Exploring domestic workers' subjectivities through stories of their personal childcare arrangements

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that the reproduction and publication thereof by Rhodes University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the participants who took time out of their own busy lives as mothers and providers to share their story with me. Your excitement and willingness to participate made the completion of this research an enjoyable experience. I have learnt so much from each of you about life, motherhood, society and myself.

I am also dedicating this thesis to my beloved grandmother Cecile Michau, a person who has meant and continues to mean so much to me. Although she is no longer of this world, memories of her continue to regulate my life. Her love for me knew no bounds and, she taught me the value of hard work and kindness. Thank you so much “nana”, I miss you every day.

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ABSTRACT

Domestic service has long been a major sector of the South African labour market, for black women particularly, who must support their family and children. Existing research has stressed the way in which race, class and gender has shaped the oppressive character of domestic service in South Africa. In this narrative study a new slant is provided on this existing theoretical discussion of domestic labour, one that is focused on exploring the agentic human being beyond 'the servant question'. This study uses narrative interviews with domestic workers in Makhanda/Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa to show how we can expand on potentially limited or constricted passive 'domestic worker identities' and ideas/beliefs about women who do domestic work. A performative and positioning narrative analysis is used to explore the subject positions of domestic workers in their stories about their childcare arrangements. This analysis examines multiple shifting identities and positions that are used by domestic workers in relation to their maternal subjectivity and their audience (here, a white trainee-psychologist researcher), while highlighting the significance of narrative methodology in making these positions visible. The areas of focus were their history, experience of domestic work, life outside of domestic work, family network/dynamics and personal childcare arrangements. Under these areas of focus the following was analysed: the ways in which the storyteller positioned herself in her narrative, how she compared/contrasted or located herself in relation to the other, claims of identity that were made, what she incorporated or purposefully left out, words and phrases that were chosen, which sections of talk were embellished or elaborated on and appeals that were made to the interviewer (Riessman, 2002). Through exploring the micro-practices of domestic workers' lives the study found that there were various subject positions constructed and used by this group of women. Findings showed that domestic workers positioned themselves actively as breadwinners, good mothers who give their children opportunities that they were not given, nurturers and crafty

mothers who secure good care for their children. In contrast to these active subject positions, positions of sacrifice were performed when domestic workers spoke about leaving their young children in the care of another while they worked. The study also found that participants managed complex positions of disappointment and unmet expectations for a better life in the new South Africa by using narratives of resistance and agency. In certain instances, identity appeals were made to the interviewer that they, and other women who do domestic work, are entrepreneurial and creative with their income and possess skills outside of their day-to-day household cleaning jobs. This was interpreted as an attempt to extend the domestic worker identity positioning beyond the traditionally accepted notions of unskilled/ uneducated women who do domestic work. In the study this allowed for more subject positions to be taken up in terms of identities and selves, beyond just being a “domestic worker”.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Remunerated domestic work has for centuries provided "unskilled" women with the means to support their families and children, particularly in low income communities. This research study uses a narrative approach to explore a group of domestic workers' subjectivities as mothers, living in Makhanda/Grahamstown, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, who support their family and children as breadwinners. Callinicos' (2007) study is used below to demonstrate how the small, ordinary stories that women tell can extend the scholarship on domestic workers beyond the historical class, race and gender divisions which render them victims of larger oppressive forces, which is the purpose of this study. Her study also importantly reveals that stories are told in relation to an audience (Riessman, 2004) and that there are silences around specific topics due to perceived expectations of the audience and foregrounded social issues. I will now turn to Callinicos' study (2007) below.

Luli Callinicos (2007), a Marxist historian, recorded the life stories of three black women living in South Africa in the apartheid era, who worked as domestic workers in Johannesburg. As older women in their sixties, they reflect on their lives from the 1940s through to the 1980s, drawing out rich accounts of their agency, sacrifice, aspiration and survival. The oral histories are intimately descriptive as Martha Masina, Thokozile Mngoma and Mmapula Sebidi share their personal experiences of being separated from their rural backgrounds and homes and having to transition to the urban space so that they could support their families. Each of the women's stories demonstrate the "capacity for 'ordinary' women to adapt and respond strategically and creatively" (Callinicos, 2007, p.180) despite shared larger structural forces of oppression. This study shows that "life stories have the power to provide vibrant insights into the wider context of society" (Callinicos, 2007, p.153).

1. This document uses the terms 'black' and 'white' in the understanding that they are socially constructed labels whose use has the potential to constitute and reproduce racialised categorization and ways of thinking, but that none the less have, and continue to, reflect and impact on the nature of social relations in South Africa today (Stevens, G., Franchi, V., & Swart, T., 2006). Their use in no way indicates any endorsement on behalf of the researcher of the racial stereotyping implied in the labelling of people based on the colour of their skin.

Their stories reveal unique, idiosyncratic identities, as well as shared selves, a feature of Callinicos' (2007) holistic approach to women's stories. This perspective challenges the victim-representations in previous scholarship on domestic workers that focused on the oppression of this group by white employers in apartheid. I now turn to examples in Callinicos' (2007) study that demonstrates how women's lives as workers, breadwinners, activists, mothers and agents are revealed.

In this study Martha's fond recollection of learning "good housework skills", while working as a domestic worker alongside her own mother and sister on the farm, is used to reveal the resilience of black women when faced with the harsh realities and indignation of life during the apartheid era. The skills which Martha proudly narrates were passed on from previous generations of hard-working women and she revisits the stories of her perseverance, as she is reminded of her mother's determined attitude towards life and their cultural values. These characteristics are highlighted in this study as crucial to Martha's survival in future instances of dispossession and displacement as a domestic worker in the city (Callinicos, 2007). A similar story emerges in Mmapula Sebidi's recollections of her childhood, and how being surrounded by a group of strong resourceful women kept her grounded after she moved from her rural homeland to the city (Callinicos, 2007). Armed with the skills of "housework", taught to her by her grandmother, Mmapula was well-prepared for her job as a domestic worker in Johannesburg (Callinicos, 2007). Callinicos uses narrations of Mmapula's early years in the city to reveal the lonely, confusing and socially isolating experience caused by the live-in arrangements of domestic workers which separated them from their families during that time.

Thoko a self-proclaimed 'urbanised woman' in her sixties, fondly recounts her early memories of helping her family build their three-bedroom house using cow's dung and mud – a skill learned by her father during his rural upbringing. Thoko similarly describes her experience as a live-in domestic worker in the city as socially and politically restrictive,

governed by long hours and low wages (Callinicos, 2007). Thoko, a political activist recollects other women's stories in the Alex township about child-rearing and their struggles to support their families. She tells stories of township women relying on traditional practices and knowledge, such as the illegal brewing of beer, to make an income to feed their children.

All three women in the study lived and worked in the city as a domestic worker for a significant period of time. They reflect on the contribution that their family's rural background and traditions made to their lives as working women, supporting themselves and others in the urban spaces which they occupied. Although the dominant theme of providing for family and children whilst being separated from them emerges from all three accounts, Callinicos notes that children are remarkably absent from the women's stories. There are multiple references to their own maternal figures, however personal narratives of mothering are suppressed (Callinicos, 2007). In the study the noticeable silence around the topic of children is attributed to the scarcity of resources, often resulting in the circulation of children and long periods of separation while children are raised by female family members far away. The focus on "struggle identities" is common in the apartheid era literature and this could explain why maternal subjectivities were withheld for the perceived white audience, and more politicised, cultural heritage resistance stories were foregrounded.

Callinicos (2007) also suggests that the women's personal stories about their children are supressed and emerge only late in their testimonies because they are painful and difficult to cope with, particularly in cases where a child was lost. This possibly reveals the fragility of young lives and the tendency to bury the harsh pains of maternal subjectivity, in favour of black struggle identities as mentioned previously (Callinicos, 2007). Painful, intimate experiences of motherhood and loss seem to be glossed over in the women's oral testimonies and examples of these are outlined below.

Mmapula's brief recollection of conceiving her son when she was a teenager visiting her mother in the city is one such example. She could not rely on the father of her child for support and therefore returned to her homeland where she could nurse her new-born and care for her aging grandmother. Thin descriptions of mothering and child-rearing appear, and the focus of her narration is her experience of the benefits of community life and reaffirmation of her identity and rural values during this time. She returned to the city to continue developing her talent for art and sent money home to support her family. Her son died in adolescence, away from her, in their rural homeland. Mmapula had another child, born at a later stage, whom she was also separated from while she worked in the city, the child was raised by her mother. Martha, also a mother, lost her only live-born child. This life-altering moment is overlooked, and a larger focus is given to her young nephews suffering (while they worked on the farm) in her narrative about children.

Another notable silence in Callinicos' (2007) study was the educational level of the three women. There is no mention of schooling, literacy levels and how this impacted their lives in terms of limited job and career opportunities and choices. There is even less narrated on the educational levels and skills of their children, their hopes and aspirations for the future. Callinicos (2007) suggests that narrative approaches - akin to those in this study - could be used to explore these noticeable silences and further develop our understanding of the "flexible strategies" and resources that are used by women to support the livelihood of their families and children. Callinicos (2007) begins to explore this in her study when she refers to the "commoditising of indigenous knowledge" (p. 168), however a deeper exploration of what this means for women with the added heavy task of child-rearing could provide new understandings of their motivations and resourcefulness. It could also open up alternative avenues of exploration and add to the growing body of knowledge on domestic workers' families and care networks.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 The globalization of domestic work

Domestic work is a global phenomenon that has for decades seen women within patriarchal ideological and social systems, perform unremunerated household duties routinely expected of them in their own homes (Anderson, 2001). Domestic work also refers to the remunerated household labour that is provided by 'unskilled' women in households other than their own, within an informal sector of employment (Anderson, 2001). Domestic workers that provide remunerated domestic labour form an essential part of contemporary dual income households (Ehrenreich, & Hochschild, 2002). Studies have shown that the functionality of the economy outside of the household, in the form of productive labour, has come to rely on this type of remunerated domestic work (Schwenken & Heimeshoff, 2011).

Anderson (2001) argues that even though "domestic work is vital and sustaining, it is also demeaned and disregarded" (p. 1). Despite the globalisation of human rights and the political reform of informal labour markets, domestic labour is still linked to the dark history of slavery and colonialism (Lan, 2003) and patriarchal gendered roles. The global 'domestic work literature' therefore contains many political arguments that illustrate how interpersonal encounters between domestic workers and their employer's serve to reproduce "macro" class and racial hierarchies in the private domain (Ehrenreich, & Hochschild, 2002). Drawing on the above, Lan (2003) used in-depth interviews to explore the relationships and social boundaries negotiated by Filipina migrant domestic workers and their Taiwanese employers. This study was particularly interesting as it emphasised the private household space as a microcosm that mirrors the macrocosm of social inequalities found on a global scale.

In an American context, Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2002) critically show that the modern-day burgeoning of the women work force has created a 'care deficit' in households. Women are trading in their expected maternal gendered 'domestic' duties for professional

careers. This means that gendered responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and childcare are being outsourced to (less-skilled) female hired labour. In developed contexts such as the United States remunerated domestic work relies on migrant labour, women who are less formally educated from poorer countries that have moved to more developed countries, to work in the informal labour sector. Some women are afforded the opportunity for careers, leisure and quality time spent on the educational and developmental needs of their own children, in contrast to migrant domestic workers who work long hours and are separated from their families and children (Ehrenreich, & Hochschild, 2002).

Five main findings on migrant domestic labour were important here. Firstly, that women's liberation from domestic spaces has been built on the reallocation of gendered roles to less privileged less educated women. Secondly, that a historical silence and invisibility around the personal lives of the 'nanny or the maid' was a necessary means to uphold more privileged women's image of the 'career women who can do it all'- enjoy a full-time professional job, tend to their children and run a household. Thirdly, that this 'silence' and a literary focus on extravagant abuses, such as female enslavement and trafficking, has resulted in us knowing very little about the children and families of poor migrant women. And lastly, that migrant women left their homes to work in more affluent nations because they were mothers who wanted to provide a better life for their children. This meant that they relied heavily on the support of female relatives in their home country for childcare, revealing that even when mothers were working away from home to support their families and men/fathers were present, childcare duties remained a female gendered concern.

Ehrenreich and Hochschild's (2002) study is quite dated but is used here to show the dominant way in which things were seen globally and to highlight the significant shifts that are seen in the contemporary literature on migrant domestic labour. Some of these shifts that are being followed by the scholarship include the global increase in migrancy, refugees and mass

population movements. Currently, various micropolitical and social justice perspectives are being used to critically engage with these emerging issues. An example of this is seen in studies that take an in-depth look at the impact of US immigration policies on parent-child separation and child detention at the Mexican border from human rights, developmental and mental health perspectives (Wood, 2018).

In a recent article Phillips and James (2014) engage with the issue of migrancy in the African context by using a historiographical overview to examine the literature on women migrants in South Africa post-1994. Firstly, they found that most of the literature on women in the workplace, focused primarily on the informal and domestic spheres. They argue for an engagement with women's experiences beyond this, one that can reveal their central role in South African society, the economy and the state as well as the motivations for their movement between urban and rural spaces. Secondly, they found that the nature of accessing urban housing during apartheid and the growth of informal settlements in the 1980s shaped migrant women's perspectives on putting down roots in the city. Thirdly, it was found that while the associational life of migrant women helped them to either reaffirm their rural links or to settle in urban South Africa, it also asserted their capacity for friendship and sociable enjoyment in either setting. This study traced how these experiences for women continue to occur in relation to those of their male counterparts. In a general sense, they argue that in order to understand the unfolding migrant labour system and it's struggles in the South African context, migrant women's experiences within and beyond the workplace must be considered.

2.2 Domestic work in an apartheid South Africa.

"The violence of Apartheid was an intimate one, what Mbembe, (2001) called an enterprise of domestication" (Bremmer, 2004, p. 237).

During the colonisation and apartheid era in South Africa, dominant white classes exploited cheap black labour to grow their economic interests (Wolpe, 1972). Black workers were marginalised as they had limited opportunity for education or employment and their movement was restricted by the apartheid pass laws and The Group Areas Act (Wolpe, 1972). This meant that black women were dependent upon 'selling' their unskilled labour, such as domestic work, in the informal sector (Cock, 1989).

In her pioneering book *Maids and Madams* based on her research during the 1970s in Grahamstown, Jacklyn Cock (1989) used the relationship between 'madams and maids' to illustrate the exploitation of black women during apartheid. She used a qualitative approach and gathered stories from domestic workers and their white employers. In her research Cock (1989) showed that apartheid ideologies were enforced by dehumanising practices, such as domestic workers being forced to use separate plates and cups from their employers. In this vein, the study also showed that duties for full-time live in domestic workers were largely undefined and included 'dirty' chores such as: cleaning the house, washing walls and windows, laundry and ironing, cooking meals, serving guests, caring for the elderly and providing childcare. At times their duties extended to washing cars, gardening, doing shopping and washing or walking dogs (Cock, 1989). She found that most of the domestic workers in her study had live-in arrangements – small servant quarters behind the main house - and received only one day off a month. This made it difficult for domestic workers to maintain close friendships and relationships. Their children and partners were not allowed to reside with them and most of their families lived far away due to the Group Areas Act. This meant that their children lived with other caregivers somewhere else. The women in her research were deprived of a social and family life and importantly, Cock (1989) demonstrated how this resulted in a disrupted family experience for domestic workers and their children during apartheid. The opposite was true for the employers that Cock (1989) interviewed and this was a pertinent

finding in her study because it showed how liberties such as leisure, flexibility, relationships and time with children and family were delineated along racial lines in apartheid South Africa.

