

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

**SUBJECTIVITY IN THE 'MAID'/'MADAM' RELATIONSHIP AND ITS
EFFECTS ON THE OCCUPATIONAL CHILD CARE-GIVING FUNCTIONS OF THE
DOMESTIC WORKER**

NOMSA C. NGQAKAYI

Supervisor : Sally Swartz

**A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology,
University of Cape Town.**

February 1991

The University of Cape Town has been given
the right to reproduce this thesis in whole
or in part. Copyright is held by the author.

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Nomsa C. Ngqakayi
Psychology Department
University of Cape Town
21st December 1990

I wish to express my deep felt gratitude to Pheliwe and my sisters Lindiwe and Nonceba, who rendered good quality substitute care for my son whilst I worked on this project. Without their help, this project would not have been possible.

I offer thanks to Sally Swartz, my supervisor, for generating my interest in this area and her invaluable contributions to this project.

I also wish to extend my thanks to the participants of this study. Without their co-operation this project would not have materialised.

This study investigated the manner in which discursive practises in the social relations within domestic service position, the domestic worker, and the work she does, as of low status and impinges on the child caregiving functions of the domestic worker. The extent to which racial factors are operant was assessed. Accounts were obtained from both 'maids' and 'madams' through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The approach to the transcribed data was informed by Hollway's (1989) interpretative discourse analysis whilst analytical concepts from Davies and Harré (1990) were used for the actual analysis of discursive positioning. Discourses that emerged from the "madams'" accounts polarized into a progressive liberal discourse and an oppressive, colonial discourse. The domestic workers' accounts revealed a discourse of servility as well as a contradictory discourse of resistance. Racial considerations did not surface as decisive in the 'choice' of positioning, although their influence was not completely irrelevant. What did surface as decisive in enforcing democratic social practises, or approximations thereof, was the need for good quality substitute care as well as the need to retain already existent relationships of attachment between the domestic workers and the children under their care.

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa many people, both black and white, employ domestic workers. According to statistics released by the Central Statistical Services in Pretoria in 1989, an average 68,7 percent (over two-thirds) of white South African households employ one or more domestic workers (Weekly Mail, August 11 to August 17, 1989). Statistics for black¹ South African households were not given.

Jacklyn Cock's 1984 study of domestic workers in South Africa is an exploratory account of domestic work involving white employers. The particular strength of the study is its implicit recognition that "...domestic service itself constitutes.....the crudest, most hidden expression of inequality in this society" (Cock, 1984, p.1).

One of the duties that many domestic workers assume is that of substitute caregiving for their employer's children (ibid). The nature of domestic work is such that the domestic worker is a constant nurturant figure in the house.

This study seeks to extend Cock's work through an investigation of the manner in which discursive practises in domestic service create and reproduce the subjectivities of 'maids' and 'madams'. Further, the implications of discursive positioning for the occupational role of the domestic worker as child caregiver is investigated. Little work has been done in this area.

The motivation behind this investigation is the ironical contradiction that appears to be inherent in the ultra exploitable and mostly denigrated nature of domestic work and the kind of responsibility that is given the domestic worker in her role as caregiver, if the developmental theories are anything to go by.

The theories of child development in psychology recognize the importance of the quality of the child-caregiver relationship for the 'normal' psychological development of the child. However, the view

1 The term 'black' is used in all its encompassing sense to refer to 'racial' categories not officially labelled 'white', namely, African, Indian and so-called 'Coloured'.

propagated by Western psychological theory of the end product of human development and identity formation as an integrated or bounded or self-contained subject has been challenged as class-, race- and sex-bound, as designed to serve the ideological purpose of bourgeoisie societal reproduction and, therefore, as misleading (Henrique et al, 1984; Hollway, 1989; Shotter & Gergen, 1989). The self, according to post-structuralist theory, is not necessarily unitary or rational.

The critique, very briefly outlined above, has had resonances on the way psychologists discuss the relation between development and its social context. The simple exploration of social influences on individual development is being rejected. The main focus, articulated mostly in post-structuralist theorizing, is to reconstruct the developing 'subject' in a way that transcends the individual-society dichotomy (Richards & Light, 1986, p.301).

It would seem that, irrespective of what changes are likely to occur in theorizing about child development as a consequence of the post-structuralist paradigm shift, the importance of the quality of the child-caregiver relationship will remain undisputed. After all, challengers to the traditional Western description of personhood are in agreement that society and the person are not "...formed and defined apart from one another and interact as though each were external to the other" (Sampson in Shotter and Gergen, 1989, p.4). Rather there is "...an essentially dialectical interpenetration of subject and object in which neither has full primacy" (ibid, p.6). I would like to assert that the child-caregiver, primary or substitute, is the earliest strongest representation of the object (in this case, society) in her/his capacity to provide meaning for the child. Further, the post-structuralist definition of the individual as the "...mediated product of society [who] in acting reproduces or potentially transforms that society" (ibid, p.6) begs the question of the contribution of the child caregiver in the processes of 'mediation' and in the reproduction or transformation of society.

On the premise that the child-caregiver relationship is unlikely to lose its significance in future theorizing on child development, it seems appropriate to delineate those aspects of attachment theory that are pertinent to this paper.

Attachment to particular people, usually the mother, develops early in childhood. Anxiety, illness, fear, fatigue as well as exposure to a strange situation increases the infant's tendency to seek proximity or interaction with the specific figure of attachment. The child is most likely to develop attachments to the person who provides comfort at such times and to people who actively interact with him/her (Rutter, 1981; Rutter & Hersov, 1985).

Attachment is not only with mothers. Most children develop multiple selective attachments (usually three or four) with siblings, other relatives, baby sitters and family friends. Although these attachments are similar in quality, they vary in intensity, with the mother generally being the most powerful in serving an anxiety-reducing attachment function (Rutter, 1981; Rutter & Hersov, 1985).

Bowlby (1951) postulated that serious impairment of the child's 'normal' development might result from even brief separations of the child from its mother, leading to disorders ranging from anxiety to depression to psychopathic personality.

Subsequent studies, to some extent, confirmed Bowlby's view but emphasized the importance of the quality of substitute care as a mitigating factor and modified Bowlby's view to reach three very significant conclusions:

1. Many children are not damaged by deprivation. Despite severe deprivation in childhood, children can have a stable, healthy personality development.
2. Although an important stressor, separation is not the crucial factor in most forms of deprivation. The context and circumstances of the separation are more important than just the fact that the parent and child are separated. Children may, in fact, be damaged by seriously disturbed patterns of parent-child interaction in the absence of any separation.
3. A child's relationships with people other than his mother are important. Research findings suggest that in the absence of such

social supports, mothers who are alone all day with their children are more likely to become rejecting in their attitudes and behaviour (Rutter, 1981; Rutter & Hersov, 1985).

The role of the domestic worker as child caregiver has all the potential of making her an important figure of attachment. Yet, despite the widespread recognition of the significance of figures of attachment for healthy child development, the importance of that role, as executed by the domestic worker in the work situation, seems not to be acknowledged. There appears to be a tension between primary caregiving, the source of affection and the way it is valued.

The focus of this study will be to examine the manner in which discursive practices in the social relations within domestic service position the domestic worker and the work she does as of low status. It is, however, important to point out that in the South African context it would be insufficient to talk about discursive practices that create the 'maid' and the 'madam' without highlighting the issue of the 'maid' almost inevitably being black and economically exploitable. The domestic worker's position of ultra-exploitability is "...at the convergence of three lines along which social inequality is generated - class, race and sex" (Cock, 1984, p.5). Between October 1985 and October 1987, 78,3 percent of all domestics were African females, 11,1 percent were 'Coloured' females, 9,6 percent were African males and 0,1 percent were White males (Central Statistical Services report in Weekly Mail, August 11 to August 17, 1989). These statistics are a reflection of "...both ideological definitions of women's work, and the fact of black women being a preferred source of labour because they are cheaper" (Cock, 1987, p.135). The worst kind of discrimination is thus suffered by black women.

Further, race is "...a socially significant consciousness of a people that they belong to a special group, compared to another, or to others, by virtue of having certain physiological characteristics in common, besides sex and age - in our time, mainly skin colour and hair texture" (Vilakazi, 1987, p.5).

Over and above the 'consciousness' of being a 'black subject' or being a 'white subject', the discursive consciousness of the 'maid' or the 'madam' is concomitant with other dichotomous categories that imply a disparity in power that derives from the social formation/economy. "...it is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black [person] entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process:

- primarily, economic
- subsequently, the internalization - or better, the epidermalization - of this inferiority" (Fanon, 1967, pp.12-13).

But discourse alone cannot maintain and sustain consciousness. For any type of discursive 'consciousness' to persist and endure it has to rest on non-discursive material social matrices, namely, the internal social dynamics of a society and its mode of production (Therborn, 1982). Hence in South Africa we do not only live the ideology of Apartheid through discourse but that discourse rests on our actual physical existence of Apartheid on a social and economic level.

It appears, therefore, that the importance of the domestic worker as a figure of attachment may well be obscured by economic, social and discursive practices that keep the domestic worker 'bound' in a position of subordination, powerlessness and immobility.

Most employers in Cock's (1984) sample stated that they hired domestic workers in order to devote more time to their children's intellectual and emotional development. The view appears to make a distinction between nurturant functions, such as feeding and making the child comfortable and emotional attachment, seems to be an implicit denial on the part of the white women in the study of the extent of their children's attachment to domestic workers.

In some child custody cases the presence of a stable domestic worker becomes one of the factors that hold sway and influence the court's decision (Mudie, 1987). In these cases the importance of the domestic worker as a figure of attachment is acknowledged, but this raises the question of how much remains unacknowledged. The denial of the importance

of this person finds expression in, amongst other things, the inhuman working conditions of most domestic workers.

The exploration of the creation and reproduction or transformation of subjectivities in the 'maid'-'madam' relationship will be done through an analysis of positioning in discourses relating to the relationship itself as well as the manner in which such positioning implicates the caregiving functions of the domestic worker. The study will attempt to look at the quality of relationship between the domestic worker and the child/children under her care. Further, the study aims to investigate black employers of domestic workers versus their white counterparts with the purpose of examining the extent to which racial factors are operant in the relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. ATTACHMENT, BONDING AND SEPARATION : A BRIEF OUTLINE OF CONTEMPORARY ATTACHMENT THEORY.

The term 'attachment' was first used by Bowlby in a 1958 publication to refer to the nature of a child's tie or bond to his/her mother (Ainsworth, 1973).

Bowlby (1969) views the biological function of attachment to be protection from predation, and proximity seeking as the set goal of the attachment system.

An "organizational definition of attachment" provides Bowlby's control systems model with motivational and affective components. It highlights the importance of the attachment figure as a secure base for exploration as well as that of preferential treatment under stress. Bridging the two concepts is that of the affective or emotional bond. With the formation of the attachment bond the infant should derive security from, as well as feel affection for, the caregiver (Sroufe & Waters, 1977).

The development of attachment as an organised system requires three necessary conditions:

1. There needs to be sufficient opportunity for interaction. Routine infant care practises such as feeding and making the child comfortable encourage mother-infant interaction. The amount of interaction determines whether the infant becomes attached whilst the quality of the attachment is shaped by the kind of interaction that takes place.
2. An infant must have learnt to discriminate his/her mother or other attachment figures from other persons.
3. The child must have at least begun to conceive of the figure of attachment as having a permanent and independent existence even when not present to perception (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1988; Sroufe & Waters, 1977).

The pattern of attachment (secure or insecure) that an individual develops during infancy, childhood and adolescence affects subsequent social relationships, behaviour in general and subsequent attachments (Bowlby, 1988; Rutter & Hersov, 1985).

Evidence suggests that the working or representational models a child builds of his caregivers, especially his parents, and complementary models of himself in interaction with them, tend to persist and are so taken for granted that they come to operate on an unconscious level (Bowlby, 1988).

2. WOMEN, WORK AND CHILDCARE : THE NEEDS OF WORKING MOTHERS AND POSTWAR GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES ON CHILD CARE IN SOME INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES.

Since the immediate postwar period, employed mothers have, out of economic necessity, increasingly become an everyday part of family life and economic structure. Governmental responses to this situation vary in different countries.

Most European and East European countries have in their national policies instituted paid, job protected, maternal leave and subsidized

child care. In 1988 the Canadian government motivated to spend \$5,4 billion on new child initiatives over the next seven years (Scarr et al., 1989). In the United States, despite the fact that inadequate child care facilities have reached crisis proportions, government response has been very slow (Pence, 1989; Scarr et al., 1989; Zigler & Ennis, 1989).

Governmental policy in the United States seems to still be influenced by, amongst other things, the view that caregiving is first on the list of motherhood's duties. The view dates back to the spread of two discourses in the postwar period, namely 'Bowlbyism' and pronatalism. The former led to a form of writing and talking that children need their mothers at all moments, and by inference, must not work even part-time, or make use of creches. The latter was generated by the despondency and alarm over the low birth rate and argued for mothers to be 'freed' to have more children (Riley, 1983). Both discourses helped propagate rhetoric that "...overpersonified [women] as mothers and desexed them as workers" (ibid., p. 188).

3. DOMESTIC WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA - CONTEXTUALIZING SOME ASPECTS OF ATTACHMENT ACROSS A RACIAL, ECONOMIC AND GENDER DIVIDE.

As in the United States, the South African government has not formulated a systematic child care policy. Existent child care facilities are the initiative of:

1. Individual governmental institutions, such as some hospitals, which provide child care services for their own employees;
2. The private sector and;
3. Non-governmental community organisations.

The majority of black women do not have financial access to most childcare services in the country and need to rely on informal arrangements involving friends, relatives and elderly women (Cock & Emden, 1984). Most

white women 'buy' their way out of domestic roles, including the care of young children, by employing domestic workers (Cock, 1984).

The function of the domestic worker as a child caregiver takes place in a context of the production and reproduction of the subjectivities of maids and madams.

Whisson and Weil (1971) capture the interrelation between discursive practices and non-discursive material social matrices in their account of the creation of the dichotomous categories of 'master or madam' and 'maid or servant' in South African domestic service. The authors identify the practises that underlie the relations of domination - subordination as follows:

- Education, occupation or source of income, style of life and area of residence are central. "Relatively speaking, servants are poor and employers rich" (Ibid., p.36).
- The forms of address 'master/madam' and 'servant/maid' hold the distinction in status in place.
- Language differences and ratings of language in terms of status reinforce superiority-inferiority complexes.
- Clothes worn at work are an indication of status. The domestic worker usually wears a uniform whilst the employer goes to work in civilian clothes, which are work clothes of higher status people.
- Urban people are considered of higher status than rural people. Workers from the rural areas are considered to be more submissive and obedient than the slick urban women and they are also cheaper.
- Colour is a highly significant factor in the major area of employment by whites. It is, however, one of the many which maintain the inequality between employer and employee.

The 'requisite of invisibility' is an important dimension of subordination. The ideal servant is "...invisible and silent, responsive to demands but deaf to gossip, household chatter, and conflicts, attentive to needs of mistress and master but blind to their faults, sensitive to moods and whims of those around them but undemanding of family, love or security. Only blacks can be invisible in white homes. (Katzman, 1978, p.188).

The 'invisibility' of deference is a mask cultivated for the purpose of conforming to employer expectations and hide the worker's real feelings in a situation where the employer exercises considerable power including the power to hire and fire the worker, to determine her wages, working hours and conditions (Cock, 1984).

The employer is afforded his/her power by a combination of factors including the high levels of black unemployment, the lack of worker rights for domestic workers, the lack of bargaining power and previously, influx control (Cock, 1984; Whisson & Weil, 1971).

The South African Domestic Workers' Union, formed of several bodies representing domestic worker interests in 1986, has set itself the task of fighting the exploitation and oppression of domestic workers. The union is still to receive official recognition (SADWU pamphlet, 1989).

Other than the structural straitjackets that position the domestic worker as dependent on her employer and necessitating a deferential demeanour, overt expression of dissatisfaction, other than changing jobs, is militated against by the psychological imprint of the relations of superiority-inferiority fostered by the very structural layout of South African society and fosters passivity and acquiescence that finds expression in a lot of other black/white relationships outside of domestic service.

4. SUBJECTIVITY, DISCOURSE AND POSITIONING - TOWARDS A SOCIAL THEORY OF THE SUBJECT.

The post structuralist view of the subject appreciates the "...force of 'discursive practises', the ways in which people are positioned through

those practises and the way in which the individual's 'subjectivity' is generated through learning and use of certain discursive practises..." (Davies & Harre, 1989, p.1).

A discourse is a structure of knowledge (Hollway, 1989; Kottler & Swartz, 1990) that finds expression as an institutionalised use of language and language-like sign systems (Davies and Harre, 1989). It is thus "...a pattern of communication, reflecting a set of attitudes, meanings and beliefs" (Kottler & Swartz, 1990).

The knowledge that circulates in discourse is employed in:

1. The construction of the self. This self is then re-experienced within all the texts or self-narratives of everyday life. It is the continuity created in these self-narratives, which are, in turn, reinforced by the dominant values and presupposition in society, that provide one with one's sense of personal continuity.
2. Everyday interaction in relations of submission and domination, that is, in power relations (Shotter & Gergen, 1989).

Discursive practices are the ways in which social and psychological realities are actively produced by people (Davies & Harre, 1989) through "...mak[ing] available subject positions and shap[ing] subjectivity by foregrounding some areas of experience or knowledge, and by creating gaps or silences in others" (Kottler & Swartz, 1990).

Discourses can be in competition with each other or they can create distinct and incompatible or contradictory versions of reality (Davies & Harre, 1989).

As a result of the multiplicity of discourses and the contradictory versions of reality they can create, the construction of the self within them can be multiple, complex, dynamic and contradictory. The multiplicity of social selves thus produced are selected, not by will but as self positioned in a variety of power-infused discourses in unpredictable and contradictory ways (Davies and Harre, 1990; Hollway, 1984,1989).

The 'choice' of position is influenced by the discourses in which the individual is positioned, by the individual's subjectivity which is a

product of his/her history, the position the person has taken up in discourses and the psychological 'investment' (usually power-induced) that accompanies the taking up of a particular position (Henrique et al, 1984; Kottler & Swartz, 1990).

It follows, therefore, that the position a subject takes up in relation to any discourse is ultimately determined in the meaning that person obtains through such positioning and, "Once having identified oneself with a particular subject position, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned" (Davies & Harre, 1990).

Other than implying a power differential and being opposing, the subject positions made available by discursive practices are dichotomous. This dichotomous nature is a derivative of the dichotomous categories, such as teacher/student, master/servant, maid/madam, which elaborate our sense of self.

The analysis of the data collected for this study will be informed by this theoretical framework.

DATA AND METHODS

The study sample and collection of data

The qualitative data analysed in this study are accounts given by five domestic workers and their respective employers. In all, nine people were interviewed. All interviews took place in Cape Town.

Selection of the study sample was random only to the extent that the researcher sent word out to acquaintances and colleagues to help find suitable candidates. The criteria for suitability were as follows:

1. Being a madam who has one or more children of pre-school age (0 - six years) with a domestic worker involved in their care

OR

Being a domestic worker involved in the care of her employer's children, provided one or more of the children are 0 - 6 years old. [The pre-school age range implies particular caregiving duties such as cooking, feeding, bathing and dressing].

2. Willingness to be interviewed for research purposes.
3. Because one of the intentions of the study was to assess the degree to which racial factors are at play, two of the madams needed to be white and two African. The selection of only African and not Indian or 'Coloured' 'madams' and domestic workers was deliberate as the researcher wanted to avoid the Indian and 'Coloured' dynamic in South Africa's pattern of discrimination.

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews through which the accounts were obtained were conducted at the madam's homes. This provided the researcher with an opportunity to get a 'feel' of the workplace for the domestic worker and the home for the madam. The other advantage was that the researcher could observe interaction between the child/children and the domestic worker, between the child/children and the mother and, in some cases between the domestic worker and 'madam'.

The first contact the researcher made with each participant was by phone and was aimed at setting up an appointment for the first interview. It was important to consult both parties individually. Whereas it is quite obvious that the madam needed to be consulted on the grounds that the interviews would take place on her premises, the need to speak personally to the domestic worker could easily be overlooked. The powerless position of the domestic worker could render her needs invisible so that consultation with the madam could be viewed as subsuming consultation with the domestic worker (as if the domestic worker is the madam's personal property or her charge).

An average of three interviews, each lasting between one and two hours, was held with each participant.

