Intimate Encounters?
Domestic Work in Home Spaces

Johannesburg has for many years been portrayed as a city dominated by fear of crime (Bremner 1998, Dawson 2006, Dirsuweit 2002). Although crime rates have decreased in the last decade (Dirsuweit 2015), thinking and caring about security is part of everyday routine in the city, almost like eating and sleeping. As "the experience of fear and at times panic lies at the deepest roots of life in the metropolis" (Mbembe and Nuttall 2008: 24), the figure of the criminal takes centre stage in narratives about the city by writers and by ordinary residents, especially in the suburbs. In Linbro Park, a peri-urban suburb adjacent to Alexandra, the residents used to share information about security on an online platform (a google group) between 2010 and 2016. Residents for example reported when they observed a suspicious '*BM*' (black man) on their streets –he was suspicious to them because he was black and a stranger; not a gardener or a tenant.

Many famous writers about modern cities have argued that the stranger is the quintessential urban figure. Cities differ from rural areas because they own a 'public realm' where strangers interact (Lofland 1973). In postmodern cities like Los Angeles, São Paulo and Johannesburg, where deindustrialisation has increased social inequality and spatial segregation despite the end of discriminatory politics, the stranger becomes largely a threat, a criminal, and often also a racial other. The black stranger, usually male, is thought to come from the street, the public spaces, and threatens to intrude into the homes, the private and intimate spaces, which is why they become fortified with walls and electric fences by those who can afford to do so. In Johannesburg, both legal and illegal immigration have increased considerably with the dismantling of apartheid. Here, the criminal stranger has become intertwined with the migrant other, the foreigner.

In writing about African cities, scholars have emphasised the mobility of their residents; rural–urban and cross-border movements are important strategies for the economic survival of many African urbanites. Postmodern African city life demands "a daily reinvention of new pathways for living" (Nyamnjoh and Brudvig 2014: 353). Most famously, it was Simone who, in his poststructuralist writing, established the 'mobile African' as the quintessential urban figure (Simone 2004a). He portrays African cities as cities always in the making through the inventiveness of their citizens, whose assembling and disassembling connections create a constantly changing urban landscape.

Both the criminal stranger in Johannesburg's popular imaginaries and the Mobile African in Simone's tropes are male figures whose lives evolve mainly in public spaces

like the streets and the markets. As fear of the criminal has made the privileged retreat behind walls, the male stranger, migrant, criminal and poor converge and make a living hustling on the public streets left to decay.

> As the propertied, the privileged, and the powerful have retreated behind the protective shield of gated residential communities, enclosed shopping malls, and other barricaded sites of luxury, the urban poor are often left to fend for themselves in urban environments that have deteriorated almost beyond repair (Myers and Murray 2006: 5).

This portrayal of Johannesburg and of African cities in general depicts only a particular aspect of urban reality, omitting many other dynamics which are just as relevant for analysing urbanity, like locality and routine, care work, intimacy and home spaces. Approaching African urbanity mainly through male hustlers on the streets and in the markets, like Simone tends to do (e.g. Simone 2006a), ignores the contradictions, ambivalences, interconnections and invisibilities characterising African urbanity; the entanglements between locality and mobility, between strangeness and intimacy, and between public and private.

Economic survival in the African city demands inventiveness and mobility from its inhabitants. Yet it also demands routine: caretakers, usually women, need to dress their children, feed them and send them to school every day. While life is highly unpredictable, these women struggle daily to bring stability and routine into their dependents' life, not least by cooking, washing and cleaning. Mobility and locality are usually intertwined: many domestic workers work in Johannesburg to ensure that their children at home in the rural areas can eat and go to school.

In this chapter, I therefore want to draw attention to an alternative quintessential urban figure – the female domestic worker. The domestic worker–employer relationship constitutes a habitual, quotidian and somehow invisible urban entanglement, connecting classes, races and spaces in intimate and lasting ways. Walls are thought to exert and symbolise exclusion and disconnection from the urban poor; yet in reality these boundaries are crossed daily by members of the 'othered' groups – the poor, the migrant, the black – as domestic workers and gardeners. In contemporary Johannesburg, black women commute daily from township to suburb to engage in cooking, cleaning and caring in the home spaces of the white and black middle classes and elites. Many even live in the suburbs as invisible residents. By listening to the stories and experiences about these deeply asymmetric, yet affective relationships, we learn most about the fundamental social, economic and political processes at work in cities of inequalities.[1] Looking closely, these relationships reveal the way in which seemingly of

1 In order to protect the domestic workers' and employers' anonymity, I have changed some of the personal details. The domestic workers I interacted with tended to be female and long-term employees hence the analysis reflects less the views of short-term workers which could be different. The data from the perspective of employers stem mainly from informal conversations or topics brought up in interviews when talking about other topics, while I conducted systematic interviews with the domestic workers about their relations to the property owners. This chapter then gives more room for the voices of the domestic workers rather than those of the white Linbro Park residents. Although I aimed to represent the data as critically as possible, the reader will notice my solidarity with the domestic workers and my sense of responsibility towards their repeatedly uttered wish that I should make their working conditions visible.

people's different life worlds, areas and social strata are actually intimately entangled, even as the employers, as we shall see in this chapter, often try to make these domestic workers invisible.

When talking about domestic work, we also have to talk about gender in the city. Homes and yards in Alexandra, Linbro Park and elsewhere are highly gendered spaces; deeply related to (European and African) images of femininity and masculinity which regard household chores and child rearing as women's work. In the realm of domestic work in Johannesburg, gender ideologies and practices of European and African origin converge and depend on each other. Affluent women living in Linbro Park have achieved what could be called, in political terms, emancipation: they are usually employed or even have their own businesses. Feminist movements in the West have left a strong impact on gender relations among the urban, affluent English-speaking milieus in Johannesburg, at least since the 1960s, according to the historian Rebecca Ginsburg (2011: 150-153). The economic emancipation of White suburban women, however, was intrinsically linked to the institution of domestic work and economic inequality; only with the help of Black domestic workers at home could White suburban women engage in paid employment.

In Xhosa gender ideologies, the association of care work with femininity is institutionalised in the role of the *umtshakazi*, a period during which a newly married wife performs all the household chores for the new mother-in-law, an institution which emphasises the obedience and deference of the wife (Hunter 1933: 264, quoted in Cock 1989 [1980]: 60). Xhosa gender ideology did not envision wage labour (*ukuphangela*) for women. The commodification of care work from unpaid to paid domestic work brought with it a loss of status. According to Mayer, Red and School, the Xhosa perceived domestic paid work as an unclean occupation (Douglas 2005 [1966], Mayer 1961: 245). According to the sociologist Jacklyn Cock, this is one of the reasons why paid domestic work is one of the least prestigious occupations in Southern African societies (Cock 1989 [1980]: 59-60).

