I realised how...much she meant to me and how...eeeh...how I never told her how much she meant to me. And how I never really acknowledged how meaningful my relationship with her was=

Sydney: Did she have children?

Jana: Yes she did.

Sydney: Did you ever interact with any of her kids?

Jana: Yes I did. They were...umm...often older than what I was. And I think her youngest child was about ten years older than me = and...ja I did interact with them.

Sydney: Jana you, you basically spent most of your time in the early days with Sophie? = Would you say that it was more time spent with her than with your biological parents?

Jana: Umm...

Sydney: Because of work commitments.

Jana: Yes, I do. I think I spent a lot of time with her. I remember how she...

Sydney: Do you know what language she spoke?

Jana: Xhosa. It was my first language as well. = It was the first language I could speak. I can't speak any of it any more =

I think, I think Sophie became so much a part of what I am today that this is what I'm spending most of my time on. Um...I think she, she gave me a sense of dignity, a sense of, a moral compass. She still is someone that I return to...kind of like, well, what would Sophie do in this kind of situation? What would she say to me? How would she help guide me? Umm...so she is someone that I still use as a point of reference for my life=

Sydney: Did you perform in any recreational chores with Sophie like = going shopping together and doing other things outside = the normal work she was expected to do=?

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- Jana: I remember that, umm, at some stage she would be washing the household clothes and I would take my doll's clothes and I would set up a little bath and wash my doll's clothes and she would wash = all our clothes and on some level I think she, she guided me through domestic chores. I know that sounds silly but you know, she showed me how to be...how to take care of a household=
- Sydney: Because it is a pity that people are just listening to you. = I am looking at your eyes and already I see them almost watering, = because I think as you talk to me, you're transporting yourself back so many years, and you are imagining all the soft touches that you used to experience from Sophie and all the motherly affection she used to give you, which at the time maybe, it did not translate to mean much, but in hindsight, you do feel that you were in very, very safe hands of someone that loved you as if you were their own. And = you were hers.
- Jana: Absolutely, she loved me like her own = and I think with the research that I did last year as well, is that we found that the bond that the domestic workers had with the children they helped to raise was very maternal. These women really cared about the kids that they helped to raise, they viewed these children as their own children, they viewed themselves as mothers to these children and I think that really is the nature of the relationship.
- Sydney: Ja. South Africa has a history of racial prejudice, which in fact makes this piece of research by you a lot more interesting. Now did this play out in any way with your relationship with Sophie.
- Jana: I think the way in which I, kind of, came upon the topic was quite interesting in that I started considering reasons why we did not have a civil war in 1994, and I kind of realised that there were so many white children who were partly raised by black women, that, there's always been a closeness that has never been acknowledged. And it is because of this closeness that maybe isn't acknowledged that, maybe that is why we didn't have a civil war.
- Sydney: Okay we are going to get back to the civil war at a later stage = You said half the time = domestic helpers are found without their own children even if they do have them. Their own children are being raised elsewhere by somebody else. Why is that?
- Jana: Well I think that comes back to urbanisation, really, and the fact that work is very scarce in rural areas. So the father moves away

from the family in rural situations and women also need to take care of their children and they move into the cities to work as domestic workers, because that is what they need to do in order to support their families. So in essence my mother worked to support me and my domestic worker worked to support her children. So we have mothers working, not spending time with their own children, so that we can all have a life and be better off than our mothers.

Sydney: And you also said something quite interesting that domestic workers are always, you know ‘checking the coast’ so to speak. There are times when they feel like part of the family and there are times when they are not sure whether they should be part of the family. Ummm...what kind of a scenario is that =?

Jana: I think it is a very difficult scenario, I think, I think so often, you know they... I remember in my research in 2007 women often said how they were expected to go on holiday with ‘their families’ down to the coast over Christmas and how they would miss their own children over Christmas. And how they felt like a mother but they didn’t have the authority to act like a mother so they weren’t allowed to discipline the children like their parents disciplined the children. So there were often boundaries that were difficult to negotiate, they didn’t often know where their authority started and stopped. Umm...and I think it is hard, it is hard to leave your own family, end up in a completely different family where you are, sometimes you are considered a mom and sometimes you are not considered a mom and it doesn’t depend on who you are, it depends on the situation. Ummm...and I think that is really hard.

The unstoried. What struck me initially about the above excerpt is the information I left unstoried, the parts of my story I did not elaborate on. All my other interactions, barring two, were lengthy, elaborate and detailed, and yet, within the themes of the children of domestic workers and my own mother, I had no stories to tell. Let us consider the theme of Sophie’s children first.

Sophie’s children. On some level, I think Sophie’s children and grandchildren only became real characters in my life after her death, and I am infused with so much

guilt regarding them that I try to repress my memories of them. Remembering how her daughter comforted me at Sophie's funeral fills me with such mixed emotions; on the one hand I'm grateful that she could comfort me and on the other hand, I was unable to console her. It was her mother that died, not mine, and yet the funeral painted a different emotional picture. My guilt surround my feelings of having deprived her of a mother because of my own needs; my needing of her mother, made Sophie absent from her daughter's life and it is this that fills me with guilt; this sense that I stole Sophie from her children because I needed her to raise me.

It also smacks a little of sibling rivalry. I get the impression, that somewhere, Sophie was mine, she belonged exclusively to me, and anything that threatens taking her away, or lessening my possession of her is ignored, unstoried, and unacknowledged. I have seemed to carry this impression of ownership and belonging through this research as themes in other narratives. In that way I am able, then, to maintain my fantasies of possessing her, of having her all to myself.

The absent mother. At being asked whether I spent more time with Sophie than with my mother, I was left wordless, again, and Sydney was forced to qualify his question ('Because of work commitments') in order not to intimate that my parents were somehow not good enough.

One of my biggest fears with regards to this work is that mothers, and especially my mother, would feel as if in commenting about Sophie, I'm neglecting to comment about them. This work does not intend to make out that working mothers are somehow

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‘bad’; it is intended to be an exploration of my mixed feelings in terms of Sophie’s presence.

But, in not mentioning my mother, by being somewhat unwilling to talk about her, I am in some sense replaying her absence in my early life. In all honesty, without malice or ill intent, I remember my mother’s absence far more than her presence in my life, especially as a child. In my wordlessness, this too, has been communicated and it could be said that perhaps, within myself, I feel the absence of a mothering part of myself, that part which is irreplaceable by other caregivers.

Loss. As expected my narrative in the above extract begins with loss, with me losing my mothering figure. Loss also permeates my narrative in less obvious ways, like the fact that I lost the ability to speak Xhosa. I have also considered whether my guilt at Sophie’s death and my inability to expunge it, may be because, on some intrapsychic level, I believe that I *killed* her with my negative projections (in a Kleinian sense). It could be that on some unconscious level that I feel as if my rage and jealousy at her leaving me (at realising that she did not, in fact, belong to me) could have killed her.

I did, however, also acknowledge and explore, on some level, the fact that both domestic worker’s children, and children whose mothers leave them with domestic workers, suffer the loss of their biological mother. None of us, in a very broad sense, have our mothers as primary caregivers, and therefore it is postulated that we may all be attached to women who are not our biological mothers. Perhaps in that, in the fact that we share the same sense of loss and were mothered by someone other than our biological

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mothers, perhaps therein we may find some sense of unity. Perhaps that can be a way in which the youth of this country, motherless but not unmothered, may find a way to empathetically relate to each other.

Storying the research. What also surprised me is how I returned to the research, either my previous or my current research, during my radio interview. It was like a touch point, a beacon that kept me anchored during the conversation. This made me consider how, even in my daily life, the research, the work, the topic, has given me a sense of structure and has become a part of my identity performance (Riessman, 2001), part of my broader life story. It was almost as if I was telling stories within stories, telling the stories of the women I worked with previously, as if they were my own. I do believe that their story, through our interaction in the research process, has become a part of both my personal and professional identity. So too, this work here, has become so much a part of my person and story, that I find it difficult to consider what I would do once this work is full birthed and the umbilical chord has been cut. Whereto will I return for some sense of continuity and personal and cultural exploration? When will I write about the relationships and experiences important to me in such a way again?

The Employer's Story

What follows is the interaction with a regular caller to the show, whose name is Fazel. As his story indicates, he tells a story from an employers point of view, where he, as the

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employer, is praising the domestic worker for her relationship with his family. Here follows Fazel's story:

Fazel: = I want to praise = more from an employer's side of it actually. = I am a single dad and I have a severely disabled son. And my domestic worker has been with me for the past = nine or ten years now.

She is = more than a domestic worker. She's provided the love and the care for my son that a mother would provide actually. And I came to realise this a long, long time ago =.

= It also afforded me an opportunity to bond with = my domestic worker, in the sense that this type of work doesn't fall under [the] normal employee/employer relationship. = And therefore it allowed me to understand where she came from. Her kids, her particular problems and her particular way of life =. It also allowed me the opportunity to treat that worker exactly, equally, as I would treat anyone else as well. It stated to me, if I have a bond with my domestic worker it must be that I had to treat her well as well. I had to treat her, pay her well, I would ensure that she would sit down with me when I'm eating and we would eat at the same table together as well. What I am trying to say is that if my domestic worker is that person that is providing so much love in my house = I think it is important for us, for many people to reciprocate that love actually.

=You know the thing is that she = has two kids as well. It also allowed me an opportunity to get involved with her two children as well. = I think as I said it works both ways =. That person gives you love and you provide the love back to her as well actually.

The following themes emerge from Fazel's narrative: 'more than just a domestic worker' and 'symbiotic relationship'. These themes will now be examined in turn below.

More than just a domestic worker. What strikes me initially about this narrative, is the kind of relationship that the domestic worker has with the family. The relationship is long lasting, meaning that it has lasted for 10 years and from the tone of the story, it indicates that there is the intention for the story to last for a longer period still.

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This indicates that there may be the probability that Fazel's child and the domestic worker could share an attachment type of bond.

Also, the domestic worker is, once again, viewed as being maternal, loving Fazel's son like a mother would. His narrative emphasised the domestic worker's loving nature, and the relationship that she has with all members of the family, seems to be *more* than just a work relationship; she seems to mean *more* than being a domestic worker. It seems to me that the element that makes her more, that sets her apart from being simply a domestic worker, is her maternal function within the home, loving and caring for the family.

This quality of being *more* than a domestic worker somehow paradoxically implies, however, that being *just* a domestic worker, without these maternal qualities, is not worthy of the same level of relationship between employer and employee. It seems as if Fazel is exemplifying the exception to the general rule that one should not generally care for domestic workers or their families, unless they are *more* than domestic workers. It implies that mere domestic workers are not treated as equals. Mere domestic workers are not engaged in reciprocal love relationships. Mere domestic workers do not deserve to be understood for who they are and where they come from. I find this implication a direct result of the legacy of racial oppression in this country, where black women were not treated as equals, where they did not deserve to be loved.

Symbiotic relationship. It seems that with this 'being more than a domestic worker', there is a presupposition of the blurring of boundaries (Van der Merwe, 2007) found in my previous research. It appears that new rules of employment have been

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negotiated by all parties concerned, to allow for Fazel's domestic worker to be more than she would otherwise be.

In this negotiation, however, and Fazel also makes this explicit, their relationship ceased being an employee/employer relationship, or at least ceases to be what is generally constructed as the norm. This appears to have happened through their daily physical proximity to one another. This daily proximity seems to have given both parties the opportunity to understand and get to know one another as people, with specific needs, qualities and difficulties. The domestic worker becomes known as an individual, not merely a member of an impersonal labour sector or a member of a gender and race.

There is also more to their relationship than monetary gains exchanged for services rendered. Fazel, along with emphasising equality and adequate remuneration, further emphasises that the love she gives to the family be reciprocated. In this case, love is reciprocated by providing finances for education for the domestic workers children. Both domestic worker and employer seem to be 'taking care of' each others children in different ways, the one emotionally and the other primarily financially. I cannot help but wonder, however, what amount of money or quality of education could ever replace the love re-channelled from the children of domestic workers to the children they help to raise. It seems as if the value is the crux – is the symbiotic relationship between domestic worker and employer an equal value symbiosis?

Lastly, it appears that domestic workers and families seem to loose and gain through the presence of the other, but ultimately, they become inextricably linked to the other through their presence and interventions. It is this link between us, this

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inseparability and mutual dependency, that is such an important, yet tension filled, part of the relationship.

What is in a Name?

The following excerpt highlights a theme present in both this show and on the show done on 702. The theme consists of the general public's discomfort around the naming of domestic workers.

Sydney: = Alright let's go to Cape Town and welcome Don. =

Don: I'd just like to say = I am not speaking from somebody who is brought up by a maid, my mother brought me up = But I am sixty-seven and the last thirty-seven years, I don't call her my domestic, I call her my housekeeper = [She] has looked after me, I've helped her. I brought up her children. She is part of my family. When I do something wrong, she tells me I've done something wrong. = [She is] an absolutely marvellous, marvellous person = I just want to say = people call people domestics servants. I think we should actually change that = I'm not worried about political correctness. I mean there is so much rubbish about that around the place anyway. I mean, there just should be a name. She should be an employee. She must be somebody who works for you. I mean, when you say domestic worker it actually denigrates the person I think.

Sydney: Sounds like they are pets or something. They have been domesticated = So we should be getting something like domestic work practitioner or housekeeper =

Jana: = I think, if I could just say something about the reason why I use the term domestic worker as apposed to nanny or au pair, is because = in labour legislation that's the term that they use. And that's the reason why I = went for it with regard to my research. And I don't think = it encompasses the whole, it doesn't encompass what they do and what they mean and I do agree with that.

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We seem to struggle enormously with the naming of domestic workers. What term should we use? Nanny, *ousie*, maid, housekeeper, domestic slaves, slaves, and it just gets worse, perhaps *meid*, or *kaffirmeid*. All these terms are historically associated with the black woman who cleans your house, who also happens to take care of your children while you work, go out for lunch, arrange a dinner party, have an afternoon nap.