In the first part of the initial interview with a participant the researcher did the following:

1. Explained the purpose of the interviews and the kinds of research questions informing the study.
2. Explained about the confidential nature in which the data would be handled. This was an important consideration as some of the issues under discussion in the interviews were likely to be of a sensitive nature and could lead to a harbouring of ill feelings or open conflict. The interviewees needed to feel confident that what they said in the interviews would not be repeated to the other party, that is, what transpires in an interview with a madam is not repeated to the domestic worker and vice versa.
3. Re-checked that the interviewee was still willing to be interviewed.
4. Invited questions and comments.
5. Obtained permission to tape record sessions.

Tables 1 and 2 give details pertaining to each domestic worker and the other people in her worklife.

The focus was on the maid-madam relationship and how it affects the relationship between the domestic worker and the children under her care, how child caregiving is experienced, how it is valued by each and how it is seen to fit into the child's psychological development. It was anticipated that there would be differences between the black 'madams' and the white 'madams' and their domestic workers in a way that they perceive the care-giving functions.

Because the researcher is a black South African and fluent in both English and Xhosa, the white madams were interviewed in English, whilst the rest of the participants were interviewed in Xhosa.

Table 1 Some of the personal details of the domestic workers and their employers

Household	Domestic worker's age	Place of work	"Madam's" age	"Madam's" occupation
1	23yrs 39yrs	Southern Suburbs	37yrs	Housewife
2	57yrs	Southern suburbs	37yrs	Lecturer
3	38yrs	African township	31yrs	Teacher
4	37yrs	African township	37yrs	Professional nurse

Table 2 The domestic workers and the children under their care

Household	Number of charges	Children's ages	Sites of caregiving
1	1	18 months	Home
2	2	2 years 4 years	Home Home & Pre-School
3	1	5 months	Home
4	3	11 months 2 years 9 years	Home Home & Creche Home & School

The focus was on the maid-madam relationship and how it affects the relationship between the domestic worker and the children under her care, how child caregiving is experienced, how it is valued by each and how it is seen to fit into the child's psychological development. It was anticipated that there would be differences between the black 'madams' and the white 'madams' and their domestic workers in the way that they perceive the caregiving functions.

Because the researcher is a black South African and fluent in both English and Xhosa, the white madams were interviewed in English, whilst the rest of the participants were interviewed in Xhosa.

Method of Analysis

The accounts collected through the interviews were transcribed and then subjected to an analysis of discursive positioning and its effects on childcare along the lines adopted by Hollway (1988) and Davies and Harre (1989) (See Appendix 3 for an abbreviated version of each account).

I made use of aspects of Hollway's interpretative discourse analysis to inform my approach to the data. The following are points that surfaced as salient in providing me with a post-structuralist understanding of the content of the accounts as well as the relational processes involved in their production:

- Meaning is constituted within language and finds expression in the space between individuals or groups of individuals. The problem for an analysis of these relational dynamics or processes is the personal and interpersonal conditions which will either facilitate or inhibit the expression of the ideas or thoughts in which these meanings are embodied.
- People's subjectivities are not only produced in discourses but also in history and relations. This notion makes it tenable that whilst analysis focuses on the personal, as in the analysis of an account, the wider historical, political and economic issues can still be held in view.

- Discourse as the production of knowledge is not neutral but follows on and is the condition of power relations.
- The meanings people produce in accounts of their experience and themselves both reproduce subjectivities and can modify them.
- Because of the variability of meanings attainable through the taking up of multiple, dynamic and often contradictory positioning in various discourses, an individual's account will not "...produce facts whose truth value is not problematic for the research. In other words....an account can[not] reflect directly that individual's experience" (Hollway, 1988, p.41). There is, therefore, no context, no matter how private and probing, which could provide the account which reflects the whole truth. The theoretical objective of discourse analysis should, therefore, not be to unravel the truth but to try and comprehend the conditions which produce accounts and how meaning is to be produced from them.
- The researcher, through his/her position as expert, will have considerable power in the relations of research. Analysis needs to incorporate an examination of the effects of this power on the nature of accounts produced.
- The accounts people produce "...are contingent: upon available time and discourses (the regimes of truth which govern the directions in which one's thinking can go); upon the relationships within which the accounts are produced and upon the context of events recounted; upon power and the defences in operation against formulating different versions because of their self threatening implications" (ibid, p.39). Self accounts thus vary depending on the situation.
- People try to construct their experience according to the dictates of the dominant Western view of the individual as a consistent and coherent whole. What is unacceptable and in contradiction is repressed and gets displaced and avoided through defence mechanisms.
- A social theory of the subject (the theoretical approach which emphasized the way in which the social domain constitutes the individual) implies that the information obtained from any participant is valid since that account is a product, although

complex, of the social domain. If a specific analysis of domain is undertaken, the resultant interpretation will be valid without the support of statistical samples; in other words, without evidence that whole groups do the same thing.

For actual analysis of discursive positioning I utilised the same analytical concepts as used in the article by Davies and Harre. Much as the interviews shaped the accounts analysed here into autobiographical texts rather than a 'proper' conversation (in the sense of strict adherence to conversational rules, such as turn-taking), the accounts still conform to the definition of a conversation that the authors use in that they:

- are "...a form of social interaction the product of which are social..."
- are "...sayings and doings of types defined by reference to their social (illocutionary) force"
- "...unfolded through 'joint action of all the participants [in this case interviewer and interviewee] as they make (or attempt to make) their own and each other's actions socially determinate" (ibid, p.45).

Lastly, it is not the purpose of the analysis to make direct comparisons between households, although commonalities and differences emerging will be pointed out. The highlighting of similarities will thus not be an implication of representativeness of the sample.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The analysis of the accounts will involve three major areas:

1. Discourses and positioning in the 'maid'-'madam' relationship and how such discursive positioning organises social relations in terms of power relations.

2. How the discursive positioning, as well as the social relations that emanate from it, are translated or not translated into social practises in the area of child caregiving.
3. Whether racial factors informed the above-mentioned relational processes and to what extent.

Other than the information already made available in the tables on page 24, it is necessary to contextualise the data by providing further details of each household. For this purpose, the analysis of the accounts given by participants of each household will be preceded by a summary of significant information on the participants.

The accounts collected from Household 1 will be analysed first. The analysis will be the most detailed for two reasons. Firstly, the accounts of interactions between the 'madam' concerned and her domestic workers bring out most aspects of relational processes inherent in South African domestic service and are a good illustration of the production and reproduction of subjectivities in this area. Secondly, an equally detailed analysis of the rest of the accounts may result in redundancy since a lot of the dynamics underlying interactions in the other households are similar. The researcher will document a comprehensive analysis of the other accounts but with less elaboration.

Household 1

At this household the researcher interviewed two domestic workers. This happened as a result of a conflict which broke out between the 'madam' and the 23-year old 'maid' (I will refer to her as Domestic Worker X [DW X]), who was interviewed first. This domestic worker subsequently terminated her services and was replaced by the 39-year old domestic (Domestic Worker Y [DW Y]). The former is a single woman whose home is in a small town in the rural Eastern Cape. At the time of the interview she had been in Cape Town for about two months. The only work experience she had was as a waitress-cum-sales assistant at a cafe in her home town. The latter is a divorcee with five children who came from the Transkei. While she was still married she occasionally went to Johannesburg where she sometimes worked as a char.

The domestic workers were employed to do a live-in job. The 'madam' reported that DW X was paid R250 a month and DW Y R300. The domestic workers' account of their earnings were incompatible with that of their employer, with DW X claiming that she was paid R220 and DW Y R250 per month.

The job description involved cleaning the house and helping with looking after the child. The working week is approximately 53 hours as compared to the 40 hour week in most other forms of employment. These hours excluded overtime baby sitting when the employers went out in the evenings. If baby sitting was from 20h30 to 22h00 it was not paid for. Payment for babysitting from 19h30 to 01h00 was five rands. The domestic worker was allowed one weekend off per month.

The 'madam' and her husband had recently moved to Cape Town. The 'madam' is a full-time housewife. Before her marriage she had worked in Johannesburg.

Discursive positioning in the 'maid'-'madam' relationship.

a) The "madam's" account:

- Relationship with Domestic Worker X

The 'madam' reported the relationship to be 'good', but stated that the domestic worker 'makes mistakes'. The latter expression turned out to be an underplay of a considerable degree of conflict between the two which ended up in the dismissal of the domestic worker about a month later.

This underplay was couched in a progressive or liberal discourse with interactive positioning of the domestic worker as an ordinary and equal person despite her different background. According to this framework of explanation, the 'mistakes' are a result of inexperience in a new environment. "She's obviously an intelligent person... one sometimes just needs to be a bit patient because it's different lifestyles ... She's lived in a rural area all her life".

The position the 'madam' takes up in this extract is that of an employee who is open-minded about human behaviour and diversity in

lifestyles. Open-mindedness or broad-mindedness is a term associated with political liberalism rather than what is perceived to be the dogmatic 'narrow-mindedness' of conservative political discourse. By implication the 'madam' thus positions herself as a progressive person and, therefore, as a good employer.

This reflexive positioning as a good employer extended to the account the 'madam' gave about her "maid's" boyfriend who happened to live on the premises. On being asked how she felt about the matter, she replied, "I actually wanted her to. Simply because she's pretty and new to Cape Town. I thought every man in the street will come in after her ... But basically it was to ... because it's nice for them ... I don't think it's worked out that well because he's a bit lazy and I think he thinks he is doing me a favour working in the garden. Whereas I'm not being unfair or unkind, but a lot of people do this ... where you stay in a room and for that room you work one day a week so that you don't have to pay for busfare anywhere... He doesn't have to pay for electricity or water or lights".

The progressive discourse is constituted by (1) the employer's concern with the possibility that the domestic worker might feel lonely if her boyfriend lived somewhere else; (2) her approval of having the boyfriend live on her premises whereas most live-in domestic workers are not allowed to have husbands or lovers in their rooms; (3) the acknowledgement that the domestic worker is attractive. In doing this, she highlights some attribute that belongs to the domestic worker's person, thereby going against the practice of keeping the domestic worker in a state of 'invisibility'; and (4) in the rationalized explanations of why the boyfriend needs to 'pay' for living with his girlfriend.

Yet, it is apparent that a conservative discourse has emerged and is competing with the progressive discourse. The utterances "I thought every man in the street will come after her" and "I'd rather have one person living here rather than a whole lot of people I don't know. Not that she would do it ... but I suppose interested men would come here to present themselves ... but I wouldn't know what they would do if we were not here ..." are instances of it.

The first utterance derives from a storyline whose source is a discursive social construction of black sexuality as impulsive and

excessive and, therefore, promiscuous. The second utterance is linked to the first in two ways. Firstly, though the 'madam' expresses the opinion that her domestic worker would "not do it", she nonetheless positions the domestic worker as potentially promiscuous. Secondly, an additional storyline of which the second utterance is an instance, also insinuates impulsivity and excess, is that blacks are not trustworthy. The associated positioning is of blacks as potential aggressors/violators and as such unpredictable.

Other than being positioned as potentially promiscuous, the domestic worker is positioned as needy - she would be lonely if her boyfriend did not live with her. This interactive positioning, concomitant with the reflexive positioning of the 'madam' as provider for her employee's needs serves to mask the employer's own needs.

The "madam's" taking up of a position as provider has an added dimension; the domestic worker and her boyfriend are interactively positioned as debtors. The connotation is that the 'madam' did them a favour by allowing the boyfriend to live on the premises, hence her attitude that the boyfriend be obliging to her demand that he work for her once a week.

Dynamic shifting of positioning from within a progressive liberal discourse to the old colonial discourse characterises the whole of the account.

- Relationship with Domestic Worker Y

The 'madam' expressed being '100%' satisfied with this domestic worker. It will later on become clear why this was the case.

b) The domestic workers' accounts

- Domestic Worker X's account

The account revealed the extent and nature of the conflict between this domestic worker and her 'madam'. She said. "Maybe I can say that this

is a better job; the only bad thing is that you're not trusted to be doing whatever you're doing properly ... I experience difficulties in telling her that I'm not pleased with something. An employer is a dignified person so it's not easy to express dissatisfaction. But I do express what I feel when we quarrel because she wants me to rush around when I work. Like yesterday I told her that I don't like it when she shouts at me ... I told her that I try and that sometimes I do not even eat because I rush to finish the work ... I asked her what she suggest I do because I could not work faster than I was doing."

Two discourses are evident in the account. One is what I shall call the discourse of deference or servility, the parameters of which define what an acceptable code of conduct for a 'servant' or 'maid' involves. The other is a discourse of resistance which makes it possible for the domestic worker not to allow herself to be positioned (either by herself or others) as servile or deferential or powerless.

Shifting of reflexive positioning from within the one discourse to the other occurs often. In the utterance about finding it difficult to express displeasure to her employer, the domestic worker positions herself as powerless. The storyline as perceived by her is employment with associated positions of 'madam' as all-powerful employer and superior and herself as powerless employee and inferior. The superiority/inferiority dichotomy seems to arise out of an association of power with superior human worth, hence the allusion to dignity. From this position the domestic worker views herself as the only potential loser in the event of the conflict getting out of hand. She consequently finds it difficult to assert herself against her employer.

It seems, however, that this position of deference generates feelings that are difficult to suppress and force the domestic worker to 'choose' to take up a position within the discourse of resistance. In the new position the domestic worker is able to stop pointing a finger at herself as the person who is at fault and stops behaving as if the 'madam' is the only person who is worthy of rights. The storyline thus changes to employment with associated positions of employer as powerful but owning a problem and domestic worker as powerless employee and an innocent victim of a situation in which she cannot exert any control. By positioning herself as an innocent victim the domestic worker interactively positions her 'madam' as

a perpetrator of injustice and as such powerful, admittedly, but not infallible. As an infallible human being the "madam's" worth as a human being falls to the level of other ordinary human beings. This changed view of the 'madam' makes it possible for the domestic worker to assert herself against the 'madam'.

It is in fact the frequent 'choice' to position herself within a discourse of resistance that was a precipitating factor to this domestic worker's dismissal from the job.

- Domestic Worker Y's account

"The hours I work are okay ... I didn't contest any of the conditions when I was hired. I can't say there's something I don't like in this job because you have to accept a job no matter what it is like. Your dislike of one or the other thing in the job is not going to alter the fact that you have to do it in the manner they want it done ... You're dependent on them, they're your employers. I'm happy here as I haven't noticed anything wrong that I do not like ... If there's something that does not satisfy me I let it ride with the hope that it will correct itself with time. Because I haven't been here for long, I tell myself that maybe it is because I'm still new that such and such is happening in a particular way; maybe it will improve with time".

This domestic worker has 'allowed' herself to be ambiguously positioned within the discourse of deference. Her positioning does not appear to be restricted so much by inaccessibility to alternative discourses but rather by a 'choice' to shut out any such possibility, presumably for economic reasons.

In her storyline of employment the employer is positioned as an all encompassing provider and the employee as a total dependant. From her position as dependant she views herself as powerless and as without any rights. Anything that arises as a contradiction is suppressed. For example, in an utterance about only getting satisfaction from work that has benefits the domestic worker positions herself within a discourse of resistance as a person who has the right to be dissatisfied with a job that does not have such benefits. This position, however, contradicts her

positioning within the discourse of servility. She immediately remedies the contradiction by a statement that constitutes a rationalization of why she needs to work without complaining or demanding a change in working conditions, "Well, I have to work because my children are dependent on me as my husband and I are divorced".

Besides rationalization, this domestic worker uses denial and avoidance to deal with any contradictions. She initially states that she has not noticed anything she does not like about her employers or about her job. Yet, when asked what she does when she is dissatisfied with something, she expresses that she 'let[s] it ride' with the hope that it will correct itself. And again she rationalizes her avoidance of taking up positioning in an alternative discourse through telling herself that whatever happens that she does not like is happening only because she is still new in the job.

The organization of social relations as power relations in the household.

What does reflexive positioning in a progressive discourse achieve for the 'madam'? Firstly, whilst it is most probably true that she does not like quarreling because it hurts her, it is also apparent that such positioning assuages a sense of guilt as evidenced by her statement "I don't want to be a big bad oke ..."

Secondly, from this position she builds up an image of herself as a benevolent employer who deserves to be treated in a similar way by her employees. For example, in comparing DW X to DW Y, she reports that DW Y was paid more and got more time off than DW X. Other than the fact that the former was older and more experienced, she worked better than the latter. "It was too much like the union workers with [DW X]... Now [DW Y] is not like that. If she's got something to do she finishes it. I was taking time from [DW X], I wasn't giving time to her, because she didn't give me anything."

The image of herself as benevolent provider is reconcilable with the view of herself as progressive and, therefore, as a good employer.

But, as her account illustrates, the view of herself as a benevolent employer is contradicted by the practicalities of domestic service. The lack of a contractual arrangement on working conditions and her dominant position as an employer results in a unilateral determination of the moral code of her benevolence. As a result, her domestic workers need to toe her line and over-extend themselves in order to be its beneficiaries.

This unilateral exercise of power which serves to interactively position the domestic workers as not responsible for joint action, as needy, as debtors and as powerless has the effect of nullifying the positive aspects of the "madam's" reflexive positioning within the progressive discourse. It also positions her within the colonial discourse. Moreover, the positioning of herself as provider tends to mask her own needs and retain the image of herself as not vulnerable and as, therefore, strong and powerful.

Positioning within a colonial discourse has the overall effect of giving the 'madam' a sense of control. It makes her feel secure in her powerful position as employer through fostering a servile attitude in her employers. The servility helps reinforce the inferior-superior dichotomy.

In the process of dynamic shifting of positions between discourses, the 'madam' gives her employers, in particular DW X, double messages. In other words, DW X was exposed to the full range of "madam's" multiple selves, namely, 'madam' the good employer, 'madam' the equal, 'madam' the provider, 'madam' the superior, 'madam' the needy, 'madam' the invincible, 'madam' the vulnerable, and so on.

It seems that it is presentation with the multiplicity of "madam's" selves that lead to a blurring of boundaries in the employer-employee, 'maid-madam' relationship with DW X. This is something that is not particularly out of character in domestic work as long as it is the employer who transgresses these boundaries. The 'madam' in this household did. She involved DW X in casual talk, for example, about taking DW X to do modelling because she is pretty. She once asked the domestic worker "Do white people only think you're pretty or do black people also think you're pretty?" However, the moral order of the 'requisite of invisibility' requires that the 'maid' 'know her place' at all times irrespective of whatever 'baits' to the contrary. DW X neglected to observe this rule. So

when she had her hair done, for example, she went to show the 'madam' her new hairstyle.

But the reality of the conditions of domestic work cannot afford DW X and her 'madam' to keep up the facade of equality. The 'madam' needs to revert back to her position as a superior to maintain control. It is from the resultant interactive positioning as powerless and inferior that the domestic worker tries to be compliant to the "madam's" orders and demands and tries her utmost to 'please the "madam"' by working fast.

As previously mentioned, the feelings generated by the positioning within a discourse of servility are difficult for the domestic worker to suppress and conflict breaks out. Being positioned as such causes indexical offence as evidenced in the utterance, "One can stick out a white [person] when you work for them and you should but when things get too much then you are at a loss as to what to do". She then takes up positioning within the discourse of resistance and subsequent events lead up to her dismissal.

The event that seems to have precipitated her dismissal arose out of a "long" list of tasks the 'madam' wrote out for DW X to do one afternoon. The ensuing conflict climaxed when the 'madam' gave an order that the domestic worker scrub a floor at about 19h00. The domestic worker recounts subsequent interaction as follows: "... I told her I wasn't going to do that floor at that time, it was time I knocked off work. She said I should do it then because I was going off the following day. I said I would do it the following day even if that meant I would go off a bit later. The quarrel started off like that ... she went to call her husband who didn't have much to say ... He asked me if I still wanted the job. I said yes, but not under the circumstances I was being made to work under. I try to please the 'madam' but she always shouts at me. He left."

When the domestic worker takes up position within the discourse of resistance she regains her sense of equality and sense of power and is thus able to do things that only a position of power can make accessible.

1. She defines what she does not like, that is, she sets limits.

2. She offers an opinion on what a possible solution might be; that she would scrub the floor the following day. In the process, she positions herself as responsible for joint action with the 'madam'.
3. She asks the 'madam' for an opinion on a possible solution as in "I asked her what she suggests I do."

This interaction served to subvert the usual power differential in the 'maid'-'madam' relationship and eroded the "madam's" traditional area of control. When she failed to regain control through 'strong arm' tactics, she calls in her husband to help her out.

The 'maid'/'madam' boundaries appear to be clear cut in the relationship between the 'madam' and DW Y. The latter 'knows her place' and behaves in an appropriate fashion in as far as the 'madam' is concerned. She is not prepared to rock the traditional 'maid'/'madam' power relations' boat.

Discursive positioning and its translation into the area of child caregiving.

The 'madam' in Household 1 holds the view that black women are "very good" with children. In acknowledging their worth as responsible caregivers, and in as far as she demonstrates confidence in them through entrusting the care of her child to them the view she expresses seems to emanate from an interactive positioning of black women, including her domestic workers, as responsible, reliable and capable.