Women can afford to outsource care work and household chores to other women when their labour can be bought relatively cheaply (Lutz 2005: 113). Therefore, domestic work is prevalent in highly unequal cities where salaries between the lower- and the middle- and upper- income levels diverge greatly. In 1989 Cock claimed that domestic work was the social space within which Black and White women most frequently encountered each other in apartheid society (Cock 1989 [1980]: 2). This also holds true for the post-apartheid period in Johannesburg, as well as for other contemporary cities. In many cities marked by inequality, domestic work is an important urban institution and a large industry. In Maputo, 6 per cent of the workforce (30,000) were employed in domestic work in 2001 (Jenkins 2000: 213). In Johannesburg, the rate is even higher, with 31 per cent of employed black women engaged in domestic work (census 2001, provided in Peberdy and Dinat 2005: 6).

A set of relations not typically understood as being about the urban – interactions between white home owners and their black domestic workers – are key to understanding conviviality in cities with stark inequality. It is within these routinised interactions that significant entanglements are formed across lifestyles and spaces. In these interactions, dispositions become formed which shape urban dwellers' ways of seeing and acting towards each other, and which become transposed to other urban contexts, like shopping malls and religious spaces, and hence shape urbanity.

It is therefore more than surprising that domestic work rarely enters analysis of the urban. Pieterse points out this gap: "Given the surreptitious presence of service workers in almost every middle-class neighbourhood, why is it that we have so little knowledge and understanding of the effects of these criss-crossing spatialities?" (Pieterse 2006: 408) One reason for this omission may be because these entanglements are formed in intimate, private spaces which are often not considered part of the urban. Bank, based on women's studies researcher Judy Giles (2004: 18), criticises Simone and others for what he calls a 'masculine view of the city' which emphasises mobility, adventure and newness, while a 'feminine view' would be more sensitive to routine, continuity and the importance of fixed places (Bank 2011: 19). The chapter hence takes the analysis of urbanity across the doorstep of the home and draws the everyday entanglements formed in the intimate spaces into the centre of analysis.

Linbro Park's Hidden Landscape

If you walk or drive into the suburb of Linbro Park, you might feel that you have left the traffic-ridden northern suburbs with their large office complexes and malls or the dense Alexandra township with its constantly bustling street life behind. Here in Linbro Park, the roads are narrow and shot through with potholes and sand. There are no sidewalks; only a lawn of grass separating the road from the walls and fences that demarcate the boundaries of the large properties, mostly hidden behind trees. The residential density here is extremely low, even for the spread-out northern suburbs. Residents who own land in Linbro Park and are hence property owners like to stress that the surface area of the suburb is equivalent to the CBD of Johannesburg; a statement which expresses these residents hopes about the land's potential for profit-maximising urban development (see chapter 4).

Only a small section of each property is used for housing. On the rest of the land the property owners have laid out vast grass lawns, they have put up additional buildings for tenants, they keep horses, they have their own businesses, or they may even have a tennis court. Tall trees cast their shade on the properties and the roads. There are some deserted properties, often awaiting new constructions, where high grass and bush have grown over decaying fences and buildings. On other properties trees are regularly cut back by gardeners; yet they are not as tamed as the professionally landscaped environments of gated communities and office parks. Some well-kept properties are surrounded by new walls with electric fences and a security gate; others only have a small, decaying wall. Distances between properties are large, and there are no street lights. The property owners had a say in this: once the municipality wanted to install street lights, residents told me, but they opposed it because they wanted to keep the rural feel. Linbro Park is not a well-known suburb, not least because it is hidden away next to the N3 highway (between Marlboro Drive and London Road) and behind a landfill site. Only in the recent years has it become better known, when the northern fringe of Linbro Park was transformed into an office complex, the Linbro Business Park, and drivers discovered that the roads of the suburb could be used as a short cut to avoid the traffic jams on the highway.

South Africa experienced a sudden mining boom and economic upswing when, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the gold standard was abandoned (Heer 2018:

189). A revolution in suburban space for the White milieus set off, caused by increased income, increased mobility (from car ownership), and state subsidies for housing (Mabin 2005a: 11-23). Brolin, who was then owner of the land which is today Linbro Park, saw its economic potential, and consequentially subdivided his large farm into smaller agricultural holdings and sold them (Heer 2018: 188). The families who eventually bought these properties were of European origin and generally English-speaking. Some were descendants of farmers whose parents or grandparents moved from Europe to rural Southern Africa as early as the 19th century (ibd. 189). Others came as skilled worker to South Africa during apartheid, and often their relocation was subsidised by the state: The apartheid government was recruiting immigrants from Europe. On the one hand, the aim was to address the lack of skilled workers. But on the other hand, it was also out of fear that the White minority was diminishing (ibd. 189, Segatti 2011: 36).

The colour bar guaranteed that the apartheid-era immigrants who were mostly skilled handymen had good jobs and salaries (ibd. 189). For many White workers, the 1970s was a period of upward mobility into more skilled jobs (Crankshaw 1996: 652). At that time, many Linbro Park residents started their own businesses. Nowadays their businesses are mostly in light manufacturing, agriculture and in the tertiary sector. Many property owners host family members like parents, siblings and grown-up children on their land, usually in additional houses or cottages. Many households in Linbro Park are, like in Alexandra, multi-generational (ibd. 189).

White privilege hence ensured the successful upward social mobility of Linbro Park property owners during apartheid. This is still reflected in the spatial dimension of their lifestyle In the same decades of apartheid that denied Alexandra's inhabitants their citizenship rights, European immigrants enjoyed easy access to South African passports. They could attend well-funded government schools and universities. Sending their children to good private schools and universities is normal for many of Linbro Park's property owners today, and through that, they make sure that their favourable social position is reproduced. In the many conversations and interviews I conducted in Linbro Park, property owners emphasised that their high social position results from hard work and is hence merited. Such views are typical for groups who enjoyed White privilege (ibd. 189, Gallagher 2003).

Linbro Park has not yet experienced desegregation in terms of its ownership structure. In 2012, there was only one black family who owned one property as well as there were a couple of Indian property owners (ibd. 189). Many property owners rent out cottages to tenants; they are mostly from lower middle-class milieus and from diverse backgrounds (Indian, Afrikaans, white, black). The largest milieu besides the property owners is the milieu of what the Seekings and Nattrass (2005: 248) call 'marginal workers': domestic workers, gardeners and handymen. They work for the property owners and businesses in Linbro Park and nearby suburbs. Many originate from rural areas in the Southern African region (mostly South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi); few have grown up in Johannesburg's townships. Many are engaged in multi-local households; living temporarily in Linbro Park is part of their economic strategy to help sustain a home in rural areas or in a township. Until 1984 only 'Europeans' were allowed to legally immigrate (Segatti and Landau 2011: 138). Since 1992, and especially since 2000, the number of documented and probably also undocumented immigrants from other African countries has grown constantly (Segatti 2011: 40). At

the same time property owners left the suburb Linbro Park and transformed their houses into cheap rental accommodation. Both this macro- and micro-trend led to the growing presence of marginal workers in the area: "Long back we used to know each other, we used to know who is staying where. But now, we are so many, and they are mixed up, coming from different countries" (Anna, 45-year old member of the property-owing milieu in Linbro Park, May 2012). Many do not have South African citizenship and little prospects of getting it in the future. Their educational background is very diverse: some went to school only for few years, while others have a university degree, but cannot get a job other than as a gardener. Their children usually attend public schools at their other 'homes' where they get looked after by relatives.