While the word *domestic* refers to working within the home, it also, as Sydney points out in the above, connotes that they need to be trained in order to exist within the confines of our homes, like dogs or cats need to be domesticated. They need to somehow be made fit for human habitation, which I think much of the discomfort around using the term domestic worker seems to stem from.

With regard to this debate, I am in two minds about it. On the one hand, naming, what you call someone, has such an important impact on that person's identity. Many of the terms mentioned above, carry with them our history of oppression and racial hatred, and therefore I hope to be unequivocal in suggesting that they be confined to remaining in disuse.

On the other hand, names like housekeeper as well as *au pair* seem pretentious; as if we are trying too hard to remove ourselves from a past that we are unable to remove. Ultimately, I believe that others, as well as myself, struggle to use the impersonal term *domestic worker*, which inherently does not carry any connotation of her care giving abilities.

But additionally, the discomfort resides in the nature of their work, not in the name itself. The nature of their work makes us uncomfortable. These women clean and tidy messes they have not made. They create order from disorder they did not create.

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They care for children, lovingly, that are not their own and I propose that it is therein, their job description (or lack thereof) in which the discomfort lies, and this discomfort has been mistakenly transferred, or even projected onto the name *domestic worker*.

The Story I was Hoping for: The Shared Nature of our Identities

The following story exemplifies how both families, domestic worker and employee, become part of each other:

Grant: Both my sister and I were raised by our domestic worker. I'm in my forties today and this beautiful lady's name was Thandi and, umm, she was part of our family.

Now it was quite a tough call because I was raised in a very small conservative town in the Eastrand, in Gauteng. And = she was part of our family, from the time that I was about four years old until = I was about eighteen [when] she left our house.

But even her son = has my middle name. His name is Edgar. And I remember when he was growing up with us he called my father 'dad'. =

We got frowned on and we got scorned and all kinds of stuff in this little town. They were part of our family and that was it.

She was an absolute darling. She taught me a lot of things. She taught me how to tie my shoes. In the afternoons she used to read with me and do my homework with me.

Today that would be called an au pair. And in Europe you have an au pair, you have au pairs here and they earn good money. They probably earn twice the amount a domestic worker earns.

But that's what she did, as well as looking after us and looking after the house. She was actually our au pair. She walked us to school, she walked us back. She was my second mom and I love her very dearly.

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There are numerous aspects which I appreciate about Grant's story and they can be listed as follows, and will be discussed separately below: The (a) politicisation of the relationship, (b) interchangeability of identity, (c) and the small things as big things.

The politicisation of the relationship. What this story highlights impeccably is the politicised nature of the relationship between domestic workers and their families, and the families they work for. By definition the relationship resulted out of a particular political system of oppression, where white families could afford to confine black women to the somewhat 'menial' chores of the female role (i.e. cooking, cleaning and childminding). Labour was and is still cheap. The horrors of scorn and rejection as consequences of loving when no loving was allowed, resonates throughout this narrative.

But, even within this system that originated oppressively, loving relationships and ties have formed between those who were not allowed to love each other. Those who politically were binary opposites of each other were thrown into living with each other, and through their proximity to each other they began, against all odds, loving each other. Lives which would in other contexts never have come into contact, now punctuate each other's daily living.

The interchangeability of identity. What was important here is how the domestic worker's son was named after her charge, by giving her son her charge's second name, Edgar. I imagine that one only names one's child after that which one loves and esteems and it seems as if Grant is appreciative of the honour of having Edgar named after him. Edgar (the domestic worker's son) calling Grant's father "dad", highlights, again, how

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parenting figures and functions seem to be adopted by children because of their proximity and the roles these adults assume in their lives.

Also, the domestic worker is quoted as having become a “second mother” to Grant. The use of the word ‘second’ is interesting too, since in this way, Grant does not deny the presence of his “first”, presumably biological mother. While the domestic worker’s presence is second, it still remains maternal and mothering, but his domestic worker has not usurped the role of mother in totality.

In this sense, it seems as if so much of each boy’s identity lies in the family and life of the other. Both boys seem to have incorporated the life and identity of the other. Both boys have a second parent, either a second mother or a second father, and when construed in this way, they have been parented by similar sets of people, some more present or absent than the others.

The small things as big things. I find it remarkable that this story, like my own, focuses on the small things that the domestic worker did for Grant, the everyday duties that somehow take precedence when the impact of the domestic worker on the narrator’s life gets storied. It seems as if the relationship, like all others, is built on the domestic workers daily presence and assistance in the life of the child. So often, it seems that it is the time spent with the child that is remembered and storied by them, and this is regardless of the quality or type of activity performed together. Tying one’s shoelaces, for example, a somewhat menial milestone, became important because it indicates the time spent between domestic worker and the child, and therefore becomes a reflection of the depth of their relationship. It also reflects the kinds of lessons learnt by Grant

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because of the presence of his caretaker, lessons which become the foundation of living, lessons which are the building blocks to experiencing and performing a functional existence.

The Voice of the Domestic Worker

Two domestic workers were approached by the production team to convey their stories and opinions with regard to this research. I believe the domestic workers were asked to contribute for various reasons. Most importantly, it seems that the production team wanted to include the voice of the domestic worker, and I believe that Sydney and the producers tried to pull the topic in the direction of the domestic workers experience. I was frustrated by this pull, and consistently tried to bring the work back to the experiences of the children in relationship to the caregiver, hereby trying to remain in control and simultaneously, and perhaps mistakenly, closing the topic down.

Nevertheless, here is Aletta's (one of the domestic workers approached) contribution to the discussion.

Aletta: I really like the conversation so much. I am a housekeeper = and I have been looking after two kids. = I am working for Indians and the second born child I have been looking after him since he was six months. He is speaking Sotho brilliantly you won't believe it. = We have this strong bond between them and me, they love me so much = I am considering myself as part of this family.

I know housekeeping is not easy. To look after two children and cleaning the house is not easy, but the love that I get from this family it helps me so much = because their parents appreciate = me. = They see the love that I am giving to their children. I am so happy to be working for = [these] people. I wish they could be listening because I love them so much. Because if we get love from those people, it eases your work, it eases your

mind. At least I know housekeeping is difficult but because of the love I am getting from this family I am really happy to be working for this people.

It's all about the love. Aletta's story makes it very clear that her working situation is eased because of the love she receives from the children and her employer. It becomes clear that the love existing within this social system is reciprocated - she loves them and they love her and it is this love that makes the job of housekeeping easier for her.

This 'strong bond' that Aletta mentions, may indicate a reciprocal attachment relationship between Aletta and the children. She displays many of the features which would make this possible. She displays a high level of emotional involvement when speaking of the children and the family which makes an attachment relationship highly likely. It is also possible that the fact that the child can speak Sotho creates an extra bonding factor between him and Aletta, which on some level could make the attachment bond stronger and more explicit since he is taking on (some) of her identity.

It is also a possibility that being considered part of the family could also ameliorate the solipsistic nature of domestic work in general, making it easier for Aletta to manage not being with her own family.

Housekeeping is not easy. Also very apparent is the juggling of responsibilities Aletta as housekeeper needs to perform. She needs to, on the one hand, look after the children of her employer and manage the household (which is probably considered her primary responsibility). It seems like Aletta is enunciating the difficulty so many women face on a daily basis. Aletta states very clearly that running a household and taking care

of children is a difficult enterprise and it is only love which can be considered as payment enough.

What is also a probability, which is not stated here, that Aletta was considering the difficulties of juggling time with her own family, and the needs of the family she works for. Sometimes I find it hard to even consider how someone juggles the responsibility of the maintenance of one family, never mind two families that are separated by varying distances.

The role of race. Interestingly, in Aletta's story, she specifies that she is employed by Indians. This highlighted to me that within South Africa there still remains the need within us to classify each other according to the colour of our skins. The racial classification made by her suggests just how commonplace this kind of categorisation is here.

Aletta may have chosen to mention the race of her employers because of their difference to me, as the researcher coming from the perspective of the white employer. Perhaps she was merely trying to indicate this difference.

Also, this mention made me realise that there is a myriad of races interacting with each other within this domestic worker system. Black women are employed by all racial groups in the post apartheid era which means that the system is slowly being stripped of its stereotypical features (white employer and black employee). But, this does not mean that the practice does not have colonialistic and oppressive roots.

A Call for Reconciliation

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The following caller had to call twice, since he was too emotionally moved by the topic to air his opinion the first time he called. Here is our conversation with Mothloda.

Mothloda: = Earlier on I called but it was just too emotional I couldn't even talk you know = I don't have a particular experience with domestic workers, as in personally = but my mother passed away when I was very, very young and we became a family that had many people who played an important role, who was not necessary working for us.

And I think that what = [Jana] is doing is quite critical for our own nation. = I can only hope that it will really help us to deal with the reality. = Its so good that someone like her can actually look into this and = tell her story. And perhaps = this would contribute positively to a journey of South Africans. = Because we have not studied = this journey of reconciliation. = This is what we need. We need people to be talking and telling their own story, not because there is a particular commission, you know guided by the law and so on. = I think = people need to tell their stories. There are many = other South Africans who are in many other conditions with regard to the domestic workers. So I am = really appreciative of her = research. I'll be glad to read it after it's been published.

Jana: = I think I am just so grateful that someone else cares. I'm just so grateful that someone else cares about my story and our story, because I do think it is our story. I think it is our story as South Africans and not only mine. = I'm just so grateful for the participation we've received and for the stories that I have heard.

Understanding each other through empathising with loss. Mothloda's contribution to the discussion enabled me to realise that the topic of my thesis and my own story is perhaps not as exclusive as it may seem. Not only those who are employers of domestic workers, or those raised by them, are able to relate to the topic.

This story made me consider that anyone who has lost someone has the opportunity to try and empathise with my situation and my rationale behind this research.

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In this opportunity lies the possibility for us as South Africans to begin to try to understand each other, through our communal understanding of loss.

Also, even if loss is not acknowledged on a conscious level for an individual, it seems that this topic becomes something that can touch us all as South Africans because of our shared social unconscious. Because of the implicit rules and relationships passed down from one generation to the next in this shared unconscious space, it allows for us to be able to empathise with each other as if it were something which happened to us personally.

Mothloda was able and willing to feel with me in my loss and apply his insights to my own personal situation. In that empathetic gesture, understanding and reconciliation was, if but just for a moment, achieved.

Stories: Paving the way for reconciliation. Mothloda and I also connected because of our love and valuation of stories. What his story made me realise, in a practical way, however, is that the story, our individual and communal stories, can be the tools used with which a path to reconciliation can be constructed. By me allowing my story to be shared on a broader platform, others were invited to share it and empathise with it, which broadens the possibility for understanding and therefore reconciliation.

Chapter Eight – *Talk at Nine with Kieno Kammies*

Introducing the Context of the Show

As in the previous chapter, the show with Kieno Kammies, who proved to be a particularly amusing anchor, was only confirmed the afternoon before I would be on air, and there again, I was terribly nervous. What did temper my anxiety however was my previous experience with *SAfm*, which gave me some basis whereupon to place the experience. This show also took place live, and was syndicated in Cape Town on *Cape Talk 567*, which meant that callers in both Gauteng (including the big cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria) and the greater Cape Town area could be involved. What became apparent is that callers, listening via streaming audio in Zimbabwe, were also able and willing to participate in the show, broadening the types of stories collected.

702 is an independent broadcaster, whose ideology (since it is not state owned) I feel more comfortable with. I would describe the broadcaster as striving to be impartial, as attempting to be balanced in news reporting, and well respected. It seemed to me at the time, and in retrospect, that I felt more open to discuss the type of issues on my agenda, and more importantly, I felt that the listeners responded more in line with my own expectations.

In this show, I felt less controlling, in the sense that I was far more willing, than in the previous show, to allow the topic to be opened up, so that stories that do not fit my original research topic could be included to allow for a greater depth of perspective. I

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was more comfortable stepping back and allowing the show to grow into what the topic allowed it to become, just by letting it be broadcast into a public space.

Lastly, I felt the most intense sense of personal satisfaction during and after this show. The show was originally only meant to be an hour long but because of the listeners' overwhelming response, the show lasted for a full two-hour slot, from ten until twelve at night. I became inspired and I felt as if my work was done, as if something was achieved through the research process. I was re-enthused to explore the relationship between the domestic workers and the children they helped to raise in a way that includes a broader social view, as well as previously excluded points of view.

Getting my Own Stuff out of the Way

Thankfully (!) I spoke less during this show and I think that was because of my attempt to relinquish control over what I considered to be *my* topic. Somehow this show became about what *we* (all of us participating) constructed through dialoguing about a topic that I found meaningful. What follows are the parts of my story which were aired during the show.

- Jana: = When my mother wasn't there = [Sophie] was there and she was my mother for all intents and purposes. =
I still constantly remember her. I refer to her in my mind and in my heart with everything. I still think of her on a daily basis as if she is still around and I miss her and that is why I am doing this. =
When I was three weeks old Sophie was employed by my mom and dad to kind of help to take care of me as they were starting off their own business and I think they were = under a lot of pressure financially and they needed someone to take care of a screaming, crying, pooping three-month-old, you know. = She worked with us until I was 16 when she retired and she died very, very unexpectedly = when I was 22 and I had done different things in my life and I had started a career and she was

out in the Transkei and I didn't phone her as often as I should and the cell reception was bad and she'd come to visit.

Now she didn't stay in the servant quarters anymore but now she stayed in the guest room and you know, our relationship changed because she wasn't in my house anymore. And I became bigger and older and more independent and I didn't need her as much anymore and I realised, I think I started realising this before, I mean I realised with a very unkind jolt how much she meant to me when she did die. Because I was devastated, and I was devastated for a very, very long time. =

I think the work that I'm doing now is a way of, kind of, on some level...trying to make amends, you know. Make amends for being a naughty girl. For not phoning, for not saying I really, really loved you. I really, really appreciated you. And to say thank you for every single thing that she did for me. I think that is what all of this is about.