Her assertions about this excellent quality of child caregiving is, however, not unproblematic. She says, "... for me black people are natural mothers ... I think black people grow up with so many children around them that they're always babysitting and looking after children for their aunts, sisters or whoever... black people know that (what to do with children) just instinctively because they've had so much of it in their lives."

Other than that the account is reminiscent of pronatalist discourse in its over-emphasis of black women as mothers (that is, in its association

of black women with 'instinctive' and 'natural' mothering), the use of the concept of 'instincts' in relation to black people has a controversial history. It has often been utilised within racialistic discourse originating in evolution theories, particularly Darwinism, to evolve a social construction of black peoples' behaviour as 'instinctual' and, therefore, as irrational compared to the rational "cultured" or "civilised" behaviour of their white counterparts. Both the mentioned discourses have been recognised to be oppressive, the former towards women in general, and the latter towards any human species not designated "white".

In comparing her child's relationship with DW X and with DW Y she felt that the child had the same kind of relationship with DW Y as he had with the domestic worker previous to DW X, whom the child "was very attached to". She felt this quality of relationship had been lacking with DW X, and ascribes the difference as due to a lack of interest on the part of DW X. "I think you have to be interested in somebody, you have to be warm to somebody to bring something out of them. But if you're not really interested the child's not going to feel that warmth".

Reflexive positioning within pronatalist discourse and racialistic discourse closes off possibilities to other explanations. The image of child caregiving by a black person that is engendered by such positioning is that of a task done with natural skills and because these skills 'come naturally' and instinctively, their execution is effortless and does not require any great amount of exertion. From this viewpoint, the 'madam' considers it possible that the domestic worker can do full-time house cleaning and full-time good quality child caregiving at the same time. For her the possibility does not arise that DW X may have found it practically impossible to do both tasks perfectly and may have been reluctant to overextend herself, as evidenced by the following statement, "The work is difficult in the sense that whilst I do cleaning I have to keep an eye on the child". Later on she adds "... she sometimes makes me do almost impossible jobs but because I'm an employee I do them."

It appears that DW X tried to limit her child caregiving tasks to what was absolutely necessary to do - she bathed the baby, babysat when the mother was out, changed the child's nappies, sometimes gave him his meals and played with him. It seems that the 'madam' picked up the reluctance, "I must say she never just went to change him. I always had to ask her to

change him." She also reported that when the child was unhappy DW X picked him up but "not as quickly" as the previous domestic worker used to do. Other than explaining this reluctance as a lack of interest, the 'madam' attributes it to laziness and a much slower pace of working.

But it is from this domestic worker that the 'madam' feels she learnt the most about making rules for the child. "[DW X] taught me things ... I mean little things like I'd say 'No, don't do that'. She'd say 'pick it up and put it back'... And he learnt that".

DW Y appears to have accepted that she needs to over-extend herself in order to appear to be a good employee. She reported that despite the fact that the 'madam' had said that the child caregiving will be a joint responsibility, she felt obliged to incorporate bathing, feeding and generally looking after the child into her daily routine. But this does not mean that she is unaware of the load she carries. She expressed that she experienced the child caregiving as time-consuming.

Despite her favourable view of the quality of relationship between DW Y and her child and of the quality of child caregiving by black women, it was difficult for this employer to address the question of whether this quality of relationship was important for her child. She avoided the question and instead talked about its importance to herself and added that it is not important who looks after the child as long as the child is given attention and cared for. The last statement was a contradiction of her previous statements about not feeling comfortable with leaving her child with just anybody.

Household 2

The 55-year old domestic worker who was interviewed had been in employment in this household for six years. She worked mornings only from 08h20 to 13h00. She did the cleaning of the house, the ironing and looked after two children, one of whom spent half the day at a play school. She does not work on Saturdays and Sundays, nor on public holidays. Despite working a 22½ hour week, this domestic worker is the best paid of the study sample. She earns R400 a month. She is originally from the Transkei, but lives with an unemployed husband in one of the squatter camps in Cape Town.

Her previous job was as domestic worker for a family she worked for for 12 years. Her employers are in their early thirties and have been resident in Cape Town for a number of years. The 'madam' worked in the morning and took over the running of the house and child care in the afternoons.

Discourse, positioning and the organisation of social relations in terms of power relations in the 'maid/'madam' relationship.

a) The madam's account

This relationship approximates a contractual arrangement. Although it was the 'madam' who took a unilateral decision about what the working conditions would be, their initial form remained unchanged over the six years. The working hours as well as the job description remain consistent and do not alter to suit the employer's needs and convenience. The domestic worker's time off is not infringed upon at random and private business is left to be private business as happens in most forms of employment; employer-employee boundaries are quite distinct. On rare occasions the domestic worker worked one or two hours late, but this was always done per arrangement. The hours were paid back. When the 'madam' came back earlier than usual the domestic worker left.

The superiority/inferiority dichotomy is just as distinct, but tends to be masked by positioning in a progressive liberal discourse. For example, the "madam's" description of her domestic worker was as follows, "... I would describe her as a conservative person. She sees nothing wrong with being a person whose role in life is to clean after people of a different race. She actually sees this as fine and incredibly lucky to have a job. So she was very upset and distressed when she was prevented from getting in [during times of unrest]. She knows that I can't get to work unless she is here and she is very conscious of that. And she does not like "skollies" and people who hang around and stop her from coming to work because she feels she's a law abiding and good Christian going to work".

The employer takes up positioning within a liberal discourse in dealing with her domestic worker's 'conservative' attitude. On being asked how she feels about this attitude she responds "I leave it entirely to her

because I would feel it gross impertinence from a white person who's never been exposed to that terror to start lecturing her ... She lives it. I just read about it. And anyway, she is entitled to her own opinions. I don't like her being distressed and we've always stressed to her that she would never lose her job because of the troubles.

The position that the 'madam' takes up in this extract is that of a respecter of human rights. As such she interactively positions the domestic worker as just another human being who has the right 'to her own opinions'. The 'madam' also positions herself as a caring and concerned employer, hence the utterance about feeling disturbed when the domestic worker feels "distressed" at the possibility of losing her job.

Since progressive discourse discourages relations of domination and subordination, from her position within this discourse it is difficult for the 'madam' to consider the possibility that her domestic worker's 'conservative' attitude may be deferential posturing. In excluding this possibility she explains, "In fact generally [the domestic worker] and I have managed to escape the reasons of her giving me the reply she thinks I want to hear. She is very courteous to me... And yet despite that... she doesn't feel obliged to tell me what she thinks I want to hear as opposed to what happened."

The only kinds of explanations permissible from the position are those that construct any behaviour suggestive of deference as behaviour indicative of:

1. A language barrier. "She may be hesitant if she feels awkward or embarrassed and is trying to find phraseology in English and it would presumably be easier for her in Xhosa. But she is not hesitant in the sense that she fears us." The same explanation is given to account for the "often slightly embarrassed" demeanour adopted by the domestic worker when she has to ask the 'madam' for money that the 'madam' keeps for her, as part of an agreement struck between them.
2. Pure courteousness and politeness.

3. An incorrect assessment, "... she takes back money which is actually rightfully hers anyway. But she is always slightly diffident and I would say embarrassed, but I think it's probably an incorrect assessment."
4. Cultural difference. This explanation was used to account for the domestic worker's gesture of kneeling down and kissing the "madam's" hand on receiving gifts or offers from her employers. The 'madam' states, "... I find it disconcerting for someone to kneel and kiss my hand but I expect it's again a cultural thing."
5. A generation gap. "It would be impertinent to impose on her a set of conduct that I think is more appropriate to the time when she is not a product of my time. She is an older woman so I leave it."

But, as she elaborates further on the relationship it becomes increasingly difficult for the 'madam' to 'side step' the issue of deference. In response to a question on whether she has observed any difference in the manner her domestic worker interacts with her and with other people, she concedes that although she has not seen much of such interaction, the domestic worker's demeanour changes when speaking to the gardener and other women who work in the same area. "I can see there is a difference. But again she is with people who if not her peers are at the same level that she's at. She's very conscious of the employer-employee with me. Not in the sense of terror but she knows definitely that I'm her 'madam', I look after her. This terminology is entirely hers by choice... She may be courteous and deferential but she is not scared."

It is of interest to observe that at the point at which the 'madam' can no longer avoid acknowledging that her domestic worker's courteous behaviour is operant from positioning within the discourse of deference, she is positioned by the colonial discourse. From this position she sees her role as employer as synonymous with that of caretaker as evidenced by the statement, "I'm her 'madam', I look after her." She is also able to describe her domestic worker's behaviour as not only courteous but also as deferential.

The reflexive positioning as caretaker interactively positions the domestic worker as a recipient of some charity and as being done a favour. To deal with the discomfort arising out of the positioning within contradictory discourses the 'madam' makes reparation by attributing such positioning to statements made by the domestic worker. By implication she, in her perception of herself as a liberal minded person, is not responsible for such positioning, "Sometimes it (her domestic worker's deferential and courteous behaviour) aggravates me. But she feels more comfortable like that so it's best that it goes that way."

The shifting of positions between contradictory discourses does not only happen on a discursive level, but also finds expression in other social practises. An example is when the domestic worker fell ill and needed medical attention. When interventions that took place in primary health care institutions failed to bring about an improvement, the employers sought out the help of a specialist friend. The illness took longer than anyone would have anticipated and the domestic worker was off sick for two months. Her job was, however, retained for her by her employers.

The retention of the job as well as the efforts to secure good medical treatment for their employee is informed by the progressive concept of fair labour practice that obtains in other spheres of employment, except that other forms of employment offer organized medical care benefits for employees rather than embark on an unorganized system of securing medical treatment, as happens in domestic service.

It is the lack of an organized medical care benefit system that militated against the concept of fair labour practice being carried out to its logical conclusion in the above-mentioned example. It seems that the 'madam' did not expect the domestic worker to still want to have her usual annual leave and an additional week's special leave after her 'sick leave'. This attitude can be understood as arising from reflexive positioning within the old discourse; as caretaker and as provider the 'madam' is entitled to a unilateral right to give or take away at will. The 'sick' leave is thus viewed as a privilege which the domestic worker is not entitled to.

It is not clear whether the domestic worker eventually did get her annual leave. She, however, did get the week's special but unpaid leave. In the "madam's" description of the interaction around the issue it becomes obvious that whereas reflexive positioning within a progressive discourse makes her feel concerned about the domestic worker's anxiety about losing her job, positioning within a colonial discourse encourages her to use that anxiety as a trump card in getting the domestic worker to toe the line. "I said 'Do you want your leave?' I'd really thought this one out and I felt I had to ask her if she'd like her leave ... She obviously felt dreadful about doing it because she's lived in a hard world and she knows she's jolly lucky we kept her job ... and on top of that she had to ask could she have a week's leave extra for her son being made a man. And I said yes but I did say I wouldn't pay for that. At this point I had to have somebody else in to help me ... just to feel okay, two mornings a week ... but this was an occasion when she felt very, very anxious about approaching me. I can see why she would feel very anxious".

b) The domestic worker's account

This domestic worker's choice of positioning in her relationship with her 'madam' seemed to be influenced by a differentiation between matters that directly involved her and those that did not.

She described her 'madam' as someone who is not very talkative. If the 'madam' said something it was usually a brief comment about things that disturbed her (the 'madam') such as when someone made a comment about her or her children that she did not like.

In these conversations the domestic worker usually sides with her 'madam' because "... when you are employed you must not agree with what the other person said, especially if it is something that has nothing to do with you. You just agree with what the 'madam' says ..." In this case, it seems that the domestic worker chooses to tell the 'madam' what she thinks the 'madam' wants to hear, and, as such, operates from within a discourse of servility.

The 'madam' was also described as "strict with food" but that there was an improvement. Whereas the 'madam' previously would not offer the

domestic worker any food nor buy her milk for her tea because milk "was expensive" she now buys bread and milk for her. Recently, she had offered the domestic worker some cheese.

The non-provision of milk seemed to be an area that aroused strong feelings in the domestic worker. She did not attempt to hide her anger and it found expression in sarcasm. In response to the "madam's" statement that milk is expensive, she says, "So milk is expensive to you being a white woman. You whites are wealthy. For a black woman like myself milk will be quite cheap."

The view that things are improving is not only confined to food. According to the domestic worker, the relationship between her and her 'madam' was quite tense in the beginning. She suspected that the 'madam' did not like her then as she did not like any "girl". Before she worked there, there used to be a high turnover of up to four "girls" a month. She felt that a problem arose out of the "madam's" temper. "She has a temper. She cannot control her temper".

Although the domestic worker thinks that the "madam's" temper has improved, she still experiences her as irritable. "Sometimes when I tell her something she shouts angrily but then apologises and says, 'No, I'm not fighting with you'... If her kids make noise she will slam the door shut as if she is mad. At times she shouts at them."

In contrast to her reaction to the issue of food, the domestic worker does not seem to view the 'madam' temper, irritability and non-talkativeness to necessarily have racial connotations. She understands the behaviour as having something to do with the employer's (i) nature, that is, her temperament; (ii) inexperience due to young age; (iii) a general dislike of "girls"; and (iv) ignorance. On the contrary, the conflict over food appears to cause indexical offence, possibly arising from resentment over the disparity in economic lifestyles between black and white, and results in the domestic worker taking up position within a discourse of resistance.

The domestic worker is also not hesitant to state that the 'madam' is a good employer. She seemed to appreciate the fact that the 'madam' is not "lazy" and does not leave all the housework for her to do. The 'madam'

does her own cooking, washes up the dishes on most occasions, prepares her children's meals and usually does the first load of washing on washing days. Despite the fact that looking after a child is not an easy job in the sense that they need constant supervision, it was still an easier job to work in a house with children because there is understanding that it will not always be possible to do everything. It is understood that the children take up a lot of attention.

But the "madam's" irritability does seem to place the domestic worker on edge. When asked what she would change about her employers if she could, the domestic worker responded "I would change the husband to be the 'madam' and the 'madam' to be him ... I feel relaxed when the husband is here".

In the six years of her employment, her coping mechanism has mostly been silence when confronted with the "madam's" temper and irritability, "I usually do not respond to everything that is said because I tell myself 'If you have to argue with people in this house, you'll end up with a heart attack'."

But, as is the case with DW Y, this is a domestic worker who has learned to 'know her place' as a black person. Her "madam's" observation that she is probably most comfortable relating to her employers from within a discourse of servility is not totally inaccurate. For example, the 'madam' offers her the use of the bathroom and towels when she gets soaked by rain. She explains her non-compliance with the offer as arising from having been raised to believe that she could not use a white person's things because whites are to be respected.

Discursive positioning and its translation into the area of child caregiving

A similar movement in and out of contradictory discourses characterised the "madam's" account of her domestic worker's relationship with her children. One of the effects is a view that splits intellectual and emotional development from physical care tasks, separating them out as if there is no overlap. "[The domestic worker] is meticulous in the kind of way she keeps them. She stops them from injuring themselves and damaging the property. She's kept them safe all this time ... [Her]

education is fairly simple and I did not employ her to be a person that played intellectual or developing games with the children ... I expect the word 'nanny' would describe what she does though I never refer to her as such ... I would see the 'nanny' as someone in the house at the same time as the mother, but the mother says "Won't you take the child away and change it because I'm busy, whereas the [domestic worker] is here when I'm not and vice versa".

The acknowledgement of the domestic worker's worth as a good and reliable child caregiver is informed by positioning within a liberal discourse. But this acknowledgement goes as far as physical care is concerned. In accordance with the split, the 'madam' sees the significance of the care the domestic worker gives only in terms of physical tasks and not involving much emotional and intellectual components. In Western cultural discourse the latter components are accorded high value, with the intellectual superseding the emotional to some degree. Physical work receives the least prestige and partly explains the devalued nature of menial labour, of which domestic work is a category. In making the distinction and in viewing the intellectual component not to be within the ambit of someone with a "simple" education, the 'madam', regardless of all her good intentions, implies such devaluation.

Despite the implicit devaluation of the kind of child caregiving tasks the domestic worker performs, the reality of the situation is that she is an invaluable crutch. Firstly, she makes it possible for the 'madam' to be a working mother. The 'madam' realises this and relates how she nearly resigned from her job during the time the domestic worker was ill "... because it just got to be a nightmare imposing on people to look after [the child]. And I spent my life rushing between peoples' timetables. It was excruciatingly bad. But [the domestic worker] makes it terribly, terribly easier". Secondly, she is the children's support system and this was also brought home to the 'madam' during the time of the illness. "I relied on her as my child's support system."

The 'madam' does agree that her children are securely attached to her domestic worker and her account describes behaviour that is indicative of attachment. But, she finds it easier to talk about the consequences of such attachment for the domestic worker rather than for the children. "Yes, they are [attached to the domestic worker]. And the interesting

thing is one of the most horrific things I found about employing someone to look after our children from the time they were babies is she seems to be so desperately fond of them in a situation where they are not hers by birth and could be removed at any time when her employment ceases here".

But, the same can be stated about the children who are bound to experience a loss if separated from a long-standing substitute figure of attachment. However, it is apparent that the 'madam' does not think that her children are involved to the same degree as the domestic worker is with them, and seems to emphasize the quantity over the quality of time spent with them and says, "If the domestic worker played a nine to five role, no mother there whatsoever then I should think the emotional bonding is stronger ... in my case [the domestic worker] is here for only a few hours ... Therefore [she] has automatically played less of a role in their lives because she has a shorter exposure to the children".

It seems, however, that what the 'madam' finds difficult to acknowledge explicitly in regard to the significance of her domestic worker's relationship with the children, finds expression implicitly in other social practises in the household, namely:

- in the domestic worker's very good working conditions.
- the "madam's" concern over the domestic worker's health. Asked about what she would like to change about the domestic worker if she could, the "madam's" response was "her health, it has bothered us very much, the change in her health". Elsewhere she says "My prime concern is that she stays well and looks after my children". The 'madam' takes concrete steps such as helping the domestic worker with housework and finding her appropriate medical care, to make sure that the domestic worker remains well;
- the "madam's" concern to foster respect in her children so they do not look down on the domestic worker as just 'the maid';
- the improvement in their relationship. The domestic worker was of the opinion that the major factor behind the change was that both children, but especially the younger child, loved her.

Household 3

The couple whose child the domestic worker in this household takes care of live in a house owned by the wife's parents in what is perceived to be one of the more affluent areas of the Western Cape townships. Both husband and wife grew up in Cape Town. They have been married for five years. The domestic worker's home is in a small town in the Karoo-Eastern Cape border region. In Cape Town she lives in one of the squatter areas. Her previous employment was as domestic worker for a white family in her hometown and after that as child caregiver for a so-called Coloured family in Cape Town.

The domestic worker was employed five months prior to the time of the interview. Her job description involved only taking care of the child. The family members did their own cleaning during the week and had a char who came in on Saturdays only. Working hours for the domestic worker were from 07h00 to 16h00. She did not work over week-ends except if the 'madam' needed to attend week-end school meetings or some other important occasion. She took leave whenever her 'madam', a teacher, took hers during school holidays.

Discursive positioning and power relations in the 'maid'/'madam' relationship.

a) The madam's account

In the "madam's" opinion, the domestic worker was quite happy working for her because she felt accepted by the family. The good relationship was easy to establish because the domestic worker herself was a friendly person. "I'm quite happy and relaxed with her". About the domestic worker's working conditions, she says, "I think she likes working here ... as she's getting more used to the working conditions here, the more happy she is. When I arrive here sometimes I find her reading a book she took from the study. She also reads magazines. So I can see that she is relaxed."

The 'madam' does not sound particularly perturbed by the fact that the domestic worker more often than not arrives late for work, nor does she seem to experience a need to exert her authority to place pressure on the domestic worker to keep proper time. "Her coming late is not a very serious matter as yet. I just notice that she comes late sometimes."

It appears that the good 'maid'/'madam' relationship is largely explicable by the "madam's" maintenance of an identification with the position of employer which recognises the power differential brought about by differences in status and material conditions but discourages the 'master'/'servant' component, with its concomitant superiority/inferiority dynamic.

So, although the madam does not seek to necessarily be in control all the time, she does set limits. She believes that the employer-employee boundaries should not collapse. The need to maintain them seems to arise from importance attached to the preservation of a consistent employer image. So, as far as is possible, private business is left out of the work relationship. "We don't talk about our private lives. I wouldn't like that to happen ... the more you talk to someone, the more you can read them and size them up till you perhaps think that they're not as powerful as you thought they were ... That type of thing leads to misunderstandings and conflicts".