That a suburb is also home to a milieu of workers is nothing new. Since the early days of Johannesburg, White families have hosted their gardeners and housekeepers on their premises, usually in simple rooms in the backyard. While many of the White residents were away from the suburb during the day at work or at school, it was Black domestic workers who populated the White suburban houses and streets (Ginsburg 2011).

While grand apartheid legislation was designed to keep the differently categorised populations apart from each other as much as possible, the desire of White middle-class women to 'outsource' the tiring household chores to cheap Black employees brought the differently categorised urban dwellers together on a daily, habitual basis in the most private spaces of the white population – their suburban homes. In the early days of Johannesburg, domestic work was the domain of Black men and White working-class women. This shifted in the 1910s, when reports of male domestic workers emerged who allegedly assaulted and raped White female employers (Beavon 2004: 96). Domestic work subsequently became the domain of Black women. For men, working on the mines was their main route to employment and building a life in the city. For women, it was domestic work (Cock 1989 [1980]: 20). As women, as black urban dwellers and caretakers engaged in household chores in the private realm of homes, the black domestic worker's role in the urban past and present has remained largely invisible; a *hidden landscape* (Ginsburg 2011).

The institution of domestic work has survived apartheid and still forms part of the suburban lifestyle in Johannesburg. According to Sparks, about 60 per cent of South African households employ a domestic worker (Sparks 2011) and it has ceased to be a privilege of white families. In Linbro Park, the majority of the property owners have full-time or part-time domestic employees, mostly male gardeners and female housekeepers. Many of the full-time domestic workers live on the properties in backyard rooms, others live in nearby township areas like Alexandra (especially River Park) and Tembisa and commute to Linbro Park on foot or by taxi.

Working conditions during apartheid were appalling for domestic workers and were often compared with slavery by workers and scholars alike (Cock 1989 [1980], Ginsburg 2011). Because of strict labour controls and pass laws, many women were living illegally in the city and seldom had access to other jobs (Cock 1989 [1980]: 1). Employers disliked the bureaucracy needed to employ an African according to the laws, and often employed domestics illegally (Ginsburg 2011: 109). During apartheid, there was no legislation regulating hours and salary, so that domestic workers worked up to 80 hours a week. They were an extremely insecure and vulnerable group of workers (Cock 1989 [1980]: 6).

Since the end of apartheid, working conditions for domestic workers have improved. There has been a massive effort by the state to regulate paid domestic work and, since 2004, South Africa has had a progressive employment regulation, not least because of the well-organised domestic worker organisations. 'Servants' were transformed into 'workers' (Ally 2009). In Linbro Park today, working hours have become adapted to office hours. Workers work from around seven or eight o'clock in the morning till four or five in the afternoon. Saturdays and Sundays are usually off and they generally have holidays (see also Ally 2009).

In 2012, some domestic workers I interviewed in Linbro Park were employed without work contracts, not least because they were illegal in the country, and some earned less than the minimum wage. Real working conditions are worse than the legislation prescribes, not least because domestic workers find it difficult to negotiate better conditions because of their illegality and their dependence on these jobs. During apartheid, domestic work provided a possibility for survival in the city for those considered illegal because they were considered Black; in the post-apartheid city it is the 'new' illegals, people who lack South African citizenship, who engage in these jobs. In Marxist terms, domestic workers thus constitute a secondary, marginal labour market which pays too little money for working class 'insiders' to sustain their families which is why they are less ready to do these jobs (Meillassoux 1974). Lebo, a domestic worker from Alexandra who had no identity documents, told me: "Domestic work is too hard, but I have no choice" (Lebo, June 2012).

Control and Parallel Social Orders

John is Zimbabwean and in 2012 was working as a gardener on a property in Linbro Park. He was responsible for maintaining the outdoor areas of the property, like cutting the lawns, pruning the trees and repairing the fences. Musa, a South African woman from a rural township, was taking care of the inside spaces of the houses like cleaning and washing. Domestic work and gardening include a lot of routine and both would know for themselves which tasks would be the most urgent ones the next day. "Early in the morning, I wake up and plan what I want to get done. But then, my boss comes and tells me to do something else. But hey, the boss is the boss," John explained. When the female or male household heads were at home, they would monitor their employees' work closely, would give instructions, would observe how Musa and John were carrying them out, and tell them if they did not meet their expectations. In contrast to the members of the household who move around freely on the property, the domestic workers' movements and actions were tightly controlled and regulated by the employers. One day, a tall truck tore down a large branch in front of the property where John and Musa were working, which blocked the road. The gardener, John, felt that the tree should be removed from the street urgently, but he did not dare to do so as he had orders to work on something else. He therefore called his employer at work to get permission to postpone the other task. "I did not want to get shouted at," he explained to me. Many domestic workers said in the interviews that they resented the close supervision, which they experienced as an insult to their ability to think for themselves and it gave them the sense of being seen as stupid by their employers.

Most domestic workers in Linbro Park are expected to wear uniforms when they are at work. Uniforms mark them physically within the private space of the property and the public streets as being in their 'temporary ritual states' (Goffman 1959: 23) as workers. During apartheid and still today, uniforms help the white suburbanites to make sense of their world (Ginsburg 2011:144). Men usually have to wear a blue overall; women's work attire is a full body apron and a head scarf. The uniform needs to be seen as a visual expression of their position in the social order, namely, to serve (Cock 1989 [1980]: 51). The uniforms materialise and reinforce differences between property owners and their employees. Uniforms make visible the relationship the workers have to the suburban space; a work relationship in which they are subjected to rules and control. When property owners get home from work, they, in contrast, change into informal tracksuits, marking their bodies as being in the sphere of home and relaxation. Clothing are hence visual expressions and reminders of the asymmetric relationship employer and employees have towards the property and towards each other (Ginsburg 2011: 142-144).

Also, in the public spaces of the suburb, the uniforms mark the domestic workers' relationship to the neighbourhood as one of work. In the neighbourhood public spaces, the uniform distinguishes them from other strangers who are not under the control of (white) employers (ibid: 144). Domestic workers can also make use of the trustworthiness which their uniform symbolises. Ginsburg (2011) reports that during apartheid the perception of African women in domestic worker uniform as harmless allowed them to go about illegal activities in suburban spaces without raising suspicion. The same does not hold true for black men today: nowadays in Linbro Park, property owners believe that criminals purposely dress in blue collar overalls in order not to raise suspicion. Because of the many construction sites, many blue-collar workers, who work and sometimes also live in the suburb, are not under the control of property owners as their employers and are often blamed for break-ins.

During apartheid there were many so-called racist 'house rules' which regulated the interactions tightly. House rules were related to popular ideas about hygiene and black germs, which justified practices like separate toilets and separate dishes and cutlery. They ensured that "the fork was not licked by an African tongue" (ibid: 146). Nowadays in Linbro Park, the times of explicit house rules have long past, but there continue to exist unarticulated conventions which regulate the workers' engagement with space.