Effectively, through her sociological analysis of the relationship between 'maids and madams' Cock (1989) showed the central connection between the private household as a site of labour for black women and the broader ideological reinforcement of apartheid rule. Her main argument was that dominant class practices are socially reproduced and preserved through the acts of domestic exploitation. The private home space is therefore seen as a microcosm against the backdrop of the dominant racial and social forces of the apartheid era. Marxist scholars describe these forces as the 'triple oppression' of class, race and gender suffered by poor black women during apartheid (Cock, 1989). Through her research Cock (1989) criticised these dominant apartheid logics by showing that they were dehumanising and argued for social change that would liberate black women from these structures of oppression.

In her study, Callinicos (2007) also used narrative methodologies and the politics of apartheid ideologies and regulations as a backdrop for intimate stories of fortitude, resilience and indignation to emerge. She did this by recording the oral testimonies of three black women that transitioned from rural areas or white owned farms to work in the city as domestic workers during the pre- and post-apartheid period. She shows that experiences are inseparable from the larger context within which they occur, by skilfully using harsh apartheid regulations as a backdrop for intimate stories to emerge. This is interesting because she demonstrated how 'ordinary' stories that women tell can add texture to our understanding of the impact that dominant social and political forces had on individuals during this time in South African history.

In addition to themes outlined in the Introduction, four main findings in Callinicos' (2007) study are of interest here. Firstly, the study found that maternal subjectivity often shaped these women's experiences of working to support their families and children as primary breadwinners. Secondly, she found that apartheid practices such as live-in arrangements, social

restriction, low wages and long unregulated work hours that characterised domestic work at the time resulted in displacement, loneliness and the fragmentation of relationships for her storytellers. Thirdly, that children were left (in demarcated rural or township areas) with a grandmother, aunt or older sibling, while their mother worked in the city, seldomly returning home as they could not afford the cost of travel. Absent mothers in her study experienced guilt because they were not able to be involved in the day to day caring of their own children. Here, Callinicos (2007) delicately touched on the complex dynamics involved with being a domestic worker and mother that is separated from her own family, but is cooking, cleaning and caring for another (more privileged) family and their children. Lastly, the study found that the women's identities, located within the macro political and social realities of their time, were not defined by this. Their identities were firmly held in place by their family, traditions, oral culture and collective value systems. This study demonstrated how the oral narrative form can provide a medium for women to 'revisit' their histories and 'pull together pieces' from their past in a coherent way, allowing the storyteller to cope with different situations. According to Callinicos (2007), this is important because it can provide a 'fresh perspective' on past events and organize stories and identities in a thoughtful way, bringing a more personal intimate understanding.

2.3 Domestic work in post-apartheid South Africa.

South Africa achieved liberation from the apartheid regime in 1994, with the formation of a new, democratic government, and governance guided by a new Constitution which enshrined equal rights for all South African citizens. However, the "democratization" of domestic labour in South Africa is still faced with many challenges as policymakers attempt to bridge the vast gender, class and racial divides left in the wake of apartheid (Fish, 2006).

The South African scholarship and research on domestic work has followed these struggles and shifts, and several key trends can be found in this literature – for example, (a) workplace

studies that have investigated domestic workers' labour conditions and relationships with their employers; (b) studies dealing with the affective aspects in lingering experiences of marginalisation, humiliation, shame and abuse within constructions of domestic work as "dirty work"; (c) studies that have explored the imperatives of education, to establish promised class mobility for domestic workers' children; and (d) studies that have examined the networks of care that domestic workers have established around their own children, and their hopes for their children. In general, these studies illustrate that despite some constructive changes – and potentials for changes - in domestic workers' lives in post-apartheid South Africa, the transformation and democratisation of the "domestic work" sector still faces severe obstacles and challenges. This means that while there is formal legislation in place to protect domestic workers, in theory, this has been difficult to operationalise or regulate within an informal sector, and in private homes (Fish, 2006). These emergent themes will be reviewed briefly in the sections that follow.

2.3.1 Workplace studies in the New South Africa.

Tallie (2012) writes that in 2002 a major shift in labour policy was seen when domestic workers who work full time were granted rights in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA). The primary goal of this new policy was to legitimize and regulate domestic work – a historically invisible and informal sector. This legislation included new workers' rights for domestic workers, minimum wage specifications, pension and Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) as well as formal registration (Tallie, 2012). The BCEA however only covers full-time workers which means that employers can avoid contractual obligations by hiring domestic workers on a part-time basis (Tallie, 2012). Desperate to provide for their children and family, domestic workers have tried to collectively organize and challenge the state and their employers (Marais & Van Wyk, 2015). The post-liberation workplace literature is therefore

largely focused on developing a strong discourse on workers' rights, human rights and unionised labour.

Fish (2006) conducted a study that demonstrated why the above-mentioned shifts had (and more importantly had not) changed the workplace for domestic workers. She did this by looking at the effect of shifting legislative policy and demographic patterns in the institution of domestic work post-1994. In her study 20 black domestic workers and a sample of employers that represented the changing demographics in the country were interviewed. She found that there had been a considerable demographic change - evident by the increasing number of 'new madams' in South Africa: Indian, Coloured and African employers. This meant that poor black women no longer only provided their services to wealthy white women and their families. This study used these labour relationships (outside of the traditional 'white madam' 'black maid' arrangement) to show that the emergent group of South Africa's 'new madams' – Indian, coloured and African employers – still operated under the gender and power differentials based on class positions. This was seen in her study when participants reported that they had experienced little to no change in their workplace after apartheid or since the implementation of new labour policies. Fish (2006) argued that this was due to South Africa's prevailing high levels of poverty and unemployment that made it possible for employers to determine how and when they adopt or ignore labour legislation. She found that a positive shift post-1994 was the move away from live-in arrangements and the regulation of work hours. This meant that domestic workers returned home at regular times to care for their families and had more direct contact with networks of care for their own children. A negative finding regarding policy shift, was the loophole in the legislature (only covering full-time workers) that meant most of her participants had lost their full-time employment and were working as 'chars' on a part-time basis. They therefore commuted daily to different homes, to work for different families, with no formal protection or coverage (Fish, 2006).

Several critical points were raised in Fish's (2006) study. Firstly, that domestic labour in South Africa was still structured by gender, class and race asymmetries despite major improvements in policy and a shifting employer demographic. Secondly, that transformation was particularly slow for two main reasons, namely: that current gender rights and labour policies in South Africa have failed to adequately protect all women working as domestic workers, and secondly that these policies will continue to be disregarded due to the prevailing power asymmetries that continue to exist in the private household space. She therefore critically argued that official labour policies were virtually meaningless within the private or hidden household workspace. This implied that domestic workers' experience of their workplace had not significantly changed despite shifts in policy and demographics in a democratic South Africa. In summary, Fish's (2006) study showed that although some positive shifts had occurred, there were still severe obstacles to challenging the social construction and the inequalities that exist between women positioned as domestic workers and their employers. She concludes that this presents distinctive challenges to South Africa's democratisation.

2.3.2 Dirty work – the affective components of low-status work.

In her analysis of the global politics of domestic labour, Anderson (2000) reveals the emotional aspects of low-status work. She uses the stories of migrant domestic workers to argue that "the domestic worker, whether 'cleaner', 'nanny' or 'servant' is fulfilling a role, and crucial to that role is her reproduction of her female employers status (middle-class, employer, clean) in contrast to herself (worker, degraded, dirty)" (p.2). She argues that having a domestic worker 'do the dirty work', affords middle-class women the privilege of remaining 'domestic' without being 'dirty'. This serves to uphold their feminine virtue in the household space and creates the mutually dependent but antagonistic stereotypes of the 'pure, moral madam' who is available to attend to her family's emotional needs and the 'dirty maid' who must physically labour out

of sight (Anderson, 2000). In her study Anderson (2000) shows that 'dirty work' practices which bring shame and humiliation resulted in the undermining of personhood, and made it more challenging for domestic workers to confront employers about issues in their workplace.

The contemporary South African literature on 'dirty work' explores the impact of new workers' rights – and how it has unintentionally, resulted in narratives of 'victimhood' and 'desperation' that continue to invalidate the capacity and agency of domestic workers to creatively 'protect' themselves against forces of oppression (Ally, 2011). The state is simultaneously cast as the liberator of the weak, exploited and marginalized domestic worker in these narratives. According to Ally (2011) it therefore becoming increasingly evident that empowering domestic workers as a social class goes much deeper than political reformation. I review Ally's (2011) synopsis below as it shows that a more sensitive approach, one that better understands the tools that are used in the social and emotional preservation of power, is required.

In her provocative synopsis '*Domestics, Dirty Work, and the Affects of Domination'* Shireen Ally (2011) shows how exploitative work deliberately carries emotive aspects of marginalisation and stigma. She does this by showing that the relationship between domestic workers and their employers is inescapably complex, affective and psychic. She exposes how the nature of domestic work is often undesirable, stigmatised and concealed and this remains possible because this form of care work is uniquely situated within the most intimate setting - the private homes and lives of others. Acts of degradation, such as cleaning soiled clothing and dirty toilets, seem to neatly occur alongside acts of affection and care within the domestic realm. She argues that it is within the paradox of love and humiliation, intimacy and estrangement that domination and submission take place. She states that it is the very affective nature of the 'tense and tender' bond between master and servant, maid and madam, that make the act of domination deep-rooted and discreet. Her synopsis highlights that differentiation is challenging because the domestic workplace is unique in its ability to blend together acts of dirty work and

domination and caring acts of service fostered by attachment. This presents both the employer and employee with confusing and complicated internal narratives and can shape relationship dynamics in a manner that is both hard to analyse and 'correct'. As Anderson (2000) so aptly put it: "The realities of power are complex. We need to recognise difference in order to heal fractures between us and in order to know where to insert our crowbars" (p.8).

A second trend in the South African literature looks at the implications of 'dirty work' for workplace relationships. Narrative approaches are used in this literature to explore the complex emotions and attachment involved in the relationship between domestic workers and their employers - especially necessary when looking after their children (Maqubela, 2016) This has been done through researching stories from two perspectives, from domestic workers accounts and from employers accounts and I will briefly review an example study of each in turn below.

Firstly, and on the one hand, a recent study by Maqubela (2016) took an in-depth look at the nature of domestic workers relationship with their employers within black families in the Limpopo Province in post-apartheid South Africa. The study consisted of 37 interviews and participant observations in three households to analyse the interactions between black middle-class women (the 'new madams') and their black female domestic workers. This feminist study specifically used narrative interviews to represent the voices of domestic workers'- a marginalised group. Maqubela (2016) critically argued that "it is through such conversations that one is able to unearth such 'subjugated knowledge', bring it to light and subject it to systematic analysis thereby making these voices visible and hearable" (p.3). This study revealed that despite legislative reform, the nature of paid domestic work remained exploitative and oppressive, even within a single race. She provided evidence for this by paying close attention to the oppressive nature of what domestic workers were made to do (chores that the 'madam' deemed undesirable) and importantly showed how this classist stigmatisation was passed on to observing children in the household. Domestic workers in her study were

subjected to emotional abuse, stigmatisation and humiliating practices by their employers and their employers' children of the same race. This showed that deeply rooted class asymmetries were enforced through 'dirty work' practices and continued to shape domestic workers' relationship with their employers. Another interesting finding was that the domestic workers in her study were reluctant to ask employers for help or time off when their own children needed them or when they were unable to make adequate or sustained childcare arrangements. This finding was used to further highlight the asymmetry of the employer/employee relationship and the extensive nature of the sacrifices that domestic workers made.

Secondly, and on the other hand, a study by Shefer (2012) showed a different perspective by exploring this historically complex relationship through the eyes of white employers and their children. She did this by analysing the way in which white narrators constructed their relationship with black domestic workers in their memories of apartheid. This study drew on 200 narratives in the Apartheid Archive Project to unearth stories that reflected the reproduction of white middle-class privilege and power within the institution of domestic work. She found that firstly, white employers and their children's stories of their "nannies" were immersed in nostalgia, expressing notions of family, nurturance, comfort and care. In this study white children often recalled their attachment to their domestic workers in stories that reflected a loving, motherly bond. Simultaneously, white narrators' stories expressed instances of discomfort and guilt when confronted with their part in the oppression that domestic workers experienced (Shefer, 2012).

2.3.3 The imperatives of education for domestic workers children.

"A striking feature today - so 'normalised' that it is undervalued and taken for granted – is that women, be they grandmothers in their seventies or unmarried young women in their twenties, play a central role in the organization and funding of schooling" (Hunter, 2014, p. 467).

It is well documented in the South African literature that poor black women are often tasked with the heavy burden of child rearing and funding education (Cock, 1989, Fish, 2006, Callinicos, 2007, Brown, 2011, Tolla, 2013). A dominant trend in the literature is therefore concerned with how 'unskilled' black women work as domestic workers to pay for their children to 'get skilled' and have opportunities (e.g. Brown, 2011). A second trend in the literature pays attention to stories of patronage where (white) employers help domestic workers to educate their children- and how this affects the relationship with their employer (e.g. Hunter, 2014). Two studies are reviewed below that show these different perspectives on the imperatives of education for domestic workers children.

In a narrative study conducted by Brown (2011) the life-stories of four domestic workers in Makhanda/Grahamstown are used to demonstrate the central role that education plays in the aspirations that women have for their children. This is explored in the context of apartheid and the shifts that have occurred in the post-apartheid era. This study found that women's decisions about employment as a domestic worker were driven by their desire to give their children educational opportunities which they themselves were not afforded. This is done in the hope that through education, children can leave the dire circumstances at home and compete in a market economy of skills. In her study she analysed women's performed identities within this dominant theme and found that their ability to educate their children was an important part of their identities as 'good mothers'. In summary, the domestic workers in this study used domestic skills (proudly passed on generationally) to educate their children so that they would not have to rely on 'unskilled' labour to survive.

Their hope for a better future for their children – through education- inspired their agency and sacrifice as well as their identity as a mother. Studies such as this call for a more intimate focus on the stories that mothers tell about their children, their homes, their aspirations and the

sacrifices which they make to meet these ends, especially in resource-poor contexts like South Africa.