But a strong characteristic of the relationship is the empowerment of the domestic worker in the following ways:

- the working conditions were negotiated thus providing the domestic worker an opportunity to voice her opinion. The 'madam' asked the domestic worker if the starting time and salary would suit her. The domestic worker did not raise any objections.
- In readily expressing appreciation of the fact that the domestic worker made it possible for her to work and her non-defensive attitude about it, the 'madam' interactively positions the domestic worker as someone who wields a considerable degree of power in the relationship. "She's doing what I was not going to be able to do. I

wasn't going to be able to work and at the same time take care of the child ... she's saved me."

- The 'madam' is able to put herself in the domestic worker's shoes thereby facilitating an objective view of her [the domestic worker's] behaviour that does not close off certain possibilities of explanations in favour of others. This helps her to be non-judgemental. Of the domestic worker's late coming, for example, she says "She doesn't come at 07h00 at all ... I think she is lazy to get up ... And I suppose she's holding tightly onto money; she does not use transport, she walks here ... I asked her [when she was employed] if 07h00 will be okay for her. She said there would be no problem. It was still February then and it was still Summer; it was easy to be here at 07h00 ... I suppose as time went by and as she saw that we don't really leave that early, she felt it does not really matter if she is late because, after all, we also don't leave at 07h00 ... And there's also the person who remains behind to take care of the child until she comes. I suppose she takes advantage of all these factors."
- Payment for overtime validates the domestic worker's right not to be exploited through being used as cheap labour.

Reflexive positioning as the powerful partner in the relationship still has an impact, though minimal. It is still in the "madam's" power to ask the domestic worker to come to work at times during which the domestic worker should not be working. The domestic worker is expected to abide by the request. The doors to the bedrooms are also locked when the family leave for work in the morning. In not being given an explanation of why this happens, the domestic worker is interactively positioned as not having the right to know why this action is taken, and as being untrustworthy. In accordance with her need to preserve the employer image, this 'madam' also subscribes to the view that an employer's neediness should not be exposed or apparent to her employee/s.

b) The domestic worker's account

The "madam's" view of the 'maid'/'madam' relationship was confirmed by the domestic worker. She said, "I'm very, very relaxed in this job because they [the employers] are very nice people. I have no complaints. The job satisfies me."

Her satisfaction seemed to stem from a sense of empowerment that was consequential upon the following social practises of her employment:

- The amount of paid leave. "I get lots of leave because when the schools are closed, I also take leave."
- Payment for overtime work "... if she asks me to come in for the day, for example, over the week-end, she gives me R10." "If the people here ask me to do extra jobs I don't mind because they pay me for the extra work."
- A job description and conditions of employment that do not change. "When she hired me she told me what she expects me to do. Up till now those conditions have not changed."
- Satisfaction with the terms of employment. "There was nothing I felt I wanted to disagree with." Somewhere else she says "I'm satisfied with the amount of money I get here for the amount of work I do."
- Acceptance by the family. "We like each other and now I feel more like a daughter of the family than an employee."

The sense of empowerment, however, seems to co-exist with non-assertive behaviour. The manner of dealing with what she does not like is typical of the conditioned non-assertive stance of the powerless employee. When her employers infringe on time that is supposed to be hers, and she raised this as the only area of dissatisfaction, she experiences difficulty in expressing her displeasure. "I just keep quiet when there's something I don't like and just hope it will resolve with time. They can think for themselves that such and such I don't like." Indicators of the sense of

empowerment were that (i) she referred to the 'madam' by first name during the interviews; and (ii) on the question of whether she attaches importance to wearing a uniform, her response was "I'm indifferent to not wearing a uniform because I feel I'm with my family."

Discursive positioning and its translation into the area of child caregiving.

The good relationship between employee and employers extends to the relationship between the domestic worker and the child. An aspect that the mother appreciates most in the domestic worker is that the domestic worker is "full of love. She loves the child. Her giving love to the child surpasses everything else."

For the domestic worker, looking after the child is what she likes best about the job. "I love this baby very much." She talks to the child almost all the time, "we talk to each other and tell each other fibs".

The 'madam' talks easily about the substitute mothering provided by the domestic worker. Empowerment of the domestic worker is executed through interactive positioning as the other mother. "Her actual job is to look after the child and everything that has to do with the child ... she just becomes the child's mother. She takes my place in quite a big way."

The domestic worker is also empowered in other ways:

1. She is trusted to make the right decisions. She is allowed to use her discretion. For example, if the child was restless during the day she will say to her 'madam', "the child was restless during the day so I gave her some of that medicine". She once discontinued to give the child vitamin medication because "someone told me that it increases the appetite and I decided that it's not the right type of medicine since this child is already overweight." The 'madam' agreed with the decision.
2. She is allowed to make rules for the child. She trained the infant to be fed at regular intervals.

3. She is allowed to give advice such as when she advised the 'madam' not to use soap powder but to use Sunlight bar soap for washing nappies to avoid nappy rash.
4. The mother's ready acknowledgement of the importance of the secure attachment of her child to the domestic worker emphasizes the high value she attaches to the work her domestic worker does. "My child loves [the domestic worker]... a child who is well cared for develops well. In a tense atmosphere the child ...becomes a fearful child who will not appreciate the positive side of things ... so it's important that the child grow up receiving love so it can also learn to love".

In viewing the child as the person who benefits from good quality care, the 'madam' positions the domestic worker as the person who helps make this possible, and, therefore, as wielding a considerable degree of power.

The domestic worker shares the "madam's" opinion on the significance of good quality care and positions herself as responsible in making such care available to the child. "My relationship with this child is important to me because if I treat this child harshly I'll be undermining her health whereas if I take good care of her she will develop well. It is also important to her for the same reasons."

Household 4

The 'madam' and her husband were born and raised in Cape Town. They have been married for almost a decade. The house they live in is their own and is, also in what is regarded to be the more affluent areas of the townships. The eldest of their children attends school, the middle child is at creche and the youngest is looked after by their domestic worker.

The domestic worker comes from the Transkei and has been in Cape Town since 1981. Whilst she was in the Transkei she worked as a shop assistant but left the job because of insufficient payment. She had previously been

in the employ of the present 'madam' for two years, but left because the 'madam' was pregnant and she [the domestic worker] did not want to look after an infant.

At the time of the interview, the domestic worker had been re-employed for eight months. She gets paid R120 a month for a live-in job that requires her to be up at 05h30 and finish at 21h00 at times, do housework, the washing and ironing and look after three children, two of whom are at school during the day. The domestic worker had given notice to stop work at the end of that month.

Discursive positioning and power relations in the 'maid'/'madam' relationship.

a) The madam's account.

The superiority/inferiority dynamic in this account is glaringly obvious. The images the 'madam' uses to describe her domestic worker construct a view of the domestic worker as worthless and inferior. The images construct the domestic worker as follows:

1. Unreliable. She puts this forward as the reason she needs a domestic worker to do a live-in job, "... they cannot be on time."
2. As a person of difficult or unfavourable temperament. She describes the domestic worker as "difficult" and "too reserved".
3. As lacking initiative. "She is simple in the sense that if you did not leave that pillow in the same position as the other one and you do not say to her "put that pillow in the same position as that other one" that pillow will remain in that position the whole week."
4. As someone who needs to clean after her as the 'madam'. "If I take some dish or crockery out of this cupboard and use it in the kitchen and leave it there it will remain there. It does not occur to her to take it back where it was."

5. As ignorant, slow to grasp, lazy to think and, therefore, as in need of an educator." I think she is naturally not inclined to use her common sense. I think it's her personality. She is leaving us soon and that's a pity because I was beginning to have some success with her ... She is slow."
6. As an ungrateful recipient of what she does not deserve. The 'madam' enumerated the kind of 'favours' she and her husband have been doing for a domestic who "is not worth it." The 'favours' counted included a wage increase from R40 to R80 per month during the previous period of employment, payment in kind in the form of clothes that the 'madam' "had enough of" and food parcels.

The interactive positioning of the domestic worker as "not worth it" makes it possible for the 'madam' to be oppressive without feeling particularly uncomfortable or guilty. She carries out such oppressive social practices as:

- making demands on the domestic worker that are totally to her convenience;
- starting time, which is 05h30, is stipulated, whereas finishing time is not;
- that the domestic worker is expected to be at work the whole week and sleep there, as well as work on a Saturday morning;
- not spelling out what the job description is; she just mentioned that she is hiring someone to specifically look after the children, thus giving the domestic worker the impression that the other work could be done according to what the domestic worker can manage. She, however, ends up complaining about the manner in which this work is done and makes demands at will.
- Trivialising the domestic worker's problems by making out that her own problems are more important than the domestic worker's. For example, one of the reasons the 'madam' required her domestic worker to work on Saturday mornings (despite being aware of the latter's

resistance towards the idea) is that the domestic worker take care of the children whilst she and her husband went shopping; if they took the children with them most often than not ended up quarrelling. It seems that this trivialisation is a rationalisation of the inconvenience that is caused the domestic worker. "If she was a person with real problems, I would be more tolerant of her."

But there is no doubt that this 'madam' relies heavily on the child care service provided by the domestic worker. "I suppose when you are a person like me who is a worker and has a child you want someone who will sleep in because they do not come on time or not at all and then you cannot go to work."

b) The domestic worker's account

In her account, the domestic worker expressed intense anger, frustration and resentment. She felt exploited. "I've already made the decision to leave here as I am dissatisfied with the money I'm paid... It's painful to continue working when you're dissatisfied, to be in difficulties (financial), yet you're working... I can't cope with that. I am just being cheated."

Moreover, she felt that the reasons she did not want to do a sleep-in job were legitimate. "There's something else I don't like, that I'm here over week-ends and leave on Saturday... and I do not know what happens to my child when I'm here."

For the duration of the employment she had dealt with her dissatisfactions in a passive-aggressive way. In doing so she positions herself as powerless and reinforces the view of being inferior. She usually sulks, "they usually see it when I do not like something and apologise ... I don't have to say anything." Other defence mechanisms open to her or accessible to her in this position are denial and avoidance. "I try to ignore things that hurt me and try to dispel them so I don't carry them around in my heart." She does not view herself as responsible for broaching the subject of what she does not like in her employment hence her

pronouncement "and what puzzles me is that the husband in this house is [in one of the helping professions] and he should see that this is not the correct thing to do and do something about it."

Leaving the job is the best way she can express her dissatisfaction about the failure to resolve a problem that was never properly discussed between her and her 'madam'. Frustration built up around:

- little pay;
- no clarity on working conditions. "There are no fixed working hours". She added, "we did not discuss the working conditions. She told me that the main thing is the child but did not say that I should not do any housework."
- What she perceived to be insensitivity on the part of the 'madam' when, on a Friday the previous month she asked to take some money home for some urgent matter. The 'madam' let her go but asked her to come back and work on the Saturday morning. The domestic worker came back on Sunday evening. The "madam's" reaction was to tell the domestic worker that she would go off at 17h00 the following Saturday in order to make up for the half-day she was not at work. Although the 'madam' did not carry through this threat, the domestic worker felt that the idea that she is expected to make up for not being at work on a Saturday is unacceptable since the 'madam' asks her to work half-days on public holidays. She decided to resign.

Discursive positioning and its translation into the area of child caregiving.

The tension between the 'madam' and the domestic worker does not involve the area of childcare and this seems to mainly be a result of attachment between the domestic worker and the children. According to the domestic worker the children like to be with her even when their mother is at home. The middle child slept with her. "All of them love me. When I leave the youngest crawls to the door. The middle child says "Auntie, bring us some chips". The eldest says, "We'll see each other again, Auntie. Greetings to [your son]." I also notice that the eldest prefers

me to be here on Mondays before she leaves for school. I raised her and used to take her to creche and fetch her. She grew to love me." She added, "I miss the children when I'm at home and I think about what they are doing ... my misunderstanding with the parents does not affect my relationship with them."

The 'madam' is appreciative of the quality of the relationship between the domestic worker and her children. She expresses that this is the only reason she still "tolerates" her. "... my children are happy with her which is what I want and everything else is of secondary importance."

This is the only area in which the domestic worker is accorded some praise "... she has a way with children and tries to keep herself and the children neat." Her presence in the family is also appreciated because it gives the employers more latitude to go out knowing that there's someone at home who will keep an eye on the children.

Her childcare services seem to be most valuable in relation to the youngest child. The mother has this to say, "As you can see, she is a very restless child. She doesn't want people. The only other person she wants is this woman [the domestic worker]. I only get some rest when she is here."

Are there racial factors involved?

The range of themes that arose in the accounts given by the 'madam' polarized into a progressive discourse and an oppressive discourse, to use South African political terminology. It did not seem to be the colour of one's skin that was the decisive factor in the 'choice' of positioning within either discourse. The analysis of accounts from the white 'madams' demonstrated dynamic shifting between the two contradictory discourses. One of the black 'madams' took up positioning to a relatively large degree in a progressive discourse whilst the other operated largely from within an oppressive discourse. The domestic workers' accounts demonstrated dynamic shifting of positioning between a discourse of deference and that of resistance. The movement in and out of the two discourses also did not appear to be primarily a result of reaction to the employer's skin colour.

However, there were some pointers that suggested that the colour or race issue was not totally irrelevant. These pointers were brought to light by responses mainly in the following areas:

1. Forms of address: Most of the 'madams' referred to their domestic workers by name. However, none of the black 'madams' used the word 'maid' or 'nanny' in the accounts. The oppressive black 'madam' opted for the words 'auntie' and 'this woman', which in themselves imply distance, but are devoid of the connotation of servility that is associated with the term 'maid'.

Although the 'madam' in Household 2 emphasized her discreet usage of the term 'nanny', it crops up twice in her account. She uses it in an effort to describe the quality of child caregiving tasks her domestic worker does. She also uses it when she tries to explain the growing distance between the eldest child and her domestic worker. "I've heard people say, maybe it's unkind, that children outgrew their nannies. And maybe that's one way of describing what happens." Both white 'madams' used the word 'maid' quite often in their account.

In this regard a striking feature of the accounts given by the employees in the black households is the lack of formal address. The domestic worker in Household 3 referred to her 'madam' by name, whilst in Household 4, the domestic worker talked of "the mother of this house", an informal expression in common use in the African community.

The two domestic workers in Household 1 occasionally referred to "the madam", whilst the employee in Household 2 frequently used the term "this woman".

2. The wearing of uniforms: The domestic workers as well as the 'madams' in the black households did not attach much importance to uniform. The domestic worker in Household 4 said "I wear my own clothes at work. It does not make any difference to me whether I wear

one or not." Her 'madam' had this to say, "I've never given that much thought... as it does not determine the way she works."

In Household 3 the domestic worker associated not wearing a uniform with acceptance. "I'm indifferent to wearing a uniform because I feel like I'm with my family." Her 'madam' seemed to partly link a uniform with a demarcation of employer and employee, which she did not think was necessary. Moreover, the domestic worker was not doing "dirty" work which would require the wearing of a uniform.

In the white households the wearing of a uniform by the domestic worker is standard practice. The 'madam' in Household 1 felt that she would not accept a domestic worker not wearing a uniform "... because you don't have to put on a different dress every day, you'd just wear your uniform." The other employer condoned the use of a uniform for the practical reason of saving her clothes. Interestingly, both reject the idea for themselves because of the "idea of collectivity that goes with it" and "looking like everybody else". Their domestic workers shared the same opinion about the practical usefulness of wearing a uniform. DW X was unavailable for the follow-up interview, where the subject was going to be raised.

3. Living arrangements: The live-in domestic worker at Household 1 lived in the so-called "maid's" room at the back of the house as is the case with all domestic workers in the employment of whites. The domestic worker in Household 4 shared a room with the children. This is standard practice in most black households.
4. The question of the imaginary white domestic worker: Each 'madam' was asked whether social relations in her family would change or be different if her domestic servant was white.

The chief concern for both white employers was anticipation of an almost inevitable diffusion of boundaries that appear mainly to have to do with the dissolution of the 'requisite of invisibility'. Other than her anxiety that a white person would not render quality care to her child, the employer in Household 1 felt that she did not like the idea, most probably because of her socialization as a South African and being used to a black domestic worker in her house. She felt that she might need to include a white domestic worker more in what the family was doing and that would be an infringement on her privacy. The employer in the other white household felt that she would not know where the "lines and barriers were". Part of the difficulty would be dealing with a domestic worker who is a stranger to operating from within a discourse of servility. "The greatest difference I assume would be having someone who is more explicit as to their role definition ...".

On the contrary, the 'madam' in Household 3 anticipated that already existent language, cultural and political boundaries would impose communication barriers on the relationship. The employers would need to speak a language other than their own. There would be cultural practises the white domestic worker would not understand, "So when we say to this white person "We're going to slaughter a cow", we will first have to sit down and explain to her what happens before a decision is taken to have a cow slaughtered ... or when there's washing of spades and picks ... This one of ours understands". The person is likely to lack a political understanding about matters that affect blacks and would not understand why the employer frequently has to attend school meetings.

For the other black 'madam', skin colour was not an issue. "What is important is the relationship between employer and employee. I could have a white person working for me with the same kind of thinking [the domestic worker] has."

DISCUSSION

The analysis brings to light the central role that needs, mainly economic in nature, play in determining discursive positioning with its

subsequent production and reproduction of subjectivities. In order to make explicit the significant contribution of needs in shaping the content of the accounts, the discussion of the analysis will involve two levels, namely, discursive positioning as a reflection of the power the researcher wielded in researcher-interviewee interaction as well as discursive positioning as a reflection of actual social relations in the household.

Discursive positioning as a reflection of power relations in researcher-interviewee interaction

There were some indications that the accounts were, to some degree, shaped by the participants' perception of what they thought the researcher's agenda was likely to be. The researcher's 'characteristics' of being a black, female postgraduate student at a university that is viewed to have a leftist political orientation must have generated particular images, metaphors, and storylines around what the interviewer was likely to be investigating.

The mentioned 'characteristics' were likely to put the 'madams', especially the white ones, on the defensive as the social status of 'madam' is historically associated with potential political conservatism and economic exploitation. For the 'maids', the 'characteristics' were likely to position the researcher as a redeemer who would come with solutions or as someone who came to reinforce the threat of insecurity of employment by hauling out from underneath the carpet what the discourses of servility and oppression, for the 'maids' and the 'madams' respectively, had swept under it. The social function of the discourses in the interaction between researcher and interviewee can be seen in this light.

The progressive discourse seemed to arise out of a need to 'say the right thing' about a form of employment whose conditions of service are mostly oppressive and exploitative. It is interesting to look at some evidence for the need experienced by the participants to say what the researcher will most likely want to hear.

In Household 1, the "madam's" efforts at saying the right thing are constituted by:

1. Discrepant information from that given by the domestic workers on pay, and withholding of certain information. She gives the impression that:
 - she pays her domestic workers more than she actually does. According to her, the pay was R250 and R300 for DW X and DW Y, respectively. The domestic workers reported being paid R220 and R250 respectively. The 'madam' did not report that the difference of R30 and R50 was money that was meant for the purchase of food. Both domestic workers did not consider this money given for food to be part of their pay package.
2. Insinuating that DW Y had a "better deal" than DW X in terms of working hours. The Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons off that the 'madam' reported DW Y to be getting, were, in fact, a replacement for working from 07h15 to 17h00 or 17h30 on Mondays and Wednesdays. The latter piece of information was withheld by the 'madam'.
3. The prefacing of negative commentary on DW X, mainly in the first two interviews by positive commentary on DW X's predecessor. This may have been an effort to be seen as unbiased and, therefore, as not racist.
4. The reservation of the expression of racist views for when the interviews were over. At the last interview after the researcher had switched off the tape recorder, the employer indicated that she would like to hold an informal conversation on some matters. The gist of the conversation turned out to be dehistoricised, stereotypic views that depicted Africans as naturally slow, as uneducated as a result of an unwillingness to learn due to inflexible traditional attitudes as well as misguided political practises and thus deserve what is their lot in apartheid's terms. In addition, she expressed curiosity as to how an educated South African black would respond to these statements. This effort appears to stem from a need to paint a picture of her exploitative practises as not illogical but as having a good basis, and, therefore, as not motivated by bad intent but unavoidable circumstances.

The employer in Household 2 appeared to need to absolve herself from the possible charge of positioning her domestic worker as servile and, therefore, attributed such positioning to the domestic worker's own utterances and actions. In addition, the need to be seen to be doing the right thing found expression in wanting to know from the researcher whether her domestic worker had pointed out any areas that she, as an employer, could improve on.

In the beginning, the domestic worker in Household 2 sounded edgy when the researcher made telephonic contact when the 'madam' was at home. On one occasion she put the receiver down in the middle of the conversation because she was anxious to attend to the child she was feeding. Towards the end of the last interview, the 'madam' mentioned that the domestic had expressed concern that the interviews would disrupt her work routine. It is possible that the 'ruffled' behaviour, as the 'madam' described it, arose out of anxiety not to be seen to be enthusiastic about an interview with a possible rabble-rouser. This need would, in fact, be compatible with the political views she expresses to her 'madam'.