One day I visited the domestic worker Musa while her employers were out. She was busy cleaning the living room and she invited me to sit down on the couch. Her gesture of inviting me to sit was performed with special emphasis, making clear to both of us that it was a transgression; we were using the space in a way which would not have been appropriate if the household heads had been around: Musa was in a social position to invite someone to sit down and chat. One day I conducted an ethnographic interview with John, and we sat in the dining area of a cottage which was usually sublet. He sat on the edge of his chair as if he felt completely out of place. He knew this room intimately from fixing things, but sitting at a table was clearly an unusual, somehow even transgressive form of engaging with this space. Some of what were explicit house rules during apartheid are hence still present in physical practices and perceptions of what are appropriate and inappropriate uses of spaces for the workers.

In many households, domestic workers move around silently and sometimes their bodies are bowed slightly downwards when they perform their tasks in the presence of their employers. They can enter a room without their employers even taking notice. "It's like they blend into the background and are forgotten", a 35-year-old resident living in Fourways once told me:

> They are the underground network of any suburb. They know all the gossip, everything that is going on in everyone's house and they share who's having an affair, who's pregnant, who lost their job, whose kid is ducking school. People do and say things in front of domestics because they don't think of them as people the way they do of their friends or colleagues (Luversan, resident of Fourways, May 2012).

Goffman calls this role 'non-persons', people who are present during an interaction but are neither performers nor audience (Goffman 1959: 152). The employers assume that if they do not pay attention to the workers, then the workers do not observe them or listen to them (Ginsburg 2011: 150).

Control of domestic workers' activities and uniforms and the implicit and explicit house rules are key devices by which the property owners uphold their privacy despite the intimate entanglements; the parallel social orders thus created ensure that despite continuous co-presence in spatial proximity, social differences do not become blurred. Rather, they are continuously reminded and visualised through uniforms, through different engagements with space and differing rules of interaction. Diverging norms and expectations for domestic workers and family members ensure that within the same room, parallel social orders, the "separate, unequal, but coexisting spheres of white home and African workplace" (ibid: 145), are constituted. These parallel social orders contribute to the fact that the everyday presence of these labour entanglement in the suburban family's lives can somehow fade into the background and be forgotten.

Hidden Resistances and Performance of Servility

The everyday intimate entanglements between suburban property owners and domestic workers are anything but symmetric: differentials in power, class, citizenship and mutual dependency create a deeply unequal relationship. Asymmetry and inequality are not a contradiction to urban entanglements; rather, building entanglements constitutes a key way in which urban dwellers *deal with* asymmetry and inequality. Because the asymmetry and mutual dependence is so powerful in the domestic work entanglements, urban dwellers develop sets of practices, moulding these relations in a way which makes them, somehow, bearable. While the suburban employers employ practices like invisibilisation, social control and separating social orders, domestic workers ease the social tensions and defend their independent agency through practices of hidden resistance.

The anthropologist James Scott (Scott 1990) argued that interactions between employers and servants can best be understood through a theory of domination and hidden resistance. According to him, performative interactions between dominator and dominated are shaped by *public transcripts*, so through hegemonic public conduct. At the frontstage, dependant servants perform subordination; in the backstage, they

question their domination through hidden critique of power, or *hidden transcripts*. Not all asymmetric entanglements correspond to this theory of domination and resistance; yet the structures of domination operating in post-apartheid Linbro Park, which carry the legacy of colonial master–servant relations, can be explicated by this analytical lens.

When the gardener Peter, a Malawian living and working in Linbro Park in the last six years, walks around on the property of his employers in his blue overall, his back is usually bent a little, as if he were trying to make himself smaller or invisible. When talking to his employer, he rarely looks into her face, and constantly nods his head approvingly. He often addresses his boss in a low tone of voice. One day I accompanied Peter to the London Road Church, the charismatic church in the neighbourhood (see chapter 6). When I observed him interacting with friends from his home country, most of them also working in neighbouring suburbs as gardeners, he appeared to be a different person; he showed self-confidence, kept his head straight and used broad gestures when talking, as if he now dared to take up space with his voice and body.

Like many other people employed to work in the homes in Linbro Park, Peter tends to perform deference and servility in front of his employers as well as in front of the other white residents of the suburb. Cock and Ginsburg both described such performances – domestic workers with bowed back, their eyes apparently focused only on their work – for the 1960s and 1970s (Cock 1989 [1980], Ginsburg 2011: 68, 162). The analytical lens offered by James Scott invites us to see these bodily practices within the neighbourhood spaces dominated by the employers as performative dramatisations, which aim at fulfilling the employers' expectations of them as submissive workers. Rather than interpreting these symbolic subjections through the physical posture as expressions of actually felt inferiority, they should be seen as symbolic displays of deference and loyalty, which do not express the worker's self-perception, but are rather a self-portrait of the dominant elites of how they want themselves to be seen (Scott 1990: 18).

Like many other domestic workers I got to know in Linbro Park, Peter felt a certain fear towards his employers, fear of being dismissed and fear of verbal humiliation. During colonialism and partly also during apartheid, punishment of slaves and servants could take the form of physical violence. In Linbro Park today, stories are told among domestic workers that certain property owners allegedly used physical violence against their employees. But if it still takes place, it is extremely rare and exceptional. Yet in interviews, workers often complained about the tone of voice which their employers used when they made a mistake; they reported demeaning comments and getting corrected for petty mistakes. Such verbal acts of correction, especially if they involve a raised voice and demeaning comments, constitute a form of verbal punishment for the domestic workers, which they fear. The domestic worker Buhle talked often to me about this lack of etiquette by her employers.

> The way they talk to people, the way they talk to us domestics … But I don't let them, I just turn it back to them. But my colleague, she just keeps quiet. They … they are God! Maybe they told themselves: 'We are the bosses!'. If I did something wrong, and I am not aware that it was wrong, you have to come to me nicely and say: "Why did you this and this?" They should not say: "Come here, come here! Why are you doing this and this, you are so stupid!" (Buhle, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

The suspension of self-control and dramaturgical discipline (Goffman 1959), the apparently uncontrolled outburst of emotions is offensive and hurtful for the workers. The workers interpret the shouting as an insult to their human dignity and integrity. Being shouted at creates emotional pain and leads to an atmosphere of fear for the domestic workers. The performance of servility and deference are hence also a measure of self-protection: pretending to be submissive helps to avoid violent words.

In this conversation, Buhle also brought up the topic of reciprocity: she claims that she would defend herself, unlike most of her colleagues who would just keep quiet. The unequal power relation of the employer–worker relationship denies the workers as subordinates the "ordinary luxury of negative reciprocity" (Scott 1990: 23). Many of domestic workers in Linbro Park spoke about a lack of communication. Male domestic employees in particular reported that they did not dare to address their employers verbally.

> Maybe one day I will bring my family here. But these people [the employers] don't allow workers to stay with family. I didn't ask, but I heard these facts from previous workers. The boss didn't tell me openly. So, I don't know if I can ask, I don't know how they will respond (David, gardener in Linbro Park, May 2012).

David assumed that he was not allowed to bring his family to live with him on the property because he had heard it from previous co-workers, but he did not dare to ask about it explicitly. Domestic workers hence often act based on assumed house rules which have never been verbalised and may even follow rules that their employers never laid down for them. Zanele told me that she had a good relationship with her employer, a relationship of hanging out together in the kitchen, of calling each other by personal names and of helping each other beyond the work commitments. Nevertheless, Zanele could not openly articulate critique or concerns in this relationship.