Using the narratives of 13 domestic workers in rural Mpumalanga, Tolla (2013) emphasized the 'burden of care' that mothers experience in low-income communities. The domestic workers in her study were all mothers and the breadwinners for their family. The study found that in cases where a male partner or husband was present, they were not working and added to the burden of care at home. Although the women in the study were uneducated, they wanted a better education for their children. It was found that the women perceived their lack of education as the reason for their narrow job options. The participants main concern was therefore the financial burden of educating their children. The implication of this was that they would continue to work, despite physical illness and old age, out of fear that their children would not have what they needed to attend school. One participant described how she had struggled to survive while her children went to school and had no house to sleep in. Participants also expressed concern over trying to send a child to university, as this would mean the rest of the family would have to live in extreme poverty. Despite this, they spoke proudly about the sacrifices that they had made as a mother to cope and provide. Participants expressed that a major coping strategy that kept them going was the hope that things would be better for their children in the future (Tolla, 2013).

A different trend appears in the literature, when stories of patronage are explored in relation to the education of domestic workers' children. Stories of female employers that pay for the school fees of their domestic workers' children is not uncommon in the scholarship and is by no means a new phenomenon. In a study conducted in Umlazi, KwaZulu Natal, Hunter (2014) uses the recollections of mothers who worked as domestic workers in the 1960s to demonstrate the shifts that have occurred with regards to children's value and their education from the height of apartheid to the present. The former domestic workers that he interviewed

explained that they were less interested in their salary and more concerned with whether the ‘umlungu wami’ (‘my white person’) had a ‘inhliziyo entle’ (‘a good heart’) and would help their children (Hunter, 2014). A key finding in this study was that domestic workers secured support for their children’s education by maintaining good relations with their employers. On the one hand, participants fondly recalled how their ‘white madam’ was generous and would give their children schoolbooks and clothing. On the other hand, participants stories showed that they endured long hours, poor pay and unfavourable working conditions in the hope to secure these favours. Interestingly, this study showed that although there were some positive recollections of racial dependence to secure children’s education, perhaps also aimed at pleasing a specific white audience, other narratives of patronage were heavy.

Following on from this, at the dawn of democracy, in her doctoral dissertation, Mange (1996) interviewed domestic workers on the advantages and disadvantages they experienced by sending their children to white schools with the help of their employer. She found that the reliance on their employers resulted in a psychological burden for the women, who were not able to return the ‘good will’ of their employer. Findings showed that the women in her study would often suppress their own needs and were hesitant to express any grievances, because they could potentially lose the favour of their employer. Participants ‘ignored’ and would forfeit things owed to them by their employer (for example time-off whilst ill), because they wanted to secure these favours (Mange, 1996). In her research Mange (1996) also found that the children of the domestic workers felt guilty about the strain their mothers underwent to secure ‘handouts’ for their education. They expressed feelings of helplessness to contribute or redress the situation because they were at school and could not work. These feelings were ‘managed’ by making promises that when they grow up, they would somehow make it up to their mother (Mange, 1995).

2.3.4 Domestic arrangements, family life and childcare.

"Apartheid affected all South Africans but did so in very different ways. The most pernicious effects on the family were experienced by people classified as 'African', for whom the physical and psychological integrity of family life was undermined through the apartheid state's policies of 'separate development', 'influx control' and underinvestment in rural areas." (Bray, Gooskens, Moses, Kahn, & Seekings, 2011, p. 49).

In a pioneering study, Bray, Gooskens, Moses, Kahn, and Seekings (2011) explore how the end of apartheid has affected the experiences of South African children. They did this by collecting stories from children growing up in historically divided communities in the Fish Hoek Valley (arguably a microcosm of South Africa). A section of their book was dedicated to '*Discourses and realities of family life'* and four main findings are important here. Firstly, most of the children from the lower-income areas did not have a father present to provide for them in a material, emotional and developmental sense. The authors attribute this to the rising unemployment rates and low wages from the 1970s onwards that has impeded men's ability to fulfil their fathering duties and the fragmentation of families under apartheid law. The opposite was found to be true for children living in middle-income areas as most often both parents played an active role in their lives. Secondly, they found that mothers in poor areas had to financially support their children, often without any assistance. Thirdly, grandparents, 'aunts' and neighbours often provided continuity in caring relationships and domestic routines in quasi-parental roles, even when children and adolescents physically moved between households. This was most common in lower-income communities, but also occurred in wealthier areas in instances of divorce and shared custody living arrangements. Lastly, they found that children from both historically privileged and underprivileged communities held on to the ideal of living with both biological parents and saw the quality of family relationships as a crucial aspect in their development and future. In summary this chapter showed that the home

space remains complex and fluid for children and their families across communities in the new South Africa.

Using a historical framework, Laura Phillips (2011) analysed the oral histories of 13 women who worked as domestic workers in urban areas in South Africa during apartheid. In this study Phillips (2011) found that the women's stories were largely organised around their experience as mothers and the fleeting presence or predominant absence of male partners. She found that motherhood and the absence of a male figure often marked their entry into domestic work and continued to shape their experience. In her study many participants had to 'mother from a distance' due to live-in work arrangements of domestic workers during apartheid. Phillips uses their oral histories to reveal how women established strong 'motherly communities' to help them cope with physical and emotional distance and to ensure that their children were cared for. An example in the study are the 'manyanos' – an organised mothers' prayer group – that provided a space for mothers to come together to talk about their separation from their children and pray for them. Interlacing themes of sacrifice and hope are used to reveal the strength of these women through their 'commitment as mothers'. By drawing out these intimate narrative accounts using a historical narrative approach, Phillips (2011) demonstrates how 'motherhood' is a central thread that is woven through their recollections of themselves as women and how textured their experiences are as mothers that had to provide for their children.

In another narrative study, Lou-Marie Kruger and Marleen Lourens (2016) used a psychological framework to explore the subjectivities of poor mothers who must care for their children in resource poor contexts. This study is important because it contributed to a deeper understanding of the emotional experiences of impoverished mothers and how this is linked to larger social issues such as mental health. Data was collected in the form of stories from one group of coloured women residing in a semi-rural low-income community. Most of the

participants were domestic workers with between 1 and 4 children of their own. The stories that these mothers told about their hungry children were used to illustrate the emotional distress and depression associated with chronic poverty and the inability to provide. These narratives of guilt and shame revealed 'feelings of failure' for mothers that were unable to feed their hungry child. In this study dominant discourses on 'mothering' are criticised for enforcing feelings of inadequacy that are felt by poor mothers. They argue that dominant discourses do not adequately consider the gendered burden of childcare and the complex emotions that are associated with this in the context of poverty. Kruger (2016), a clinical psychologist, used these findings to show that poor black women are psychologically affected and that this can predispose them to mental illness. This is particularly significant in the South African scholarship given the increasingly common trend towards female headed households in low-income areas.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Question/Statement

What subject positions are used by women, working as domestic workers, through the stories they tell about their personal childcare arrangements?

3.2 Research paradigm and theoretical framework

The methodological paradigm of this study is qualitative. A narrative interpretivist approach, as conceptualised by Riessman (2005a) is used as a theoretical framework in the study. This approach, aligned with the "narrative turn" seen in the human sciences, assumes that people are active social beings who structure their subjective experience through the stories that they tell (Smith, Collinson, Phoenix, Brown & Sparkes, 2009). These stories are to be taken seriously if we are to progressively develop insight and appreciation for the way in which cultural and social realities are constructed by the storyteller and essentially how these realities are experienced.

Narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating (Riessman, 2004) and this approach is focused around the human agency embedded in storytelling. Personal narratives are used in all areas of life as a way of constructing the 'self' and positioning oneself in the world (Riesman, 2005a). According to Riessman (2002) subject positions in stories refer to the way in which the storyteller chooses to tell a story in a particular way, thereby positioning themselves (often favourably) in relation to others. This performative understanding of narrativity by Riessman (2002, 2005a) is used to analyse instances where women perform their preferred identities in the stories which they tell. Performative narrative analysis is therefore used in this study to systematically study the way in which women working as domestic workers position themselves in their stories of their personal narratives of experience.

In the production of a story, specific language is used by the narrator to 'position' the self and others as subjective participants in that narrative (Bamberg, 2011), thereby 'performing' identities. In this study the aspects of the narrative that were used to analyze instances of performative identity included: phrases and words that were used, embellishment and detail added to certain instances, the use of reported speech, appeals made to the interviewer, the way that the narrator positioned herself (favorably/unfavorably etc.), how other actors were placed in relation to one another, and the identity claims that were made (Riessman, 2002). According to Riessman (2002) narrators can oscillate between positions as this can help them to cope with different instances in their story. An example of this is seen when a narrator shifts between positioning the self as an agentic being – that controls their circumstance and then positions the self as victim of circumstance in another instance. This 'fluid' positioning is controlled in the narrative by the language choices that are made. Voluntary verbs (e.g. decided to) indicate active role positioning, whereas compulsory verbs (e.g. had to) indicate passive role positioning (Riessman, 2002). The way in which the narrator chooses to use language, to position the self, to elaborate on, or to repeat aspects can indicate that certain accounts are meaningful and significant to the narrator. This performative approach is appropriate for this study as it captures the identity construction and the performing of the identity which occurs in the detailed stories which domestic workers tell about their lives. In this study there is a specific focus on how this group of women perform or "do" their identities when speaking about their job, motherhood and their personal childcare arrangements. It was therefore important in this study to pay close attention to the way in which the participants selected and spoke about their experiences.

In the telling of a story a choice is made in terms of representations and information sharing (Callinicos, 2007). A choice is made in terms of the representation of the self and the other as well as the information which we choose to be forthcoming with and that which we

choose to withhold. In this research study the act of telling their story about their childcare arrangements is therefore a personal action of agency as it embodies the choices which are made. It must be noted however, that these choices are influenced by a variety of internal and external factors, such as preferred placement of the self, the perceived or real status of the audience and the personal need for similarity and difference between the self and other, to mention a few. Callinicos (2007) reflects on this when she comments on how the testimonies of women in her study were tailored to their imagined white audience who had access to resources and books in the published world. It is for this reason that reflexive practice is necessary, particularly when submerged in the narrative form as it appropriates interpretation and trustworthiness. It is for this reason that reflexivity was practiced throughout the writing of this research study and has been reflected and expanded on further in the section titled 'validation of the narrative form'.

3.3 Sampling

A convenience purposive sample of women who are employed full time as domestic workers living in Makhanda/Grahamstown was selected. The first participant was recruited based on convenience from the researcher's collegial network. This participant was asked to direct me to other domestic workers, thereby using snowball sampling to increase the sample size (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Participation was limited to women who have children of their own and who could speak English or Afrikaans due to the researcher's personal language limitations. The interviews were conducted at a place and time that was most convenient for the participants. A relatively small sample of four interviews was deemed sufficient as narratives are rich in information and can encompass entire life stages (Riessman, 2002). A brief description of the four participants who took part in this study is outlined below, with the use of pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Grace: Is a 47-year old woman who was born in Makhanda/Grahamstown. She is one of seven siblings and grew up in the rural area of Makhanda/Grahamstown with her mother and father. Her mother worked as a domestic worker and her father was a gardener. She completed her schooling until grade 12. She has two children aged 14 and 16 years old, both of which are currently in a rural government school in Makhanda/Grahamstown. Grace works as a domestic worker four times a week for three different families in Makhanda/Grahamstown.

Lisa: Is a 44-year old woman who was born in King Williams Town. At the age of 6 she and her parents moved to Makhanda/Grahamstown and she attended school at the rural government school from grade R until matric, but she did not pass matric. She has five children, one of which passed away. Her 21-year old daughter and her two grandchildren aged two and six years old currently live with Lisa in Joza (urban settlement) in Makhanda/Grahamstown. Lisa has been working as a domestic worker since the age of 25 and currently works Monday to Friday and every second Saturday for four different families and one group of students in Makhanda/Grahamstown.

Emily: Is a 34-year-old woman who is originally from Port Alfred. She worked as a domestic worker on a farm where she met her husband. She and her husband moved to Makhanda/Grahamstown 9-years ago in search of job opportunities. She has one child of her own aged 9 and two 'adopted' children aged 12 years and 10 years who have been living with her since her cousin passed away. Emily has been employed full-time as a domestic worker for the past 9 years with the same family in Makhanda/Grahamstown.

Erica: Is a 58-year-old woman who grew up on a farm just outside of Makhanda/Grahamstown. She attended the farm school from the age of 12 and completed standard A and B. She worked on the farm as what she describes as the "nanny" looking after the farmer's children. She left her children on the farm with her mother and moved to Makhanda/Grahamstown with her

husband where she has since been employed as a domestic worker for families in the town. She has three children aged 30, 28 and 24.

3.4 Narrative material collection

The material was collected by using a narratively styled semi-structured interview (Appendix A) and was analysed using Riessman's (2004) performative narrative analysis attending to positioning and performed subjectivities, within stories. The interview was loosely structured around topics (i.e. childcare) with specific open-ended questions. This was because the participants were unlikely to be English first language speakers, therefore making it challenging for them to talk about their lived experience in an unstructured way (Riessman, 2002). This interview allowed for the exploration of domestic worker's subjectivities in a conversational, less directive manner and ensured that the narrative unfolded authentically. It was important that the sequential and structural features that are found in narrative accounts were not lost (Riessman, 2002). Even though the researcher approached the participants with broad areas of inquiry, assuming that important issues in the participant's life would emerge naturally (Riessman, 2002), there was still the need to recognize the control which the researcher asserted in the interview (Kruger, 2007). This control was asserted in two manners, the status of the researcher and the power dynamics of the interview process, even when it is open-ended. In this research study the researcher is a tertiary level educated, white female and decided on: the questions that were asked, the flow of conversation/turn-taking and the interpretation of what was said, among other things. Feminist writers have argued that the 'imposing frame' of the researcher is less obscured in the co-construction of meaning when there is a notable difference in socio-economic status between the researcher and participant (Wilkinson, 1998). This factor was considered throughout the conducting and interpretation of the narrative interview and is expanded upon in the relevant 'discussion' section.

Interviews ranged in length of time and were between 30-45 minutes respectively. The interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants and these recordings allowed for verbatim transcription. A follow-up interview was used as an opportunity to debrief, give feedback and inquire about any need for intervention or referral. No significant new information regarding their experience of domestic work or their childcare arrangements was shared with the researcher at the follow-up interview. All the participants reported that they had experienced the interview as pleasant with one participant stating that she really enjoyed the kind of questions that were asked in the interview. None of the participants expressed the need for referral or intervention.