Other than that the employer in Household 3 does not have much to be defensive about, except for the meagre pay that she expects her domestic worker to survive on, the lesser degree of defensiveness on the part of the black 'madams' can be explained by two factors. Firstly, skin colour and educational status was likely to generate a view of commonality of interests, aspirations, values and attitudes, thus doing away with the 'us' and 'them' dynamic that was inevitable in the interactions with the white 'madams'. Secondly, blacks are historically less associated with oppression and racial domination than whites.

For the domestic worker in Household 3, the interviews seemed to be a case of telling the story as it is. The domestic worker in Household 4 hoped that the interviews would culminate in a redress of her working conditions. In the interviews she needed to make her needs explicit hence the discourse of resistance is dominant in her account. For DW X the predominant need seems to be unloading her feelings on someone who, by virtue of being black and a student, was likely to understand. The more dynamic shifting of reflexive positioning between the discourses of resistance and servility is reflective of both the exploratory nature of her self-narrative as well as the degree of openness with which she related

towards the researcher. On the contrary, DW Y's dominant positioning within a discourse of servility seems to be an effort to hold on to her job. Except for the assurance of confidentiality, she had no guarantee that whatever she said about her employers would not get back to them.

Discursive positioning in 'maid'/'madam' interaction

The examination of discursive positioning as a social function of researcher-interviewee interaction prompts the question of how one is to understand what is really going on in the different households if discursive positioning in the accounts was partly influenced by what the participants thought the interviewer might want to hear.

The comparative analysis of discursive positioning between the accounts given by the employers and those obtained from the domestic workers illuminated a factor that was important in my understanding of the social relations in the households. This factor is that social action or behaviour, consequent upon discursive positioning, is the ultimate determinant of meaning in any social interaction. In other words, it was an analysis of whether the discursive positioning was translated or not translated into social practises, other than discursive, that gave me an understanding of the relational processes between the 'maids' and the 'madams'. It thus became important that an analysis of the creation and reproduction of subjectivity not only look at contradictions between discourses but also between the particular discourses and social action.

This analytical approach highlighted the social function of the discourses in the interview situation and outside of it and drew attention to the pivotal role that needs play in shaping not only discursive positioning but also social action, which then begins to have implications for such positioning.

- The social function of discursive positioning in the accounts

For the 'madam' in Household 1, positioning within the progressive discourse served to cover up her exploitative and oppressive actions. In interaction with her domestic workers, the positioning seems to be aimed at

fostering 'good' relations despite the oppression and exploitation, presumably to assuage feelings of guilt.

To the extent that the discourse reflects fair labour practice the 'madam' in Household 2 practises what she preaches. However, in the interview, positioning within this discourse serves to mask the strong demarcation between black and white and/or 'master' and 'servant'. It appears that the discourse serves a similar function in day to day interaction with the domestic worker. Although the domestic worker is 'edgy' in the presence of her employer, it seems that her anxiety is partly a reaction to the 'madam's' irritability, which the domestic worker does not experience as particularly racialistic.

The 'madam' in Household 3 also practises what she preaches and her domestic worker's account validates that, except for the single practise of low pay. Despite the fact that the domestic worker was satisfied with what she was paid for the amount of work done, it is difficult not to view the amount as exploitative. It is not feasible for any mother with children to survive on that amount of money without being subjected to conditions of poverty. For the 'madam' in Household 4 the discourse was used to legitimise the view of herself as blameless, and get the researcher to see things her way.

Both in the interview and in the 'maid'/'madam' interaction, the white "madam's" choice of positioning within an oppressive discourse generally seemed to be motivated by both a need to rationalise the maintenance of racial boundaries and the perpetuation of their superior economic and social status. Moreover, in Household 1 the discourse was further used to 'sell' gross economic exploitation and legitimise oppressive practises, as was the case in Household 4.

In day to day interaction with their employers, the domestic worker's choice of positioning with the discourse of servility is a bid to retain their employment. This seems to be the dominant positioning, particularly for DW Y of Household 1 and the domestic worker in Household 2.

It is interesting to note that explicit positioning within a discourse of resistance happens when DW X of Household 1, and the domestic worker in Household 4 have already taken the decision to leave. It seems

that the 'choice' of making this discourse available is partly dependent on whether there are alternatives, in terms of employment. And, it is quite obvious that for DW Y and the domestic worker in Household 2, there are no alternatives, for different reasons. With five children dependent solely on her, DW Y cannot afford to lose the employment she already has whereas the 55 year old domestic cannot afford to lose what she has since it is such a good deal.

- Needs, the shaping of discursive positioning and implications for child care

In as far as discursive positioning and social practice is concerned, economic needs seem to dictate to both 'maids' and 'madams'. The analysis of discursive positioning demonstrates, however, that the relationship between identification of such needs, how they are expressed, met and valued in domestic service is not necessarily linear, but requires a circumspect process that accommodates historical processes as well as the broader economic and social structures.

The need for substitute child caregiving is brought about by the position of working mother, which is, in itself, a consequence of a need to supplement family income. This is the case with three of the four 'madams'. The exception is the 'madam' in Household 1, whose need for a domestic worker, who is also substitute caregiver, arises out of social status as white and economically privileged and, therefore, above doing inferior menial tasks, as well as able to afford employing someone else to do them. An additional aspect in Household 4, is that of freeing the mother for leisure or reprieve from mothering tasks to do something else, such as studying. For the domestic workers the need is to retain a job in a situation of plentiful, cheap labour, high levels of unemployment and lack of contractual employment.

Despite needs on both sides and the potential power the domestic worker has as substitute child caregiver, the inferior economic and social position as a black person positions her as exploitable and helps perpetuate the reproduction of her subjectivity as servile and powerless in the day to day contact with her employer. From this position of relative

powerlessness, as well as being disadvantaged by speaking a foreign language at the workplace, it is difficult for most domestic workers to bargain for a better deal and fight for recognition of the work she does as important. But as the account of the 'madam' in Household 1 indicates of urban domestic workers, bargaining power is not totally inaccessible. It seems that this "madam's" choice of African rural domestic workers is motivated by the recognition that they are the most exploitable partly because they allow themselves to be positioned as such.

The recognition of the child caregiving tasks of the domestic worker as important is unlikely to come from employers since that would go against employer interests to retain access to cheap labour. Even the black 'madams' who openly acknowledge their appreciation of importance of the good quality of attachment of their children to their domestic workers, devalue the significance of the relationship through paying their domestic workers badly. For the white 'madams' such recognition is thwarted even further by the incompatibility of such acknowledgement with the need to keep blacks in perpetual inferiority, hence their avoidance to acknowledge the importance of the relationship for their children.

The analysis also demonstrates, however, that it is especially the need to obtain good quality substitute caregiving that enforces democratic practises or approximations, thereof, in the households. In a bid to secure someone she views as most likely to render the desirable, dependable and nurturant care for her child, the employer in Household 1 reverses the common practice of 'desexing' workers taking place in many live-in jobs; she allows DW X's boyfriend to live with her. She also does something that is against traditional practice, to try and resolve conflict with her domestic worker through discussing it with the domestic worker. The failure to resolve the conflict is itself a demonstration of how brittle the sense of power sharing is, when it is attempted. The 'madam' in Household 2 holds on to her domestic worker through offering her attractive conditions of employment. This seems to work since part of the domestic worker's anxiety has to do with parting with what she views to be her best paying job. The re-employment of the domestic worker, as well as the increase in pay, in Household 4, had to do with her good relationship with the children during her previous employment there. The employer in Household 3 openly acknowledges that the gesture of payment in kind is

motivated by her need to hold on to her domestic worker for her good qualities as substitute mother.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of the accounts in this study provide us with a better understanding of the 'maid'/'madam' relationship as well as perceptions of the domestic worker as child caregiver in her workplace. Subsequent research could investigate the perceptions of persons previously taken care of by domestic workers; of the relationship between them with special focus on the extent to which the relationship is modelled on the relations between the parents and the domestic worker. This would hopefully further add to our knowledge of the contribution of the child caregivers to the reproduction or transformation of subjectivities in domestic service.

REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, M.D.S. (1973). The development of infant-mother interaction. In B.M. Caldwell & H.N. Ricciuti (eds), Child Development Research, 3, pp. 1-94. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bowlby, J. (1951). Maternal care and mental health. Geneva World Health Organisation.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and loss. Vol. 1. Attachment. London: Hogarth.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). A secure base: Clinical applications of attachment theory. London: Routledge.
- Cock, J. (1984). Maids and Madams: A study in the politics of exploitation. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Cock, J. (1987). Trapped workers: Constraints and contradictions experienced by black women in contemporary South Africa. In Women's Studies International Forum, 10(2), pp. 133-140.
- Cock, J., & Emden, E. (1984). Childminders in Soweto: A face from the hidden abode. In Class, community and conflict: Local perspectives, 31 January - 4 February.
- Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20(1), pp. 43-63.
- Henrique, J.W., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Veun, C., & Walkerdine, V. (1984). Changing the subject. London: Methuen.
- ✓ Hollway, W. (1984). Gender difference and the production of subjectivity. In Henrique, J.N., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C. & Walkerdine, V. Changing the subject. London: Methuen, pp. 227-263.
- Hollway, W. (1989). Subjectivity and method in psychology. London: Sage Publications.
- Ingleby, D. (1988). Development in social context. In M. Richards & P. Light (eds), Children of social worlds: Development in a social context, pp. 297-317, Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Katzman, D.M. (1978). Seven days a week: Women and domestic services in industrializing America. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kottler, A., & Swartz, S. (1990). Talking about wolf whistles: Negotiating gender positions in conversation. Unpublished paper. University of Cape Town.
- Mudie, G. (1987). A family and developmental model of custody and access determination in divorce. Doctoral thesis, University of Cape Town.
- Pence, A.R. (1989). In the shadow of mother care: Contexts for an understanding of child day care in North America. Canadian Psychology, 30(2), pp. 140-147.
- Riley, D. (1983). War in the nursery: Theories of the child and mother. London: Virago Press Limited.
- Rutter, M. (1981). Maternal deprivation reassessed. United Kingdom: Penguin Books.
- Rutter, M., & Hersov, L. (1985). Child and adolescent psychiatry: Modern approaches. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications.
- Scarr, S., Phillips, D., & McCartney, K. (1989). Dilemmas of child care in the United States: Employed mothers and children at risk. Canadian Psychology, 30(2), pp. 126-139.
- Shotter, J., & Gergen, K.J. (eds), (1989). Texts of identity. London: Sage Publications.
- South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU). Demands for Legislation. Pamphlet issued by SADWU Head Office. Elsie's River: Allied Printing Services.
- Sroufe, A.L., & Waters, E. (1977). Attachment as an organizational construct. Child Development, 48, pp. 1184-1199.
- Therborn, G. (1982). The ideology of power and the power of ideology. London: Verso.

Vilakazi, H. (1987). Race, class and historical materialism. Paper presented at a Centre for African Studies seminar, University of Cape Town.

Weekly Mail, August 11 to August 17, 1989.

Whisson, M.G. & Weil, W. (1971). Domestic servants: A microcosm of the "race problem". South African Institute of Race Relations.

Zigler, E., & Ennis, P. (1989). The child care crisis in America.

Canadian Psychology, 30(2), pp. 116-125.

APPENDIX 1: THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - EMPLOYERS / 'MADAMS'

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

- How old are you and your spouse?
- What type of work do you do?
- What type of work does your spouse do?
- How far did you go in school?
- How long have you lived in Cape Town?
- For how long has your present domestic worker worked for you?
- What happened to your previous domestic worker?

B. WORKING CONDITIONS

- What are your domestic worker's working conditions?
- Did you discuss them with her?
- What are her duties?
- What happens when she falls ill at work?
- What do you imagine your domestic worker likes best about her job?
- What do you imagine she finds worst about her job?

C. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

- How do you feel about your domestic worker working for you?
- What do you like about her?
- What do you not like about her?
- How do you think she experiences her working conditions?
- How do you think her working conditions affect your relationship?
- Are there parts of the house she is not allowed to use?
- Does she ever make decisions in her work in the house?
- How would you describe your relationship?
- What language do you use for communication?
- How do you feel about using it?
- Do you ever give your domestic worker any presents/gifts?
- How do you feel about giving them?
- When you are dissatisfied with any aspect of her work, what do you do?
- How do you explain your attitude to her?
- How do you explain her attitude to you?
- How do you feel about her being in the midst of your private life?
- Do you ever help her with the housework?
- What types of things do you talk to her about?
- Do you imagine you would have a different experience with your domestic worker if she was white, like it happens in other countries?
- If there was anything you could change about your domestic worker, what would you change?
- How much of your domestic worker's private life do you know?
- Do you know her surname and where she lives?
- Do you allow her to have visitors?

D. SELF IMAGE

- Have you ever worked outside the home?
- What is your attitude towards women who work outside the home?
- What is your reason for employing a domestic worker?
- How strongly are you in favour of domestic workers wearing a uniform
- Does your domestic worker use one?
- What do you imagine it would be like if she did not wear one?
- What do you do in your leisure time?

E. CHILD CAREGIVING

- Does your domestic worker take care of the children?
- How do you feel about that?
- How do your children relate to your domestic worker?
- Would you change that in any way?
- Did you inform your domestic worker about this part of the job?
- What does your domestic worker routinely do for the children?
- What does she do with them?
- For how long has she looked after them?
- Who makes the rules in the house?
- Who maintains discipline in the house?
- Does your domestic worker help with these tasks?
- Do you allow her to make any rules?
- Are you satisfied with the way your domestic worker looks after the children.
- Who looks after the children when they are ill?
- What does your domestic worker do for the children when they are ill?
- Who feeds the children?
- Who toilet trains them?
- What does the domestic worker do for the children at bed time?
- Would you say any of your children are attached to her?
- Would you say the relationship between your domestic worker and your children changes over time?
- If yes, how do you explain these changes?
- What happens when one of your children in unhappy/angry/frustrated/happy/excited?
- How do you think your relationship with your domestic worker affects her relationship with the children?
- How do you think your domestic worker's working conditions affect her relationship with the children?
- Do you think your children's relationship with the domestic worker is important (1) for her; (2) for your children?

APPENDIX 2: THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - DOMESTIC WORKERSA. PERSONAL INFORMATION

- How old are you?
- Are you married?
- How many children do you have?
- Who do they live with?
- Where is your home?
- How long have you lived in Cape Town?
- How long have you worked for your present employers?
- Where did you work before?

B. WORKING CONDITIONS

- What are your working conditions? (Hours of work, wages, sick leave, paid leave, etc.)
- Did you discuss them with your employer?
- How do you experience your work?
- Are you satisfied with it?
- What does your work involve?
- What do you consider to be the worst thing in your job/what do you hate most?
- What do you consider to be the best thing?/What do you like best about it?
- What happens when you fall ill at work?

C. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

- How do you feel about working for your employers?
- What do you like about them?
- What do you not like about them?
- How do you think your working conditions affect your relationship?
- Are there parts of the house you are not allowed to use?
- Do you ever make decisions in your work, for example, about what the day's meal will be?
- How do you feel your employers treat you as a person?
- How would you describe your relationship?
- What language do you use for communication?
- Do you have difficulties with it?
- How do you feel about using it?
- Do you ever receive presents/gifts from your employers?
- How do you feel about receiving these gifts?
- When you are dissatisfied about something at work, what do you do?
- How do you explain your attitude towards your employers?
- How do you explain your attitude towards them?
- How do you feel about being in the midst of their private lives?
- Do any of them ever help with the housework?
- What types of things do you talk to your employers about?
- Do you imagine you would feel and experience your work differently if you worked for black/white employers?
- If there was anything you could change in your employers, what would you change?

D. SELF IMAGE

- How much contact do you have with your family/friends?
- How do your working conditions affect your family life?
- Are you allowed to have visitors?
- Do you wear a uniform at work?
- How do you feel about it?
- If you could choose another type of work, what would be your choice?
- If there were things you could change about domestic work, what would you change.

D. CAREGIVING

- Do you have to look after children?
- What are their ages?
- What do you like about the children?
- What do you not like about them?
- Do you enjoy looking after them?
- How do they relate to you?
- Were you informed about this part of the job?
- What do you do routinely for them every day?
- What do you do with them?
- For how long have you looked after them?
- Who makes the rules in the house?
- Who maintains discipline in the house?
- Are there any rules that you make?
- In what ways do you maintain discipline in the house?
- Who looks after the children when they are ill?
- What do you do for the children when they are ill?
- Do you feed them?
- Who toilet-trained them?
- What do you do for them at bed time?
- Would you say any of the children are attached to you?
- Do you think your relationship with them changes as they grow older?
- If yes, how do you explain the changes?
- What happens when they are unhappy/angry/frustrated/happy/excited?
- How do you think your working conditions affect your relationship with the children?
- How do you think your relationship with your employers affects your relationship with the children?
- Do you think your relationship with the child/children is important for (1) you and (2) for the child/children?

APPENDIX 3: HOUSEHOLD 1The 'madam's' account - 1st interview

DWX has worked for us for six weeks.

The previous domestic worker] was actually a fantastic maid. But she didn't want to live in. And I actually wanted a live-in maid, you know, for baby sitting and things like that.

[DWX] must clean the house. We've got a washing machine here for the washing, and do the ironing and wash the baby. Usually I try and go out in the morning when he's sleeping but I mean I don't always plan that I come back exactly when he's woken up. Obviously she's here in the house whilst he's sleeping. And in the afternoon I'm here.

In the morning she's in at 7 and opens the house, draw up the curtains and everything. Sometimes she could give the baby a bottle but usually I give the baby a bottle because I'm usually up before her. There's no set thing, it depends. And then she cleans the house and looks after the baby too. You see, he's usually with me unless I'm getting dressed or when I'm going out but I often take him out with me.

She is off from 13h00 to 15h00. Then she comes back any time from 15h00 to 17h00 or 17h30, sometimes 6 'o clock, very occasionally 7 'o clock with people coming for dinner or we're going out or whatever. The baby likes her very much. It took a while you know because he loved [the previous domestic worker] and she absolutely loved him too. She was very good. So is [DWX] but it took a while. I'm quite happy with her now. And also in the beginning I was a bit nervous about leaving her with him. I'm sure one always is, every mother is.

[DWX] worked in a cafe before. She earned a lot. I think about R139. So this is the first time she's worked in a home environment, but she's learning fast, you know. She's obviously quite an intelligent person. But she makes mistakes. She doesn't understand things that I take for granted and one sometimes just needs to be a bit patient because it's different lifestyles. So it's patience on both parties. She's lived in a rural area all her life. And with all the mod cons we have how can we expect her to know. But that's a minor thing in our lives. The major thing in our life that we've stressed over and over again because she lives here with her boyfriend. He stays here too. But the major thing we've stressed is security. Maybe because of the baby and because this is a city. That outside door where she comes in is locked and this door is locked. And if she uses our door here she must double lock it at night or just lock it because she's left it open a couple of times. I mean anyone can make that mistake. I've also done it, my husband's also done it, but it's a mistake [The previous domestic worker] was very good about that. I think [DWX] is very different.

I actually wanted her to [live with her boyfriend]. Simply because she's a very pretty girl and new to Cape Town. I thought every man in the street will come in after her because I think she's very pretty. She came with the boyfriend to Cape Town and because I wanted her to live in and he was

obviously part of the package sort of thing and I said to her 'he wants to stay here, that's fine, but then he must work one day a week for me'. But basically it was because it's nice for them; they can live together. I'd rather have one person living here all the time rather than a whole lot of people I don't know. Not that she would do it, she is not that type, but I suppose interested men would come here to present themselves. She might like them and they might be fantastic but I wouldn't know what they would do if we were not here, whereas her boyfriend is a very nice guy. But I don't think it's worked out that well because he's a bit lazy and I think he thinks he's doing me a favour working in the garden whereas it is not really and I'm not being unfair or unkind, but a lot of people do this, in Johannesburg, in Cape Town, where you stay in a room and for that room you work one day a week

He works for other people but he works for me because he stays here. Like on Friday I found that three or four times I had to wake him up. But he takes a chance and I got a bit cross with him about that. And he works terribly slowly, but again maybe people that come from the country are not used to the pace of the city. But I was spoilt because I had a gardener before who did three times as much as he does and maybe that's why I find him slow. I still don't know if he's going to stay or he's going to go and live in the townships and I must find another gardener. I don't want him to go because of [DWX] but [she] said she's going to stay. So if he goes, to be totally honest, it doesn't really matter to me, but I want her to be happy, you know, because it's much nicer for her to have him here. It's no problem with me. But I found it very difficult communicating with him. He wouldn't talk to me. And I say 'unless we communicate about this, we're not going to reach any kind of understanding'. He just keeps completely quiet. I mean, I get cross with my husband. I get cross with anybody. It's not because he's working for me that I get cross with him. I'm a volatile person and if someone does something stupid, I get cross, you know. And it's terrible because he's black and I'm white. I feel sometimes that I can't talk to him as an equal because a white person I'd scream at. But because he's black and because he's scared that I'm - I can't say anything, I'm actually not being me. I wanted to [scream at him] but I don't.