> The problem is the bosses. They don't know how to treat people … If you shout at me, I get angry and I cry. I cry until you see that I am angry. If you say sorry, if you realise you made a mistake, I stop crying. I don't like that. Barbara: So, the bosses shout at you sometimes? Zanele: The lady, she has never … ah yes, she did, sometimes (Zanele, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

Zanele reported that she retreated into bodily communication like crying as a form of expressing emotions instead of verbally articulating that she was angry. When she wanted to get electricity in her backyard room, she did not ask openly for it, she told me. She complained to her employer about feeling cold in her room. Eventually she wrote him a letter asking for electricity and he then installed it, apologising for not having thought about it earlier.

In a very literal sense, these examples show how within the worker–employer relationship, the workers are not 'speaking subjects' in the sense of Foucault. Their dependant position and their work role delegitimise their words and inhibit their capacity to perform 'speech acts' (Austin 1962, Du Toit 1993: 323). Similar to what Du Toit (1993) describes for farm workers in the Western Cape, domestic workers in Linbro Park have no voice. Sara, a domestic worker, put it like this:

> We don't have freedom of speech to our bosses, most of us. Barbara: But why do people not speak up? Sara: I think, it's feeling inferior. I don't know how they think, but maybe they think you get cross. They think a lot about you. Even people who went to school, they say nothing, even if it's wrong [what the employer does]. Or they say: "We were born differently, we can't come out with our feelings, we can't say it out loud." It's like someone who is being abused by their husband, but they just can't speak out. It's like that, I think, they are ashamed. I don't know (Sara, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

In this quote, Sara included me as white anthropologist in the generic 'you', together with the white domestic employers; it shows how much the property owner–domestic worker entanglement is embedded in local understandings of society as still deeply racialised. In many interviews, domestic workers expressed how they do not dare to ask questions or voice their concerns, but resort to nonverbal communication and acts based on assumptions about what employers expect. Silence and avoidance are hence strategies employed by domestic workers. Avoiding verbal communication is a form of 'impression management' Goffman calls it (1959). Remaining quiet can help domestics to avoid falling out of their performance of submission by, for example, shouting back at the employer. The absence of communication has been noted in literary studies on master–servant relations (Mphahlele 1962, quoted in Cock 1989 [1980]: 83-84). Mphahlele interprets the silence as a weapon by the servant "against the white master who has all the instruments of power on his side. Both of them know this" (ibid: 140,). During apartheid some White employers literally refused their domestic workers the possibility to talk; workers could get fired if they complained (Ginsburg 2011: 157). Sara, in the quote above, presented diverse interpretations for why many domestic workers do not dare to speak to their employers: maybe an inner feeling of inferiority, a fear of being shouted at, a perception of a lack of intercultural understanding, and feeling ashamed about being a victim of verbal violence.

Among domestic workers in Linbro Park there are stories which they tell about their employers to each other; some of them may exist in different versions in other suburbs as well. According to one such story, a close relative of a domestic worker in Linbro Park had died and the worker told her employer that she needed days off to attend the funeral. According to this story, her employer responded: "Why do your kind of people die the whole time?" I was told the story repeatedly, and the storyteller always expressed feelings of moral outrage. Instead of expressing condolences for her loss and acknowledging her grief, the employer talked to the worker as if she was representative of a racial other. Albert Memmi calls this form of speech the "mark of the plural" (Memmi 1967: 85). The employer did not see the domestic worker as an individual but as a representative of a generalised other, the Black poor, the once racially inferior (ibid: 85). It was this depersonalisation and performance of disrespect towards the death and her loss which the workers found to be morally outrageous and insulting.

One way of dealing with these acts of indignation is gossip. When domestic workers visit each other in the evenings, when they talk to other workers on the street, or when they get home to their families at the weekend or at the end of the year, they talk about their employers and special incidents, and about the hardship of domestic work. Many complain about the physical strain, the workload, and about health: many domestic workers suffer from back pain and physical signs of emotional stress like

blacking out. Stories about morally outrageous mistreatment by employers travel and become retold by workers who did not experience it themselves. In gossiping about these experiences and criticising them in a loud, angry voice, domestic workers can express their condemnation of their employers' behaviour and, at least with their co-workers and families, reassert part of their human dignity. Ginsburg (2011: 157) observed similar behaviour in the Johannesburg suburbs during the 1970s and found that such mutual commiseration helped domestic workers to feel better about themselves, even if it did not improve the situation.

Gossip exchanged among domestic workers can be seen as backstage performances (Goffman 1959) in which the workers discuss their roles so that they are able to play their part again in the next frontstage performance with the employer. The reciprocity of speaking back can now be enacted in this back region outside the spaces and interactions dominated by their employers. They constitute *hidden transcripts* (Scott 1990), hidden critique of power uttered in the absence of the powerful. The hidden transcripts are a derivative discourse embodied in "speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript" (ibid: 4-5). In the private spaces with co-workers and family, domestic workers call their subordination into question, they make public their unhappiness with their social position and, by proclaiming it as morally wrong to be treated as such, they reclaim their social and moral value. The dominant discursive frame within which domestic workers talk about the poor treatment by employers is usually apartheid and racism. Many domestic workers explained situations which they perceived as outrageous as routinised habits which employers had acquired during the apartheid regime: "This is because of the way my employer has grown up" (Peter, gardener in Linbro Park, May 2012).

Hidden transcripts can go beyond verbal acts and can entail forms of retaliation. During apartheid, domestic workers sometimes hid guests in the back rooms and stole from their employers. These were not explicit, coordinated efforts of resistance, but hidden practices of 'infrapolitics' which pushed back against what had offended them (Ginsburg 2011: 22-23). Infrapolitics are low-profile forms of resistance constituted by disguised but nevertheless political acts (Scott 1990: 20). Around properties in the suburbs in Johannesburg there was a hidden net of activities unknown by the employers; practices like hiding lovers, relatives and strangers in their domestic quarters transformed the ideologically White suburbs into lived spaces of hidden cohabitation (Ginsburg 2011: 111ff.). Ginsburg also reports the frequent violation of the spatial and physical etiquette which employers imposed on workers, like drinking from the Whites' glasses and turning on the radio (ibid: 157-9). Cock's study on domestic workers in Eastern Cape in the 1970s showed that 98 per cent of her informants used things that they were not supposed to (Cock 1989 [1980]).

In Linbro Park today, one such practice of covert resistance is the making of unauthorised breaks when the employer is not around. In such situations, when the employer, the audience for their performance as diligent worker, leaves workers take on a backstage style (Goffman 1959: 129). They take possession again of their bodies and reject their employer's control over their work rhythm. Employers tend to interpret such practices as laziness, and hence the workers need to be controlled, employers told me.

In interviews workers suggested that crime can also be seen as practices of deviance, resistance or even retaliation.