3.5 Narrative material analysis

Narratives "do not speak for themselves or have unanalysed merit; they require interpretation when used as data in social research" (Riessman, 2004, p. 2). It is important to note that the transcribing was performed verbatim as much as possible, however some of the English (not the domestic workers' home/first language) was 'tidied' and/or 'annotated' to improve coherence – this is discussed in-depth later on - and the act of analysis and interpretation of the personal stories by the researcher is a subjective act. This subjective interpretation, however well-intended, will reflect the position, in terms of class and race, of the self (researcher) and the other (storyteller) in this research. Feminist perspectives in the social sciences are focused on recognizing the power dynamics, interactions and co-construction of meaning which is inherent in the research process. Feminist writers have expressed various concerns regarding ethical issues which arise in the one-to-one interviewing process, even when women are interviewing women (Wilkinson, 1998). This is an acknowledgement that there will always be "differences" (of social category, identity, experience, perspective, etc.) between a researcher and the research participants; and there is concern over the researcher's power to control in the proceedings, the conversation, the interpretation and representation of the other and the

regulation of conversation in research studies (Wilkinson, 1998). It is important to acknowledge that the researcher and participants in this study are both reaching across these differences (and dynamics due to South Africa's racial legacy) to communicate.

In this research study, it was therefore important to recognise the bi-directional flow and influence on information provided by the participant and interpreted by the researcher in a reflexive manner. When analysing the narrative material, the researcher was aware that domestic workers – historically underprivileged women - would position themselves in particular ways in their stories. This positioning would serve various purposes some of which would align with the higher cultural capital of the researcher or with the dominant victim/despondent discourse often heard in poor women's stories (Kruger 2007). This is an example of how the relationship and dynamics between the researcher and the participants impacts upon the production of knowledge.

Riessman's (2004) performative narrative analysis was therefore used in a reflexive manner to analyse and provide an interpretation of the multiple positions that the storyteller utilized when talking about their work, family and personal childcare arrangements. The multiple positions that were performed by the storyteller in terms of their own identities, the audience (researcher) and the characters (families and children) were closely analysed in each narrative. This was done by being familiar with the transcriptions and highlighting sections of interest and grouping them together. These groupings were placed together as a broad theme and then inspected more closely for subjective stories. These stories were finally explored for their performative purpose through the researcher's subjective interpretation of performed identities, as described by Riessman (2002) and Bamberg (2011). Bamberg's (2011) approach was additionally used as a methodological tool in the analysing of the women's subjectivities, as he distinguishes between "big stories" which are organised around the socio-structural scripts of gender, race, class, victimhood and exploitation and "little stories" that give voice to

agency, creativity and resistance. This is appropriate in analysing the 'little stories' that are told by domestic workers about their childcare arrangements. According to Bamberg (2011) these "little stories" which are found in the re-telling of everyday experiences are used by the storyteller to interlace identities and positions of strength, survival and perseverance.

There were specific features of interest that were guided by the narratively themed interview schedule (see Appendix A) and were subsequently areas of focus in the analysis. The areas of focus were their history, experience of domestic work, life outside of domestic work, family network/dynamics and personal childcare arrangements. Under these areas of focus the following was analysed: the ways in which the storyteller positioned herself in her narrative, how she compared/contrasted or located herself in relation to the other, claims of identity that were made, what she incorporated or purposefully left out, words and phrases that were chosen, which sections of talk were embellished or elaborated on and appeals that were made to the interviewer (Riessman, 2002). These analytic tools were specifically chosen as they provided a subjective and focused approach to unpack the multiple, nuanced and idiosyncratic manners in which storytellers have chosen to 'act out' and make meaning of their real and preferred identities (Bamberg, 2011). The findings are explored in the analysis section of this research paper.

3.6 Validation of the narrative form

In this study personal narratives encompass sections of talk - a retelling of accounts in domestic workers lives in the context which they develop - during the course of a single semi-structured interview. According to Riessman (2002) the 'truths' or the value of narrative accounts are not based on their true (or objective) representation of past events, but rather on their ability to forge shifting subjective connections between the past, present and future. These narratives offer storytellers an opportunity to "do" their story differently and thus a way to re-imagine their lives through the telling of their story. The study is most interested in how personal

narratives around childcare arrangements provide an opportunity for these women to perform a more desired version of the self, and thus "manage potentially 'spoiled' identities" (Riessman, 2002, p. 12).

The quality of these narrative accounts is grounded in Riessman's (2002) concepts of reflexivity, persuasiveness and transferability. Reflexivity refers to the researcher's duty to be aware of, acknowledge and work with their own involvement in the research process and the part they play in the results that are produced. This is particularly important in narrative work in South Africa where language, education, class and racial inequalities still prevail. The ability of the researcher to account for their own involvement will impact on validation, and assessment of the quality of the material gathered and interpreted. The concepts of persuasiveness and transferability refer to the usefulness of the researcher's interpretations which must appeal to a larger scholarly community. Through revealing their own positionality (reflectively) the researcher must convince their audience (theoretical/scholarly community) that their findings and interpretations are transferable and useful in the domestic work literature.

As stated by Smith, Collinson, Phoenix, Brown and Sparkes (2009) the ethical ideals of respecting difference while striving for understanding is about understanding "how the stories we invite from others and tell ourselves shape, enable and constrain relationships and how and what knowledge is created" (p. 346). The presentation of the self as interpreted by another in this process involves a close reading of contexts. As Smith et.al (2009) aptly state: "the influence of the researcher and socio-cultural circumstances on the production and interpretation of narrative happens within a certain situation, such as an interview setting" (p. 344). The cultural context, the intended audience and the shifts in positioning need closer focus in the narrative because of this contextual consideration. Riessman (2002) further points out that language – the particular words and styles that narrators select to recount experiences – needs to be interrogated in fine detail, not taken at face value (Smith et al., 2009).

In this study the interviews were conducted in English, without a translator, as one of the criteria was that participants could speak English. Being a white, educated, first language English speaking woman in relation to the older, less-educated black isiXhosa speaking participants I needed to carefully consider my word choice during the interviews. When misunderstandings did occur, I would repeat the question using alternative words that were simpler to understand. The language used and the style of the questions were therefore shaped by the level of proficiency and understanding of the participant. Although these measures were taken, I must recognize that my position (and profession as an intern clinical psychologist) as an interviewer, co-constructing the stories, caused very specific narratives to emerge (Riessman, 2008). Narratives that were told were at times tailored to meet the perceived expectations of the audience, interviewer and of interviews themselves.

Although power imbalances in research can never fully be eliminated, this is not to say that good research and gaining reliable useful information is impossible (Kruger, 2003). It does however imply that these imbalances need to be recognized and reflected upon throughout the research process if the information gathered is to be valid and trustworthy (Brown, 2011). It is important to recognise that the findings, interpretation and discussions in this research study are infused with power differentials. Some of these power differentials are inherent in the research process – with one-person (who has rehearsed and prepared) asking the questions and another (unprepared) participant who answers the questions. In this study my privileged socio-economic status, level of education and advantaged use of the English language in comparison to the participants is noteworthy. My current vocation as an intern clinical psychologist was also felt to have played a minor role in the kind of narratives that emerged – tailored by what participants decided to be forthcoming with and what they decided to withhold. I attempted to manage these power imbalances and the perception of me as a psychology student by using

simple language and only asking non-intrusive follow-up questions if the participants were already freely elaborating. This made some of the narrative interviews slightly shorter than anticipated, and in future two or three interviews might prove more fruitful if the participant and researcher are afforded time to feel more comfortable and build trust, which could potentially allow for more private, extensive, personal narratives to emerge.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

To comply with ethical standards of practice ethics clearance was obtained through the Psychology Departments Research Proposal and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) and the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (Appendix B). Only once ethical clearance was obtained from these required authorities at Rhodes University, did data collection commence. First, the purpose, nature and objectives of the study, as well as potential discomforts relating to the potentially sensitive topic of work and family life was explained to each participant. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained as the responses by a specific participant could not be traced back to that participant as any personal identifiers that appeared in the interview were replaced with pseudonyms. The names of participants were removed from the stored transcripts and the results of this study were published in the form of a completed academic thesis, but confidentiality was maintained with the use of pseudonyms. Confidentiality was further ensured by not sharing any information with persons not in the research team (Ms. Nisha Michau and Prof. Lindy Wilbraham). Captured narrative material was stored on the researcher's computer which is password protected and in a locked room. At a later stage material was securely stored in Professor Wilbraham’s office in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University. Other considerations included that the researcher took personal responsibility for the interviewing, transcribing and overseeing all material collection efforts. Anonymity was ensured through password protection and subsequent locked storage of audio recordings and the use of pseudonyms on all transcripts. Identifiable information such

as the names of employers, the names of schools, the names and ages of family members and the names of shops where they worked etc. were also changed to protect identities.

An introductory letter outlining the agreement between the researcher and participant was given to each participant before interviews were conducted. This letter provided information regarding: the purpose of the study, procedures, confidentiality, conditions of participation and withdrawal, the informed agreement (consent) to participate in the study, identification information of investigators, the rights of the research participants and the contact information of the Rhodes Psychology Clinic should the need arise. Participation in this study was completely voluntary and any individual who wished to withdraw from the study was free to do so at any stage without any consequence or disadvantage. Individuals who chose to participate, read all the information and instructions pertaining to the study and provided informed consent by signing the consent form.

There were limited potential risks and discomforts involved in participating in this study as participants were asked to tell the researcher more about their experiences related to their family life, childcare arrangements and occupation. In the South African context however, it was noted that any one of these topics may introduce the re-telling of traumatic experiences or adverse negative circumstances. The participants were therefore encouraged to tell the researcher, who is a trainee clinical psychologist, if any of the topics felt too personal to respond to during the interview, at which time the interview would be ended. As a result, participants did provide some information on personal topics such as their childcare arrangements, but reticence was respected, and they were not pressured into answering or elaborating further if they did not freely choose to do so. Furthermore, the utmost care was taken in the design of the narrative interview (Appendix A), so as not to evoke any negative emotional responses. A second follow-up interview was conducted so that participants were provided with a space to de-brief, talk about their experience with the researcher as a training professional psychologist

and ask any further questions regarding referrals. This was done as a precaution in the event that a participant reacted negatively as a result of the participation; but none did.

Chapter Four: Analysis

The interview schedule was designed to follow a 'life-story' trajectory which started with me asking the participant-storyteller about themselves, where they come from and progressing toward their work as a domestic worker and their responsibilities as a mother which incorporates the childcare arrangements made. The narratives were therefore analysed with a life-story sequence in mind. Under the relevant headings, each of the overarching themes are discussed in the various selected extracts with my words (the interviewer) proceeded with the letter 'I' and the letter of the participant-storyteller's first name (a pseudonym), i.e. 'G' for Grace. The interviews were conducted in English, the participant-storyteller's second or third language, so some explanatory comments were added into extracts in square brackets. This aspect of the interviews will be discussed in a section on Reflexivity, in the Discussion, later on. The various identity claims made by the participant-storyteller and the way in which she placed herself in the story independently and relationally is explored below, guided by Riessman's (2004) performative analysis of narrativity and Bamberg's (2011) approach to analysing subject positions within 'small narratives'. Following these guidelines for narrative theory-driven analysis, some interpretive claims are supported by links to other "stories" and "positions" in allied research literature in this section; but this engagement with previous scholarly literature is formally continued in the Discussion.

4.1 Where I come from and how I came to be here.

Only one of the participants was born in Makhanda/Grahamstown and left shortly after completing her schooling to access better job opportunities. Two other participants were born in nearby Eastern Cape towns and one participant was born and raised on a farm just outside of Makhanda/Grahamstown. All the participants in the study were raised by their biological parents, with the presence and support of their mother being most prominent in their stories of

childhood and even later adulthood. Each participant came to be in Makhanda/Grahamstown along different trajectories, some leaving for larger metropolitan areas and then needing to return so that they can support their extended family, and others moving from the farm to Makhanda/Grahamstown to access better opportunities for themselves and their children.

In the first and second extract, Erica explains how she had to move away from the farm where she was born after getting married, leaving her children behind to be cared for by her mother. She felt that she had to leave the farm and relocate to another farm where her husband was working at the time. A few years later, she alone made the move to Makhanda/Grahamstown to search for work opportunities so that money could be saved to pay for her children's school fees.

> E: Oh, after looking after their kids, I am married, and I left them, and I was not working there on the farm. I moved to another farm, the place that my husband was working.
>
> (Erica, page 2, line 40)

> I: And when did you go back to work? How old were your kids?
>
> E: Sjoe! [South African slang word expressing exclamation] I can't remember. After that I left my children to my mother on the farm, I left them to her and then I am coming to Makhanda/Grahamstown to work.
>
> E: After that, my children they come here to stay in Makhanda/Grahamstown with me.
>
> I: Okay, so they stayed on the farm for a while?
>
> E: Yes, they stayed on the farm for a while
>
> I: Okay, tell me how old were they then?
>
> E: Hey, sjoe, the big one was doing standard 6 in Peddie, the other one was standard 5 in Makhanda and the other was standard 3, so maybe they were between 10 and 12 years old.
>
> (Erica, page 2, line 42- 48)

Erica's story reflects the domestic mobility and fluidity that is common in poorer household structures where women must relocate to access work (a form of migrancy) and children must move to be cared for by someone within the extended family network or to go to

school. Her children were originally left on the farm, but after reaching a certain age they moved and were separated from one another (to live in two different towns) to go to school. Her story also reflects the importance of extended female networks of support (her own mother) which is often utilized by poor working women who cannot afford childcare or immediately take their children with them when relocating. This resonates with Phillips (2011) who looked at the care dynamics and sacrifices of domestic workers that must leave their home to access work opportunities and support their extended family and children.

Similarly, in Grace's story she recounts having to leave her home in Makhanda/Grahamstown in search for work opportunity in the larger metropolitan area. She tells of a 'busy' and interesting journey where she moved around frequently and relished the fast pace of the big city life in Johannesburg. Her children were born in Johannesburg, a place that she longs to return to. She recounts how her life was uprooted when she had to move back to Makhanda/Grahamstown with her children due to an elderly family member's illness and need for care.

> G: I went to school up to grade 12, tertiary level and unfortunately because there is no work in Makhanda/Grahamstown, I had to leave home after school.
>
> (Grace, page 1, line 11).