But I don't want to be a big bad oke and I said I hate quarrelling because it hurts me too. And I don't like it and I don't like bad vibes, you know. You see what I tried to find out from him is if he wants to go from here because he's unhappy with me or because he would prefer to live in [the township].

The first few times he came here I paid him if he painted or did something for me because I wanted to look (not audible) so I paid him for that.

If that was the problem I'd like him to tell me so that I could try and make him understand why. He is saving two hours a day travelling, he's with his girlfriend, he doesn't have to pay for water. But otherwise I'm very happy with her. And she's a nice girl. She's very pretty. I want to take her to a modelling agency. I've said it to her but I don't think he'll like it and she does as he tells her. I asked her "do white people only think you're pretty or do black people also think you're pretty?" I think

she's stunning. I wouldn't mind her going during the day. But I don't want to interfere.

She comes to me when she has her hair done. She shows me her hairstyle. I enjoy that. But she's not too chatty nor am I really. I can't sit and chat all day and she is also not like that. Otherwise you don't get anything done. I think she's very, very nice but she's forgetful. But then she's only 22. When I was 22 there was nothing I could remember. But in terms of her looking after my child I must say initially I could hardly go away for one hour. But he's now completely relaxed and I'm completely relaxed. And I've seen her speak to him, put him on her shoulder. She likes him very much. And it's a pity we have this little thing with [her boyfriend]. But she's very good with my baby, very good.

But if there's anything between me and [her boyfriend] she doesn't try to ... she doesn't take sides. And I said to her 'Do you think that he's lazy?' and she said 'no'. But to me he's terribly lazy. But without anything from my part or [DWX's] part he's very good with my child. [The child] absolutely loves him. He'll go outside to watch [DWX's boyfriend] rake the garden. In my funny kind of way I'm happy with him.

I think maybe people who are not from the city, she's not maybe used to dealing with this many white people. I think a lot of black people have a natural resentment or natural instinct, they don't trust whites. I mean, they have every right not to. They don't want to bare themselves to white persons and talk about personal things and their feelings because maybe I'll just take them one day by my fists, you know, I'm not that kind of person but she doesn't know that.

It's a very difficult question, saying what she likes about her job. I would say maybe the baby. Maybe if the baby wasn't here it wouldn't be so nice. The child's growing and she's teaching him some things. She also enjoys him. I know that [the previous domestic worker] also loved him. I also want to teach [DWX] how to cook; it's nice for her because as I tried to explain to [her boyfriend] I said 'you know, if you worked a bit harder, if you did things, maybe I'd ask you to work twice a week instead of four times'. I said to her 'you know, if you're willing to learn and watch me and learn how to cook you could get a job as a housekeeper and not just as a maid and you could earn up to R500/R600 a month'.

I'll be honest. I love cooking, but I hate doing housework. I'm lazy. I'd rather have someone else to do it for me. But once the baby's grown up, I don't think I'll need a live-in maid. But with the baby with you all the time, as much as you love that child, the more you love it, the more tiring it is. You don't just ignore it, and it really gets you down. It's easier to go out and have someone else looking after your child.

I don't know what she finds the worst [about her job]. But probably it's getting up early in the morning. But I probably think that worse than all that and for me per se, is that she should have left her child to work because her boyfriend didn't have a job.

I pay her R250.00. I said I'd increase it in three months time, but it's not a lot of money, I don't think so.

What I like about her is that she smiles, and she doesn't sulk. And she's very clean. I can't say she works wonderfully because that's still coming. I think she's honest. She's good with the baby. But the most important thing is that she's a nice person and I like her as a person. And I think in her own funny way she's quite gently persuasive. When I get cross with her, she doesn't burst into tears, she doesn't walk away, she'll stand her ground and she'll say what she thinks. But she's not cheeky. She won't turn off, which I like. When she arrives late, she'll say why she's late, which is better than giving me a whole lot of excuses. I think I like the honesty.

Is there anything I don't like about her? It's too soon to ask that question. There are a lot of things I'd like her to improve on, but there's nothing I don't like.

I ask her 'do you want to be here?' And she says 'yes'. I ask her 'Do you want to be here because you want to or because you don't have an alternative? I know that if someone were to offer you a char job, and you went to live in Khayelitsha, you'd rather do that than be here.' 'No, no madam. I'm staying here. I don't want to go to [the township]". I don't know if she means she will stay here because she wants to or because she's got no alternative.

[The previous domestic worker] and her are similar. They're both not educated. They both have very simple lives in the sense that they're not city people, they're not drinkers. They like nice clothes, but they're not flashy. You know they're that kind of woman. They're very good women.

I had maids in Johannesburg who were very different. I mean they said exactly what they felt. There's no hold up, very upfront, which is fine, but it's completely different. And they loved to dress.

I actually feel comfortable with both types, because with one there's a complete openness and you know exactly where you stand. And things get done. I mean, I had a char who knew exactly what I wanted done and it was done. They were very efficient. They worked very well. But now I have a baby. I could get a Coloured maid, they're very efficient. But we all know that Coloured maids tend to have a drinking problem and that's the reason I don't want one, because of my baby. I mean, she could start running around when I'm not here. I can't afford that. I don't say all Coloured maids have a drinking problem. I'd rather have a simple person and I don't mean to be derogatory, but a person who doesn't aspire to drink and is honest. But I must say I've never had a dishonest maid.

2nd Interview (+ 1 hour)

(By the time this interview took place, DWX's services had been terminated and DWY was employed in her place.)

It doesn't worry me at all [that the domestic workers are part of my private life]. It worries my husband sometimes. Both [DWX] and [DWY], they haven't taken over. You get some people that are very chatty; then it is

an interference. Ja, when my husband and I fight I don't particularly like someone to be there. I don't enjoy [DWX] seeing it. But generally, I don't think about it.

Yes, sometimes she feeds the child. Except that he's now graduated, in the last week, to feeding himself. She used to make his breakfast, supper she hardly ever used to give him his food. And lunch, I sometimes used to prepare and sometimes she used to give him. The child is just clinging on to me just at the moment. But I know that he was quite happy with her.

No, I wouldn't say he was attached to her. I don't know why because he was very attached to [her predecessor]. But maybe it's because he knew her much longer. He's only known [DWX] for two months. He knew [the previous domestic worker] from the minute he was born.

But then he was younger too. It's difficult to compare. And it is not only because it was her or it was [DWX]; he's also changed. Before I could leave him with anybody - he still goes to anybody, it's not a problem, but you could see he was very, very fond of [DWX's predecessor] I just didn't pick that up with [DWX]. But maybe he does.

[DWX] used to help me a lot with nappy changing. It was probably 60% her and when she wasn't here, the mornings usually I did it. I must say she never just went to change him. I always had to ask her to change him. The child could hardly get wet with [her predecessor] she was really caring.

[DWX] made rules for the child, funnily more so than [her predecessor]. [DWX] taught me things. [DWX's] obviously part of my life, I can't get her out of my system. She was actually very good and [her predecessor] didn't do that well. Maybe he was too young then I don't know. I mean, little things like I'd say 'no, don't do that' she'd say 'pick it up and put it back' and she was so patient like that. And he learnt that, he learnt about putting something back. And he learnt about putting something back and putting it away. And because she was young, she used to play with him nicely, you know, tease him and it was fun.

I was very happy with that kind of thing. There was nothing that she did I saw that was bad for the child.

Ja, I think I'd probably be more worried about having a white domestic worker because for me black people are natural mothers. I think black people grow up with so many children around them that they're always babysitting and looking after for their sisters or their aunts or whoever, but they grow up being actually very fond of children and natural and I don't think white people are like that unless they're nurses or work with babies. I'd much rather when we went out have a black baby sitter than a student, a white student. I'd never have that. I mean when I was 18 I would not know how to pick up a baby let alone know what to do when they started crying, whereas black people know that just instinctively because they've had so much of it in their lives.

Generally I don't think I'd like having a white domestic worker. I don't know why. I've never thought about that. Why wouldn't I like it? Maybe

it's because of my role as a South African and I'm used to a black person being in my house and it's not an infringement on my privacy.

I don't know, maybe because you've got to include them more in everything you do, you know; therefore it becomes an interference because you know if you're sitting down to dinner she will sit down to dinner with you whereas [DWX] I don't think would ever want to sit down to dinner with us. I remember when I was overseas for a while I'd come back and I was sitting down for lunch and I said to the 'maid' "come and have lunch". She was very embarrassed to sit at the table. She didn't want to. And I then realised that I was imposing some rules, not rules, but things she'd rather not have. So I think in that way, if I sat down for lunch then she'd sit down with me and she'd always be with me and in that way I think it would be an invasion of my privacy or something I did not necessarily like. I would not be able to be alone; maintaining boundaries would be difficult. As I said, I would never have a white student in here, never. To look after my house maybe, but not after the baby.

[DWX] used to pick the child up and hold him when he is unhappy; [Her predecessor] used to pick him up straight away. But [DWX] was also good at that. She used to pick him up and she used to say "sorry, sorry!" ... and comfort him. They never left him to cry, but I don't do that either.

I think I'm very fortunate to be able to be at home with my child and to be in a position where I don't have to go to work and leave my child alone.

But even if I didn't have a child and I worked, I'd still have a domestic worker. I would probably not have a live-in maid. A live-in maid is best when you have family, between 17h00 and 19h00 with the baby there's bathing, there's feeding, there's dogs to feed, there's husbands to feed. It's chaos.

[DWX] was very happy with a uniform, she loved it. And I think it's nice because it saves their clothes. [DWY] put on her uniform on the first day even before I mentioned anything about uniforms. Personally, I hate uniforms. I hate looking like everybody else. But yes, if I had a domestic worker who said to me I don't want to wear a uniform, I wouldn't accept it, because you don't have to put on a different dress every day, you'd just wear your uniform.

Interview 3

(This interview was done to obtain information on how the employer experienced her new domestic worker [DWY] as compared to her predecessor [DWX]. The interview was conducted two-and-a-half months after [DWY] was employed.)

There's a world of difference. I was very fond of [DWX] as you know, but as far as somebody to work for me is concerned, [DWY] is much better. She's older you know. I've never shouted at her. I was always shouting at [DWX] because she just did the most silliest things. I think it's most probably the age difference that makes the difference. I suppose at [DWY's]

age, [DWX] will probably be the same. I don't think she was interested. She knew how to work. She worked well but she was much slower. I only realised the difference afterwards. I'm 100% satisfied with [DWY].

[DWY] probably gets more time off than [DWX] did. In fact she does. [DWY] works on a Saturday morning and she leaves at lunch time. But then she gets one long week-end off once a month from Friday. [DWX] didn't do that because she never got anything finished. [DWY] gets Tuesday afternoon off and Thursday from 11 'o clock. So she's off Tuesday, she's off Thursday, she's off Saturday lunch time. And we pay her more. I pay her R300. We bought a new TV for her room because she's here on her own. Everything I bought [DWX] she ruined, you know. She used to burn things. I think she was just young or she just didn't care. I don't know. [DWY] has got a different attitude. Ja, she's definitely got a better deal than [DWX] but the reason is because she's older and she is more experienced but I was very happy to get [DWX] to that stage. But I said to her this is her very first job. She's only 23 so the better you do the better I'm going to pay you and the better I'm going to give you time off because it must work both ways. Somebody works well for me, I... I feel guilty if I have to ask [DWY] to stay because she works so well. Apparently, I pay her better than anybody I know whose actually a housekeeper. She does everything and she's paid R300. Lots of maids work on Sundays. The reason I did it with [DWX] is because if she worked a bit harder she wouldn't have to work on Sunday. She didn't work the whole Sunday. Usually she'd be out by 10. And it wasn't every Sunday. I suppose I was trying to say if you do this then I'm going to do this, but it didn't happen you know. It was too much like the union workers. She was off between 14h00 and 16h00 and she dropped everything to go off at 14h00. [DWY] is not like that. She's got something to do she finishes it. Like once she was supposed to go off on week-end and I didn't see her leave. I found her sweeping the driveway and I hadn't asked her to do it. She said she just wanted to do that. So I said 'Don't come back Sunday. You want to come back Monday morning, come back at 09h00. I could never do that with [DWX] because she never gave me that opportunity. I was taking time from her, I wasn't giving time to her, because she didn't give me anything. It's like a two-way thing.

I probably got on, in a funny sort of way, better with [DWX]. She had a sense of humour and I could talk to her. [DWY] is very quiet. We talked about things with [DWX]. We talked about clothes, we talked about shoes. And [DWY] doesn't really talk. [DWY's] been here as long as [DWX] was here, but they [the child and the domestics] don't have the same relationship. He had that with [DWX's predecessor] but he never got that with [DWX] and I thought it was just a question of time. He can say "[DWY]" before he can say "Mommy", "Daddy" and "[DWY]" but not poor mom. He doesn't call me anything.

I think you have to be interested in somebody, you have to be warm to somebody to bring something out of them. But if you're not really interested the child's not going to feel that warmth. I think [DWY] has got a lot of inner warmth. When he cries, [DWY] is very good at picking him up and comforting him, and she says 'It's all right' and all that kind of reassurance, which you feel. She's not lively as [DWX] used to be with him, playing games and that sort of thing. But she's most probably more comforting and he's secure with her. Once or twice when we've gone out and

she's baby sitting and he's woken up we come home and he's lying here with her. She's got him here. Obviously she looks after him when I am here and when I'm not here. I wouldn't like to say [DWX] didn't but I think she didn't have the same element of caring.

I'm, quite relaxed with [DWY]; I feel, if I go away, the house isn't going to burn down or something terrible is going to happen. With [DWX] I was just a bit scared. You know what [DWY] also does; when he gets a bit 'ratty' she puts him on her back because she's big, you know. [DWX] was too small to do it. In five minutes he's asleep and she just puts him down. He absolutely loves it.

I hope one day [DWY and the child] will have a good relationship. I want him to listen to her too. He must take commands from both of us. I think for her job it is important that she's happy with him because if it was a difficult child, an unlovable child, he'd be much harder to look after or to care for.

For me [the child's relationship with the domestic worker] is important, ja, because if I do want to go out and work when he starts playschool, for example, he'll be here with [DWY] and it's important for me that I know he likes her and vice versa because I wouldn't be happy leaving the child with somebody who didn't care for the child. So for me it's terribly important. That's the most important thing. I'm pleased that she's an incredible cleaner, she cleans this house beautifully. But even that, the most important thing is childcare. It's not important, I believe, who cares for the child as long as the child is cared for, the mother, the grandmother or the domestic as long as the child is given attention and cared for. Not that I mustn't give him attention because somebody else is giving him attention, that when I'm not here he's got that ... his needs are met. Talking about that and you see that thing on those children, refugees from Madagascar ..."

The Domestic Workers' Accounts

Domestic Worker X's Account

I experience this job as quite different from the ones I did before. I don't know which of the two jobs is better as yet because I'm still not very familiar with this one. I've been in this job a month now. There's been no difficulty as yet, everything's going smoothly. Maybe I can say that this is a better job; the only thing is that you're not trusted to be doing whatever you're doing properly. I chose this job because the salary is higher. I have a lot of problems. I get more rest time here as well. Here I get time off on Thursday from 12. I'm not always off on Sundays. I'm off every day between one and three and then I work till six or seven depending on what I'm doing. On Saturdays I go off at 12 and sometimes have to come back in much later. I get one weekend off per month. This month end I'll be off from Thursday at 12 because I could not get the Monday off (Worker's day) as she asked me to be here that day since here sister and her children were here and they'll be away on the weekend.

I do not cook although she sometimes asks me to cook mashed potato for the child and to peel and cut up vegetables. The work is difficult in the sense that whilst I do the cleaning I have to keep an eye on the child. A child touches everything so I have to say 'no' ever so often. I can't spank him because by rule I cannot give him a hiding. I can only say 'no' and I'm not allowed to shout at him. When I first came here she told me how I will work. I didn't dispute anything because I'm not familiar with this job and I didn't know that you can object to what you don't want. Now I know you can do that, so I've heard from other people.

I experience difficulties in telling her that I'm not pleased with something. An employer is a dignified person so it's not very easy to express your dissatisfactions. But I do express what I feel when we quarrel because she wants me to run (rush around) when I'm working. She always tells me that I'm slow. I always try to work fast but she doesn't seem to take note of all that. She ends up making noise and shouting at me, sending me this way and that way, telling me to do this and that now. She wants me to finish everything at the same time. I try but when I get angry I then tell her what I don't like. Like yesterday I told her that I try and that sometimes I do not even eat because I rush to finish the work but all that time she'll be shouting at me. I said that I don't like it that she is always cross because of me so I'm asking that I look for another job. She told me that I work slowly. I asked her what she suggest I do because I could not work faster than I was doing.

Yesterday I came in at quarter past seven. It got busy at lunchtime. I was packing away some stuff she'd brought home from shopping. I finished at twenty past one. I then left. I got delayed at the place I went to during lunch time and arrived here at ten past three. She shouted at me. I found her writing and it turned out that she was writing a list of things for me to do. When she hired me she told me that I will not do any vacuum cleaning or any type of cleaning such as washing floors. She said I could do ironing, look after the baby or help her in the kitchen. It was the third time it happened yesterday then when I came back in the afternoon she tells me to do the cleaning. I reminded her about that.

The list of things she wanted me to do was long. She wanted me to cook the child's vegetables and minced meat, to peel their vegetables, hang out the washing, do ironing, scrub the floor and vacuum clean. Whilst I was busy preparing the mashed potato for the child, she came to ask me why I hadn't vacuum cleaned yet. I told her that I was still preparing the child's food. She said I should have started with vacuum cleaning. She was not talking in a nice way, she was shouting at me. She told me I should have done the vacuuming first because I knew that she was going to get visitors. I didn't even get a chance to apologise. When I was just about to finish vacuuming she told me to stop because there were people around and I was making a noise. She told me to sweep the kitchen and to finish the cooking. She put some washing in the machine, that was already about 6 p.m. She then told me that I'll go off at 9.00 that day and from the following day I'll start work at 6 a.m. and go off at 8.30 p.m. Later I went to hang up the washing. When I went back into the house she told me I should scrub the floor of this room twice, first use an antiseptic and then clean it with soap. I told her I wasn't going to do the floor at that time, it was time I knocked off work. She instructed me to do it then because I was

going off the following day. I said I would do it the following day even if that meant I would go off a bit later. The quarrel started off like that, she shouted at me. She went to call her husband, who didn't have much to say, but just to tell me that if I did not want to work then I must just say so. He asked me if I still wanted the job. I said yes, but not under the circumstances I was being made to work under. I try to please the madam, all the time, but she always shouts at me. He left. She then said "[DWX] I'm not going to be telling you 'no' all the time. If you don't want to work, just say so". I said "Well, I can stop work". We were still discussing the issue today.

As I said, I enjoy working here, the only thing I don't like is that she always shouts at me. I don't know if I may be the wrong party or whether she's the one who's doing wrong. I've been thinking that I've been trying to please her.

I don't know yet, because she said it is not her wish that I leave yet because she likes me. I told her that she does not talk to me, she shouts at me. I told her that I was begging her not to shout at me because I was not going to understand what she was saying. I tried to humble myself but I could not because she shouted and I could not hear what she said. She told me that she's worried because I worked well for her and jobs are scarce.

My wish is to continue working, but I don't know how to stop the noise. I don't thrive well under a lot of noise. I panic. I like people not to shout at me, no matter how angry I make them. When someone shouts at me I forget everything and become stupid. I could work for her but she must decrease her noise. She must tell me things by talking to me and not shout. She is the type of person that cannot address any person in an appropriate way. That's not one of her talents. She just shouts. But there's nothing you can understand properly when someone shouts at you.

She quarrels with the husband quite often and she makes that noise. My boyfriend works here too on Fridays because he lives here. We agreed on that. She has a lot of complaints about him too. You see, she wants everything done simultaneously and she shouts because she doesn't see that she's rushing you around. They also quarrelled the other day and [my boyfriend] told her he's leaving because she seems to be dissatisfied. One tries to stick it out in a job because one cannot be without one and expect charities from other people; people get bored with that. One can stick out a while when you work for them and you should but when things get too much then you are at a loss as to what to do.