> At 3rd Road, a lady was cut by the garden boy, she died. When we, the people and the police, tried to ask, the garden boy said: "It's because she didn't want to pay me. All the times when I wanted my money, she would tell me stories, here and there. So I got angry. In fact, I didn't want to cut her throat, I just wanted to take all her money. But unfortunately, when I tried taking all the money, she came, and I didn't want to be arrested, so I killed here." So if they were in good books, there was nothing like that (Sara, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

This story about the killing of a female employer by her gardener because of a wage dispute was told repeatedly to me. The domestic worker, Sara, presented the murder as a direct consequence of the employer's poor treatment. Domestic workers suggest that the best way for employers to protect themselves from 'inside jobs' (when employees assist criminals to get into the house) and crime in general would be to treat their workers well. Workers in Linbro Park did suggest in interviews that inside jobs can be related to a deep-seated hatred generated by yearlong experiences of inequality and attacks on human dignity. Crime hence becomes a tactical form of resistance (Certeau 1984), a form of critique of persistent inequality.

Because they depend on each other in basic ways – the worker needs a salary, the employer a household organised – they do not inhabit separate spheres in the city but come to share what Mbembe calls "the same episteme" (Mbembe 2001). Following Nuttall (2009: 1), being entangled with each other is the "condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored". Domestic work relations as a mode of entanglement are deeply troublesome for both the employers, who often deal with it through invisibilisation and social control, and the domestic workers, who tend to deal with it through forms of hidden resistance and conflict. There is, however, also a further set of practices through which employers and domestic workers deal with the everyday intimacy in their asymmetric relationships: the moulding of patrimonial ties. This corresponds to a more positive way of experiencing these entanglements, namely, through affection. Although these two sets of practices or attitudes (control/resistance versus patrimonial ties) may appear to be deeply contradictory, they coexist within the same relationship, causing domestic work entanglements to be shaped by the tension between them.

Affection and Patrimonial Ties

In Linbro Park, critique of power is not always relegated to the hidden transcripts; there are also workers, especially women, who feel comfortable enough to raise their voices against their employers.

> One day I said to the wife: "I am not a slave; I work here because I need your money and you need my hands. Don't treat me like I am a slave." Sometimes I think about leaving, finding a job somewhere else, but when I think about Liz [their adult daughter], she is so good, so sweet (Buhle, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

The comparison of domestic work with slavery is quite common among domestic workers. Buhle emphasised the mutual dependency in the relationship, but also talked about

her freedom as an economic actor in a free market who could sell her labour to whom she chooses. Then she contradicted the free labour market idea by drawing attention to a key aspect of the intimate entanglements between employers and domestic workers; the affective ties. Despite the depersonalisation, the violent words and the expected performance of servility, domestic work also involves a strong emotional dimension, reflected in the way that people feel and talk about it. Because she felt affection to the daughter of the household whom she had seen growing up, Buhle was ready to remain with her employer even though she considered the treatment to be humiliating.

Domestic work, as a paid form of care work, is in many ways different from other types of wage labour. In contrast to working in a shop or a factory, there is no clear temporal and spatial separation between workplace and home, especially for domestic workers who live on the property. Another fundamental difference lies in the nature of care work. In households with children, female domestic workers often have child-care responsibilities. Children demand different treatment from inanimate household items. Care work is about relationship building; giving the children a sense of comfort is part of the job (Jochimsen 2003). If care providers are replaced, the quality of the work suffers (Stingelin and Schillinger 2012: 8). A caregiver can feel compelled by societal norms and values to do the job, which makes it difficult for her to quit and leave the persons in need behind. The needs of a dependent child and their fulfilling can create empathy and affection in both the caregiver and the care receiver (Jochimsen 2003).

During apartheid in White middle-class households, the workers were often the most constant presence in young children's life. Many women worked 80 hours a week for a meagre salary, but still felt compassion for the children, the sick and the elderly they took care of (Cock 1989 [1980]: 16, 92). Out of this continuous co-presence and care-giving, a high degree of intimacy could emerge (Ginsburg 2011: 138). Ginsburg finds that the best word to describe this intimacy is love, "the fractured, conflicted, pathological, self-doubting love that often exists among family members of a dysfunctional household, but love nonetheless, including fondness for, knowing of, and dependence upon another person" (ibid: 138).

Gabriel, the son of a property owner in Linbro Park, was brought up by domestic workers who have been with his family for over 20 years.

> Barbara: Now who is living here? Gabriel: Just my family and the Zulu staff … Three of them live here, one of them lives in Tembisa. But they have known me and my brother since I was a little baby. So it's nice, for them, it's nice to see us grow up. "You naughty, Gabri, you naughty!" (Gabriel, 23-year-old son of a property-owning family in Linbro Park, May 2012).

Imitating a variety of English with interference from Nguni languages, which Gabriel saw as typical Zulu intonation, he explained how his domestic worker would call him with a nick name 'Gabri', which indicates the informality of the relationship, the affection, but also the complex asymmetries between the privileged white child who depended on the care given by the black domestic worker. His tone of voice spoke of mutual fondness and he prided himself in the interview for visiting the domestic worker's son in Alexandra regularly whom he called his friend. By marking them with an ethnic (and black) label ('Zulu staff') and by imitating what he perceived to be a typical Zulu accent he made very clear that he assigned them to a different socio-cultural

world, even though their everyday lives were deeply entangled with each other and there was obviously so much affection.

This relationship between domestic worker and the employers' children is often characterised by subtle power negotiations which are played out in a joking manner. The domestic workers are given a limited, surrogate authority by the employer to make sure that children behave properly, an authority often contested by the children. Lebo was working as domestic worker in a household with teenage boys whose lives she knew in detail. She told me that she would shout at them in a joking manner if they made a mess in the kitchen after she had just cleaned it (Lebo, May 2012). Joking and humour assisted in navigating the insecurities about which situation definition applied (Goffman 2008 [1974]: 91). is it a black domestic worker shouting at her white employer, which is a breach of etiquette, or is it a surrogate mother reprimanding her children?

Relationships between domestic workers and their employers can also be personal and affective. Female domestic workers and their female employers in particular build up some degree of intimacy if the relationship lasts for many years. Sometimes work is interrupted, and they sit together in the kitchen, exchanging information and concerns about children, care responsibilities, kin and neighbours.

> Barbara: Do you have a good relationship with the property owner? Buhle: When she is there, we sometimes sit and chat. We like to gossip. We talk about life, about anything. Or we just take the phones. "Come and see this on Facebook!" We sit and we forget [about time, about work]. She is a good lady, I don't tell you lies, she is a good lady (Mosa, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

In such moments, employers and workers can develop intersubjectivity, at least with regard to the responsibilities and worries they both share as women taking care of a household and family. Shared gendered duties can become a commonality and a basis for some mutual understanding. Shifting from an attitude emphasising each other's differences to sociable moments of togetherness based on commonalities could be moments where differences are resolved, at least for seconds, where boundaries become transgressed and the fact that one shares an episteme (Mbembe 2001) acknowledged.

Domestic workers' lives are often marked by a succession of social tragedies, like illness in the family, death, abusive love relations and crime. Burdened by these worries, domestic workers may share them with their female employers, seeking emotional and sometimes also financial support. Sharing of intimate worries, though, has limits: domestic violence and personal health concerns are considered too private to be shared. In addition, the information flow tends to be asymmetric. While employers may be well informed about the family problems of their domestic workers, they may try to hide information about marital issues from to them.