> G: So, I was in Joburg and they transferred me to different places. But all around Joburg. Sometimes in Chippie, sometimes in Brandwag, but all around Joburg.
>
> (Grace, page 3, line 63)

She describes Johannesburg as a fast-paced, welcoming space, a place where she was given opportunities and people were experienced as generous. In the extract below she compares Johannesburg to Makhanda/Grahamstown, which she was forced to return to due to family commitments. She describes it as a "desperate" place where people are just "waiting and wasting":

> G: It was busy, and you don't stay without money there [in Johannesburg]. You are not working, but you don't sleep without food, there are so many people there, sometimes they look after you, even if they don't know you, but you don't go hungry. There are some people around you and they can't bear to see you starving, and they give you something yebo? [isiXhosa for yes]. Here in Makhanda/Grahamstown, you can starve to death.
>
> (Grace, page 4, line 81)
>
> G: Yes, they can share, but instead they don't. They can tread on top of you. And even if you have got an education here, people are just waiting and wasting [in Makhanda/Grahamstown]. If you are not belonging to each organization there is nothing [community initiatives that are designed to respond to poverty and income insecurity i.e. stokvels].
>
> (Grace, page 4, line 86)

In the following extract Grace goes on to narrate her love for Johannesburg and makes an identity claim as a working woman, where she was 'sought after' and good at her job. This working-woman positioning is dependent, in Grace's story, on a network of caregiving, where her mother is taking care of her children, in Makhanda/Grahamstown. This working-woman positioning is supported in the small story of how one of her employers in Johannesburg fought to keep her despite the business needing to retrench workers:

> G: Yes, compared to all of them, still new. They said I must be taken out, but my area manager said no, they said we are to keep this one. Now they are fighting about me.
>
> I: They were fighting over keeping you?
>
> G: Yes, because they say she is the last to come late here, we have got service. They said no, we must keep her. But then they brought the paper and I had to sign here and then the job was finished. So, they kept me a long day and then let me go.
>
> (Grace, page 4, line 71 – 73)

This working-woman positioning is of course performed in this interview, and this extract, against what Grace *lost* – a job, and a self, where she was seen, valued and rewarded well. This identity loss is compounded by the sense of disappointment, sacrifice and frustration she feels in having to return to Makhanda/Grahamstown, to care for a family member and her children, and having to 'make-do' in a smaller city as a domestic worker. Here she tries to

perform a worthy, capable working-woman subject position that a white educated researcher might acknowledge and appreciate.

Although each participant came to be in Makhanda/Grahamstown and experienced the city in different ways over the years that their story unfolds, two common threads were followed throughout the women's stories: moving to access work opportunity and the responsibility of providing for their children and family. All four of the participants positioned themselves as mothers who are willing to uproot and relocate themselves and put aside their own desires to accommodate, support and educate their children.

4.2 My road to domestic work.

Three of the participants started doing domestic work as this was the most available and 'common' work opportunity available for a black woman on a farm, especially prior to being married. Erica's words reflect the availability of domestic work when she talks about how she came to be what she refers to as 'the nanny' on the farm:

> E: Yes, on the farm there were lots of domestic workers because on the farm there is a cleaner, there is another one that is cooking, another one that is washing, another one is a nanny.
>
> (Erica, page 2, line 33)

Most of the participants attributed their entry into domestic work to not completing their schooling, a similar finding in Tolla's (2013) study where domestic workers perceived their limited employment options as a result of low educational levels. The role of education in gaining entry into higher paid jobs and opportunities promised in the New South Africa, which is focused on in Brown's (2011) study on domestic workers, produces complex subject positions of disappointments, and the resilient competence of making do. All participants told stories of missed opportunities, and of disappointments – the promises of the Rainbow Nation, the New South Africa, have not materialised for them, and they need to account for these

failings and being stuck. In all these stories, domestic work is a fall-back option when other plans do not work out. This was narrated in Emily and then Erica's small stories below:

> I: How did you come to be a domestic worker?
>
> E: Oh, because I did not finish my studies, through family problems, so this is the job that I can do, yes.
>
> (Emily, page 1, line 13-14)

In Emily's story, "so this is the job I can do" is an identity claim of resilience, capability and competence as a woman; she can clean, care for children and cook. But it is also an identity claim of disappointment; I can do this job, *but not another, but not a better job.* She has become trapped in domestic work due to incomplete formal education, and "family problems", and is unable to move her life-story on to reap promises of better opportunities. These are the lingering, structural, triple oppressions of race, gender and class (Cock, 2010). In Erica's story, entering domestic work on the farm was perceived as an inevitable 'rite of passage' into young adult womanhood, particularly before a young black woman was married. This is seen in her identity account of being 'next in line' ("then it was me"), when she talks about her predecessor getting married, subsequently leaving the farm, and then how she took over as the 'nanny' in the white household. The nanny subject position relies on her child-caring competence as a woman/mother, but also undercuts it through the sense that nannies are nothing special, one may simply replace the other as circumstances shift:

> P: [My children] were maybe 4 or 5, yes, another lady was looking before me and then she is married and then it is me.
>
> (Erica, page 2, line 37)

Even though her mother worked as a domestic worker, an agentic and resistant story emerges in Grace's telling of her becoming a domestic worker. Grace made efforts to break the intergenerational cycle of domestic work, of following her mother into low status work: she wanted a different story and identity. She tells of having 'tried everything else first' and 'doing many other jobs, before domestic work. The 'other jobs' which Grace narrates appear to hold an important significance for her and her identity in terms of her ambition, entrepreneurial

effort in constantly reinventing herself, seizing opportunities and making the most of achievement.

> I: It sounds like you have done quite a lot of jobs?
>
> G: Yes, so many things, a lot of things. I was working as a clerk there in the Department of Labour, by the time Mr Mandela came out, I got a job there. And it was in Heugh street. I worked there, and after the election the job was finished. And then I got the job with the nuns.
>
> I: And then?
>
> G: No, wait. From the Department [Department of Labour] I got a job in a shoe shop. It was a new shop that came here to Makhanda/Grahamstown.
>
> I: Was it a new shop that had just opened?
>
> G: Yes, it had just opened, and I was elected to be the one to go and train in East London. It was me and on other coloured lady [that were chosen for stock management training]. And they took us to be trained, I think it tool about three weeks.
>
> (Grace, page 2, line 48- 53)

In her story Grace positions herself as a brave opportunist, willing to move across the country and take new positions at work if they were presented to her. She tells of being chosen and sought after in many jobs, including a clerk in the Department of Labour and stock manager at a shoe shop in Makhanda/Grahamstown, prior to doing domestic work. Domestic work is narrated as something which Grace felt she had to 'fall back on' because her opportunities had 'run out' and she had young children and an elderly mother to provide for. An identity claim of worthy resistance, entrepreneurialism and skilled employment is held up in Grace's story, before the frustration and humiliating defeat of domestic work is narrated. These positions are performed in relation to the researcher (an university-educated white woman, starting a professional career as a clinical psychologist) and the audience (scholars/researchers with

academic careers) as a potential appeal for sympathy, where Grace appears as a "thwarted victim" despite trying her best.

At the very beginning of her story Grace makes an identity claim as an 'educated' woman, with an emphasis on being more educated than her previous generation. 'Being educated' is something which Grace seemed to place great value on for herself, and her children. When asked where she attended school, Grace responds by telling the interviewer of her level of academic achievement instead, further reiterating the importance of academic success for her:

> I: What did your mom do?
>
> G: She was a domestic worker too, and my father was a gardener.
>
> I: Okay, alright…
>
> G: But they educated me.
>
> I: And where did you go to school?
>
> G: I went to school up to grade 12, tertiary level.
>
> (Grace, page 1, line 6-11)

The importance of an education (particularly for their children) is a theme that emerges strongly in the domestic work literature, and often speaks of the desire to overcome generational disadvantage and to access future opportunities within the democratic imperatives of 1994-liberation in South Africa (Brown, 2011). In this light, the domestic workers in this study position themselves positively as enabling mothers who give their children opportunities that they were not given; and it is their children, armed with education, who will achieve class-mobility out of poverty, historical disadvantage and adversity. This is clearly shown in Grace's story when she narrates her own daughter's resistance toward ever doing domestic work, an idea which Grace supports by educating her daughters. Grace had wanted to escape domestic work herself, and not follow her mother's subject position, but she ended up having to be a domestic worker when her other options failed; in the extract below, Grace's daughter is now

occupying this resistant subject position and she (Grace's daughter) carries all her expectations for a better life in getting an education and leaving the 'location' (urban settlement):

> G: No, my child said to me that she can't in her life ever work as a domestic worker!
>
> I: She can't?
>
> G: Because she said to me: "Sjoe [South African slang word expressing exclamation] mamma I see you guys are struggling", "you are struggling and don't get a lot of pay" [Grace is narrating here what her daughter said to her].
>
> I: So, she [her daughter] would like to do something else?
>
> G: Yes, because she says "right now, I am not going to be like you and keep the certificates here [in their home] and I will try by all means to get a job that I have been educated for. I feel sorry for you because you have aged now and so have the certificates, we can burn them" [Grace is narrating here what her daughter said to her.].
>
> I: And how does that make you feel as a mom? Are you proud that she would like to do something different?
>
> G: Yes! I don't want to see our kids, my child struggling, and I told them that. I told them that I wish for God to give you everything you want. Firstly, work, you can't stay here in the location forever. No, it's so painful, sjoe [expressing exclamation of pain/resignation].
>
> I: What do you mean by needing opportunities?
>
> P: Yes, they are needing opportunities, but they are doing good, they will finish with school, we will see then.
>
> (Grace, page 10, 189-197).

4.3 My experience of being a domestic worker.

All the participants have been employed as domestic workers for more than five years. In her story Lisa mentions that she has been doing domestic work for "a long long time"- a total of 19 years. Emily, Lisa and Erica reported that they experienced domestic work as a 'positive' experience. They used words such as 'like', 'happy', and 'no problem' to refer to their work; and the "contented domestic worker" is a subject position that was undoubtedly told for my audience, as a white researcher, responsive to my leading interview questions about "enjoying" and being "satisfied with" the work (for example, see extract below), so as not to seem

threateningly "political", dissatisfied, ungrateful, disrespectful towards the researcher (or all white people), or complaining. However, despite most of their working lives doing domestic work it was noticed that this topic (their experience of the work, what they did daily, how their routine worked) was glossed over or avoided in their stories. Erica in particular, briefly responded but quickly rebutted the researcher's line of questioning with a topic change, adding that she has a second, more creative, stream of income, and identity-position, which she elaborated freely on:

> I: Okay, that's so interesting, and tell me do you enjoy the work that you do? Do you feel satisfied with the job that you do?
> E: Oh, yeah. I like the job that I do. Really. But sometimes I also sew in my house, I am sewing sometimes.
> I: Oh, okay that's nice, so do you make clothes?
> E: Yeah, the Xhosa stuff, that clothes.
> I: Okay, so do you sell it?
> E: Yes, I sell it.
> I: Okay, so for some extra money?
> E: I sell for extra money, because there are people working and they buy these clothes for presents. They live in Makhanda/Grahamstown, but they go to PE [Port Elizabeth].
> I: Okay, that's great, and now? Do you still sew?
> E: Yes, I am sewing on my days off.
> I: Good and that is what you are enjoying?
> E: Yes!
> I: And where do you sell your stuff?
> E: I sew the clothes in my house, I do not have a separate place, I have my machine at home in my lounge.
>
> (Erica, page 4, line 89-102).

Despite the leading questions I asked Grace in the above extract, most of the participants had little to say about their experience of domestic work but told extensively and enthusiastically about other activities and work, such as a sewing business. The short, direct and polite "answers" which were given when I asked about enjoying domestic work stand in contrast to the willingness and forthcoming telling of other activities, work or aspects of the participant-storyteller's lives. The eagerness which was experienced in Erica's animated telling

of her sewing business is potentially an identity appeal to the interviewer that she, and other women who do domestic work, are entrepreneurial and creative with their income and possess skills outside of their day-to-day household cleaning jobs. This was interpreted as the participant-storyteller's attempt to extend her identity positioning beyond the traditionally accepted notions of uneducated women who do domestic work, because they are unable to do anything else. This unskilled subject position was used earlier in this section by Emily when she said:

> E: Oh, because I did not finish my studies, through family problems, so this is the job that I can do, yes.
>
> (Emily, page 1, line 14).

Erica's story is challenging the idea of doing domestic work as a poorly remunerated job for other households, as performed by black women with no other option, by positioning herself as an industrious and creative subject in her sewing business. Here "sewing" is another so-called feminine skill she might have learnt from her mother while growing up, but which she can use to support herself and her family, on her own terms. This was similar to findings in Callinicos (2007) study where domestic workers relied on their heritage, cultural knowledge and skills to cope with difficult transitions and to support their livelihoods in the urban space.

This is similar to Grace's subject positioning in earlier extracts, when she refers to the various other jobs (with higher social status) which she had done, prior to domestic work. These identity appeals could serve the purpose of aligning with me, as a privileged, educated, white woman/researcher, or the perceived reading audience (of university educated people). According to Cock (2011), another explanation of this positioning could be that it enables the maintenance of the domestic worker's personality, self-worth and integrity despite her current demeaning work role. This requires reframing domestic work as only part of the career journey, not what domestic workers do for work in its entirety; and it also allows more subject positions to be taken up in terms of identities and selves, beyond just being a "domestic worker".

In other instances, identity claims were more aligned with roles traditionally assigned to women who do domestic work. This is most prominent in Erica's story below where she refers to herself as "The Nanny" (not "a nanny") and tells me about her past designated role as a domestic worker with a particular job description on the farm which included looking after the white farmer's children:

> E: After that we stay to the farm and then working at the farm, working for the farm people. At that time, me, I am looking after the children there.
>
> I: Oh okay, so you looked after the children on the farm?
>
> E: Yes, I am the nanny.
>
> E: Yes, on the farm there were lots of domestic worker's because on the farm the is a cleaner, there is another one that is cooking, another one is washing, another one is a nanny.
>
> (Erica, page 2, line 30-33).

In a different story, Grace describes her job as a domestic worker at the Monastery in Makhanda/Grahamstown. She narrates long, strenuous work hours filled with various daily duties of servitude, such as feeding and serving the nuns and washing up after them:

> I: And Grace, how long have you been doing domestic work?
>
> G: Sjoe, I can't remember because first I was working at a nun's place.
>
> I: At a nun's place?
>
> G: Yeah, here in Grahamstown when I moved back.
>
> I: What kind of work did you do at the nun's place?
>
> G: We were cleaning and serving them.
> I: In the convent?
> G: Yeah there were so many nuns there by that time, if you come in at 7 o'clock you only leave at 12 o'clock sometimes.
>
> (Grace: page 2, line 36-43)

The way in which the above narrative is told and juxtaposed by other work opportunities (such as a trained stock manager at a shoe shop) might be to firstly, prioritise and valorise her previous jobs to show she could do more, and secondly, present domestic work in

a demeaning way to get the researcher and audience's sympathy for what she "lost" (previous higher status jobs). There is also the possibility that for her the chores at the Monastery represent the numerous practices and rituals of inferiority associated with paid domestic work (Cock, 1989), what she (and the researcher/audience) might perceive as 'dirty work' (Ally, 2011). In previous extracts, by focusing on her other jobs and opportunities, she dissociates from her perceived current position of disparity that she occupies and in the extracts that follow she goes on to further reject the heredity of this positions by saying that her own daughters will not be subjected to the sufferings of paid domestic work in the future.