There's no other problem I experience in the work as such, even though she sometimes makes me do almost impossible jobs but because I'm an employee, I do them. There are very big curtains in the lounge. She told me to iron them. On inspecting the curtains I decided they were too big to be ironed by hand and I asked her if we could not send them to the dry cleaners for that. She told me that I must iron them because the woman who worked here before ironed them. She called me and spread the curtains out and asked me what I found difficult in ironing them. I said they were too big and I've never ironed that big a curtain. She insisted that I iron them both. Whilst I was ironing the first one, there arrived a lady I know who also

works nearby. I asked her to help me iron the curtains. She expressed shock when she saw how big they were and said that she is an experienced worker but no one had ever made her iron such big curtains. She told me that employers usually send big curtains to the laundry. Ironing those curtains was difficult and I felt hurt but there was nothing else I could do since I'm only an employee. You can be employed by someone who'll feel for you and you can be employed by someone who doesn't care how the work affects you and just tells you to do things simply because she does not know how it feels to be doing them.

Her shouting overshadows everything so that at this stage I don't know if there's anything that I find positive in my work here. But I suppose they help me sometimes. When I'm ill she takes me by car to a doctor. When I run out of money and have a problem before the month is out, she gives me money. I get paid R150 and R70 for food. Being shouted at is unpleasant and you don't want to be shouted at the whole time. You want to live peacefully with no constant worries.

I like the fact that the adults are not too dependent on me. They don't run after me for their food, they prepare it themselves. The child is also not naughty, he does not cry all the time. He likes playing.

I wouldn't say there's something I don't like about the husband maybe because he doesn't spend much time here. It's difficult to explain. There's nothing they do that makes me feel they don't value me. You see, after she shouts at me she's again the one who approaches me, which gives me the impression that she valued me, she's the one who will want to know if I'm cross. Sometimes when I don't feel like talking I tell her that I'm not cross although I know that I'm not happy in my soul.

I like being in their midst because I learn a lot sometimes. I sometimes overhear how to express something in English which I couldn't express. But it is not my wish to always be amongst them because I sometimes don't feel relaxed. I feel tense. It's just fear that I may be doing something in the wrong manner.

When I do whatever I'm doing, I do it with the feeling that I've got to do it carefully because I do it for whites. A white is important to us blacks because you've got to value and please them in all you're doing.

I'm talking about a white person as an employer. You're frightened for yourself because you wouldn't like to leave the job because you've been fired for doing something wrong.

Yes there would be a difference if I worked for blacks. I would work for black people like I do for whites, but there would be things that would happen differently. I think in the case that I need money now. A black person would perhaps not have the money because he would only have money himself at the end of the month because he/she may be working just like you're working. Sometimes he/she doesn't have any money in savings. A white person can provide you with money at any time. With a black person I would be speaking the same language. I think that creates more understanding since you can express things in the proper way.

[DWX] was unavailable for further interviewing since she stopped working for her employers soon afterwards.

Domestic Worker Y's Account

I took this job because I couldn't find one in the factories. I prefer factory work because that type of a job has benefits. Looking after the child here doesn't really make a difference because he's a child and I'm a parent and I love children.

From Monday I start work at 7.15 and finish at 7.00 in the evening. On Tuesday I have a break from 2 to 5.30. On Mondays I have the lunch break which is from 1 to 1.30. There's lots of work on Mondays so I don't have much time to eat because I'm rushing to do something else. On Tuesday afternoons I work from 5.30 to 7. Wednesdays is again 7.15 to 7.00. On Thursdays I'm off at 11. Fridays is again 7.15 to 7.00. My work on Saturdays depends on when I finish it. I usually finish at 1.30 or 2 and I then go off. I don't work on Sundays. The hours I work are o.k. if I consider the amount of time I get off and off days. Sometimes when they go out I have to come back to babysit till about 1 a.m. If they're away from 8.30 to 10 p.m., I don't get paid anything, but if they're away from 7.30 to 1 they pay me R5.00. I didn't contest any of the conditions when I was hired. I would say I find this work a bit more difficult than factory work. In the factories we started work at 7, but lunch time was lunchtime and there was teatime. At 5 'o clock you stop work, irrespective of what you were doing. In this job you have to finish the work whether it's time to go off or not, you simply have to finish it. She does not help me with the housework. During the day she just sits and then goes to sleep during her rest time. She may do the odd small task like re-adjusting a curtain. I prepare the child's food and bottles.

I can't say there's something I don't like in the job vbecause you have to accept a job no matter what it is like. Your dislike of one or the other thing in the job is not going to alter the fact that you have to do it in the manner they want it done whether you like it or not. You're dependent on them, they're your employers. I can't say there's something I don't like because the work I do here is the same as the work I do at home.

At the same time I can't say there's something I like best in this job because this is not the type of work that provides satisfaction for me. I can only be satisfied with work that has benefits. Well, I have to work because my children are dependent on me as I have divorced my husband.

I'm happy here as I haven't noticed anything wrong that I wouldn't like. What I like about my employers is that they care and they treat me as a person. They buy me groceries and when I have money problems they give me money and they don't tell me I'll get my money at the end of the month. I haven't seen anything in them as yet which I would say I do not like. They're satisfied with the way I do my work and as a result they're treating me well.

If there's something that doesn't satisfy me I let it ride with the hope that it will correct itself with time. Because I haven't been here for long, I tell myself that maybe it is because I'm still new that such and such is happening in a certain way, maybe it will improve with time.

I'm happy being here because when I'm here I just do my work. Being amongst them doesn't make any difference. The husband helps me work work because sometimes when I'm busy with ironing and he comes back from work he will take the child and give him a bath.

I don't know if there'd be a difference if I worked for black people. Maybe there'd be much more work to do and less time off. It's too early to say that there's anything I want to change about them. We're still learning about each other. I feel o.k. about wearing a uniform because it protects my clothes. I can't say what I'd like to change about this job because whatever change there is the work still has to be done by the domestic worker.

The child is my responsibility. I look after him. Sometimes when I'm busy and she notices that he needs to be changed she does. He's a sweet child, he's not a 'stout' child who needs attention all the time. It's only when the mother is around that he cries often, I suppose demanding his mother's attention.

When I was employed she did not tell me that I was going to look after the child. She just mentioned that there is the child too, and added that the child is her responsibility as well since she is not working. As time went by I saw that if she tells me to do this and that then I'm meant to be doing that. As an employee you see what is your responsibility and what is not so I continued doing the things she asked me to do whether she continued asking me or not. Tasks having to do with [the child] emerged along the course of my employment here. I put him on my back so he can sleep. I'm so used to putting mine to sleep on my back that I do the same with him. His parents like that because they can see it's parental care, the child receives warmth and is in contact with the mother. I play with him sometimes, sometimes in the garden when he wants to go outside. There are no rules I make for him because he's only a child. He sometimes opens and unpacks that cupboard. I clear that up for him and he would be busy with something else. He was ill once whilst I'm already here. His mother looked after him and gave him his medicine. I attended to him as I attend to him every day. He's still using nappies and he's not toilet trained yet. He just got used to me straight away. He cries when his mother leaves, but he stops quite soon after that. He does not cry when I leave. When he's unhappy, anyone of us picks him up to console him. I do that as well. Our relationship is okay.

Working in a house that has a child in it makes a great deal of difference. The time in which you give him a bath, feed him, put him to sleep, look after him when he plays outside is time you could be doing other work. The work load is increased and they (employers) are aware of it. I suppose they don't mind very much about the other work because they realise that a child adds to the number of people in the house.

APPENDIX 4: HOUSEHOLD 2The Employer's Account

[The domestic worker] has five mornings in which she has to vacuum the house, polish the few bits of furniture, do the ironing. I usually do the washing before she comes in because there is increasingly more work with the two children and she is not a machine. She's employed primarily to look after the youngest child.

She's never had them both at the same time because the eldest child was at pre-primary by the time the youngest needed her care. But we didn't say specifically although we did say there was a child and that was one of the things I wanted to know about her, did she like children, had she looked after children. She's meticulous in the kind of way she keeps them. She stops them from injuring themselves, damaging the property. She's kept them safe all this time.

They gag along behind her but she doesn't sit down and play games with them. She can read and when the eldest was of an age when she wanted [the domestic worker] to read to her, [the domestic worker] would do so. At the moment the youngest child is being very demanding. She'll point and want shapes she recognises from colour pictures, and [the domestic worker] does this. But it was never her role to do mind developing tasks. I've let that just happen as part of going around with her.

I expect that the term nanny would describe what she does, although I never refer to her as such. I would see the nanny as someone in the house at the same time as the mother, but the mother says 'Won't you take the child away and change it because I'm busy' whereas she is here when I'm not and vice versa.

If you can use the word conservative for her behaviour of accuracy, I would describe her as a conservative person. She sees nothing wrong with being a person whose role in life is to clean after people of a different race. She actually sees this as fine and incredibly lucky to have a job. She knows that I can't get to work unless she is here and she is very conscious of that. She does not like 'skollies' and people who hang around and stop her from coming to work because she feels she's a law abiding good Christian going to work, she should be left at peace. Any time there is a disturbance all these things are voiced by [the domestic worker] and she is always in a very grave state when she arrives here. But we also have the understanding and she has abided by it, that if the violence is very bad and she's in any danger coming to work, she is to go home.

I leave her views entirely to her because I would feel it gross impertinence from a white person whose never been exposed to that terror to start lecturing her on how she should be tolerant and see political growth and that revolution is necessary or whatever cliches. She lives it, I just read about it. And, anyway, she's entitled to her own opinions. I don't like her being distressed and we've always stressed to her that she would never lose her job because of the troubles. We'd never fire her.

[The domestic worker] and I have managed to escape the reasons of her giving me the reply she thinks I want to hear. She is very courteous to me, she calls me 'madam', she feels more comfortable. Again, I've never pushed that because I thought it would be a purile victory to say "call me [by name]. And yet, despite that, she does tell me the truth when I come home and say 'Did [the eldest or the youngest child] eat their lunch?" She will say 'yes' or 'not all of it' or 'she didn't like it today, Madam'. And the same with her political views. So, although she is very courteous, she is not hesitant in the sense of too afraid to ask me something. She may be hesitant if she feels awkward or embarrassed and is trying to find phraseology in English.

But although I've never said it's a problem, she continues to manifest this sort of slight embarrassment of body posture, but I think possibly it's just a language thing. She is always slightly diffident and I would say embarrassed, but I think it's probably an incorrect assessment. She's much more vociferous, she speaks much more loudly if she's speaking in either Afrikaans or Xhosa. I suppose that's probably because she was feeling more confident in a language other than English.

I've seen her with women friends if she's walking down the road coming to work. Again, she's sort of more bustly in her behaviour with them. I can see there is a difference. But again, she's with people who, if not her peers, are at the same level that she's at. She's very conscious of the employer, employee with me. Not in the sense of terror, but she knows definitely that I'm her madam, I look after her. She considers herself very lucky to have a 'master' and a 'madam' who look after her. This terminology is entirely hers by choice. But she's not scared of me. She may be courteous and deferential, but she is not scared.

Sometimes it aggravates me, sometimes I'd like to get past it, to get her more relaxed. But possibly that is her relaxed. It's just my white liberalist thinking that these terms are encouraging or fostering all sorts of attitudes. But she feels more comfortable like that so it's best that it goes that way; it would be impertinent to impose on her a set of conduct that I think is more appropriate to the time when she's not a product of my time. She's an older woman so I leave it. We had to negotiate what was for her very tricky, leave from me at the end of December. Now she had gone into hospital for what was going to be ten days in October. I relied on her as my child's support system. The ten days dragged out to be two months in hospital and nobody knew it was going to be two months. So I kept hanging on, hanging on. She came back to work for two weeks. And then I said 'Do you want to leave?' I'd really thought this one out and I felt I had to ask her if she'd like to leave because I knew she had a few months paid sick leave. Her Christmas leave is the only time she sees her family. She obviously felt dreadful about doing it because she's lived in a hard world and she knows she's jolly lucky we kept her job. I don't think she's jolly lucky, I think she was entitled that for us to keep her job for her but she, from her point of view, thought she'd been lucky that we'd kept her job open and paid her for two months.

And on top of that she had to ask could she have a week's leave for her son being made a man. And I said yes, but I did say I couldn't pay her for that. At this point I had to have somebody else in to help me as I was

unable to manage any more. I'll pay her a full month's wage less one week's salary. But this was an occasion when she felt very, very anxious about approaching me. I can see why she would feel anxious. It had been a difficult one with not seeing her for two months.

Being a working mother is both a matter of choice and necessity, more and more a necessity; it's very, very hard. And there are many, many times when [the domestic worker] was away in October and November, when I was tempted to resign because it just got to be a nightmare imposing on people to look after [the youngest child]. And I spent my life rushing between peoples' timetables. It was excruciatingly bad, but [the domestic worker] makes it terribly, terribly easier. She is very, very reliable.

Yes, they are attached to her and one interesting thing is one of the most horrific things I found about employing someone to look after our children from the time they were babies is she seems to be so desperately fond of them in a situation where they are not hers by birth and could be removed at any time when her employment ceases here.

Somehow as the eldest child got older, a bit of distancing seemed to occur although when [the domestic worker] comes to the door the child throws herself out at her and gives her a big hug and she often makes presents for her. And the youngest child remembered [the domestic worker] after a two an a half months absence. She was very calm and happy with her. And when I go in the morning there are no tears.

I've always been very strict that the eldest child is never rude to [the domestic worker] and never to expect [the domestic worker] to clear after her. I noticed that as the eldest child got older her independence from [the domestic worker] was quite pronounced. I've heard people say - maybe its unkind - that children outgrew their nannies. And maybe that's just one way of describing what happend.

I do not run my finger alongside boards largely because the Cape can be windy and very dusty. I don't have a fetish about it. She's worked long enough for me to know that any irregularities are caused by something she could not help, like the youngest child interrupted her or she didn't feel well or something like that. My prime concern is that she stays well and looks after my children. I think that's a fair arrangement.

She is very appreciative. To demonstrate her appreciation she often kisses my hand. At first I found that very disconcerting, but I realised that for her it's a spontaneous expression of gratitude and it's just that my culture does not have that kind of thing.

Yes, she has been ill several times. The one session in October was the worst. She complained of a sore ear. We took her to the ENT surgeon that we know. Now we paid for that consultation.

If the domestic worker played a nine to five role, no mother there whatsoever then I should think the emotional bonding is stronger than that wher the maid is either a char or the mother is always present or, in my case [the domestic worker] is here for only a few hours, and I'm always

here from lunch time onwards. She has automatically played less of a role in their lives because she has a shorter exposure to the children.

And the youngest child is very happy with her, we have no fears, they have their own routine. [The domestic worker] has a set of stock phrases that she speaks to the child, but they are in Xhosa, but she always uses the same ones over and over again, so it's a pattern as well as a language. [The domestic worker] puts on her overall and comes through here and the child has the rest of her breakfast with her, which she usually holds back and won't have without [the domestic worker] that is how their day is initiated.

I have noticed with [the domestic worker] I expect with years of discretion to behave as only the maid, the tremendous amount of discretion that she does tend to efface herself or move back slightly when I come in. And I suppose that comes from years of being reminded of something called 'her place'. She's 55 she's been doing this work for 40 years. I expect it's a hard school. She's quite discreet about it, but I think it could only work to the best because she really liked our children and we feel she should find her own balance with them.

The anxiety about being late, I'm sure is what creates the greatest anxiety because if something happens she has no control. It's an area we've never been able to talk about. When I come home at lunch time, I've been able to say 'what was the problem this morning? Did you have to wait long for a bus?' But she's never defensive about it, she's always upset that it's happened, so it obviously worries her a lot. And we're also sure that it's because she knows that many, many domestic workers lose their jobs through not being on time.

She's a very, very agreeable person for me in the sense that I feel at ease with her. If we were very different, we could have talked about things. I would have liked that, but it's impossible. We're separated by years, by culture, by roles, role barriers that she will not cross.

It's an aspect that I don't like rather than her. It's the fact that she's the weak link in my chain of organization, so that if the buses make her late, my work is always dependent on [her] coming.

I try not to talk to her in anger partly to overcome my own upbringing. I was brought up where it was very easy to see people shouting at servants, so I tried hard not to enter that pattern. I don't shout at other adults, so why should I shout at her?

I think the racial prejudice is very, very hard to get yourself free of. You've got to perpetually work at it particularly in this country where we have more and more encounters with black people of different social classes. That needs a lot of adjusting.

I don't know how I'd adjust to [a white domestic worker]. I grew up in Zimbabwe and my parents had black people to work for them. I've never lived in a culture where there were white servants. I would find that very, very difficult in terms of not knowing what the lines and barriers were. The greatest difference, I assume, would be having someone who is more explicit

as to their role definition, which, of course would be a great problem but would be a great help in the end.

Her health has bothered us very much, the change in her. She is still very keen to present herself as happy.

Did she indicate to you any areas which I could improve as an employer? Even if it might be a small thing, you've mentioned uniforms and I must have bought her one two years ago. It doesn't matter to me. Uniforms are fine. I have to get her a new one.

The domestic worker's Account

I've been working here for six years now. I look after the kids, clean the house and do the washing.

My employer helps me with the work. She washes the dishes quite often and always does the first load of washing. When I get here in the morning I feed the youngest child. She refuses to have her breakfast before I come. The eldest child also used to do that. After I have changed her nappy, I then go on to do the other work.

I find the work relatively easy although looking after a child is difficult work. Children need constant supervision. But I prefer a job that involves child care because the priority is that you take good care of the children. How the housework is done is not really important.

I'm quite satisfied with what I'm paid. I've never been paid this well. I'm paid R400 a month. It is very rare that such a thing happens, and that is why I am holding on to the job. My employers are also sensitive to my needs when I'm ill and try to get medical care for me.

I start work at 08h15 and leave at 14h45. I don't work on Saturdays and on public holidays.

I often play with the children; we play chasing games. Sometimes we write. I teach them speaking Xhosa.

You see, 'madam' does not talk a lot. She will occasionally talk about something that has disturbed her like if someone says something negative maybe about one of the children. I usually agree with her views because when you are employed you only address what affects you directly. If it's something you're not directly involved in, you just agree and say "You know what people are like. They will say anything. Let them talk".

The children love me. This one [the youngest] cries when I leave. The eldest child also used to do that.

She is very strict with food. But there is an improvement. I've told her that she doesn't want to see her food go to anyone else. She used to buy Klim (milk powder) for me, but I told her that my mother is still alive so I can't eat Klim as if I'm an orphaned lamb. She said that milk is

expensive, and I said "It is expensive to you being a white woman. You whites are rich. It will be expensive to a black woman like me". I then put this child on my back and went to buy (cow's) milk. I think I spent the next two years buying my own milk.

But she has started giving me milk. She now also buys bread for me. The other day I heard her say "here's a piece of cheese". I suppose the change came because the youngest child loves me.

I don't think that this woman liked me when I started working here. In fact, I don't think she liked any 'girl'. There used to be a turnover of up to four 'girls' a month.

She has a temper. She could not control her temper. Maybe that was because she was young. When someone is young, you don't think much about what you do. But there's nothing wrong with her now. Maybe she has learnt from other people because she also used not to give the garden 'boy' food but now she does.

I don't react to everything. If I reacted to everything that people in this house said I would suffer a heart attack.

What I like about the job is looking after the children. In a house with children the work is not too heavy because your employer realises you do two jobs. If I were to change anything in the job I would make 'the madam' the husband and him her. I feel relaxed when he is around.

I iron some of my clothes here. She told me to. She also wanted me to have a bath here. But I don't have the time to do that. If I come in wet, they give me one of their towels to dry myself, but I haven't done that because of that notion of "Ooh! A white person". We grew up being told that a white person is to be respected.

She lends me money. She sometimes asks "Do you have money?" I say "No, but I didn't want to borrow". You see, she is a fine person, it's just that everyone has a negative aspect. I used to get hurt in the beginning if something I didn't like happened. Now that I'm used to her, I think that if she does something then she doesn't really mean it or she does it because I'm not one of her family. Like on Friday, it was the youngest child's birthday, but she didn't leave me even a small piece of cake. But it's a public holiday tomorrow and I know she will buy me a cake. So one cannot say she is totally bad because she does think of me sometimes.

APPENDIX 5: HOUSEHOLD 3**The Madam's Account**

Our domestic worker has been with us for about five months. We employed her to look after the child. She starts work at 07h00 because I have to be at school at 07h30. But that happened by word of mouth only, she doesn't come at 07h00 at all, just like I don't get to work at 07h30 at all, I get there at about 07h45. My husband starts work later and she takes over from him. I think she comes here late because she is lazy to get up. And I suppose she's holding tightly to money because she does not use transport, she walks here. If she gets up late and still has to walk, she is bound to be late.