Gardeners, I sometimes observed, were treated by female employers in ways reminiscent of mother–son relationships. One day, a property owner, Sophie, showed me her garden and introduced me to her gardener and his wife who was visiting from Mozambique. The gardener experienced Sophie as a warm, caring person who was never harsh and never insulted them, very much in contrast to her husband. Before we continued our walk through the property, she said to the young gardener: "Don't

make another baby now that your wife is here. Don't forget, children need to be fed as well" (Sophie, September 2012). Her comment on her worker's personal decision of reproduction and sexuality implied that Sophie assumed she had more knowledge or foresight than this young couple.

Such communicative practices in domestic worker–employer relations can be termed *paternalism*. Paternalism refers to practices in which actors interfere with another person's freedom and autonomy for what the actor believes is for their own good (Bavister-Gould and Matravers 2001: 476). Paternalistic communicative practices entail treating the interaction partner as possessing less knowledge and being in need of moral or other guidance. In the past, paternalistic attitudes formed part of employer–employee relations on farms in South Africa. In these rural contexts paternalism as an economic relation and ideology regarded the employer as father of the workers who took on responsibilities beyond those included in a mere labour contract (Du Toit 1993: 321). Paternalistic relationships were not only typical for rural areas, but also existed in urban settings like the mines (Ferguson 2013: 228) and were an important component of White attitudes towards their domestic workers during apartheid (Cock 1989 [1980]: 68). According to Ginsburg, seeing the domestic worker as infantilised, and in need of guidance helped the employer to mitigate the fears caused by having strangers in the privacy of the home (Ginsburg 2011: 156).

Paternalism leaves its imprint on the way in which white suburbanites sometimes speak to domestic workers in the post-apartheid city: in situations when they give advice like the above, or seek to provide emotional support, they use a specific way of speaking, a high-pitched voice and a dramatised friendliness. When domestic workers gossip about their female employers, they often imitate and ridicule this tone of voice, which comes to stand as a symbolic code for the paternalistic and asymmetric relationship. These learnt patterns of interacting with each other are beyond consciousness and constitute forms in which asymmetry has become inscribed in the body and in the everyday encounters with strangers. At the beginning of my fieldwork in Linbro Park I attended a meeting of domestic workers. They did not know me yet, but because of my white skin and because our encounter took place in a white suburb, they treated me like an employer: Two female domestic workers started to talk to me in an overfriendly way and offered me all kinds of services. I was puzzled, as during my fieldwork in Alexandra no one had ever talked to me this way. With time I realised that these were the typical registers of employer–domestic relationships and black–white encounters in a white suburb.

In Alexandra I sometimes used to go with Thabo to a shebeen; an enjoyable experience, not least because the customers were generally curious about what I, as a white outsider, was doing in a township shebeen. When I visited a shebeen in Linbro Park in the company of a domestic worker, though, I felt intensely out of place, not least because I was observed with suspicion. When we left the shebeen, a young man approached me. He asked whether I was looking for somebody, assuming that I was seeking an employee. And then he said, "The people didn't know if they could talk to you or not" (visit at Pharao's place in Linbro Park, May 2012).

These registers constitute part of the habitual urban knowledge of many urban dwellers in Johannesburg. They are part of the stock of knowledge which urban dwellers activate in specific situations of encounter. They constitute dispositions and modes of seeing each other which are relevant beyond the specific employer–domestic worker

entanglement in the suburban homes; they also become activated in other settings and are, hence, relevant to stranger interactions as well. They influence the way urban dwellers interpret encounters in other situations, be it at the shebeen, in neighbourhood spaces, in religious spaces (see chapter 6) or the mall (see chapter 7).

> Some domestics have a good relationship with their boss, others don't. Some blacks are like this, others are different. It's the same among the whites. Some are nice with their workers, others aren't (Zuzile, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

In this conversation, Zuzile, a domestic worker, emphasises the heterogeneity among what she saw as two racial groups. This again shows how strongly employer–worker relations are still interpreted as relations between the racial categories created during apartheid. In that conversation Zuzile also explained that her boss is like a 'friend' or an 'aunty' for her. She called her boss by her nickname, Babs, instead of Barbara. Zuzile who also went by an English name, Susanne, had her boss refer to her by her Zulu name, Zuzile.

It is common for speakers of Nguni languages to carry a so-called ethnic name which indicates their belonging to a linguistic or ethnic group like Zulu or Xhosa, as well as an English name. This is a result of colonisation and the efforts of missionaries who gave a 'church' or 'school' name to children because their previous names were considered complicated, foreign and heathen (Moyo 1996, Neethling 2008: 32). Naming practices in Nguni languages are more than just a label for a particular individual; the names have a meaning which is located in the cultural context. The name may express an aspiration that the parents have for their child, it may express the position within the family, or it may reflect the particular circumstances which prevailed at the time of birth (Neethling 2008: 33). For Zuzile, not calling each other by their 'official' names, but with a nickname or ethnic name, is a symbolic code for the intimate nature of their relationship. Naming practices are hence not only ways of expressing identity but also ways of expressing one's understanding of the relationship and influencing it.

During apartheid, many employers did not know the full name of their domestic workers (Cock 1989 [1980]: 74). They would refer to them by their English name, or even called them by the generic term *sissie* (in the Xhosa dominated Eastern Cape) (ibid: 118). Domestic workers were expected to address their employer as 'madam'; employers would talk about their workers as 'my garden boys' or 'my girls'. These naming practices contributed to the performance of a hierarchical, asymmetric relationship in which the workers were stripped of their personal identity and represented as inferior, childish others. In post-apartheid Linbro Park, parts of these naming practices are continued in habitualised, often unreflected ways. While some employers have adopted the new legal terminology speak of 'workers' instead of 'servants', others habitually speak of 'maid' or 'my girls'. In interview situations and backstage situations with co-workers or family, the domestic workers in Linbro Park would refer to their employers as 'the boss'; when performing servility in front of white employers, many would address them as 'madam'.

A further aspect of a relationship seen normatively as good by the workers is gift exchange, as for example brought up by Zuzile in that conversation. She explained that she whenever she felt hungry, her employer would make her a sandwich or she could make one for herself. Towards month end when money is short many domestic

workers do not eat breakfast but are hungry at work till they receive the lunch from their employers. The receiving of food not on a rhythm determined by the employer but rather depending on Zuzile's own biological needs was hence a sign of a 'good' relationship for Zuzile. Zuzile explained that her boss also assisted her financially, for example if she had difficulty paying her children's school fees (Zuzile, May 2012).

In many domestic worker–employer relations the work–salary exchange is complemented by another form of exchange, gift giving. Employers may help their workers financially when they run out of food before the end of the month, they may assist with paying for a funeral, they may pay for the domestic worker to see a doctor or to get medication and they may give them old clothes and food.

Such gift giving by the employer is generally interpreted by employers and employees alike as a symbol of mutual care and a good relationship. Yet, there are also exceptions. Sometimes, employers give the domestic workers food which they did not want to eat themselves. In an interview, Bianca complained how employers would open a pack of chips, let it stand around for days and then give the stale food to the worker.