In their narration of their experience as a domestic work most of the participants were employed by more than one family on different days of the week. Only Emily was employed as a full-time contractual worker, whereas Lisa, Grace and Erica were employed part-time and therefore had several employers. The standard hours of work for most of the participants were from 8:00 until 14:00. The part-time nature of their work and shuffling between families is illustrated most prominently in Erica's story:

> I: Tell me, what does a normal day look like for you?
>
> E: I am starting work at 8 o'clock until 2 o'clock.
>
> I: And do you work for different families, or one family?
>
> E: No, for different families, I work for four different ones. I am working for Dr Henley (pseudonym) at number 13 and I am working for Mr Davidson (pseudonym) and his wife, I am working for Mr Garret, he is a professor and then I am working for students and I go to them on Thursdays. And then on Saturdays, but not every Saturday, every second one, I am working at a different house for two ladies.
>
> I: Wow, okay so you move around quite a lot between houses in the week?
>
> E: Yes, we move around.

(Erica page 2, line 31-36).

The participants stories highlight the growing trend toward the informal sector's casualisation, as seen in the literature (e.g. Fish, 2006) where domestic workers are being paid a daily/hourly rate rather than a fixed monthly wage. Contracts and UIF are only applicable to persons employed for a certain number of hours per week by an employer (Tallie, 2012). And as the literature suggests part-time work has therefore allowed employers a loophole regarding contractual laws and conditions of employment as stipulated in the new South African Labour Act (Fish, 2006). What this means for Lisa, Grace and Erica is that they travel to different parts of Makhanda/Grahamstown each day to work for different families for shorter hours. This could imply that they have less invested relationships with their employers, but for their roles and positions as "mothers", it could also mean that they return home at an earlier hour, saving on the cost of afternoon/after hour childcare and spend more time at home with their children and family during the work week. Another aspect in this narrative is that multiple jobs can contribute to positive subject positions through participants representations of resilience, flexibility, coping and breadwinning by being good at what they do.

4.4 My life outside of domestic work: personal interests, social support and networks.

When asked about their lives outside of their work, religion was foregrounded as a common theme among all the participants. Interestingly, going to church served many purposes (such as narrative identity-building) other than it being for the purpose of practicing the religion itself. This is seen in the extract below when Grace establishes a "me" subject position, amidst all her other striving, sacrifices, jobs, responsibilities and disappointments. The church space was used by the participants as a resource for social connections (such as support groups for mothers), a consistent source of comfort, personal time and a referral base for childcare. This is similar to Brown's (2011) study which found that religion and God played a vitally important role in providing support in hard times for women working as domestic workers and their children.

Additionally, this study found that the church as an institution is a resource in terms of self-care, a space for female connection, child-care and opportunity to access work:

> I: So, there is a 9-year-old, 10-year-old and a 12-year-old? [Emily's own biological son (9) and her 'adopted' children, a girl (10) and boy (12) that she took in after her cousin passed away].
> E: Yes
> I: That must be hard work?
> E: Yes, it is, but through God I have managed
>
> (Emily, page 3, line 58-61)

> G: I do church for me.
>
> (Grace, page 9, line 178)

> L: Yes! And then on Sundays I am busy busy really, because I like church. Every Sunday! Even if it is raining and raining, I am wearing my jacket and I am going to church.
>
> (Lisa, page 4, line 105)

> E: Yes, even when I am not sewing, I am going on Thursdays to a group of mother's and women that go every Thursday to church.
> E: And then Friday I work and then Sunday I go to church again.
> I: Okay, so is that a big part of your week, how you are social and see other people?
> E: Yes
> I: From the church, that when you get together with other women?
> E: Yes, it is very nice.
>
> (Erica page 7, line 176-181)

The role of religion and the church as an alternative 'care network' and community resource is highlighted in these women's stories. This is clearly seen in Emily's story where she tells me that she "chose someone from my church that I trust" (page 3, line 77) to help her look after her children. The role of the church as community resource that provides mothers with childcare and the opportunity to access voluntary caregiving, cleaning and cooking work is further expanded in Erica's story of a creche on the nearby church's premises:

> I: Oh okay, so at the creche. Are there lots of creches?

E: So, no there is just one. And of course, I am staying there by extension 3 and it is not too far, you go there, to the Baptist Church and there is a creche there.
I: Okay, and is that creche full?
E: Yes, there are lots of kids, but I don't know if its full. In the yard of the church there is a creche.

E: Yes, I see them. Because they are family of us, they live near us, she has got two little ones and that mother is cooking at the school for the children and she has little ones and she takes them there to the Baptist church.
I: Okay, so she can go to work where she needs to, and she leaves her kids there?
E: Yes, she leaves them there and fetches them straight after work.
I: And then they go home afterward?
E: Yes, they go home afterward, but I am sure there by Baptist if you want to fetch them later, they are going to wait for you and you can fetch them later, maybe until 5.

(Erica page 4, line 109-112, 116-120)

This kind of arrangement, described in Erica's extract above, allows mothers to leave their children in a safe place, not far from home, to be cared for by women that they trust while they go to work as domestic workers. In this story Erica positions other women (and herself) as "good mothers" that are making responsible decisions for their children's welfare.

4.5 My immediate family network, dynamics and current living situation.

In their narrative accounts about their own family Grace, Erica, Emily and Lisa illustrate the domestic mobility and fluidity that characterise their current household structures and arrangements. Most of the participants talk about extended family households that are single-parented, multi-generational and in Emily's case include her niece and nephew. Needing to support their children and family often precipitated the need to uproot and relocate, at times without their children. This meant that they had to leave their children at a different location (to be cared for by someone else) or they must find suitable affordable care for their children close to their home. This is similar to findings in earlier studies that looked at poor women's entry into domestic work (Callinicos 2007, Phillips 2011). Positions of sacrifice were performed when participants spoke about how they had to leave their young children during

the day while away at work in middle-income areas and in some cases live separately from their children to make use of available childcare:

> I: I am interested Erica, when they were babies, your three daughters, when they were around the ages of four, five and six years old, were you working then?
>
> E: No, I left them with my mother [on the farm], I left them to her and then I came here to work in Grahamstown.
>
> E: Yes, she was looking after them and they were going to school there [on the farm].
>
> (Erica, page 3, line 51-53).

Even though most of the participants were not separated for lengthy periods of time by long distances from their families, as was common practice with live-in arrangements (Cock, 1989) their stories did reflect various examples of needing to 'move and adapt' and at times adopt diverse living arrangements. Many of the narratives that reflect this mobility specifically refer to the mother's need to move to find work, for children to go to school or to support extended family. This is similar to findings in a study Bray et al. (2010) conducted in low-income communities that illustrated the movement of children between neighbourhoods and relative's homes for the purpose of adult supervision (while their mother worked) and closer access to schools. The fictional Western arrangements of the nuclear, stable family who come and go from a single consistent home base with predictable routine does not appear in these stories. In Phillips (2011) study the increasingly diverse family practices of domestic workers with children are demonstrated in stories of resilience and community-based childcare. Similarly, narrations where the biological mothers form a part of their children's care network that consisted of multiple female caregivers with differing dynamics and contexts was found in this study.

Despite these blended arrangements being arguably 'unconventional' (by Western standard) the individual uncertainties and the challenges that the participants talked about, each were positioned positively (in a variety of active roles) as 'caring, competent mothers' in their

narratives. This was specifically demonstrated in small stories that featured their agency, such as their willingness to 'adapt', their tenacity to 'make a plan' and ability to be practical mothers who find solutions to childcare concerns. These performed identities were possibly aligned with what participants thought a white researcher and academic audience would perceive as 'good, competent mothering' as opposed to 'poor, incompetent mothering' given that their children were left in the care of another.

Narratives about the dynamics and structure of family life were mainly dominated by female characters and were only extended briefly by the mention of a biological father at times. When asked about factors such as family support, stories of misfortune and disappointment emerged. This was most evident in Grace's story when she talked about her daughter's relationship with their biological father:

> I: Why are they angry with their father?
>
> G: Sometimes you can say, like there is no support, he doesn't support them. So, the kids they don't want to stay in Joburg, him and I we were fighting, we fought a lot. From there I sent him to labour, that was the solution [Grace explaining that she made a legal claim for maintenance/child support].
>
> I: I can imagine that it was not easy.
>
> G: So, after that all the things that he had done, he then stopped working and now the kids don't want to see him, because we last saw him in 2010. That was the last time I went to Joburg.
>
> I: So, he still lives in Joburg?
>
> G: Yes, and he is not working and not helping me support the children. He is not getting a job right now; he is not even looking.
>
> G: That is why my child is afraid of this, even if he doesn't have money, just to say how are you doing? How is your life? So, they are cross about that thing. The children say they know it is difficult to find a job, but just to ask, how we are surviving here.
>
> I: To have some kind of relationship?
>
> G: Not anymore, not anymore.
>
> (Grace, page 5, line 92-100)

4.6 Accessing help to care for children.

Similar to findings in Phillips (2011) study, participants needed help caring for their own children and the children were most often cared for by a female friend in the community or family member. These kinds of arrangements were key in their ability as mothers to leave and do remunerated domestic work, thereby materially supporting of their family (Phillips, 2011). In this study the detail and organization of this care varied among the four participants, but arguably were similar in that they performed identities which exhibited their creativity as mothers to find and secure good care for their children. These included arrangements that would: get their mother involved in child care and homework, find a trustworthy friend from religious gatherings, reach a barter agreement with an unemployed neighbour who needed meat and other supplies and secure a place in the nearby creche that is run by the community church. Here, participants are challenging the idea of a careless mother that simply leaves their children with others by positioning themselves as 'crafty mothers' when talking about their childcare choices as creative, practical, available and cost effective:

> I: So, tell me, what creche did your youngest one go to?
> E: Seletzu creche [pseudonym]
> I: Okay, is that close by?
> E: Yes, it is close by my house
> I: Okay, why did you choose that one?
> E: Because it is not costly, and it is close, and it doesn't need transport.
> I: Okay so its practical, it made sense?
> E: Yes, I used to drop him there on my way to go work.
>
> (Emily, page 3, line 64- 71).

At times the participants also positioned themselves as 'good mothers' because they had raised domestically skilled, trustworthy older children (often daughters) that they could rely on for the unremunerated childcare of their younger brothers and sisters in the household.

> L: Like my daughter that I said is now 21, she was 3 years old when I started.
> I: Okay, she was small then, and tell me where did she go when you had to go to work?

L: Oh, so remember I tell you I have got the older one…
I: Yes, oh okay, so the older one helped you?
L: Yes, so the older one helped to look after my baby at that time.
I: So, did the older one goes to school and then come home and help with the little ones?
L: Yes, she did.
I: Wow, that's helpful, that there were older siblings…
L: Yes
I: And what did it mean practically for the older one to help with the younger one? Did they cook? Did they clean and help you in the house?
L: Yes! They were doing everything in my house, they clean my house, do the washing and can cook.

(Lisa, page 4, line, 80-89)

The narratives about the different ways in which they as mothers sought out and secured good care for their children reflect their positive subject positioning as active agentic beings who are not afraid to ask for help when fulfilling their motherly duties. The identified 'carers' in the narratives were also positioned favourably. This positive positioning was evident in the language used (words such as 'trust', 'good', 'friend') to describe the women that helped with childcare:

E: I took someone from my church that I trust.

(Emily, line 77, p. 3)

This favourable positioning could be accounted for by the close relationship that the domestic workers share with the carer. Another possibility for the favourable positioning of the carer is the underlying need to position the self as a 'good mother' that finds proper care for her children. Mothers in this study demonstrated a positive positioning of the self for 'finding good care' for their children as well as a grateful and proud attitude toward the female networks of childcare support that dominate their narratives on childcare. An example of this is when Erica, one of the participants, herself now a grandmother, elaborately describes how she is looking after her two very young grandchildren, demonstrating her new role in the inter-generational care network of strong women. Furthermore, the study found that religion and

church played a significant role in terms of both practical support and their identity-making as 'good mothers'. The church was identified as a resource that the mothers used for social connection, a source of comfort and a referral base for childcare. In Emily's case she placed more trust in her carer because they attended the same church. Emily notably positioned herself as a 'thoughtful mother' when she narrated the careful care and consideration that she made before settling on a specific carer. In another story the church (which is traditionally perceived as a place of safety and care) is used by one of the mothers as their choice of creche. It is a possibility that the status of the church was used in this story to give her decision credibility and to represent her as a careful and considerate mother. The concept of religion playing a role in identity-making and subject positioning appeared most evidently in the section "Life outside of domestic work".

4.7 The responsibility of providing for my family and children as a mother.

All the participants in this study contribute significantly to the material support of their family and children. Three out of the four participants do so alone, as single breadwinners in their homes. In their narrative accounts it became clear that each of the participants are proud to support their family, however they each face their own unique challenges, whether it be emotionally or materially.

Participant's representations of themselves as strong, hardworking and independent women who are mothers, reveals a positive aspect of their maternal subjectivity that they are profoundly proud of. Grace tells us that she is the "breadwinner" and when asked about a partner she tells us that she "does not want another one", and Lisa proudly states that "no, no man is needed to help at home". This positioning is also seen in narrations that deal with independent decision-making regarding childcare arrangements. These narratives expand their

representation as a 'good mother' that can not only support but can also make good responsible decisions for children without the help or assistance of a partner/husband.

At the same time, participants also narrate 'less capable, suffering' subject positions in stories about the 'other' (less desirable) side of being a mother that is responsible to provide for their family and children. In her narrative Grace portrays a position of suffering and appeals for sympathy when recounting how her elderly mother relied on her to buy groceries and how she did not have enough money to give her the things that she wanted, because she was paying for her children's school fees.

> G: "I don't have money, where do I get money now?" [Grace's responding to her elderly mother who needed her to buy paraffin].
>
> (Grace, line 141, p. 7)

She appeals to the audience further, performing a victim position, when she describes her children's anger toward their father, because he does not work and does not provide any kind of emotional, material or childcare support. She supports this claim by saying that there were many times where she had to tell her children that they had to wait for what they wanted because she could not buy it for them right away. She is therefore performing positions that oscillate between active roles – the mother that is a strong independent breadwinner- and more passive roles – the mother in need of support/not having enough to go around.

A contradictory positioning appears when Emily briefly talks about having a husband who "sometimes supports" and who helped her make decisions about childcare. It seemed important for Emily to position herself as a married woman that has the support of a husband, a mother that did not have to make decisions alone. By positioning herself as 'a supported mother' Emily is challenging the idea that mothers/domestic workers lack the support of a husband/man and struggle alone, as performed by black women in low-income communities. There is a possibility that Emily perceives this as an idea that is held by the

interviewer/audience, given the fact that I asked the question below (implying that she made decisions on her own):

> I: Did your husband help you make that decision, or did you make that decision by yourself?
>
> E: Yes, we sat down and talked about that.
>
> I: So, it sounds like you have got someone who supports you in having to make those kinds of decisions?
>
> E: Yes, I do, sometimes.
>
> (Emily, page 4, line 80-83).

This is interesting because in a different story Emily narrates the motherly struggle she felt when she had to leave her infant son at home with a woman during the day while she worked as a domestic worker because her husband was not contributing/supporting the family financially. She speaks about how it was a difficult adjustment for her to leave her baby in the care of another and that trust was an important factor in her childcare arrangement.