And I think, you know, because we, we as children raised by domestic workers don't really exist. You know, we never, we are not spoken of, we don't have a place. I mean, my mother raised me, yes, but my domestic worker also raised me and I don't think that ever has been said – enough at least. =

I remember = she'd baby-sit us at night = I remember going into her room because it will always be warm and cosy and kind of small and close. You know that's the feeling I always got is that it was close and warm and cosy and that it smelt warm. = I am trying to describe a very early memory so...you know, we would eat with our hands...pap and *sous* [sauce] and = *marogo* [wild spinach]. = I ate with my hands and I kind of miss that and I miss being able to speak Xhosa because I was also one of those kids who = at three = could speak more Xhosa than = Afrikaans and now I can't speak Xhosa or Afrikaans, cause I just speak English. = I think I miss that. I really do. = You know, my memories aren't always fond either.

She was really good at disciplining me as well. = [I] remember in particular I started smoking at quite a young age and = that was not a very good thing to do because smoking is addictive and it is bad for you but she was the one who caught me and who told my parents and I have been angry with her ever since = because I got into so much trouble... =

Kieno: She did it because she loves you, she loved you very much.

Jana: Yes she loved me.

Kieno: Very much.

Sophie as one of my social ghosts. The second paragraph of the story highlights the way in which I relate to Sophie as one of my social ghosts (Gergen, 2001).

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She contributes on a consistent basis to the private internal dialogue I conduct with myself.

For instance, when I became engaged recently, I imagined what she would think of my partner, how she would have reacted to me getting married. It is almost as if I created a conversation with her in my mind, for me to feel as if all my social ghosts were told too. Those people who are no longer with me in body, but whom I carry with me in my mind, heart and person – they deserved to know about my good fortune and joy, and they deserved to share in my pleasure.

I think what is also evident in that second paragraph is that the imaginal dialogue (Watson, 1999) between Sophie (as social ghost) and I has been continuous throughout this research process. While this work, in my mind for the last three years on a daily basis, has been continuing, her ghost, her imaginal presence and the imaginal conversations I have with her, have intensified. I consider her first and foremost in terms of honouring her memory with every word I write. I wonder how she would perceive various opinions and thoughts – I wonder whether she would laugh, now, at having caught me smoking while I was twelve years old, for instance. I wonder what she thinks of my slight sentimentality, of my passion and tenacity. I wonder whether she cried at hearing my story, our story.

This imaginal conversation has also become so much broader, so much bigger than just an individual feeling. I felt (especially during this show and on other occasions) as if I was connecting to a culture far wider and far more intrinsically linked through our socially constructed interactions than I had previously considered. I am interacting with a

culture, real and imagined, when acting with the remainder of Sophie in my heart and in my mind, and by sharing and storying those interactions during the research process.

Changes in positioning equals changes in relationship. What is evident in the third paragraph of my story here is the fact that as our social positioning changed, and so did our relationship. As soon as Sophie retired and left our home, she became almost idealised on the one hand, and forgotten on the other. I think it is only after she was no longer present in my home that I realised how present she was in my early life, and of course now that she is no longer present at all, her presence in my heart and life is even more pronounced.

My family and I also had an enormous amount of difficulty with regard to where Sophie would sleep when she came on her yearly (sometimes bi-annual) visits. New domestic workers had taken up her old room, and she was no longer our domestic worker, but that is the only relationship we had had with her in the past. She was a friend, an elder and that needed a new-found, newly established set of norms and respect. So, Sophie lived in our guest room, not the servants' quarters (oh my, how I hate that term!), which seemed to give her the respect she deserved. Yet, on all her visits she cleaned everyday as far as possible. She would help with the cooking, and unlike everyone else in the household, no one made her bed. She made her own. The blurriness of who we were to each other and what position we occupied in each other's lives was still prevalent, but in different ways.

So, too, as my position from child to adult changed, our relationship changed as well. I became busy constructing a life of my own, unable and unwilling to pay attention

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to Sophie, whom I assumed would always be around. I was no longer the dependent child who needed her love (although there will always be that dependent child self within me, needing, oh so desperately needing her love). I was able to give her compassion, to rub her feet, and to give her money on her birthday. What we were able and socially allowed to give and received changed, and this change influenced our relatedness.

Reparation. So much of what is evident in the fourth paragraph of the part of my story contained here is about my need to make reparation – almost like the small Kleinian infant, attacking the mother with bad projections, and then out of fear of killing the good and the bad object, and out of desperate guilt, needing to make reparation. This entire piece of work can be seen as an attempt at reparation, and attempt to restore that which psychically (I believed) I killed with my inattention – my inattention which was so bad. I think I am trying to restore and bring back to life my relationship with her, the closeness with her that highlights what a good, good, good object she is to me.

Giving us a voice. The fifth paragraph of my story shows some of my attempt to create a homogenous population of children raised by domestic workers. I think this may be the case since I don't want to feel alone in this awareness anymore. I so wish for a grouping to belong to, a grouping which I can call my own. Perhaps that may be the reason why I try to create an *us*, out of different individuals.

The warmth of a womb. Paragraph seven of the above story also indicates that her presence and her small bedroom became somewhat of a womb-like structure for me

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into which I would periodically regress to feel the warmth and security of maternal affection. My reminiscences about eating with my hands and being unable to speak Xhosa, indicate that these early rituals, these early ways of being and culturally specific customs, still remain and resonate with me in their absence. It is as if they have become part of my unconscious because of the social interactions I had with Sophie. The physical, bodily closeness to food and the almost violent-sounding Xhosa still quicken something in my heart and mind which I implicitly understand and miss, even though those aspects are now absent.

Discipline and authority. The last paragraph of my story present in the show indicates the difficulty that arises between domestic workers and the children they help to raise regarding the boundaries of discipline and authority.

On the one hand I believed, because of my complete possession of Sophie, because I felt that she belonged to me so entirely, that she would always align with me against the world. Discipline, and especially regarding this example, was so difficult for me to swallow since I believed she would always be on my side, a person in whose eyes I hoped I could never do anything wrong. My heart and sometimes my body would violently retaliate screaming, “But you are not my mother!”, denying all maternal care giving influence, when the disciplining nature of that relationship comes into being.

This difficulty also arose in my previous research in which domestic workers needed to hide the authority they took. One domestic worker indicated that she would give her charge enemas, secretly, without the child’s mother’s knowledge, because of cultural differences. I’m convinced that every time Sophie needed to assume authority,

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which put her in a bind with regard to gaining favour with me, she was doing so because she loved me so deeply that my welfare was more important than my esteem of her.

The Male Caretaker

The following section will encompass a collection of the stories from the show which emphasise a male caregiver, as opposed to a female caregiver. I found the prevalence of the male caregiver in these stories astounding. I had no idea that it occurred as often as seen here.

If I reflect back, my neighbours while I was living with my parents in the house on the hill, had a male caregiver for their three young sons. He would take them for walks up and down the road, and assist them on their bicycles. I never met their father, but I knew which man was taking care of them on a daily basis. I remember the injustice I felt on his behalf when they moved to the coast and left him behind. They just moved. Incidentally he works for my father now, having been unemployed and apparently distraught at losing contact with the boys he loved so much.

What follows are the stories of Kevin, Jenny, Dean, and Henry.

Kevin's story.

Kevin: I was basically raised by two Gogos [literally meaning grandmother, but was coined as a more affectionate term for the domestic worker by Kieno during the show]. My mother ran a small business from home, baking biscuits and cakes for a little shop down the road and we had one woman whose sole job was to clean the house after

three kids. And the second Gogo was to help with the baking and to look after the children.

And = when I was approximately five, the one maid or domestic worker, she left us. I don't remember how or why. And we got a second one in who is still with us today. = I mean I speak almost fluent Zulu.

I remember times as a child growing up and them giving me hidings and going to my parent saying, "Oh Kevin did this and Kevin did that and the boys were fighting".

And they were a part of our lives and when one of them did decide one day to up and leave, it was a bit of a sore moment = Ja, well, they were part of the family.

I mean, on weekends we would pack up three kids, dogs on the back shelf and we will all go up the coast to our beach house every single weekend. The two Gogos were taken in rotation as to who would come along for the weekend.

And when we were up there, the caretaker, the male caretaker, he would take us and we'd go and pick sugar cane and walk on the beach and = basically [do] anything just to get us out of the house so that Mom and Dad could relax on the weekend. And = still to this day, fifteen years later since he left us, I still remember him. I know where he works, I know what he's up to.

The construction of a helping empire. In reflecting on my own history and because of our socio-political history of cheap labour and oppression, it was possible for many households to adopt a *helping empire*, which would consist not only of one person who would clean but multiple black women who were employed to do domestic tasks, like cleaning, baking and looking after children.

This, I think, had several implications for the identity of women in South Africa. Black women became domesticated, the labour force associated with traditional female identities. White women on the other hand were freed from the traditional feminine roles of cleaning, cooking and child-minding. White women were therefore able join the workforce, earn and spend money, sacrificing time with their children for a more secure financial future. But, also, through the construction of an helping empire, the black

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woman, in sacrificing time with her children, provides them with a greater sense of financial provision (security here is a gross overstatement since domestic workers are notoriously overworked and underpaid). But this financial provision only means that the domestic worker is, barely, able to feed and clothe her children.

The abandonment. The second and fourth paragraphs of Kevin's story indicate such a pronounced sense of loss, where it is almost as if the child in Kevin was the narrator of these sections, saying that he was never given any kind of explanations as to the domestic workers' departures.

This sense of just being left, especially since the domestic workers were considered to be a part of the family, is important when one thinks of the literature on attachment and psychoanalysis mentioned in the third chapter. It would seem as if there is the possibility that Kevin may, although I know so little about him, have internalised a sense of women being objects that leave him without forewarning and preparation. This image is somewhat paradoxically combined with the woman who stays and cares. It would seem as if he may have internalised a split notion of women and maternal figures.

The stable male caretaker. As opposed to the two Gogos who were taken on holiday on a rotational basis, the male caregiver, the one who relieved his parents of their care giving duties while on holiday, seemed to be a stable consistent figure in Kevin's life; more so than the women who were multiple and paradoxical.

What also seems evident here is the longevity of the relationship in Kevin's mind, where he still remembers him, still keeps him in mind. This may point to the longevity of

relationships to attachment figures, or the fact that perhaps this male caretaker was internalised as a whole or part object and incorporated into his sense of identity.

Jenny's story.

Jenny: I just wanted to say that a lot has been said about Gogos but = growing up in Zimbabwe we had a lot of male caretakers which we (politically incorrectly) called houseboys. But = they taught us so much, we had such strong influences from them and there are so many good memories growing up with these wonderful people that were so patient and caring and kind. And I think that has influenced my life a lot and maybe I didn't say "thank you" enough and I would like to say "thank you" now.

The Zimbabwean houseboy. Once again, in our similarly colonised neighbouring country, Zimbabwe, the subjugation, oppression and degradation of the other, in this case the black male *houseboy* is obvious. Also, the issue of naming becomes paramount in the sense that commonly understood terms of reference retain severely degrading connotations.

Jenny, however, manages to create a picture of the male caretaker that is patient, caring, kind, and influential. It seems as if here, too, Jenny seemed to awaken to the general theme of regretting the fact that we could have been more appreciative of our caregivers. In this sense it seemed as if the show, cumulatively awakened our social unconscious, our general understanding of care giving, and what measures are appropriate in thanks.

Dean's story.

Dean: = We still to this day we have our gardener. His name is James. = He is truly a godsend. He has been with us since 1981 when I was just a little boy of 4 years old.

= Now = the reason I think he had the patience of Job is because I am actually blind. = Can you imagine the blind kids; they are a bit more mischievous, a bit more naughty than the sighted kids because obviously they want to know more. = I was impossible and this man = looked after me so wonderfully well, no matter what I wanted to do, from making fires to just being a holy terror, he was there, and he was with me all the way = we still have him today and it is just something really special.

= You must forgive me I am diverting slightly from the topic, but it actually turns out [that I was involved in television] = and he [James] walks around with such pride saying, = “You know I used to play with him and now this is who he is today”.

Needless to say the poor guy never gets leave. I mean they really are amazing, amazing people and I just think that even though we do love them we don’t really give them = the gratitude that we should, from time to time. =

When I made my debut on TV, he was one of the people I really wanted = to watch me and = he did and = it is very, very special.

James the godsend. Dean’s describes his gardener (once again a word that does not capture the relationship) in a particularly idealised fashion. James is a “godsend” and has “the patience of Job” and he seems extraordinarily longsuffering. It almost looks like Dean internalised an idealised version of James and this version (constructed out of real and imagined aspects) seems as if it has become part of his internal world. What is also evident is the fact that James, no matter what Dean did or did not do, was always there. James was present as a figure with whom Dean could have a consistent, loving relationship.

It also appears as if the relationship is based on James and Dean sharing good and bad experiences together; the sharing of personal triumphs and achievements as if they

were your own (the bragging on the part of James at Dean's success); the bearing with the other through all kinds of difficulty.

James the possession. The sentence "we still have him today" jumped out at me in the reading and re-reading of this story. The word "have" depicted such a sense of possession (the theme of possession also evident in my own narratives), that no matter what the rest of the story's content is, I keep having the sense that James *belongs* to Dean.

Henry's story.

Henry: = My grandmother = died in 1928. = My grandmother was a midwife. = She used to go and get the babies from no matter who it was, and she had a very difficult birth once with a black lady and when this baby was born it was a boy and = the [black] woman said, "When this child is big enough he is going to come and stay with you". And true enough when he was four years old he came along and he stayed with = my uncle.