Her job is to look after the child and everything that has to do with the child; she just becomes the child's mother. She takes my place in quite a big way. If there's something wrong with the child she tells. I want a report when something happens. She does not do any housework at all, especially now that the child is older. When the child was smaller she would get bored when the child was asleep and she'd do some cleaning. But now that the child is getting bigger I can see that she does not do as much cleaning as before, because this child can be quite demanding. Our agreement was that she goes home when I come back from school at about four.

She does not work over week-ends, except if we ask her to look after the child if I'm not going to be here or I'll be having a meeting at school. Or when we're going to have a ceremony here at home. We give her money for that. We sometimes ask her to go off a bit later, perhaps at about 8 or 9 and we also give her some money. We pay her a fixed salary of R100, but there are the extras during the month. She sometimes borrows money. I usually don't deduct the money because I usually understand that she must have a real problem, and she has children. The money we give her for overtime depends; we give her R20 when she has been here for the two days. It's difficult to say what she likes best about her job, but I can see that she's generally happy. I think it has to do with the atmosphere here. She is a friendly person and when she came she felt accepted. She calls my mother "Grandma" and she sometimes plays with the other two children. And the child is not troublesome. Maybe also the fact that we pay her when she works overtime, we don't forget that.

What I can say she doesn't like, maybe, is that we ask her to work at some weekends, especially on Sundays. She does come most of the time. When she doesn't come I usually think that she knew she would not be able to come, but was reluctant to say so and then just decides not to come.

She agreed to the working conditions I put to her. I asked whether she'll manage to be here at 7. She said there would be no problem. It was still summer then and it was easy to be here at 7 or 7.15, but she usually came before we left. I suppose as time went by she felt that it does not really matter if she is late because after all we also don't leave at 7. So she started drifting to 7.30. And there's also the person who remains behind to take care of the child until she comes. I suppose she takes advantage of all these factors. I asked her if R80, that was the amount agreed upon, will be satisfactory for her if her job will only entail looking after the child. She felt that it was alright. But it was R100 from the beginning, because I

noticed that she will sweep and tidy the sitting room, so I felt I should pay attention to the extras she does and decided to pay her R100.

I'm quite happy and relaxed with her. I wasn't going to be able to work and at the same time take care of the child. I appreciate the help she gives with looking after the child. She's saved me. I like a lot of things about her. But the most important is that she's full of love. She loves the child and this is why I said she enjoys her. The fact that she gives love to the child surpasses everything else. Giving love to a child is important because the child will grow well. In a tense atmosphere, the child feels oppressed and becomes unhappy, especially when the child grows up from very young in that kind of atmosphere. A child who grows up tense becomes a fearful child who will not appreciate the positive side of things. Because of this lack of appreciation the child will repeat what was done to him/her and will want to create tension in other people because that is the life that he's grown used to. He/she will not understand when other people are happy, he/she will not appreciate them. He will take tension to be a normal way of life and will always want to frustrate other people, which is something which will frustrate him even more. So it's very important that the child grows up receiving love, so he can also learn to love. Secondly, whilst the child is very small and yet tense and fearful, you will not even know when he/she is not well because he/she is always tense and it becomes difficult to know whether he/she has a tummy ache or whatever. The result is that the child grows up being unable to tell when something is wrong with him/her, he/she learns to hide/conceal/be secretive.

I'm very careful to the extent that we lock the bedroom during the day. We didn't know her, you see, and it's difficult to trust someone, you don't know. We wanted to first observe the type of person she is. We have, however, determined that she's quite fine. We still lock the bedrooms because now we're already used to that. She must know there is nothing she can steal should she ever get that inclination. But she doesn't look like that kind of person. I don't know how she feels about the matter, but she's never said anything to that effect. It was a new experience for her to be told that she only has to look after the baby. She used to want to do ironing as well and my mother would say 'no, there's a person to do that. You just concentrate on what you were employed for.' You could see she is not used to having work limited for her. She says so, she says 'I'm used to working for Boers. I'm used to doing everything.' She's gradually adjusting to the fact that she is not working for Boers any more, we are her first black employers.

I'm not aware of anything as yet that I could say I don't like about her. Her coming late is not a very serious matter as yet. I just notice that she comes late sometimes. When I arrive here sometimes I will find her reading a book she took from the study. She also reads magazines. So I can see that she is relaxed. I liked the idea that she reads. She will otherwise sleep when the child is sleeping. She can at least occupy herself when she is bored.

In a way she does take decisions. For example, she once said; 'I decided not to give the child the Multivite medicine today because someone told me that it increases the appetite and I decided this is not the right type of medicine because this child is already big.' She takes the decisions and then reports them. She also told me not to use any soap powder other than Sunlight for washing the baby's nappies because the others cause nappy rash. I appreciated

the advice because I didn't even know about that. Our relationship is alright. I take it she feels comfortable if she can express that she needs money, could I please lend her some.

We also converse a lot about topics related to children or events that happened in the street where she lives. We don't talk about our private lives. I wouldn't like that to happen. I want us to maintain the employer-employee relationship, that gap mustn't close. She must know there are certain things I can't discuss with her and that she can't discuss with me. I wouldn't mind if she wanted to share a particular problem, but it must end there. But I don't like gossip to circulate between the two of us. The more you talk to someone, the more you can read them and size them up till you, perhaps, feel that they're not the type of person you thought they were, that they're perhaps not as powerful as they thought you were. That would mean that you wouldn't place them in as high a regard as you did initially. That type of thing leads to misunderstandings or conflict.

We give her presents. I feel fine about giving her presents as long as I don't shower her with them; otherwise she will begin to think that I'm begging her, although I know inside me here that that's what I'm doing. I'm pleased with the way she works; I'd be very disturbed if she were to decide to leave tomorrow. I'd be hurt, but I don't want her to know that.

I do help her with the work in the sense that immediately I come in, put away my bag and take the baby so that she can perhaps make up the bed, or do something else. Sometimes she puts the baby on her back and does her work. I don't know whether I'm helping her or not.

Yes, there would be a difference if I had someone white working for me. Firstly, we would have to use another language. Secondly, there would be some cultural things that she wouldn't understand. Things like we sometimes have ceremonies here, and we ask this person who belongs to us to come and help. She understands and sometimes even before we ask her she offers to come. So when we say to this white person 'we're going to slaughter a cow' we will first have to sit down and explain to her what happens before it is decided that a cow should be slaughtered. She would maybe also not understand when I ask her to come in because weekend after weekend we have meetings at school. You see, when there's unrest we have a lot of parent meetings as parents need to be informed about everything that happens. Or when there's washing of spades and picks and as a relative I need to go because I'm one of the family.

I don't know much about her private life; it's the things I said I'm reluctant to talk about. All I need to know is whether she has any children and a husband, so that if she tells me that she is not able to come over weekends, I then understand that it may not be that easy to come because she has a husband, that she is likely to be telling the truth because she does not live alone. I must also know the reasons for her wanting a job as I must know how desperate she is. If I get someone who is just in need of pocket money and does not really need much else, I can't rely much on that kind of person, whereas if someone has a family you know that the person is in real need of a job.

I wouldn't like her to get visitors here and I'm sure that is one thing she wouldn't like. You see, she might pay too much attention to her visitors at the expense rather of her job.

I don't think that wearing a uniform is necessary because there is no reason to have other people notice that she works here. Secondly, the work she does here is not dirty work. Whether she wears a uniform or not is her own choice. I don't see the point of having one.

My child loves [the domestic worker]. She knows when she is held by her. I don't feel insecure or jealous because the child is still small. [The domestic worker] is always playing and talking with her. My neighbour is a nurse and she works at the baby clinic and she once commented that [the domestic worker] is so good for the child because even whilst the baby is on the weighing scale she talks to her and says 'don't cry my baby'.

I would say that the relationship we have with [the domestic worker] as employer and employee makes her relationship with the child even better. When someone works under pleasant conditions she develops interest in her work and I think our relationship with her brings out the best in her. She is a naturally warm person and I think she has a natural love for children.

The relationship with the child is important for her because the child is what she is here for. I suppose the child is important for her because she seems to love her. And she is important for my child because of the reasons I mentioned before. A child who grows up receiving love learns to love and he/she develops well.

The Domestic Worker's Account.

I always get this kind of job ever since I left school. I always look after children. In white homes you do that plus the housework. I'm employed to look after the child - that's my only job. When the child is asleep I sometimes get bored and do some work in the house. I'm not forced to.

I work from half-past seven and sometimes going for 8, until the mother comes back from school. When she has meetings at school she works late and I only leave after she has come back. She asks me to do that. She does pay me for overtime. I get lots of leave because when schools are closed, I also take leave. I get my full wages when I'm on holiday. I get paid R100 a month and if she asks me to come in for the day, for example, over a weekend, she gives me R10.

When she hired me she told me what she expects me to do. Up till now those conditions have not changed. There was nothing I felt I wanted to disagree with. I was satisfied. I'm very, very relaxed in this job because they are nice people. The best thing I like about this job is looking after the baby. I love this baby very much. What I like about this child is that she is used to me. She knows my voice. I take her as my own child.

What I don't like about this job? Maybe that sometimes they make me cross when they come back too late. Like when they come back at 10 or 11 at night, but I don't say anything. I just keep quiet when there's something I don't

like and just hope it will resolve with time. They can think for themselves that such and such a thing I didn't like. We like each other and I now feel more like a daughter of the family than an employee.

There are rooms in the house that I do not use unless they are at home. They lock them. I'm used to that now. Before I got used to it I thought maybe they don't trust me. Now I'm used to that I don't think anything about it anymore.

[My employer] gives me a lot of presents. I'm pleased with that. Sometimes when I come back from my weekend off, I find that she has done some of the baby's washing. That's what she helps me with.

We talk about prices and where one buys items cheaper. I talk to the kids too about TV programmes. We do not talk about our private problems. I just sometimes tell them about events that happen where I live. We don't have much time to talk, when she comes home I get ready to leave. That is maybe the reason we don't discuss our private problems.

Things would be different if I worked for a white person. Yesterday I found myself saying 'Even if I worked for a white person, they would not buy me such things'. The work would also be different. With a white person you both decide on something but after some time they forget those agreements and break their promises and work does not go as initially agreed upon. New tasks come up along the way. That makes you cross. You become resentful, even though there's nothing you say. And you don't get a cent extra.

If the people here ask me to do some extra jobs I don't mind because they pay me for the extra work. And when I'm without money sometimes and they give me money, they don't deduct that amount at the end of the month. I get my full salary.

Getting home late sometimes makes the person that I live with very angry and unhappy, but he stops being cross when I explain why I'm late.

I'm indifferent to not wearing a uniform because I feel like I'm with my family.

If I could do some other kind of work I'd choose a job that pays more even though the job might be difficult. If there were something I could change in this job, I would look after the child at my own home rather than here. When I get home after work there's piles of work I need to do and if I looked after the child at home I'd get a chance to do the other things.

My relationship with this child is important to me, because if I treat this child harshly, I'll be undermining her health whereas if I take good care of her she will develop well. It is also important to her for the same reasons, she will develop well if I look after her in the proper manner.

APPENDIX 6: HOUSEHOLD 4The Madam's Account

We got married in 1980. The person who works for me now is the first domestic worker I had but just before I had my second child, she told me that she was not going to be able to look after a baby and asked to leave.

The person who worked for me at the beginning of the year left and because I was struggling I thought of her and she also happened to be without a job at that time.

[The present domestic worker] stays with me during the week. I told her that I need someone who will sleep here and take time off on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday, except for the occasional week-end that I might need to go somewhere. We agreed quite amicably on that. She is supposed to start work at 7 a.m. In fact, not at 7 a.m. I have three kids. The eldest attends school and gets up at 6. I've trained her not to be too dependant on me. All I have to do when I don't have someone helping me is to make her something to eat. When there is someone I ask her to get up at the same time as [the eldest child] and just see to it that everything for school is ready. She does not need to wash or do anything else for her but see to it that she eats before she leaves.

There is no specific time to go off duty. The person decides when to go off as when I come back from work I do the cooking and wash the dishes. After that she is free to do whatever she wants. But the people I have had always thought they needed to do something new though I say 'no, leave the dishes, I'll do them myself'. And so I leave them to do it.

The work involves looking after the children. That's what I emphasize to them. When my present domestic worker started working here [the eldest child] was the only child. She was still at pre-school then. I told her to see what she could do around the house since she could not just sit and fold her arms whilst waiting for [the child] to come back from pre-school. So someone who works here looks after the children and she will then do cleaning in whichever way she can manage it, so much so that even if I see that the place has not been dusted, I do not ask why because I know that I've hired the person to specifically look after the children.

She gets paid leave. She is off on all public holidays. She takes her annual holiday when I get a holiday because I cannot arrange that in any other way. So if I take two weeks holiday she takes that much as well.

When someone desperately wants a job, especially with us blacks, it is difficult to get someone who will be asking a lot of ins and outs of the job because the main thing she wants is the job. Hence you find that when that person is more familiar with the home they do not do the things they said they would do. I pay her R120 per month.

It's difficult to say what she likes about her work. She is difficult in the sense that you cannot see if she is happy or if she is not happy. She is too reserved and she is very simple. She is simple in the sense that if

you left that pillow not in the same position as that other one and you do not say to her 'put that pillow in the same position as that other one' that pillow will remain in that position for the whole week. She does not use her common sense. I tried to encourage her to do things on her own and not wait for me to tell her what to do. I tell her to take this house as hers and work it as she would work her own house but that does not seem to help.

I think it's her personality. She is leaving me soon and that's a pity because I was beginning to have some success with her. She couldn't even cook. If I was coming home late I would ask her to cook some meat and she would not even think that she can also cook some potatoes too. She is slow. If you tell her to do something in a certain way, she sulks even though she does it. All I know is that my children are very happy with her even though she might be what she is. I have a problem with my youngest child. As you can see she is very restless child. She doesn't want people. The only other person she wants is this woman. I only get a rest from her when she is here. So my children are happy with her which is what I want and everything else is of secondary importance.

I wouldn't mind if she left but I'm tolerating her because she gets on well with my child. What I like about her is that my children love her which means she has a way with children and she tries to keep herself and the children neat. What I don't like about her is that it's not easy to tell her things. I've got to plan what to say to her and think 'if I say this she is going to sulk'. She does not say a thing when she does not like something. The weekend I asked to be here is the first weekend of the month when I go shopping because I cannot take these children with because they are a problem. My husband and I come back quarrelling because of them. So I need someone to look after them. And when we come back we don't delay her and she goes/leaves immediately. But when we come back she is very cross. I have since discovered that she sells chicken, but she did not tell me about it.

I asked her if she wants me to get someone else and she said I should. But I sat down and gave the whole thing a good thought. My child was still very small then. And I discussed the matter with another woman who said "I think you should leave her to continue working if the child cannot get along with anybody else and just overlook the other things".

On the Friday of the end of last month she told me that she needs to take money home urgently so I said that's okay as long as she will be here Saturday morning. She told me that she has a child she needs to take care of. I said I understand that. She also said that if she had her way she would not sleep in. She previously told me that she lives with her brother and his wife and the child is safe, therefore there is no problem. She is leaving at the end of the month.

We've been trying to take her as part of us and telling her that she is part of the family and that she is not a servant. But it's not working.

I suppose when you are a person like me, who is a worker and has a child you want someone who will sleep in because they do not come on time or not even come at all and then you're not able to go to work.

We give her presents. We've done a lot for that woman but we've already taken the decision that she's not worth it. You see, when she started here I started her off on R40. But by the time she left I was paying her R80 by way of motivating her and she left when I was thinking of paying her R100. But now I cannot even give her an increase because I'm not happy with her. I gave her some of my clothes, the ones I've had enough of and won't wear any longer. After she came I gave her a lot of my shoes, good shoes.

There's nothing wrong or uncomfortable about her presence in our midst. She is of more help than anything else, because we can leave if we need to go somewhere. I help her in the sense that when I come back from work at 5, and I see that that day she has not swept the floor and I then take my broom and sweep my house. I help her with the dishes on some days and take over the care of the child. We talk about everyday things like happenings in her area or in mine. She does not talk about her own private life.

Colour is not important; what is important is the relationship between employer and employee. I could have a white working for me with the same kind of thinking as she has. If she was a person with real problems I would be more tolerant of her. My problem is that I have small children and I need someone to look after them.

The person who is with me does not wear a uniform. I've never given that much thought. If the person is clean, it does not matter whether she is in uniform or not as it does not determine the way she works. I'm quite satisfied with the way she looks after the children. She really tries there. Most of the time she is with them she is laughing. She cannot reprimand my eldest child. I wish I was able to change that. I tell her to discipline [that child] but she tells me that she finds it difficult to punish children. Both my husband and I make the rules in the house. She does not because she says she is unable to.

The Domestic Worker's Account

I've already made a decision to leave here as I am dissatisfied with the money I am paid. The amount of work I do here is huge. I look after the children, get up in the morning to make porridge for the eldest, and I then wash the two year old to prepare her for creche and then I make porridge for the youngest and also do everything else for her. In addition to that, the rest of the housework I have to do. I've always been hoping that the pay would go up but I don't see that happening. There's also something else I don't like, that I'm here over weekends and leave here on Saturday. That makes me unhappy because I have a child who is attending school. I only get to see him on Saturday afternoon. I sometimes miss school meetings because I'm here. But the money is just not there. I get R120 including travelling costs.

It's painful to continue working when you're dissatisfied to be in financial difficulties yet you're working. I'd rather be at home and make other plans. I've got to do the washing and this huge house is waiting for me to clean it.

I advised [the employer] to get someone to do a char job on Saturdays and she had said that she gives me too little money to get a char for Saturdays and I thought it's a good thing that she realises it. I am just being cheated. I told her that I'm not someone who talks a lot and I have made the decision to be at home under the circumstances.

And I can't sit here the whole day just looking after the child. I just can't sit and stare at an unswept kitchen or dirty washing or unmade beds. And I told them so. It would be better if there was someone else to do that work. Then I would just concentrate on the child. But now I've had enough. And what puzzles me is that the man of the house is [in a helping profession] and he should realize that this is not the correct thing to do and do something about it.

There are no fixed working hours. I just work. I get up at half past five and I'll be on my feet until about 9, after I have washed the evening meal dishes. After that I give the middle child a bath and then go to bed. They sometimes go out and come back at \pm 10. I don't like the idea but because my child is dependent on me I just cannot be not working. I get paid leave and sick leave. I don't get paid before I take holidays, I get paid when I come back.

Where we had a quarrel and I came to the decision that I leave was when I did not come back on Saturday morning because I had to go to the office. She did not like it and said that the following Saturday I would go off at 5 p.m. instead of 12. But she let me go before 5 on that day, but the idea that when I'm not here on Saturday I should make it up is unacceptable. Yet she asks me to work half days on public holidays.

What I like about my employers is that they are very respectful. Because they are respectful I feel that they do not treat me like a worker. I feel like part of the family. They usually see when I do not like or did not like something and apologise. Sometimes they come back late. They will then take me home. And they will say 'we can see that you're upset, we're sorry'. I don't have to say anything. I'm someone who doesn't like to quarrel with my employer and any one that I live in the same house with because that disturbs me. I try to ignore things that hurt me.

The children like to be with me so that even when their mother is at home, they'll mostly be around me. The two year old sleeps with me. There would be a big difference if I worked for whites. They would pay me for working on Saturdays if I was not supposed to be working on that day, whereas with black people you just get asked. And I suppose I would be earning at least R200. You also have a separate room and you start at 8 if you have to start at 8 and you stop at 5 and yet remain on your feet till it gets dark. If there was something I could change in this job I would stop looking after the child and just do the cleaning. I wonder what I would want to change in them? I don't know. I'm generally satisfied with the type of people they are.

I wear my own clothes at work. It does not make any difference to me whether I have a uniform or not. I like the children because I'm happy when I'm with them. I like looking after them. We have a good relationship. I teach the youngest to walk. The eldest likes reading and playing. The

parents make the values. I tell the kids when they're doing something wrong. I was told to do that. All of them love me. When I leave the youngest crawls to the door. The two year old will say "Auntie, bring me some chips". The eldest will say "We'll see each other again Auntie. Greetings to [your son]". I also notice that the eldest prefers me to be here on Mondays before she leaves for school. I raised her. She grew to love me. When they're in a happy mood they play with me and the eldest will take out her schoolbooks and read me a story.

The parents treat me well and the children treat me well. The only problem is the money. I miss the children when I'm at home and I think about what they could be doing. Because the money issue is a serious issue, I'll try to forget about them. My misunderstanding with the parents over money does not affect my relationship with them.

The good relationship we have is important to me because it is painful to be living with children who do not look happy and cry when their mother goes to work. I usually don't like such a scene when I see it; you can't be with a child the whole day and yet have that child cry for someone who goes to work in the morning. The relationship is also important to them because they're happy when I'm with them. I can see that they don't like it when I leave.