> I: Was it difficult for you to organize or arrange someone to come to your house and look after the kids?
>
> E: It was difficult because I was not used to that life. So, it was difficult.
>
> I: I can imagine that would need some thought, about who you would choose to look after them.
>
> E: Yes, I had to think.
>
> I: How did you decide on who to choose for that job?
>
> E: I took someone from my church that I trust
>
> I: Okay, so someone in your network, someone that you knew well.
>
> E: Yes, that was it.
>
> (Emily, page 3, line 72-79).

Here Emily is making a sympathetic appeal to the researcher to understand how it was emotionally difficult for her as a mother to leave her small baby in the care of another so that she could provide for her family. This narration of affective difficulty that comes with living this maternal subjectivity is however, quickly retracted when Emily is asked about her

perception of other mothers (in her community) that might also be facing similar difficulties when it came to childcare arrangements. She responds by saying that although she had heard other mothers mention their personal struggle and difficulties around childcare, they do not really speak about it openly. When asked about the reason for the silence around this issue she shortly responded that "they make their own plan" (Emily, page 5, line 116). Interestingly, her response suggests that she wanted to protect the favourable position of other mothers (and perhaps herself) as independent women who do not complain about the lack of support or resources for child care, but instead 'make a plan' and carry this burden in strength, solidarity and silence.

An interesting theme emerged when Lisa spoke about her role and responsibly in providing for her household currently as a grandmother. Her story revealed how it was necessary for her to continue working every day of the week as a domestic worker to care for her own daughter and her two young grandchildren who are living with her. She also describes doing homework and cooking for her grandchildren. Despite being elderly and having raised a family of her own, Lisa's story demonstrates that older generations of women are unable to transition beyond the burden of family life and childcare in poorer communities. Studies suggest that this is not uncommon in contexts of poverty where older women often form the pillar of necessary female networks of care and support in their communities (Callinicos, 2007; Phillips, 2011). This story also shows that the establishment of multi-generational, extended households are necessary to accommodate elderly grandmothers and relatives who may assist with childcare in return for accommodation (Bray et al., 2010). There are not separate facilities for the elderly, or enough money to keep up a separate dwelling/household. Lisa appeals for sympathy by occupying this burdened subject position as an elderly woman who is tired, but unable to retire (from work and mothering duties) because she must continue to provide.

Narratives of shared responsibility and duty emerged when participants spoke about having to tend to their own household. Having to take care of things at home after they have cleaned and fulfilled their duties for their employers during the week – the so-called "double shift" required of domestic workers (Fish, 2006), working in a remunerated job during the day and returning to domestic labour in their own households in the evenings and at weekends was seen. A commonality was that all participants asked their children (particularly their daughters) for assistance with daily household chores (such as cooking) during the week. The participants occupied subject positions of dutifulness and fortitude by telling the researcher that after a long strenuous work week they would spend their "free time" and weekends tending to bigger household chores such as gardening, cleaning and washing clothing:

> I: What do you like to do in your spare time?
> E: I like to tidy at home. So, my free time, I spend it there, doing my chores at home.
>
> (Emily, page 1, line 9-10)

> I: What do your weekends look like when you are not working?
> L: I like to clean my house thoroughly on Saturdays
> I: On the weekend?
> L: Yes, when I am not busy.
> (Lisa, page 4, line 100-103)

> I: So, on weekends, what else is it that you like doing?
> G: I am, cleaning my yard and gardening.
> G: And then sometimes on weekends I do the housework on Friday and then at least its rest on Saturday.
>
> (Grace, page 9, line 171-172 and 178)

In their narratives their positioning as 'the good housemaker' is carried throughout with various mentions of their unremunerated work in their own home, which is felt to be relieved somewhat by a having daughter(s) in the home. The expectation of female gendered tasks in the household is something which was also highlighted in Brown's (2011) study when she talks

about the gender-socialised ideology of feminine labour/chores in the home being passed down generationally.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 The return to Makhanda 40 years after Jacklyn Cock's Maids and Madams.

In her seminal study that explored the relationship between 'maids' and 'madams', based on her research in the 1970s, Jacklyn Cock used a feminist Marxist social justice approach to argue that dominant class practices are socially reproduced and preserved through the acts of domestic exploitation. Cock's (1989) research was conducted in the Eastern Cape, what she referred to later in her book as the 'Deep South' of South Africa, a microcosm of the crudest expression of inequality in society during apartheid. Her study makes a significant contribution to apartheid perspectives on feminist and labour issues and raises theoretical questions around the role of paid domestic in the capitalist mode of production (Callinicos, 1980). In later writing, Cock revisits her 1970s research to show firstly, that the global and South African scholarship on domestic workers has progressed significantly, and secondly, that despite new labour legislation, the conceptualisation of paid domestic work as unskilled, feminized work still represents an important challenge to the invisibility of domestic workers in South Africa (Cock, 2011).

In this study I return to Grahamstown (renamed Makhanda), the historical site of Cock's research and book *Maids and Madams*, forty years later to explore domestic workers stories from a slightly different perspective to Cock's pioneering study. This study uses a performative narrative approach, as proposed by Riessman (2004), to analyse and provide an interpretation of the multiple subject positions that domestic workers use in personal stories about their work, children and family. The South African scholarship and research on domestic workers is used to discuss the main findings of this study below, namely, (a) the experience of becoming and being a domestic worker is precipitated by the responsibility to provide for family and that expectations and disappointments are managed through multiple fluid, complex identities; (b) the use of performative narrative and positioning analysis to make new fluid/complex shifting

multiple identity positions visible; (c) domestic workers stories of motherhood reveal multiple subject positions that can extend our understanding of care networks; and (d) that reflexivity in interpretivist qualitative research can contribute to our knowledge in the field on issues such as: language, privileged and socially distanced categories and other ethical aspects.

5.2 The experience of becoming and being a domestic worker.

In the literature on domestic workers experience of becoming and being a domestic worker in South Africa, several trends are seen. Firstly, black women in low-income communities are often identified as breadwinners for their families (Fish 2006; Phillips 2011) and this is discussed from various historical (Bray et al., 2011) psychological (Kruger & van der Spuy, 2007). and migrant labour (Hunter, 2014; Phillips & James, 2014) perspectives in the literature. Secondly, these women sell their 'unskilled labour' in the informal labour sector – often as domestic workers to provide for their families and to educate their children (Brown, 2011; Callinicos, 2007; Phillips, 2011). Thirdly, the literature shows that household structures are domestically mobile and fluid, particularly in lower income communities (Bray, et al., 2011), where women must move and relocate or migrate to access work (Hunter, 2014; Phillips & James, 2014) and children must do the same to be cared for - often by female relatives or members of the community (Bray et al., 2011; Phillips, 2011).

These dominant trends are echoed in the present study which found that the participants were all breadwinners who had to relocate to work as a domestic worker in Makhanda/Grahamstown so that they could support their families and children. Their household structures are fluid and mostly organised around female inter-generational childcare arrangements, similar to the findings of Phillips (2011). In this study the participants work for many families on different days of the week, and this is aligned with the growing trend in the literature to address the casualisation of domestic work due to failed policy and labour legislation (Fish, 2006).

This study also found that domestic workers had unmet expectations for a better life in the new South Africa and managed this disappointment in narratives of resistance and agency. Interestingly, this meant that unlike other studies that viewed domestic work with pride and gratitude for its role in affording future opportunities for themselves and their children (Brown, 2011), this study found that domestic work was perceived as a "fall back" position for participants. In this study, the experience of being or becoming a domestic worker was as a result of failed plans, missed opportunities and prevailing calamities. This was highlighted by participant's complex positions of disappointment and the imperative for education to end the intergenerational cycle of domestic work for their daughters. This study proposes that 'dirty work' and 'unskilled' identities (Ally, 2011) are being replaced with alternative, more favourable identities in their narrative accounts (Riessman, 2002). These narratives seem to be used resourcefully by the participants and performed for the white researcher and audience to expand on potentially limited or constricted passive 'domestic worker identities' and ideas/beliefs about women who do domestic work.

Participants chose stories that foregrounded their entrepreneurial endeavours, creativity and idiosyncratic identity as mothers and as women outside of their job as domestic workers. These narratives might alternatively, reveal that it is important for participants to be seen as an individual, with their own dreams, skills and desires, outside of the demands and constraints that accompany their job as a domestic worker (who is oppressed by larger societal forces). This was similarly seen when domestic workers in Callinicos' (2007) study narrated about their heritage that lead to political and artistic endeavours.

This finding extends the view of domestic workers beyond the 'victim of oppression' toward the more personal, active, resilient being (Phillips, 2011), important parts of their identity as individuals. This shows the importance of multiplicity and fluidity of subject positions, heard in small stories, for historically marginalized groups, such as domestic workers,

who must 'manage' spoiled identities and escape larger stories of oppression. This is facilitated by using performative narrative analysis in qualitative research.

5.3 The use of a performative narrative and positioning analysis.

In this study Riessman's (2004) performative analysis of narrativity and Bamberg's (2011) approach to analysing subject positions within 'small narratives' is used to reveal new fluid, complex shifting identities and multiple identity positions. By using this approach that focuses on the subjectivity in the narratives I was able to examine how a particular kind of self or identity was constructed by participants, in general, as domestic workers, as mothers, but also and importantly, in relation to me as a researcher and the perceived academic audience (both of which are belonging to socially different categories from the participants).

Previously, within both Marxist and feminist circles, domestic workers have been viewed as victims of gender, class and race (Cock, 2011) within larger stories of oppression by social structures and ideologies. In this study, Bamberg's (2011) small story approach allowed domestic workers to perform other identities as mothers, as agentic, resilient, good mothers, using networkers of care as they arrange their children's care, development and education through small everyday stories. The larger stories of oppression are still present in the background, but the small stories are revelatory and transformative – and only sometimes heard in scholarship (e.g. Kruger, 2007; Kruger & Lourens, 2016; Phillips, 2011).

This study, with its focus on domestic workers maternal subjectivity, therefore used the performative narrative and positioning analysis to incarnate the plurality of self-positions that appeared for domestic workers as mothers. This lens was particularly useful because on the one hand, the participant-storytellers used positions of agency in stories about providing for family and children, and on the other hand they needed to cope with or 'manage' what this (the responsibility and burden to provide) had cost them through positions of motherly sacrifice and

struggle in other stories. By using this approach, the study was able to evoke some of the complexities and contradictions that are housed within the maternal subjectivity of these women. This is valuable because it showed the participant's many representations of the self and connections between subject positions, including those which had been split off or denied because of personal ambivalence or the resistance toward the perceived beliefs/ideas about motherhood held by the researcher or audience (Riessman, 2002).

5.4 The experience of being a mother.

This study found that the participants constructed their identities and positioned themselves in various ways relative to their maternal subjectivity and their audience. Participants positioning oscillated between 'victims of circumstance' (i.e. mothers needing support) and independent agentic beings (i.e. mothers who make a plan). According to Riessman (2002) this is aligned with other narrative studies that found identity construction to be a fluid process, where narrators move between positions of power and victims of circumstance by choosing to tell (and withhold) certain stories. Riessman (2002) explains that this fluidity is necessary for narrators to deal with various situations and 'manage' existing or desired identities.

In this study the multiple fluid subject positions being performed in the extracts that lay claim to participants identity as a 'good mother' included: breadwinning, making responsible custodial decisions, making sacrifices and suffering for children, playing a wider motherly role in the family in times of crisis, supporting and pushing education and keeping a good household. Maternal subjectivity was also represented as 'competent' through stories of 'well raised' daughters who form a part of supportive childcare networks, but who will not work as domestic workers because they are educated. Through analysing this positioning, we might understand that participants job as a domestic worker imbeds their identity as a mother who is 'good' because she is giving her children skills and an education (Brown 2011; Phillips, 2011). In this study 'religious, responsible, virtuous' positions also emerged and were possibly used to

further solidify ‘good mother’ identities through the high moral status that is associated with religious belonging and the church. In research conducted with African migrant women Phillips and James (2014) found that Christianity provided a specific moral framework for the ways in which many African women conducted their lives. The moral support groups that these women belonged to subscribed to these notions, in which femininity was defined in terms of respectability.

The realities of maternity, as presented by the participants, also revealed a number of interesting contradictions such as, on the one hand mothers were positioned independently (and not in need of a man’s support) and on the other hand, mothers were positioned collectively (and proudly make use of supportive female care networks). Further examples of fluid maternal positioning were seen in stories that performed positions of individual emotional sacrifice as a mother leaving her child in the care of another versus the collective sacrifice by mothers who bear this emotional burden in silence and strength.

This is interesting because these maternal narratives were found to be largely suppressed in this study and seemed to express a self that is simultaneously singular and similar, at once individual and communal. Narratives about the agonising decisions and burdens of care were also curiously unemotional. This might have been because it was difficult for participants to express these feelings in their second or third language. Another possibility is that it was difficult for participants to deal with the fluidity or multiplicity that such recognition would entail. This could imply a split subjectivity, on the one hand, being an independent strong woman who works and who is tasked to look after her family (totally in control of her destiny and others) and on the other hand, being a mother that has no choice but to leave her children in the care of another. Other seminal studies on mothers in resource poor contexts identify the psychological shame and guilt that is associated with having to be separated from children (to work) or not being able to provide enough for them (Kruger & Lourens, 2016). These studies

argue that all mothering practices cannot be analysed according to traditional mothering perspectives as this unjustly places an added burden of guilt and shame on mothers who are facing crises and traumas that are unique to the context of poverty. This calls for new perspectives on 'mothering' and the re-positioning of mothering identities in low-income communities. These perspectives need to account for the hidden struggles and deep emotional burdens that mothers supporting children face in poor contexts.

One significant contribution, that extends our knowledge on care networks, was the reflexivity that a positioning and performative analysis allowed in this study. For instance, positioning as mothers also occurred in relation to me as a researcher (a young, white, educated woman, a training clinical psychologist, who is not a mother) and the perceived academic audience. This presented new material on performed positions that reflected how participants would like to be seen, perceived and understood as mothers by this particular audience. In this study I found that participants positioned themselves favourably as 'good mothers' and made identity claims that would either align with me and my perceived position, ideas or beliefs about motherhood or challenge these with their own positions of resistance. This meant that at times, participants 'protected' their maternal subjectivity by splitting themselves from me (and my nonmaternal subjectivity) as white young professional who is not a mother and who cannot understand (and might judge) their position. At other times, participants appealed to me for sympathy toward their position as poor mothers who carry the burden and responsibility of children and family.

Positioning for the purpose of impressing the researcher and perceived audience also occurred in this study. Examples of this are: "I am worthy, I really work hard" positions which were later juxtaposed by "thwarted victim" positions, appealing for sympathy when things did not work out the way that they had hoped it would. These subject positions and performed identities, in relation to me as a researcher, pose theoretical questions about the influence of

divided social categories on the expression and interpretation of narratives in qualitative research for both the participant and the researcher. This will be discussed further in the section on reflexivity below.