And you know we were a big family. My uncle stayed = [in the] *buitekamer* [a room outside the main house] like the grown-ups or young boys did and = this little boy came, his name was Daniel, = and [he] actually stayed in the room with = these teenage boys and grew up with the family and = when he eventually got bigger he had his room in the *buitekamer*. = [My uncle] grew up and of course = got married and Daniel stayed and = eventually my mother had me.

I was the first boy = and Daniel took me over. = When I was only about two years old he would put me on his bicycle and we would go off into the *veld* [bush] and this man was absolutely fantastic. Today I am very, very field conscious. I know a lot about trees, animals = and everything that I know this man = taught me. He was the man that used to say "Now don't go through life just like that. Look!" His main word was 'look' and 'you will see', and eventually when my uncle died he inherited like anybody else. = [My family] all died [and] he stayed with me until he was well into his seventies and had a stroke and died. So he was like a father to

me. = I was really absolutely heartbroken when Daniel died well in his seventies. =

In those days when the circus came Daniel and I went to the circus. = We sat amongst the non-whites in those days and in those days we could also go to the bioscope because we could sit upstairs = in the gallery and he used to take me to the bioscope and then during the holiday = Daniel never did a stroke of work because everyday we would be into the veld and he would go this way and go fishing that way and we would do this, this way. It was absolutely amazing. Amazing man and an amazing time that I had with him =.

The crossing over of racial boundaries. What was most evident to me in this story, besides the obvious swap of a male caregiver for a female caregiver, was the consistent crossing of racial boundaries, where black and white families mixed, during times of crisis (birth and death) and ordinary times (the movies etc.).

Both Daniel as a little black boy, and Henry as a little white boy, were able to be assimilated to some degree into the racial experience of the other. Daniel came to live in the white family as if he were one of them, included, a part of, and acknowledged through inheritance. Henry, in activities and leisure times, ‘tagged along’ so to speak, with Daniel to sit in the non-white areas of the circus and the movies.

It is my opinion that there may be some implicit social norm imbedded in our social unconscious which allows for children to have done this kind of crossing over without fear of prosecution, persecution or stigma during the time of apartheid. In this way, perhaps many more of us, in far more obvious ways, had the experience of otherness, of being assimilated into another race as part of our growing up here, in this land so divided by racial boundaries.

Intergenerational relationships. Besides the crossing over of racial

boundaries, there seems to have been an intergenerational ‘intertwinedness’ between Daniel and Henry’s family. The intertwinedness did not cease when there was the death of the matriarch, nor did it cease during other life changes, like Henry’s uncle’s marriage. The interracial connectedness continued from generation to generation, passed on implicitly and explicitly between family members. I envision this passing over, this intergenerational relational inheritance, as part of the implicit accumulation of our social unconscious.

He was like a father to me. I have spoken so much about the domestic worker being maternal and here we clearly have a man of a different race becoming a paternal caregiver in Henry’s life. The lessons he learned about the bush, as well as general life philosophies were so emotionally imbued that I struggled not to cry during the telling of this story. It seemed as if Daniel really was like a father to Henry, and I have been considering that perhaps, in a Fairbairnian sense, Daniel was introjected as part of Henry’s ego structure; being layered into his self. It also looks like he was a figure to whom Henry was securely attached, where Henry learnt how to be in relationship, and how others function in relationship to him. Lastly, Daniel still seemed present in Henry’s story, even though he had passed away which suggests, on some level, that there may be continual reference and imaginal dialoguing between the two in Henry’s internal space.

The Child of the Domestic Worker

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What the following stories all have in common is the fact that children of domestic workers called into the show to air their perspectives with regard to not being raised by their own mothers because their mothers were raising other people's children by being employed as domestic workers.

This angle, whilst not being in the forefront of my mind, was something which struck me deeply at Sophie's funeral. I was so acutely aware that I had the benefit of being raised by Sophie and her children had not. I was the one who benefited from her loving gaze, while her children saw her only intermittently. I feel, on some level, that I stole their mother from them, and that they stole their mother from me in the times when Sophie returned home. So, here are the stories of Mandla, Jean and Mbuso.

Mandla's story.

Mandla: = I never had a relationship with my own mother because she was a domestic worker. She was never there at home =.

I was talking to somebody yesterday and saying to them = I've never celebrated a birthday in my life = because my mom was never there. =

I am going to mention I'm going to have a very, very big = 40th birthday. = Because we never celebrated a birthday because my mother was always somewhere and she was = [only] here maybe once a month or = twice a month. = Maybe for a few hours sometimes, you know. = Even now when I am thinking about = it makes my heart sore.

But at the end of the day, maybe somewhere somehow it gave me an education in a way because she was working. She was bringing money. = You know the only thing I thank my mom for is just maybe she gave me an education, through what she was doing, you know? =

It is nice when you talk like the way you are talking, but on the other side you know it's also very sore that = I don't have a relationship with my mother. I am 38 years old now. = I don't

remember sitting [down] with my mother. = I don't remember spending a week with my mother.

The absent mother. Mandla's sadness during the telling of his story was tangible. The loss he experienced with regard to having had an absent mother was so present it became almost overwhelming, especially for me with my residual guilt. But it was such a relief to finally hear that someone else also lost their mothers to economic and political demands, as I feel I have. On that level I could empathise with him – we both feel as if our biological mothers were absent. Where my guilt comes in is when one considers that, possibly unlike Mandla, I had another woman, another mother, who could have been his mother taking care of me. Another difference too, is that my mother, or someone who could have been, was not taking care of him in a maternal sense.

To speak of Mandla's loss in a Kleinian sense, he may still be considered as being in the depressive position, where he has needed to come to terms with losing (so to speak) his idealised mother. The aim of this position is integration of the good and bad parts of an object and this struggle is present in his narrative. It seems as if the loss he feels is almost all-encompassing, and yet he struggles, albeit incompletely to integrate this bad experience of her with a good one (i.e. mother the financial provider). It seems as if constructing the birthday celebration may be his attempt at trying to create new memories of goodness, and togetherness as an act of reparation, an act of restoration of the relationship.

His mother can also be considered as a need-exciting object, in a Fairbairnian sense, where no matter how good or bad the object is in reality or fantasy, the need for

Mandla to have a mother never dissipates. His mother as an object will always incite his neediness to have her and be in relationship to her.

Furthermore, if considered from an attachment point of view, it seems as if his attachment to his mother can be considered as insecure, and there is also a flavour of the attachment being disorganised in the sense that he is so vehement about his mother's absence and yet so needy for her presence.

Jean's story.

Jean: [I'm] the daughter of a domestic worker, a woman that's been a domestic worker for most of her life. = She is eighty-three at the moment and she worked for a family in Seapoint, but you know what is so sad about this is that we as the children, we missed out on a mom. My mother's eighty-three and I'm looking after her.

Looking at the current situation in our country and in our province we have Helen Zille, Premier of the Western Cape. I want to ask, "Where is the justice for our mothers?" Where is the justice, because = woman's work = is underpaid, is undervalued, it's unrecognised.

She is eighty-three and she depends on that pension. You know this family exploited her =, she was their domestic worker. She had to do the cleaning. = She was the nurse for the master of the house because he was a sickly man = and then = on top of that on a Saturday morning she sometimes had to go to the other business and work. = And the money was atrocious.

= If you look at women, women's work is unrecognised still, its underpaid, its undervalued and you have a Premier whose top cabinet, officials, are men. Its totally disgusting.

Making the personal political. This title is quoted from Jones (2005) where she exemplifies the connection between the personal and the political. Here, Jean inextricably intertwines her personal difficulties (i.e. her mother's difficulties as a domestic worker) with the political climate at the time of recording.

At the present time, the first female leader of the Democratic Alliance, and the first female leader of the Western Cape implores to make a difference for women in general. And yet she employed only males as her cabinet members. Jean picks up on the contradictions of the Premier's actions, but continues to plead "where is the justice for our mothers?" One woman in power is not enough, and it becomes apparent that Jean feels dismay at the idea that powerful women seem to change very little for women in general down the line.

Also, however, Jean sternly points out the hypocrisy within the political system, where genders within politics and indeed within South Africa are not equal. She implores us all to hear about the under-recognised work connected with the woman's role, namely household duties and child-rearing.

The bitterness. Finally, regardless of Jean losing out on a mother and whilst considering her mother's sacrifices, it does not seem as if she feels that she has benefited from any of it, because of the inequality of our political and social system. This leaves a feeling of bitterness seeping through her narrative – a quality of having been wronged on a social and personal level; a quality of being wronged by gender inequality and her mother in a personal way. This can be seen (and more specifically heard in her tone) where Jean states that she is now taking care of her eighty-three year old mother – a woman whom she experienced as not having taken care of her.

Mbuso's story.

Mbuso: = When everyone actually talks about a domestic worker it reminds me of my time when I was growing up. My mom was not a ‘stay-in’ domestic worker, so she used to travel every morning and come back in the evening. So she would = wake up at 4 o’clock in the morning and then be ready to go take the earliest bus in the township towards town or to the suburb where she used to work.

Then me and my brothers, we used to take turns, because from = the house = to the bus stop was probably = 2km, and we actually had to walk with my mom to the bus stop = and most times I used to hate it when it was = raining and it was my turn to actually wake up and actually accompany my mom to the bus stop. = Whether it was winter or summer and that used to happen from Monday to Saturday. Fortunately for us on Saturday she would knock off early at like 3 o’clock and maybe we’ll spend some time [together]. I mean Monday to Friday = the only time we are going to see her is in the morning when it is your turn to actually walk her to the bus stop. Then in the evening you won’t actually see her until she wakes you up, “ = it’s your turn to walk me up to the bus stop”. =

Then again it saddens me, you know, but in a way, I mean = we were eight at home so it’s a big family and = I’m well-off now and my brothers and sisters = we stay in suburbs now. = It is sad sometimes yet at the same time actually you think, “wow it is a job, she has to look after her family”. If it means that risking her life in waking up in the morning, risking the cold and all the sicknesses, just to keep other families warm. =

You see these things in the malls, you see these young kids with domestic workers = and then you’ll see them being rude to them and then you actually think, “Geez, why?” Do these kids actually know that this woman, this mother, is having other kids elsewhere = who are crying who are wishing to spend time with her, but here she is in the malls pushing trolleys, pushing prams and everything else and then the kids that she is looking after are actually treating her like S. H. one T. = and then you actually wonder, “Really is it fair?” =

The commuting domestic worker. Mbuso describes in such detail the experiences of a commuting domestic worker and the impact her commute had on her life and the life of her family.

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Firstly, the hours she had to travel were long and arduous, no matter what the weather and Mbuso describes the scene of walking his mother to the bus stop in the mornings with such a sense of being inconvenienced and yet, such fondness since this was the only time he was able to spend time with his mother during the week. I think he captures the ambiguities of being grateful to his mother (for the fact that he is educated and financially independent), and still resenting the situation (the fact that he hardly saw his mother) and all it entails.

This story highlights the fact that there is a selected portion of the population of domestic workers who do not live in the homes of their employers. This does not mean, however, that they are necessarily able to spend more time with their families or children. The sacrifices they make are significant, if slightly different from the domestic worker who lives (isolated and without children) in the home of their employer.

In conversation with my supervisors, I was made aware of the possible intentions of Mbuso's mother in asking her sons to escort her to the bus stop. Something I had not realised (not being a mother myself), was the extent to which children are included in mundane tasks in order for their mothers to be able to spend time with them. If this was her intention, I find the story slightly more endearing since it shows that even though there was very little time to spend with her children, time with them was still important. It may also be that Mbuso, like me, did not have the perspective to realise this intention since it was possibly not made explicit.

On the other hand, and perhaps this says more about me than about Mbuso or his story, I viewed the actions of his mother as purely selfish initially. I could not understand what kind of protection a child could offer his mother on a very early morning in

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Johannesburg. Perhaps, this indicates my own resentment, like Jean's, where, because of my mother's absence, I feel a slight resentment at being forced to be present in her time of need.

Kleinbaas. The last paragraph of Mbuso's story makes us aware that even behind the mundane, the shopping and the walking around in shopping malls, there were major sacrifices on the part of the domestic worker. Most importantly, he almost entreats one to consider the domestic worker as a version of your own mother, and in that way, perhaps she will receive the respect she deserves; the respect which is proportional to the sacrifice of her life with her children.

But also, there is re-enacted again a South African phenomenon (perhaps less prominent now, but of this I cannot be sure) of the children being of higher status than the domestic worker. The terms *kleinbaas* (small boss) and *kleinmiesies* (small madam) are terms which were used by domestic workers to refer to the children of their employer. This term, which indicates a smaller version of the authority figures present in the home, becomes a very accurate word to describe the phenomenon present in Mbuso's last paragraph.

I have found, even in my own narrative, the presence of children (myself included) having more power in the relationship between child and domestic worker, and subsequently, because of these peculiar and tension-filled relationships, children start treating their domestic workers, women who should be treated with respect and as mothers, like 'S.H. one T'.

It is more than apparent to me that it is the historical context out of which this profession was birthed, which influenced the kleinbaas phenomenon. It is precisely because of an implied sense (perhaps passed down through a social unconscious) of racial superiority that white children treat their black minders in rude and disrespectful ways.

On the other hand, I need to keep in mind that children treat their biological mothers in rude and disrespectful ways too, which may indicate that their interaction with the domestic worker is but a mirroring of their interaction with their biological mothers. This could mean that there is a certain level of comfort and trust between domestic worker and charge, where the child feels comfortable enough to treat her caregiver in the way she would treat her mother. This, however, brings us the concept of discipline and I wonder and doubt whether the domestic worker has enough authority within the relationship to deal with her charge's rudeness.

The Employer's Story

The following story, from an employer, was aired as a response to Mandla's story.