5.5 Reflexivity.

"The stories that are told and received are therefore influenced and informed by what tellers as well as the audience bring to the relationship from their own lives and contexts" (Etherington, 2007, p. 600).

Narratives are co-constructed in narrative research and it is therefore important to acknowledge how the researcher and audience exerts a crucial influence on what is said, how it is or ought to be said, what is taken for granted or left out and what is elaborated on (Riessman, 2008). Reflexive practice is a tool that must be used to locate the self (researcher) within the research and how that self (as the researcher) influences the research process and its outcomes (Etherington, 2007). According to Bishop and Shepherd (2011) the act of reflexivity can add to our knowledge of narrative methodologies by showing how the assumptions, beliefs and biases of the researcher and audience inevitably shape the research process. Feminist principles, relating to equality and power, challenge researchers to make transparent values and beliefs that lie behind their interpretations (Etherington, 2007). This facilitates in the sharing of power by lowering the barriers that exist between researcher and researched and allowing both sides to be seen and understood for who they are (Etherington, 2007).

My experience of the four participants that unfolded during the interviews and later in the analysis are discussed below. I do this to show that certain aspects (such as language, privilege and socially distanced categories and ethical aspects) had a major impact on the knowledge that was produced in this study. I hope to add something to the knowledge on

narrative methodology by showing the transformative quality of the reflexive material and how co-constructed relationships provide a context for the narrative content.

5.5.1 Language

It was evident in this study that language played a key role in shaping how questions were asked, stories were told, issues were understood, and identities were represented as well as the research relationship between myself and the domestic workers. Interviewing in English resulted in a power differential that put me at an advantage as I am a first language English speaker and the interviewees were second or third language speakers. This resulted in broken language in the narrative extracts above which (inadvertently) represents domestic workers as 'uneducated', 'poorly skilled' and 'inarticulate'. I tried to engage with this issue by partially correcting the language and scaffolding meaning in the extracts. However, finding a balance between respectfully representing domestic workers and not losing the essence of what they had said was challenging.

In the interviews I felt that answers were brief, and stories were not elaborated on freely due to interviewees lack of proficiency and confidence in the English language. This could be overcome in future studies if the researcher is able to speak isiXhosa, or if questions could be asked in English and responded to isiXhosa by the participant and then translated. An unintended consequence of the brevity of stories was that I ended up speaking as much as the interviewees. Whilst reflecting on shorter non-descriptive narrative sections it was noted that I had oscillated between positions of curiosity and frustration (asking participants to "tell me more") and positions of trying to respect boundaries (not being intrusive and allowing participants to choose how forthcoming they would like to be). This was challenging in a narrative study that sought richly detailed "stories" as material to closely analyse rather than simply describe. In the interviews I also used language in a certain (controlling) manner, for

example when asking leading questions to elicit answers that I would deem valuable for the focus of the study or that would align with the reviewed literature.

In Shefer's (2012) study she looked at how white narrators construct their relationship with black domestic workers in their memories of apartheid. She found that a domestic worker's identity, her own social location and context (her black subjectivity) existed outside of her connection with the white family for which she worked (Shefer, 2012). Domestic workers often had an English name (given to them by their parents) and an isiXhosa name, one for each world which they inhabited. Domestic workers gave white employers their English name (out of respect) because their employer could not pronounce their isiXhosa name. A powerful example of "naming" and "positioning" through language also appeared in this study when I chose to use English pseudonyms (Emily, Lisa, Erica, Grace) for isiXhosa speaking domestic workers. I created the pseudonym by using the first alphabetic letter of the name that interviewees used when introducing themselves to me. Interestingly, three of the interviewees introduced themselves using their 'English names' (either given to them by their parents, their christened name, or given by their employer) and only one used their isiXhosa name given to them at birth. By choosing to continue the use of these names (albeit different) and the allocation of a new name I encouraged the performance of English names (and English identities) by isiXhosa participants for the (presumably English) audience of this research. In doing so, I assumed that participants would not protest to being perceived as more English (and invariably less isiXhosa) in this research. This is problematic for two main reasons, firstly that my own perception of English as having a high cultural capital is shared by participants and therefore they would "want" this portrayal and secondly that participants would not object because they have been given English names previously. This called into question the way in which identity and knowledge constructions are created and contended and how they shift around language and are impacted by the choices that I make as a researcher when using

language. Considering this, reflexively, I have grown more mindful of my role in the reproduction of cultural and social inequalities (based on the use of language) that occurs when projecting my own cultural capital onto another.

5.5.2 Privilege and socially distanced categories

According to Etherington (2007), researchers cannot deny their position of power, however as much as they include participants' views and voices and negotiate relationships, in the end, the research is their own work. Being a young white woman who does not have children and who is an intern clinical psychologist after many years of education and professional training, means that I am socially distant from the participants in many categories. The participants are older black women with lower educational levels who are mothers (and grandmothers) that must support a family by working as a domestic worker. These disparities firstly, influenced how interviewees "performed" certain identities for me (the researcher) as well as for the academic audience which the researcher belongs to. Secondly, these differences influenced how I responded to interviewees and what interviewing them brought up for me and how that made me feel.

My privilege and belonging to a socially distanced category were evident in the research process when I battled with assumptions that I made about families and children in low-income households. As a white middle classed woman psychologist researcher, I was surprised by the "chore curriculum" in black African households, where children care for and are socialized primarily by other children and siblings. This was similar to findings in Bray et al. (2010) study that explored the division of labour within Coloured families in low-income communities. My privileged position was also evident by asking interviewees leading questions about enjoying domestic work and being satisfied with their work life. This is interesting reflexively as I was potentially avoiding my own discomfort (around my position of privilege as someone who

employs a domestic worker). This could also be attributed to the fictional belief held by some white middle class people that domestic workers are a "part of the family" and enjoy taking care of the needs of others (Ally, 2011).

I felt that my position as a child-free white psychologist constructed a particular kind border between my own identity and the identity of the research participant in relation to each other. Being a training clinical psychologist (a fact that participants were aware of) I did not want to appear imposing and this limited the nature of follow-up questions, especially regarding stories of hardship. Despite my best intentions to create a comfortable holding space for stories to emerge, I felt that on the one hand knowledge of my vocation caused interviewees to limit certain narratives- to avoid being examined, analysed or diagnosed and on the other hand my childless status limited narratives that interviewees felt only a mother might empathize with (e.g. stories about their own children).

An example of interviewees reticence was seen when they chose to withhold information or 'stories of struggle' pertaining to mothering and having to leave their children in the care of others. I noted that during the interviews, at times narrators appeared reserved emotionally and there was hesitation to give information that might lead to being 'diagnosed' or judged according to western psychological mothering practices. Alternatively, the narrator could be intentionally withholding instances of internal struggle, guilt or shame, associated with leaving their children, thereby avoiding the anticipated confrontation of follow-up questions, counselling or consoling by "the psychologist" on these private matters. Instead stories that position the narrator as adaptable, resilient, thoughtful agents that can create opportunities for themselves and those that they care for emerged.

I noted that the reticence was compensated for in elaborate efforts by domestic workers to appear "worthy" to their audience (and me as the researcher). Narratives that did not support

skilled, worthy identity claims were often cut short or silenced by interviewees. I was concerned that their need for the audience's approval was due to fears of being judged by me as a young, white, educated, child-free, psychologist. This is perhaps something that could be overcome by having several one-on-one conversations in a casual manner, building a sense of trust and familiarity, prior to entering the space of the "premeditated" interview; or by having a series of group discussions, where domestic workers could share mothering stories about their children with one another (and the researcher).

According to Phillips (2011) in the literature on domestic workers, 'victim' discourses are being dislodged and replaced by discourses of self-acting agentic women who are resilient and capable of supporting themselves and their families. In alignment with this, I wanted to move past political, oppressed, victim accounts that are explored against a socio-political backdrop by exploring the micro-practices of domestic workers' lives at home and with children. Due to this, I experienced a great deal of discomfort around representing domestic workers as "unskilled" in this study. This resulted in an overly cautious approach when portraying domestic workers' struggles on the one hand and an embellished focus on identities revealing entrepreneurship and creativity on the other hand. This could potentially have facilitated the concealment of struggle identities in the narrative and invalidated participants experiences of struggle and oppression when they were told. This could be overcome in future research by being mindful of the balance that needs to be held between what the participant wants to say and what the research wants to achieve.

5.5.3 Ethical aspects

Being sensitive to the field in which I was working brought many interesting questions reflexively. In this particular study empathy and respect were more important than compensation given the existing asymmetrical power differentials of the researcher and the

participants. To not reproduce the white woman employer “madam” and the black woman domestic worker “maid” dynamic, it was decided that participants would not be paid for their stories. It was also felt that without financial incentive participants might be more likely to speak freely and not try to tell the researcher what they think she might want to hear.

I also had to consider that domestic workers are generally low-income earners and that paying for stories might sway decision-making regarding consent to participate. This coercion has been documented in cautionary writings on ethics within research studies with resource-poor individuals, groups or communities, where compensation is provided (e.g. Colvin, 2014; Marx & Treharne, 2018). My supervisor and I wanted to emphasise the voluntary nature of this study. It was therefore decided that participants would not be paid for their participation, but that their travelling costs would be reimbursed. No financial compensation did mean that interviews were shorter than they might have been if participants were paid for their time. It also complicated the recruitment process using snowball sampling as some identified potential participants withdrew interest when told that they would not be paid for their participation.

The fact that this study is also interpretivist qualitative research meant that I have interpreted women’s experiences and positions and I am not able to take these interpretations back to them, to agree with, or to dispute. I am also unable to learn from/gain insights from the feedback that they could give me on my interpretations.

Chapter Six: Concluding comments

Based on these previous studies that reveal the significance of family and children in domestic workers stories (Brown, 2011; Callinicos, 2007; Kruger & Lourans, 2016; Phillips, 2011) this research study aimed to explore the positions that domestic workers occupy in their maternal subjectivity. The stories that domestic workers told about their family and personal childcare arrangements were used as a narrative tool to explore these instances of positioning and identity-making. This study, like those mentioned above, is orientated toward challenging the historical position and identity of the 'maid' as a lonely, silent 'victim' by opening alternate stories of family, intimacy, agency and sacrifice.

In this study stories were analysed using the narrative approaches of Riessman (2002) and Bamberg (2011) to locate the narrator (in their positioning) in relation to other actors (i.e. the actual and perceived audience). This approach allowed me to firstly, explore how domestic workers choose to be 'seen' and 'cope' with the responsibilities of motherhood by fluidly shifting between passive and active positions in their stories and secondly, subject positions and performed identities in relation to the researcher and audience (from socially distant categories) were made visible. Interpreting domestic workers' stories about their lives and experiences was a complex task. This was made more challenging by the many axes of difference between the researcher and the participants in this study, something that is important to remember when considering the interpretations and findings. Reflexivity was therefore essential in this study and served as a secondary but integral data source and became the experiential context from which meaningful findings emerged.

Limitations to the study

The most notable limitation of this study is that only four participants were interviewed. This makes generalisability of findings limited. The Eastern Cape and Makhanda/Grahamstown is a very specific context in terms of limited resources and very high unemployment and poverty rates, which is not necessarily the case, in similar ways, throughout South Africa. The brevity of interviews (for reasons discussed above) is also a potential limitation**.**

Strengths of the study

The use of a performative narrative and positioning analysis, the complexity and multiplicity of domestic workers' identities (full of tensions and different positions, performed for different audiences) emerged in this study. This contributed to the knowledge on how narrative methodologies are used to explore the relational and familial aspects of domestic workers lives, women's stories about sacrifice, agency and individualism, but also their commitment to others, to their community and to their family. This also contributed to a detailed analysis of reflexivity.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Theme 1: Introductory questions

- Tell me about yourself – who are you? Where are you from? Where do you stay now?
- What do you like to do in your spare time? Who are your friends and what do you like doing together?

Theme 2: Questions related to being a domestic worker

(Trying to explore their subjective experience of being a domestic worker)

- How did you come to be a domestic worker?
- How long have you been doing domestic work?
- Are you employed full-time? How many days a week?
- Was domestic work your first job? If not, what was it?
- What does a typical day as a domestic worker look like for you?
- Do you enjoy the type of work that you do? What are some of the things that you do enjoy and what are some of the things you do not enjoy?
- Are there things about your job that you find difficult/challenging?
- Do you feel like your job keeps you from doing other things that you would like to do?
    - Probe on the following elements:
        - What kinds of things relating to your job do you experience as difficult? Why?
        - What are these other things that you would like to be spending time on?

Theme 3: Questions related to social life/relationships

(Exploring this aspect of their life outside of the workspace and what it looks like in terms of social support and networks)

- How would you describe your life outside of work?
- Do you engage socially? What kinds of things do you do?
- Do you feel that there is support for you in your community/neighbourhood? What does this support look like?
    - Probe on the following elements:
        - What other things do you do with people in your community?
        - Who is typically involved in these gatherings/events? Is it always the same people?

Theme 4: Family system relationships/information

(Exploring their immediate family network/dynamics and current living situation)

1. Tell me about your family? Who are you supporting?
2. Do you have children of your own?
3. Tell me more about your child(ren)? How old are they?
4. Who lives in your home with you?
5. Do you feel that you have someone supporting you at home? If so, who?
    - Probe on the following elements:
        - How many people are dependent on you? And for what?

- What is your role in the family?
- How do you feel about your role in your family?

Theme 5: Child Care Arrangements

(Exploring the types of childcare arrangements as well as the nature of these arrangements)

1. Who looks after your child(ren) during the day when you are at work?
2. Has this always been the case? If not, what did previous care arrangement's look like and why did they change?
3. What does this mean for you practically? How do you get them there? How do you fetch them afterward?
4. Was/Is this difficult for you to organize/arrange? Who helps you with this?
5. What made you decide on (insert place/person name) to care for your child(ren)?
6. What are your own thoughts around this arrangement?
7. When you are finished with work for the day and your child(ren) are at home, who looks after them?

Probe:

- What kinds of other resources are being used?
- Who helped you decide on this childcare arrangement?
- What are you happy about regarding this arrangement? Are there things that you are not happy about/concerned about in relation to this arrangement?

End of Interview

Appendix B: Ethical clearance form

RHODES UNIVERSITY
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14 December 2018

Nisha Michau
Department of Psychology
RHODES UNIVERSITY
6140

Dear Nisha

ETHICS APPLICATION: PSY2018/43

This letter confirms your ethical protocol with tracking number PSY2018/43 and title, “Exploring domestic workers’ subjectivities through their stories of childcare arrangements”, was reviewed by the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) of the Psychology Department of Rhodes University on 22 November 2018 where modifications were requested. These modifications have been received and therefore the committee decision is now APPROVED.

The RPERC is a subcommittee of RUESC-HE and therefore this decision will be ratified at the next RUESC meeting. Please ensure that the RPERC is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. This clearance is valid for 12 months from the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Prof Lisa Saville Young

CHAIRPERSON OF THE RPERC