Rose: = First of all Mandla = you know you have just shown me the other side of it. = There they were looking after our kids and you [the domestic workers' children] were almost the lost generation.
Mandla I didn't get it if your mother is still alive. = If she is go and love her and tell her how much you appreciate the fact that she had to leave you and earn a living.
= What I want to say is I'm extremely fortunate in that I'm now sixty-two but I'm not a spring chicken anymore. At the age of twenty-three as a young married woman we bought our first house and we = inherited with the house the lady that had worked for the previous owners. Her name was Betty = and Betty = is still alive. = [Over] forty years of being my mother (she is older then I = was at the time). She raised my children. =

I started paying her R20 a month. Can you believe that? =
R20 a month forty years ago and we thought that was quite high. =
She was getting a lot more than other domestic ladies were. =

I'm so fortunate in that she is still alive. She came in today.
She comes in twice a week. = She is wonderful. I love her. She
raised my children. She is almost my best friend and I've never
even thought of the possibility of her dying.

Jana you have really shocked me over there you know I'm
sort of sitting going, "Oh my God! Please Betty don't die!" =

The inter-show dialogue. I so enjoyed the fact that listeners responded to other listeners' stories on this show. This phenomena created an interconnected web of dialogue around my topic, which I believe served to open up pathways of thinking and relating that were previously closed.

Rose was shown the other side of her story. She had the opportunity to look into the shadows that her life cast and realise the perspectives present in this phenomena. Rose also had the opportunity to try, through empathy, to understand the social, political and personal complexities to the domestic worker system.

I so appreciated her heartfelt concern and admonition to Mandla, encouraging him to find some basis upon which he could restore his relationship with his mother. As a mother herself, it almost seemed as if she was able to walk in Mandla's mother's shoes, realising how much his mother may need the appreciation Mandla seems unable to give. On the other hand, she was able to relate to Mandla too, envisioning a future where he may be, as I have been, unable to tell his mother just how much he appreciated the life (however imperfect) she had enabled him to live.

The lost generation. I, along with Rose, realised that we as South Africans have a lost generation, namely children who were not raised by their biological mothers. Both

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children predominantly raised by domestic workers and the children of domestic workers, have been raised by women who are not their biological mothers. The mothers of children like me and children like Mandla (to use him as an example), were lured and driven into the labour force in order to sustain the livelihoods of their children.

What could the sociological consequences of this lost generation be? I'm not sure I have the answer to that question, but I can throw my mind open and imagine that perhaps, just perhaps, this sense of abandonment and being unmothered, may be one of the remaining roots of antagonism within this nation. Perhaps it could even be linked to our crime rate in South Africa, where unmothered children are driven to fend for themselves in criminal subcultures.

But, as also seen, this unmotheredness, which burdens both the Black(s) and the White(s), could, through stories and dialogue, pave the way for a greater sense of understanding and reconciliation.

The inherited domestic worker. This phenomenon of inheriting domestic workers I find particularly alarming. What I find even more concerning is that it still occurs today. While I had heard about the phenomenon of buying a house, and 'inheriting' or 'purchasing' the domestic worker who used to work for the previous owners, this phenomenon only recently became part of my own reference system.

A friend of mine recently bought a home, and was told that the domestic worker did not want to leave the property and would he mind if she stayed. On the one hand, I understand that finding somewhere to live is a difficult prospect especially for domestic workers who are chronically underpaid. I also understand that families downgrade,

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selling bigger properties for others where domestic workers are no longer necessary and therefore, ensuring that she remain on the property may be some way of extending a helping hand.

On the other hand, this phenomenon highlights the dependency of domestic workers on the family they work for and the space that family gives them to occupy. It signifies that the room, for some, is more important than the family ties, perhaps. It highlights that domestic workers become part of the properties they work in, not the families they work for. Domestic workers are therefore, when inherited, somehow sold along with the properties. How is it possible that our society allows for women with families to be bought and sold as part of inanimate objects?

My best friend. What Rose captures so beautifully here, is a relationship which I believe is also under-explored – the relationship between the mother and the domestic worker. While cartoons like *Madam and Eve* do acknowledge this relationship, it is not prominent in any kind of research.

She seems to honour domestic workers in general as ‘ladies’ and this connotes a sense of royalty, dignity and refinement. Just in the use of this word, Rose seems to give the domestic worker a greater femininity and higher status than the much troubled (and perhaps consistently offensive) term ‘domestic worker’ can connote.

It seems like this pair, the female employer and the domestic worker, because of the possibility of their daily close contact, become dear friends to each other, and share a major part of each other’s lives. They become dependent upon each other, not just

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financially or otherwise, but I believe on an emotional level they depend on the friendship and companionship the other provides.

With this emotional dependency as a backdrop, Rose's cries, begging Betty not to die, become even more poignant, because she, in the event of Betty's death, would be losing one of her closest companions, and woman who has shared her life on a daily basis and in an intimate and meaningful way. This relationship, still hidden and obscured, is more than worthy of public recognition.

The Interdependence: Being Raised by a White Family

The following stories depict domestic worker's children and employers of domestic workers, calling in to talk about the interconnectedness of the two familial structures. It became clear from these stories that there is a great amount of interdependence, where domestic workers spend most of their time with white families in order to provide for their own. While the situation is difficult and paradoxical, it seems as if there is much appreciation and acknowledgement in these stories with regards to the contributions each party, made in different ways, to the children involved. Here are the stories of Jane, Octavia, Sibongile, and Elizabeth.

Jane's story.

Jane: = I am married, I would like to share a little of my Gogo when I was young. We are still very much in contact. We were six kids and what a great woman she was. She used to cook for my mom – bake bread. We used to sleep, she used to read us stories. = I have one son – married – he is in the medical field. And then my dad at that time had a little business

and she used to run it and then she got married. She's got two beautiful daughters of her own. She named them after my sisters. Then she did = live-in nurse training. She = [works at a] hospital = [these days].

So one day she was waiting for her lift outside the hospital on these benches and then there was a student sitting next to her and as he was reading a book she looked up and then her eyes went on his name badge and [she saw] it was my son. And then she said, "My word! I know your mom!" and tears rolled down her cheek.

One day [she saw] = my other son [who] was also a student at the same hospital and also in the medical field and then she looked on the name badge and = she told him, = "[your] mom is my sister". = And you know we are still in contact = [and] whenever we have functions in the family we regard her as our older sister.

Intergenerational recognition. From Jane's story, the domestic worker who raised her and her five siblings was so much a part of their existence, that once again, we find that Jane's domestic worker named her children after members of her family. This shows the level of regard Jane's domestic worker had for Jane's family, in wanting to remember them in an intimate and consistent way. I'm sure that every time she calls her daughters by name, she must illuminate some connotation to Jane's sisters and her family.

What I found inspiring here too, was the fact that, once knowing the family name, the domestic worker and the family continue, in true secure attachment style to have a supportive relationship with each other. The longevity of the relationship established between Jane and the domestic worker who raised her, where they view each other as sisters, is worth noting and celebrating.

The level of emotion present in this narrative, where Jane's domestic worker is said to be crying and Jane herself seeming rather emotional in the telling of her story, shows the depth of the relationship between these two women.

But, for the purpose of being critical, I question the amount of contact these women have on a daily basis (not that this is a prerequisite for a deep and meaningful

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relationship, however). What bothers me is that Jane's domestic worker, if having to look at Jane's son's name tags in order to recognise them, could not have been in recent contact with Jane's family. I get the feeling that perhaps this woman, who was meaningful to Jane, has in turn, not been introduced as such to her family, and she certainly is not a consistent member of their household as a sister may be.

This just highlights some of my own difficulties where as can be seen in my own narrative, I had difficulty creating a public space for Sophie, and carrying her through my life into every sphere. Where Jean does acknowledge her domestic worker's public presence, is the fact that she has been invited to participate in parties, something I deeply regret not having done enough.

Octavia's story.

Octavia: = I just want to say thanks to the white family that raised us. My aunt who was a domestic worker. =The = family raised us very well. They had so much positive contribution into our lives. = I feel I need to say, "thank you" to the = family =. They knew our birthdays. Whenever we were in their yard they knew who we were. I spent quality time with them.

The white family that raised us. And here we have the white family who 'raise' the black children in the domestic worker's family. Although this story is short, one can see the gratitude for the time that the family spent with Octavia, even though I feel that this sense of gratitude (when examined) is rather disturbing.

The fact that Octavia is grateful to the family for merely knowing who she was, is hugely concerning. I wonder why Octavia considered this to be out of the norm, and I think the answer lies again in our political and racially segregated past, where hatred for

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another race was more acceptable (and if not more acceptable then certainly more commonplace) than positive contribution. In some way, no matter how appalling it may sound, it was out of the norm to know, recognise and name the children related to your domestic worker, but remember and acknowledge their dates of birth. That Octavia is so grateful for this basic human decency enrages me, to the point where I find it difficult to inhabit the kind of society which could birth such inequality.

Sibongile's story.

Sibongile: = I just want to talk about my grandmother. = She used to work for a certain family = as a domestic worker, and when = the mother of that family passed on = they left a will and in the will they left quite a large sum of money for her, as well as royalties to a certain mine that they had. = And fortunately = one of the terms in the will was that they had to create a trust, an education trust for her kids and the next generation. = And that's how my parents got to benefit in terms of going to school and that's how we also got to benefit in terms of going to school and to varsity and all of that. = So as much as she was not able to spend a lot of time with her kids, which is my mom and my aunt, = we all got to benefit in terms of getting an education and going to school. =

Setting up their children's children. During the telling of this story I became overwhelmed with emotion, because I used to have fantasies of being able to give Sophie's grandchildren what she gave me and I arrived, like a white, female Father Christmas for her funeral, bearing gifts which I thought would make the pain of the loss evaporate.

This story is also particularly exceptional in the way it contrasts with previous stories. In Rose's story the domestic worker is inherited, where in the present story she receives an inheritance, and a sizeable one at that. To reflect on the irony of the word

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inheritance here, it is considered to be something of value. Inheriting a domestic worker is a derogatory concept, devaluing the domestic worker to the level of merchandise. On the other hand, this is slightly tweaked by this story in which inheritance does add lasting value to the lives of the domestic workers children. In this sense, perhaps the concept of inheriting a domestic worker highlights the value gained by the inheritance of a person with a property.

I feel that in some idealistic society, the domestic worker's children's children should in some way benefit for her sacrifices. They should benefit for the loss their parents suffered. What strikes me though, is the way in which domestic worker's families may benefit. This beneficence occurs on a mostly financial level, where they may be financially provided for and therefore have more educational opportunities.

But, what I struggle with, even though I celebrate this story, is the fact that, for me, there is no level of financial compensation that can ever replace the love and presence of a mother. Perhaps, however, the trust enabled Sibongile's mother to be more present in her life.

Elizabeth's story.

Elizabeth: = I just want to say to you there is also a happy side to = people and their domestic workers. I have two sons and their families who now live in other countries. They each had a domestic worker =. They built them a house. They educated their children. They have left them life-long pensions and when they come out to this country on holidays they shower them with gifts. They give them a holiday as well and they are in touch with them all the time. = And = both these domestic workers were only like sixty = when they retired them = which is much earlier than a lot of other people retire and they have been left so well-off. = So there is a different

love for domestic workers. = And they are in constant touch with them from overseas still as I say when they come out here they treat them royally – its unbelievable. = And I mean even their house, fire insurances are paid for them by my children. = And, as I say, I just can't believe it myself when I see how they shower them with love and everything still.

The happy side of the relationship. Just in case I had forgotten, (and here reader I hope you sense my agitation), Elizabeth called in to remind me of the good, unbelievable and happy side of the relationship between the white family and the domestic worker. It seems as if she tried to create an idealised version of the benefits that domestic workers received, just to make us all remember that we are 'not all that bad'.

While I acknowledge that there are various ways in which domestic workers benefit from their work, I find it difficult to include this story, even to comment on it because there was something so self-justifying, so self-righteous in the tone with which it was delivered that it triggered an anger and cynicism in me which no other story did. It is included here for its 'otherness', for the fact that it was not the story I wanted to hear; for the fact that perhaps I heard it wrong and am now unable to see through what I thought I heard. Perhaps, reader, you should make up your own mind with regard to this one.

In conversation about this story with my supervisors, I became aware that Octavia (the grateful grandchild of a domestic worker) and Elizabeth are almost inversions of each other. I seem to think that Elizabeth would expect the bizarre gratitude present in Octavia's story from the domestic workers mentioned in her story.

While my frustration with this story is clear, I also don't want to be totally unjust in not presenting the idea that good deeds are present within it. I understand that in the majority, employers do not build their domestic workers homes, or 'shower' them with

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gifts. I praise the way in which the domestic workers were somewhat recompensated for the work they had done. What is worrisome though is that this kind of behaviour, far from being expected and commonplace, is perceived as rare and that is why it is deserving of praise. I wish all domestic workers would be recompensated in whichever way, in line with the meaning of their work, and where this recompensation would become expected and not in need of assertion.

The General Resonance with the Research

- Zandi: I think your talking is very, very good = because it speaks to the very height of our society = with mothers being the pillars of the society and I think historically it raises some = very interesting points about the strength of a woman.
And then another thing that it touches, or it could touch, is the subject of reconciliation amongst the youth = because for long now some of us didn't understand why our mothers had to leave us and go to = raise other kids. =
I find it very = intellectually stimulating and I just wish you the best. I wish they give you a distinction or something. = Is this a qualitative or a quantitative study?
- Jana: It's a qualitative study and thank you so much for your enthusiasm about it. = It's more important for me that people start thinking about these issues than the mark I'm going to get at the end of the day.
- Zandi: Exactly, that's what I like, because you're opening up spaces that were previously closed. = Some people didn't raise the questions and it's very interesting for the youth of today to be engaging about these things and I really wish you well.

Opening spaces that were previously closed. This student called in to resonate with the topic in a social and academic sense. She brought in an institutional and academic voice to the discussion which I valued. Zandi helped me to reflect on the

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purpose of any kind of research and I realised, after her comment, more so than ever before, that the purpose of research for me is to open spaces that were previously closed. This research has aimed to open up pathways of discussion, to forge new interactions, to interlink new members into the discussion.

In particular, Zandi states that she believes this discussion to have opened up a space to start a reconciliatory process amongst the youth, where young South Africans may be able to gain a greater level of understanding of the position of the other. We have been able to consider how many of our experiences are shared, how many of our experiences are mirrored. My mother working mirrors the domestic worker leaving to raise children like me. We stand in the nooks and crannies of each other's experience and through discussion, through asking questions, new pathways into those nooks are created.

The Thank You's

The following three men, Monchu, Frans and Mgleli, form a somewhat conglomerate voice, not a story per se, but a voice of thanks for the discussion which I believe deserves to be aired and discussed again.

Monchu's voice.

Monchu: = I'm just grateful that we = appreciate the domestic workers [and] they are doing work that our parents haven't found time to do due to their busy schedule = and I just want to be grateful that I was raised by one. I'm a very young guy; I'm achieving a lot in life because I've been taught from a domestic worker. I would call her

my mother because she taught me what's wrong and what's right. I would never look down upon them. They would always be my pride, and I'm just grateful that I had one =.

Monchu's story oozes gratitude and respect for the dedication and love of his domestic worker. What I also like about this contribution is that it raises the issue of domestic worker performing the role of moral educator – a caregiver instilling in the lives of those she raises the moral conditions of what is right and what is wrong. While I am by no means presuming that this binary opposition of right and wrong is an absolute, I think this contribution highlights a further function of domestic workers in the lives of their charges.

Frans' contribution.

Frans: = Jana really = does something like the reconciliation committee tonight because this matter had to be addressed for a long time. =
A young girl took care of me and her name was Nana =, and I have never had any touch with her since then but in the last time I've been thinking about her a lot and wondering how she was and where she was so I'm just saying tonight, "Nana, thank you Nana, ma Nana, thank you very much for everything you did for me and I wish my spirit will be connecting with yours and that you would know that I was thankful today for what you did for me".
Thank you Kieno. Thank you Jana.

Frans' contribution resonates with me on such a deep level. There are so many of the women who formed part of my caregiving conglomerate that I have not had any contact with since they left. I too wish to thank them for their contributions in my life – no matter how short lived they were.

I also find it startling that such close relationships are allowed by all concerned just to evaporate. I wonder why we feel it unnecessary to remain in contact with these

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women after employment ends for whatever reason. While I understand that the children in this scenario have very little control over the coming and going of their caregivers, it raises a concern on the part of both domestic worker and employer to deal responsibly with this close and intimate relationship. As intimated in my previous research, it is possible that losing contact with these attachment figures may be psychologically harmful to both the child and the domestic worker.

Frans also gives a plethora of thanks, both to the domestic worker who raised him and to Kieno and me for the discussion, which to him also had a reconciliatory feel. I am and was deeply touched by his gratitude.

Mgleli's contribution.

Mgleli: = This is so emotional for me and = congratulations man you brought us something that really takes us back, that makes you think, it makes you look back. If you were a child of a domestic employee you look back. If you were a child of family who had a domestic employee you were raised by one, it makes you look back as well. So you've got two angles here that are looking at this.

Kieno: And the third angle is if you are currently have a domestic worker, hopefully this has given you a bit of a rethink if you didn't think about it in the first place =.

Mgleli: But thank you for the show because we wouldn't have been raising these questions. = We have overlooked this so much

What is most apparent from Mgleli contribution is the idea of having various perspectives of the same situation. No matter on which side of this relationship you are, whether you are an employer, a child raised by a domestic worker, a domestic worker, or the child of a domestic worker, the topic and the show allowed for a multiplicitous view of the topic.

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He also raises a call for nostalgia, a call for us to look back and examine our lives and relationships, a call for us to examine the impact of our position and roles on the other parties tied up within the relationship between domestic worker and the child she helps to raise.

Also, Mgleli's emotionality is, for me, a prime example of the resonance with the social unconscious of our country. Even though he does not appear to be involved as a participant in one of the roles connected with the topic, he does feel the emotional resonance with the story.

The Challenge

Bongani, impassioned, implored me with the following story.

Bongani: = This topic has touched me. It has made me = reflect.
= It's true we leave our kids with these individuals but I wish that our stories should not be how appreciative we are when we reflect back at how they have raised us, [how] they've raised our kids. = I think the future stories must be what has been our contribution to their lives = and [this is] my appeal to South Africans who are fortunate enough to have domestic workers. I believe the story has = a = [bigger] meaning when at the end of the day the appreciation is also being extended to the giver.
= I love the topic but = the scale is tilted the other way and what I'm learning as an individual = is, I want to contribute, to tilt it the other way. = Then this domestic worker retires and she can also go back and physically say this is something that I've worked for, this is the appreciation. = I would not pride myself to relate the story of how good [domestic workers] were, it's [a] job half done. I'm just challenging all of us. I'm involving myself, I think we can raise this bar = [higher]. = What I've learnt in this show is that I'm not doing enough. = I want to do enough and that's what I've learnt. =

I don't want my kids to tell how good Gogo was, but I want Gogo to say, "You know what? It was worth it for me to raise those kids."

Jana: And I think you have just kind of re-challenged me, I think, as well in the sense that... umm... perhaps just chatting about it isn't enough, you know. Perhaps more can be done. Perhaps I could have done more. I know could have done more but perhaps I can do more with my own future with my own children and my own domestic workers and their lives.

I realised during the show that there would be no other way for me to finish this chapter but with Bongani's comment. Bongani made me realise that there has been a fatal flaw in my research, and perhaps pointed out that which I already knew – the fact that I did not give my appreciation to Sophie in a tangible sense while she was alive, so that she could be in the position to show others how much I loved her. I did not give her the opportunity to show others, her public space, just how much I loved her. I did not allow her the opportunity to be proud of me and our relationship in a public space. The closest I came to her being able to be proud of me, proud of us, was when we arrived at her funeral.

I was also made aware that writing this thesis, all these words and pages, mean nothing if they are not followed up with action. This work means nothing if it is not used to provoke thought, restorative action and change. Perhaps I have not gone far enough; perhaps I have not done, tangibly, as much as I could have. I am exhorted to do more, to create more awareness, to forge new pathways through doors that are bolted shut. I am committed to what needs to be done in order, not only for voices and stories to be heard, but for change to come along the new roads built by these voices.

Chapter Nine – The Aftermath

In this chapter I hope to provide some indication of the effects of the data gathering process. It is divided into two sections, Personal Reconnecting and Women's Day Luncheon Honouring Domestic Workers.

Personal Reconnecting

After collecting the research data, I received two very special phone calls from people whom I had long since forgotten. The first was from my aunt who had listened, quite by accident to the 702 show as syndicated on *Capetalk 567*. The second call came from my childhood drama teacher and mentor.

I saw my aunt recently when she stopped over in Johannesburg on her way to Mozambique. The last time I saw her was in excess of eight years ago. She happened to be listening to the show absentmindedly, recognising my laugh somewhere during the show. It was a meaningful reconnection for me, in the sense that through the show I was able to open up personal pathways of communication and connection.

When my childhood drama teacher called the day after the show, I burst into tears, so happy was I to hear her voice. She encouraged me to continue with the work I had been doing – encouragement I needed at the time. I had become disillusioned, wondering whether the work I had done was really able to bring to mind different patterns of thought and practice. On a more personal level though, I felt as if my work had the power to

reunite me with other important figures I had somehow lost touch with along the way. I realised that no matter who was lost, I could mend the ties that bound us in the first place.

Women's Day Luncheon – Honouring Domestic Workers

I was contacted via email about a month after the data collection process by the producer of the 702 show. She informed me that a woman (Zamo) had contacted the station and was interested to speak with me with regard to the show. I called Zamo, the founder of a small, newly-formed social activity group called *Young Active Citizens*. She had heard the interview on 702 and decided to actively do something to honour the domestic workers in our lives. Here is a summary of the group and their agenda:

Subsequent to a thrilling and very successful 2009 election drive, we, the young, active and responsible citizens of South Africa truly deserve to give ourselves a thunderous round of applause for entrenching our 15 year-old democracy through voting – the premise of **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**.

Thus, today we are heeding the...call by the new administration led by our fourth democratically-elected President Jacob Zuma to tirelessly work together with government to ensure that we build a better South Africa for ALL.

We are urging you to join us in making a patriotic **PLEDGE** to exhaust the blogosphere with robust debates, comments, views and suggestions on how we (young, active and responsible citizens) can work diligently in partnership with those we've elected into office, to make sure that essential services are delivered as promised.... A thousand (1 000) pledges is our target. So waste no time. Make your patriotic **PLEDGE** today!

After collecting all the pledges, we will then begin our next phase of robust discussions on topical issues of social and national concern, with the main aim of coming up with solutions that'll be of long-lasting value in our respective communities.

So let's all join the movement and create a society of young people who are social activists! [emphases not mine] (Nkatshu, 2009).

I became very enthusiastic after the phone call, although I remained generally uninvolved with the organisation of what was to be named *Women's Day Luncheon* –

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Honouring Domestic Workers. I was so pleased that a concrete intervention was made, some action taken, as a direct consequence of a very humble undertaking. Zamo asked me to speak at the luncheon, as I was her so-called inspiration for the event. What follows are the details advertising the event:

On August 10, the Young Active Citizens plan to host a luncheon for plus/minus 100 domestic workers who are located in Johannesburg and the proximate areas.

Because Women's Day (August 9) falls on a Sunday, August 10 (Monday) will be the official day to mark this significant day in the history of our country. To resonate with the spirit of the class of 1956, August 9 still remains one of the commemorative days that remind us of how powerful, gallant and tenacious women are both at home...and in society at large.

In our efforts to remember our history and continue to venerate these...women who make a difference in our society, the Young Active Citizens will celebrate this year's Women's Day by honouring women who perform arguably one of the toughest, but nurturing jobs; yet they still remain undervalued...

Some of the women comprising of the 20 000 strong crowd that marched to the Union Buildings in 1956 came with their offspring on their backs, including nannies and domestic workers, who...also came with their employers' children. Hence we saw it apt to celebrate Women's Day with these women who, some at old age, are the sole bread-winners back home, by hosting a luncheon in their honour at the Sophiatown Lounge in Newtown, Johannesburg...

One of the aims of hosting this gathering is to purely give thanks to our mothers, aunts and sisters, but more importantly we want to reassure them that no matter the circumstances, the job they do is of inestimable value and though we don't get to appreciate them as often as we should, but their strength, courage and resilience is venerable.

By embarking on this humble initiative, we (Young Active Citizens) seek to affirm and always remember the societal significance of this underrated line of work.

Young Active citizens: Celebrating the strength and resilience of society's caregivers! [emphases not mine] (Nkatshu, 2009).

Employers were asked to sponsor their domestic worker for this luncheon at R200 per head, which included a three course meal at the restaurant and drinks.

From the above two excerpts, one is able to glean the political basis for this organisation, and this political basis is used to activate individuals to inspire change.

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This political basis resonates very loudly with my own thinking in terms of the fact that the personal is inextricably linked to, and a product of, the political, each space influencing the other.

The only assistance I gave in organising the event was to suggest that they try create a follow up interview with both radio stations. This was granted. Kieno Kammies interviewed Zamo the week before the event to drum up support for it. Zamo was also granted an interview on SAfm in a lunchtime slot. In addition, there was some publicity on our national television broadcaster (SABC) on their morning show.

So, the day, which I had been greatly anticipating, arrived and I had no idea exactly how many people would be at the venue, or how many other speakers would be involved. I brought the three domestic workers who work for my family with me (to the event). We were welcomed, warmly, on our arrival at midday and my three guests were escorted to receive a back and shoulder massage each. I thought this was such a well-conceived touch, providing these women who have so little time for luxury, with a taste of relief and a sense of being spoilt.

After our arrival, I felt a little uncertain of exactly what I was meant to be doing, so I offered my assistance to the Young Active Citizens present, laying tables and preparing gift packs (containing various magazines, promotional items, CDs, and a handwritten thank you note from the group). These gift packs were a lovely idea, physically showing appreciation for the women who work so tirelessly for us.

An hour passed. Domestic workers started trickling in slowly but surely, and I took up a seat watching as the day unfolded. The venue was pleasant, with large open space, half of which was filled with numerous tables set up and decorated in honour of

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these domestic workers. The other half of the restaurant remained open for the use of other patrons in this bustling area of Johannesburg. I suspected that this may become a problem, since our event was by no means cordoned off from the view or noise of the general public. There was also no sound system, which proved problematic in trying to communicate with such a large audience in an uncontained space.

At around one-thirty, all the women were asked to take up their seats and were welcomed by the organisers. I wasn't the only speaker, the line-up of speakers included local radio celebrities, representatives from the Department of Labour and *Proudly South African* (a group specialising in the promotion of South African products); and one representative of *Domestic Bliss* (a skills training agency for domestic workers).

Lunch orders were taken and then the waiting began. As each speaker (whom I struggled to hear over the general din) finished, I anticipated the arrival of my starter (a measly garden salad), which never did happen. Finally, the honoured guests received their starters at around quarter-to-three. The starters were served in tin plates, reminiscent of those reserved for domestic workers during the times of apartheid, where all cooking and eating utensils were kept separate between Black and White, domestic worker and employer. I found this addition to the day misjudged and insensitive. I was totally horrified that something that may be considered postmodern-cool, the use of these plates in up-market establishments, could so insensitively be placed in front of those who were so consistently denigrated by this practice. While the use of tin plates seems to be general practice for *Sophiatown* (the restaurant), perhaps extra attention needed to be paid by the organisers with regards to this practice.

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I continued waiting to speak, a speech I had been agonising over. I began wondering, with the increasing noise levels as more people filled the restaurant, how I was going to project over the noise of the crowds. Thankfully, I hoped, I had been trained in the dramatic arts, and would be able to use these skills.

As I glanced around the room, I saw bored black women, staring into space, unable to hear any of the speakers. One for one, I saw these ladies push away their tin plates, containing cold and almost inedible food. Sighs went like a Mexican wave throughout the gathering.

I began considering why I had committed my own public holiday to this enterprise. I could have gone away for the weekend, or had a massage of my own. Then it struck me that the domestic workers, also gave up their public holiday to be at this gathering which was supposed to serve in their honour, and to their benefit.

Finally my turn came, and with my stomach rumbling, since I had not been provided with a stitch of food, and a similarly hungry crowd I screamed my speech over the general bustle. I changed my starting sentence with a holler at the crowd asking who might be hungry. The women started laughing uproariously. I thereafter started my speech. Here is what I said:

To start, I would like to thank Young Active Citizens for inviting me to speak here today. It has been a long time since I have come across such a proactive, creative group involved with important social issues.

Let me tell you a little about me and the work I do. Sophie worked for my family since I was three weeks old as our domestic worker. Sophie retired when I was sixteen, moving back to the Transkei to take care of her grandchildren. She died very unexpectedly when I was twenty-two. I was extremely sad and consumed with regret and guilt. I felt as if I had lost the woman who was like a mother to me, as if the pain I felt because of losing her would never stop. My actions towards her, however, during the latter part of her life did not show just how much I love her. I hardly ever called her on the telephone and while I was overjoyed when she came to visit, I was too busy to spend time with her. I regret

not taking the chance to share the depth of my love for her. At her funeral I realised that the only way I would be able to contend with my grief would be to take some kind of action. I vowed on the ten-hour ride home from her burial that I would make some kind of plan.

I started, soon after Sophie's death, to think of ways in which I could make known how meaningful our relationship was to me and I interviewed various domestic workers, trying to find out what their feelings were towards the children they helped to raise. The first part of my work focused on the idea that domestic workers spent so much time with the children they help to raise, that they begin to love and care for them like their own. I'm sure many of you can relate to how these women felt. They cared deeply about the children they were involved with. They wanted to continue having a relationship with them even after employment ended. They saw themselves as mothers to these children. I wonder how many of you feel like mothers to your employer's children. They experienced that the children they took care of adored and loved them too. The women were desperately sad to leave these children behind when they were separated from them. But, what I also realised is that it seemed difficult for domestic workers to know where they fit in. Sometimes they are treated like family and sometimes they are not. This seems to be one of the bigger problems domestic workers who raise children face.

The work I'm doing now looks at the others side of the relationship – the experience of the children in relationship to their domestic workers. I did two radio shows where people were invited to phone in and tell their stories about the domestic workers who raised them. The response to the shows was overwhelming. People phoned from all over the country and even Zimbabwe to honour their domestic workers, to say how much they loved and appreciated them, for all the work they did and the love they shared. The idea for this lunch apparently also came from just listening to the show. Children of domestic workers called in as well, and their comments made me realise just how much was sacrificed by the women who helped to raise me.

So today I would like to honour all of you for your dedication, your love and your patience in helping to raise the children of this country. Thank you for teaching us how to care for others, and ourselves. Thank you for showing us how to live lives of dignity and compassion. Thank you for being the mothers of a nation – a nation striving for peace and justice.

I hope that we find a future where we raise each other's children together, where mothers and children are not separated, and women do not look down or up at one another. I hope we can stand together hand in hand, as partners, to raise this nation to its rightful position.

To end I would like to play you as song by a South African band called *Hot Water*. The song is entitled *Thembi* and it is about a young man who is thanking his domestic worker for helping to raise him. Here are some of the lyrics:

Thembi my African mother
You took care of me like no other
Instilled in me from youth

The desire for honesty and truth

Now the ancestors are strong in me
I see them in the mountains and in the streams
The ancestors are strong in me
I see them in the shadows and in my dreams...

...
And I thank you.

I thank you Sophie, and all those like you, for loving me like your own, even when it was difficult and painful for you. I'm sorry that I did not tell you enough.

Enjoy your lunch!

I had prepared the manager of the restaurant that I would give them a cue to play the music after my speech was finished. The manager was nowhere in sight and I had to run around trying to find the CD I had given her to play the song. Finally, about five minutes after the end of my speech, a faint *Hot Water*, could be heard. During the song, the women cheered and ululated, and I went to the very back table and held my domestic worker's hand, resting my head on the table. I was so overwhelmed with delivering my story to the women, who by proxy, were like my Sophie that tears were rolling down my face. I was also crying because the day, while well-intentioned, became totally chaotic. Speeches went unheard, our mouths were dry and stomachs were rumbling.

At around four o'clock, having still not received a bite to eat myself, I was tired and wanted to leave. Half of the guests had received their main courses, the others had received nothing. I was asked to stay for the lucky draw, and thankfully, two of the women I had brought won a course each at *Domestic Bliss* (who had sponsored seven courses to women present on the day). They offered winners a choice of prizes – baking, child-minding and general housekeeping courses. My editor alerted me to the fact that even this choice of prize may be considered insensitive. Instead of thanking domestic

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workers for the work they do, they were offered courses which could train and domesticate them further – courses which would enable them to serve us better. We left after this, tired and dejected.

While eating a longed-for greasy take-away meal, having rushed to the nearest spot which could guarantee me a square meal, I reflected on the day with my fiancé. I felt so desperate after this occasion, for two reasons. On the one hand, I felt terrible for the organisers, who had put so much effort into planning a day, from which there was no discernable profit for themselves, and yet, much of it collapsed. They were consistently enthusiastic, well-intentioned and soulful.

On the other hand, I felt ashamed that once again, domestic worker's positions were undermined. No other group of honoured guests would have been expected to wait for four hours for their lunch – the rest of the restaurant patrons came and went, while our party sat, listening and waiting for their meal. I so badly wanted to be able to write this chapter through only praising the efforts of others like me who want to make a difference, but this has not been possible.

While I am enthused by the efforts of Young Active Citizens, and believe that their intentions are noble, the day (in my view) did not do what it was meant to. It was meant to honour and praise these tireless workers of our society, and instead I believe it tired them out further. While the initiative is praised, the execution of the day left much to be desired.

It did, however, come to my attention that the delays and general incompetence surrounding the day were deliberate on the part of the restaurant where the event was held. I find it appalling to think that establishments like *Sophiatown* in Newtown are

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unashamed about making a profit, riding on the backs of these severely downtrodden women. On some level, because of this, I am further propelled to try to make a difference, through continuing research, awareness and action. The organisers asked for an apology from the owners of this establishment, one I'm not sure was received.

I also fear that my criticism here may dampen any further efforts of this kind, which is certainly not my intention. My purpose in this chapter was to critically paint a picture of the day, and reflect upon it. I hope that in contrast to feeling dejected, you see the need, as I do, for further active intervention, since it becomes clear that greater levels of awareness and social restoration are needed in order for these mothers of our society to be treated with the respect they deserve and have earned.

Chapter Ten – Reflection and Conclusion

Reflexivity is a way of working with subjectivity in such a way that **we** are able to break out of the self-referential circle that characterizes most academic work...reflexivity is a way of *attending to the institutional location of historical and personal aspects of the research relationship*...reflexive engagement in research can turn the ‘merely subjective’ into a self-consciously and deliberately assumed position. This *position* of the researcher then makes subjectivity into a crucial resource in the research process, and into something that can be made visible to the reader so that it is useful for them if they want to take the work forward [emphases not mine] (Parker, 2005, pp. 25-26).

Parker (2005) maintains that there are three resources for reflexivity available to a researcher. These are: (a) collective processes, (b) embodied relations, and (c) reflexively relational immanent critique.

Collective Processes

Firstly, pertaining to collective processes, Parker relates how the correct historical and institutional conditions need to be present in order for the researcher to be able to ask certain questions in particular ways. In more detail Parker states the following:

The lesson of this work is that the activity of a research team is crucial to the framing and interpretation of a piece of research and the research cannot be carried out outside a research relationship. The activity of the team may be implicit – present only in the meetings between researcher and supervisor – ...but these collective aspects of what is thought and what is remembered about the research process are crucial to reflexive work (pp. 26-27).

To reflect on the collective processes at play during the research process, on a more macro-level, the research proposal was passed by both the psychology department’s ethics committee and the university’s ethics committee without any trouble. I believe

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therefore that the institution, as a reflection of the academic, social and historical place, portrayed its willingness for these questions to be raised. I find it difficult to imagine these questions being asked (or being authorised to be asked) twenty years ago, when our country was steeped in the darkness that was apartheid. Besides allowing work to be done on this subject matter, the institution also made allowance for less mainstream research methods to be used in this work.

On a more intimate level, I would like to spend some time discussing the research team and our interactions. Since the very beginning of this process, the interaction between my research supervisors and I have been potent, interesting, stimulating and meaningful. I feel as if all team members were willing to allow this work to be shaped by all those participating. There was a constant critical and reflexive stance adopted by my supervisors. While doing so, however, they were supportive and warm. What struck me most, though, is how the content and the topic allowed for all three of us to reflect on our own spaces and experiences. I feel as if the whole team became personally involved, reflecting on the presence of the domestic worker and all the complexities that brings on our own lives and the 'life' of the research.

Embodied Relations

Secondly, let us consider Parker's concept of embodied relations. As researcher, I bring with me certain implicit power differentials in relating to those who have participated in this study. Three aspects of this institutionally embodied power have affected the relationships within this study namely gender, culture and class.

Gender. When considering gender, Parker's (2005) stance resonates with my own: "Aside from the domination of research institutions by men, traditional psychological research practice assumes stereotypically masculine features for predicting and controlling behaviour, formulating hypotheses from existing knowledge and then examining phenomena dispassionately" (p. 31). I think much of my standpoint with regard to this research, in my epistemology, method and analysis, has been to debunk and overthrow this masculine supremacy. As a member of an all-female research team, I have tried to give prominence to the feminine qualities often excluded in research practice. These feminine qualities include using qualitative research, trying to create an emotionally evocative work, allowing for the work to highlight tensions, the use of stories and being vigilant about not reducing complexity. In this way, I have hoped to give rise to a different quality in this work, one that is not ruled by so-called 'scientific principles'. I have shared my heart and person in this work, highlighting my subjectivity and experience. Most prominently, though, I hope my passion, as opposed to dispassionate examination, has been evident in this work. I have tried to fire this topic up to create an impassioned piece of identity performance.

I do, however, think that, in line with the masculinity associated with academia, I did not shy away from employing this quality in many of my interactions with the participants in this work. In particular, the show on *SAfm* was a good example of how, through my inexperience and naivety, I tried to exert myself as an expert on the topic at times, often trying to close down and focus the discussion. I also used this masculine ruse to allow me access to the radio discussion, hoping that research in the more

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masculine sense would create a situation in which I would be more respected and therefore granted airtime. I don't regret the use of this masculinity however, without which this work would not have been brought to fruition.

Culture. Parker (2005) has the following to say about the effect of embodied culture on research relations:

Aside from the predominance of white researchers in mainstream institutions, traditional psychological research is carried out from within the perspective of the dominant culture, so that members of 'other' cultures are assumed to be the ones who have to be specified as different, marked out against the hidden normal behaviour and experience of the white population. The differentiation between what we take for granted and the category marked as 'other' also has consequences for how we define what research itself should look like (p. 31).

Considering the above, this research has been quite peculiarly affected by culture, with different variances of dominant and subservient cultures. While I conform somewhat to white traditions and am a white researcher from a traditionally white research institution, what has been researched here in both topic and method, is by no means dominant.

Interestingly, too, while the 'nanny culture' examined here is considered 'normal' within this country, the relationships within this intertwined phenomenon have long been hidden from the researchers gaze, and it is this notion of domestic workers as taken-for-granted which propelled me to place them, and us as children raised by these caregivers, into the spotlight. In doing so, I feel as if I have managed to try and overthrow dominant notions of what is allowed or not allowed to be researched.

Also, considering that I am White, I no longer form part of the dominant culture in this country as was evident during the apartheid era. In this sense, I am now the *other*, but perhaps it is prudent at this juncture to consider that the notion of the other is rather

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simplistic. Here when considering the concept of the other as defined by political dominance, I am the other, but I still carry with me a history of political dominance, a history of dominance I have benefited from, which could still classify me as somewhat dominant in terms of my cultural space. I consider myself both as the *other* and the *dominant*, since I inhabit this space of transition, the space in-between the two extreme positions. As has become evident in this work, we all carry parts of the other within us, oscillating between dominance and submission depending on which context surrounds us. Therefore what I have investigated is not entirely imbued with either the notion of otherness or dominance. I have found myself inhabiting the in-between.

Specifically considering that part of me that I consider as other, I am the other who investigates a normal occurrence in a culture that used to predominate. On the flip side, I'm the dominant researcher listening to the stories of those who are different to me, the stories of others - the domestic workers and their children. This means that, to some extent, I have felt as if the notion of otherness itself turned a little on its side, if not on its head through this work. But, the vestiges of the predominance of Whiteness still linger in academia and I am well aware of the fact that I perpetuate this lingering.

Class. While culture may have played a slightly more convoluted role within this research, I feel as if class, in all its unexamined glory still holds much sway within this work. Parker (2005) says the following:

Aside from the gross-under-representation of working-class people in higher education, the ethos of academic, governmental and professional research institutions prioritize individual competitive activity, in which the bidding for resources privileges those who already have the time and the cultural capital

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(personal history, educational back ground, appropriate displays of the self though accent, dress and leisure interests) to be able to accumulate even more resources and to sabotage collective forms of research with explicit political agendas (p. 31).

It would have been impossible for someone, uneducated, to have presented this work in the way I have. This work has been formed by my class, education, financially privileged history and my display of myself. All these factors allowed me into the university which allowed for this work to be conceptualised and carried out. I do feel, however, as if I have used my privileged social position with an awareness of the power it carries, trying to expose the voices that have not been heard, the stories that have been silenced.

Also, I have been careful, in my approach to emphasise the social and collective nature of this work in the phenomenon of child-rearing in this country. This I have done on both a theoretical and practical level, where (a) theories like the social unconscious and social ghosts have informed my conceptual basis, and (b) data gathering methods like the radio show have provided a social echo within this work. Incidentally, radio is also the social medium to which most socio-economic classes have access to, which means that on some level, very little socio-economic power was necessary for individuals to participate in the research.

Reflection on the Process

I would like to take some time to make some personal reflections on the research process. While the project continued to expand and contract, in terms of the amount of data I wanted to collect and the methods I would use, there are a few elements which remained constant and crystallised throughout the two-year process.

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Firstly, I wanted my voice to be heard. I wanted a platform on which I would be able to perform my story, not only to provide a therapeutic catharsis for myself, but to provide the reader with a story through which they could live their own. My story is only valuable in as much as it can be related to in a social and performative way. Therefore, I exhort you, reader, to grab on to this work and wrestle with it, think about it, think about you, feel what I felt, and remember when you felt similarly.

Secondly, the focus on stories, starting off as a metaphorical theoretical concept, became more and more primary for me, as I realised that my passion to tell my own story, infused others with the passion to tell theirs. I wanted, always, to create a space in which the individual and social voices and stories could be heard, honoured and reflected upon.

Lastly, the beacon that never wavered in guiding me through the storm was Sophie, my *other* mother, whose memory and imaginal voice kept me holding on to this work. Her invariably social process within my memories and heart continued to urge me towards excellence, striving to create a good work, rather than a large one. Her presence helped to keep me humble, realising that regardless of the institutional and personal pressures this work may face, ultimately, this work was for her. Every word, and every hour of this process is not only in completion of a degree, it is for the woman who loved me and cared for me as her own. The degree merely formalised my impetus in creating a work that would remain and be built upon by myself and others.

To clarify, I believe there were numerous elements of the research process which I consider to be contributions to social science in general and psychology in particular. Other aspects of the research process also contribute directly to society. These

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contributions to the discipline and society with regard to the research process will be examined henceforth.

I hope that this work may become one of the templates that others could use as a basis to start exploring how they would like to tell their stories in an autoethnographic way. I believe I have provided you with a template through which you can relieve and/or create your own experience and feel less isolated because of being able to share in mine. By using this somewhat marginalised research design in a professional, formalised and institutional way, I hope to have brought that which is decentred into the spotlight as a different and valuable way of coming to know.

But, the process of telling my story would not be complete if you reader are not compelled to tell and explore your own story because of reading mine. This work as a personal and political catharsis has hoped to drive to you to action and interaction. I hope that you take up the call, the call to action, the call for reconciliation, the call for understanding. Perhaps through this societal views of domestic workers and their roles in our lives could shift.

Also, the methodologies used here, both in terms of data gathering (letters, photographs and radio shows) and analysis (thematic narrative analysis and visual narrative analysis), may also provide others with a basis from which to begin exploring some new and some not-so-new ways of dealing with data.

What I am particularly proud of is the use of talk radio as a means of sourcing a variety of different voices and opinions with regard to a topic and I believe that the most potent and perhaps important contribution this type of data gathering is able to make is the *throwing-open* of a topic. Through this method, collaborative, unpredictable, live and

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in real-time, one is able to sense the climate or reaction of a particular population to a particular question or topic. Most importantly however, this method gives one the opportunity to create change through dialogue, to affect listeners and contributors on a far broader level. Therefore this method becomes a social intervention, a way of broadcasting the research topic so that it does not remain institutional property. The research becomes public through its method. Through the research becoming public, I felt as if a community of listeners and stories were created, in an interlocking web, which bound us and you together as those who have shared in the creation of this work, new ways of thinking and new levels of understanding.

I also hope to have used existing psychological theory in a postmodern way, which presupposes that I have not thrown out that which is considered modernistic, but used theory (like attachment theory, Fairbairn's object relations, and Kleinian psychoanalysis) as a useful tool through which to explain relationships. I believe the process of learning how to represent positivistic theories in a non-essentialistic and non-reified manner has been useful in terms of providing a manner in which to approach and implement the use of disparate theories. This quality of combining things which are considered to be able to co-exist has been a deliberate strategy in this work (evident in my (anti) epistemology and literature review), and I believe it has been successfully employed in such a way as to be a potential guideline for others.

Reflection on the Data

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I hope to resist, as far as possible, reducing the analysis in the previous sections into neat little themes that I can *discuss*, but it became apparent that there were various social and individual story lines which seemed to pulsate through various stories and my interpretations of these narratives.

One of the primary threads which ran through this work was that of possession. This feeling of possessing the caregiver as existing primarily for the sake of the charge is echoed throughout this work, by my own voice and those of others. This omnipotent possession, where the child finds it difficult to consider that a caregiver can have a life, mind and interest other than the child, may be one of the roots of our inability to value the domestic worker. This sense of possession, where these women (and men) have been inherited like possessions, lessens them into objects which can be possessed, objects devoid of individuality and separateness. Perhaps if we as children raised by domestic workers can hear, and truly hear, that there is a life unseen by us in the vestiges of their lives and minds, we could stop treating these caregivers as objects existing solely for our purposes.

The unseen life of the domestic worker came to light in this work though the voices of the *other* children of the domestic workers, their biological children, who told their stories. These children's stories often echoed my own: both of us had absent mothers and I believe that in this absence we found some way in which to be able to understand and relate to each other.

In addition to the absence felt by many of us as participants, there was also an echo of loss which resounded through the work. I think the most basic level at which anyone could empathise with me and this topic was the loss that I had experienced

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through Sophie's death. Often participants related this loss to their own caregivers, whether they were parents or domestic workers. This thread seemed to indicate that this work had wider resonance than just that felt by children of domestic workers; all those who have loved and lost could empathise with the impetus of this work.

Just as the voice of the other child was heard in this work, so too, the experience of the male caregiver came to the fore with a number of children raised by male caregivers sharing their stories. Many of the themes were similar, where male caretakers became like father figures, and their care on all levels was greatly appreciated.

But, it became clear from the very first, just how this relationship between domestic worker and charge, and all the accompanying relationships, have been created, perpetuated and sustained by the politicisation of the relationship. This phenomenon is a product of a political system, of political oppression, hatred and segregation, and yet, regardless of the macro-political atmosphere, somewhere the germ of human decency and love was allowed to thrive.

It is this love which also resounds through many of the stories presented here; love between the most unlikely characters. This love and care resulted in an intertwinedness between cultures, classes and generations, where black and white families became mutually dependent upon each other. Black and White, young and old, male and female, rich and poor, existed with one another, inextricably linked to one another – all this while political forces were optimised to keep us all apart with laws, policies, bombs, guns and violence.

Lastly, there was a repeated call for action and understanding, a call for a way to be paved towards reconciliation. This reconciliation through action was called for on a

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personal and a collective level, where domestic workers would be able to testify to the appreciation they have received, and the youth, un/mothered, White or Black, could learn to understand and empathise with each other.

The question that remains to be asked now is how these themes and results contribute to social science and society as a whole. I believe most passionately that this work has been able to contribute to the theories used in the literature review in different ways. Let us examine each theory in turn and in terms of how this research has been able to add to, subtract from or provide a different view of the theories used to thematically elicit themes from the narratives.

Firstly, when considering attachment theory, it seems as if the results favour a view of an attachment network existing in all of us. This would link with theories like The Convoy Model (Levitt, 2005), the Social Network Model (Lewis, 2005) and the Affective Relationships Model (Takahashi, 2005). This work seems to indicate that children and human beings are attached to numerous caregivers in similar and different ways, where there seems to be a complex interwoven web of close interpersonal interactions within the child's life. This research seems to debunk the notion that biological mothers are all-important. It also allows for infants to be attached in equally meaningful ways to both mothers and racial, culturally and linguistically different caregivers in a meaningful and secure way. Primarily, this research allows for the scope of attachment to be considered as broader and more complex than perhaps traditionally envisioned.

When considering psychoanalysis – Klein (1952) and Fairbairn (1952/2006) – I became re-enthused with regards to the theories usefulness in trying to understand how

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we incorporate the experience of caregivers into our own hearts and minds. What I found striking is how these two theories of psychoanalysis were so complimentary in terms of the newer postmodern theories of social ghosts (Gergen, 2000) and imaginal dialogues (Watkins, 1986, 1999). I became aware again how numerous objects and part-objects of our caregivers may exist within us, with whom we continue to have an imaginal relationship, even after death or separation. The results also made me aware just how common and poignant loss (a concept Klein focuses on) is in all our lives, providing us with a basis through which to understand one another. Also, just to be clear, while I will not be presumptuous enough to assume that I have made great strides in order to make a substantial contribution to psychoanalysis, I believe that the way in which psychoanalysis has been used here, in the analysis of stories, is a unique and substantive contribution to psychology.

What also became apparent is that the contextual use of the theories presented above created a greater political and personal complexity with regard to the themes used. In line with my social constructionist views, the socio-political context within which this research was imbedded informed the results and their complexity. This means that I hope to have shown that a theory is only as useful as its context allows it to be, and this context then also informs the emergence of the data.

Also, I think it became particularly clear through this work, how the concept and role of the domestic worker resonates within all of us as a concept and a person we understand and know on an unconscious level. I realised that there is something familiar to all of us about a black woman holding a white child because it is part of our societal experience, not merely an individual one. This notion links well the concept of the social

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unconscious. It also relates to the social aspects and the social importance of this work. This work is only complete if it remains spoken about, thought about and acted upon on a societal and political level, some of which was already attempted as can be seen in the previous chapter.

Lastly, I believe this work has made irreversible strides in terms of contributing to the literature available on domestic workers. This work has created new pathways for exploration into new angles of this South African phenomenon. This topic, originally exploring the perspective of the child who was raised by the domestic worker, became so much more complex than that through the process. I believe through this work we may be able to gain insight into the complexities and interrelatedness of us all in relation to each other.

Some of the possibilities for further research would be to explore the following: (a) the experiences of the children of domestic workers, (b) the male caregiver in relation to the children he helps to raise as well as their experiences in relation to him, and (c) the experiences of employers of domestic workers in relation to their feeling toward to those who help to take care of their children.

I would also like to admit here to some limitations this work presents. Primarily, I had hoped this work to be bigger, more participants and more words, than evident in the final product. I had also hoped that the work would contain more depth; something that because of the data collection strategies (talk radio in particular) was not quite accomplished because of the nature of the medium. While my own story contained in-depth work, and the analyses of the stories provided more depth than expected, this work could have benefited from more in-depth work which could have been added in the form

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of individual interviews (for instance). Also, I believe that finding a more aesthetically pleasing medium for the work, like a play or a novel, could have been more useful and congruent in terms of my aims. A play as medium could also have served as a vehicle for an actual identity performance (and re-performance) of the stories gathered here. I hope to continue in this way, taking into consideration my limitations and the new directions which have been opened to me and us by this study. Lastly, it has been brought to my attention that my vision and depiction of domestic worker here has been rather saintly, and this depiction is very much influenced by the remembrance of my primary relationship with Sophie. While I have tried to point out the tensions, the ambiguities within the relationship, perhaps I have not fully accomplished presenting the domestic worker as both good and bad simultaneously. Perhaps, I could have explored the more unacceptable aspects of the domestic worker as person, in order to add to the tensions evident in this work.

Conclusion

The only way in which I could conceivably conclude this work is to indicate that it is by no means 'finished'. One attempt here was to open up the field, not close it down and complete it, so to speak. This work still lives with me in every revision, in every reflexive thought, in a myriad of conversations and memories. I encourage you, reader, not to let this work die with its supposed end. Continue to interact with the multitude of issues raised here concerning us, them, domestic workers, children raised by them,

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children borne by them, employers of them, citizens of here and citizens of there.

Perhaps by not forgetting, we could reconcile, reconcile in our jointly felt loss and love.

A parting poem in remembrance of the black Madonna, stirring somewhere in all
of us:

The Black Madonna's energy has smouldered.
Rejected by the patriarchy,
now she is erupting
in the world and in us,
demanding conscious recognition...

The Black Madonna weeps at times.
At times she is austere.
At times her fierce humor
Cuts through our daily madness...

When she comes in a dream,
She may take us on her lap,
put our head beside her heart,
and rock.

And we know
we have never heard that heartbeat,
never felt so loved.

Sometimes she is strict.
Her discipline is part of her love.
She knows what she is fighting (Woodman & Mellick, 2000, p. 123-126).

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Appendix A

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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jana van der Merwe, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of Pretoria. During my daily commute from Johannesburg to Pretoria, listening to the radio, I became inspired to use the medium as a research tool.

My research is based on exploring the relationship that children, who have been (partly) raised by domestic workers, have with their domestic worker. Furthermore, this relationship will be explored in terms of how the domestic workers may have become an integral part of these children lives, as well as how this relationship is unique to South Africa's political, cultural and historical context.

A call-in radio segment was considered as a way of broadening the scope of this research, by hearing various participants' stories of their relationship with their domestic worker, and in order to place it within the social domain. Conducting a segment of this nature would make topical a relationship which may have been neglected by the general public. It is my view that domestic workers have often helped to raise the children of their employers for decades, and the psychological and relational impact of this has not adequately been explored, and their societal position, despite the important work they do, remains precarious.

If this topic interests you, please contact me in order to work out the particulars (i.e. whether I will be in studio; how long the segment will be; dates etc.). Also attached, you will find the full research proposal, and an example of my previous research work for your perusal.

I sincerely hope that this idea will become workable.

Many thanks,

Jana van der Merwe