> When my employer gives me stale food, I would like to tell her: "This is not right; this has been open to a week, why did you not give it to me immediately when you thought you can't finish it? Because I was there when you opened it, am I supposed to eat stale food?" No, we can't talk like that to them, we can't. We need to say: "Oh, you have given me this …" (Imitating a high-pitched voice). Am I your dog? It's wrong (Bianca, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

She explained that a worker could not openly criticise the gift of stale food but had to pretend to be thankful. As already mentioned, Mauss makes us aware that gift giving follow rules of reciprocity (Mauss 1990 [1925]). Although one may think of charity and gifts as being given without expectations of receiving anything in return, in reality gift giving is not altruistic at all, but guided by the self-interest of the parties involved (Mauss 1990 [1925], Rössler 2005: 194). The counter-gift which the domestic workers are expected to give is a social attitude, namely gratitude. This normative expectation is so strong that, as Bianca points out so clearly, voicing critique about the donated stale food is literally impossible for the domestic worker. The domestic worker rather performs the expected gestures of gratitude in front of the employer and throws the stale food away on her way home.

Affection, gift giving and sharing some intimacy and informal etiquette are seen in Linbro Park by workers and employers alike as indicators for relationships which they normatively evaluate as good. They often talk about such relationships in non-work-related terminology, namely, as friendship, kinship or family. Many employers in Linbro Park claim that their domestic workers, especially if they were with them for a long time, constitute part of the family and many refer to them as *Gogo*, a Zulu term for grandmother.

One day, Monika, a female property owner and household head approximately 50 years old, told me that she belonged to a 'new generation' which builds a close rapport with their domestics. She told me that their *Gogo* has worked for them forever, from the birth of her first son until she retired. She was part of the family, she claimed (Monika, April 2012). Performances are often subject to idealisation and actors aim to create an impression of themselves which corresponds to officially accredited values of the

society (Goffman 1959: 39). Monika's reference to 'generation' probably referred to her German forefathers, farmers during the colonial period, or the generation of her parents who were farmers during the height of apartheid. Defining the relationship to her domestic workers as 'family' was probably less a statement about their actual relation and more a claim to being a 'good' employer as one should be in the post-apartheid era.

The same day, Monika told me a story about a former worker. Her company had gone bankrupt a couple of years earlier and they re-employed one of the dismissed company employees as a handyman in their home. He was destitute and they allowed him to sleep at the house, as she explained, and she even gave him many things which they did not need anymore, like kitchen utensils and clothing of her deceased husband, so that the worker could sell them and make money. Then her gardener told her one day that the handyman was stealing from her. The handyman had helped himself to the old material from their bankrupt company like copper cables, which was lying around in the garden, and had sold them. Monika was bitterly disappointed:

> The hand which helps them, the hand which gives to them … But the people, they bite the hand again and again. They mess it up themselves and never learn it. That really hurts. I gave him work, I gave him money, I made tea for him and prepared sandwiches. But that is now over! He can't come anymore, because now he is guilty, and he knows it, and he knows that we know it (Monika, a 50-something property owner, Linbro Park, April 2012)

In this paternalistic narrative, Monika presented herself as the slightly naïve, benevolent employer who did everything in her power to help her suffering employee. Her narrative of how she took care of him when he needed help is reminiscent of a mother taking care of her child (making tea and preparing sandwiches). She felt responsibility, affection and sympathy for him, and she expected gratitude and loyalty in return for her gift. Her disappointment was not so much because of what he stole (the cables were anyway just lying around to be sold one day), but she was disappointed about the fact that he stole and broke the moral 'contract' and did not live up his role as the grateful gift receiver. Among property owners and other white Johannesburg residents I encountered many such stories about disappointing workers whom one treated like family. Ginsberg notes that during apartheid "the most damning accusation for a domestic worker" was not that she was slow or dishonest, but "that she was ungrateful", as ingratitude represented a "rejection of the white madam's role as protector, teacher, and mother figure" (Ginsburg 2011: 156). In the quote above, Monika applied the "mark of the plural" (Memmi 1967: 85), generalising from the individual example to 'black poor' as a general category. Claiming that "they mess it up themselves" she meant that she intended to be non-racial or non-racist, but that 'their' own behaviour made this difficult.

The expectation to be grateful and to serve can be very powerful. One day, armed criminals entered the quarters where the domestic worker Zuzile was living. They held her and her husband at gunpoint. The criminals wanted Zuzile to knock on her employers' door so that they would open, believing that it was Zuzile. Out of fear for her employers' and their children's life, she invented stories about dangerous security devices at her employer's house and successfully scared the criminals away. She encouraged them to burgle the neighbour's property, where only workers were living,

which they eventually did. The affective relationship bound her that closely to her employer that she risked her own life for her; and rather put the lives of workers living next door at risk. The reciprocity of this commitment, though, is not always mutual:

> Once we don't stand for each other, it means we are going to die. If I tell you that I am sick today, take care of me, because I am taking care of you. If I am working for you, you leave your child with me, I am the half mother, because I love the baby, I love you, I love everyone in the family. So, once I tell you I am sick today, just be fair with me. Some people, they tend to forget this. Every morning, they go to work, they return at six. We remain here, we are their bodyguards, we are their everything. If ever, we were very rough, they could find empty houses. But once I am telling I am sick, or I am stranded, or something came up, please help me! They must come up for me! As long as I am your worker, it means I am part of the family (Zuzile, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

The claim "I am part of the family" expresses strong normative expectations on how employers should act towards the workers. Speaking of family or friendship is used to articulate demands on employers, namely, expectations of solidarity, of empathy, and often also of resource distribution.

Domination and resistance, as well as affection and paternalism, characterise the entanglements between workers and their employers in Linbro Park. Some domestic workers brought up all these aspects when talking about the same employer, others related them to different family members. Research on domestic work in South Africa during apartheid also described these oppositional tendencies in domestic work relations (Cock 1989 [1980], Ginsburg 2011). This can be understood as the ambiguous co-presence of two fundamental attitudes in these domestic work entanglements: encounter and distanciation. Encounter is, on the one hand, "an interaction where both actors perceive and recognize the difference of the other, respect it, and try to build on it in their relationship" (Förster 2013b: 242). Distanciation is, on the other hand, "an interaction here two actors adopt a disruptive attitude toward the other, trying to secure an independent agency" (ibid: 242). While affection, moments of drinking tea together and paternalistic ties can be understood as forms of encounter, practices like tight control and gossip can be seen as forms of distanciation, based on disruptive attitudes towards each other. Domestic work entanglements are hence characterised by this deep, troubling tension between affection and mistrust, between moments of togetherness and awareness of deep dividedness, between encounter and distanciation. These deep ambivalence and contradictions are characteristic of urbanity in general (ibid), and of the *cities of entanglements*, Maputo and Johannesburg, more specifically.

Invisible Residents of Linbro Park

Domestics either live in rented rooms or shacks in the suburb or in a nearby township, or they live in their employers' domestic quarters. These rooms are usually found in the back of the properties and generally consist of simple concrete structures with one or

several rooms.[2] As Cock describes for the apartheid times in Eastern Cape, also nowadays in Linbro Park, the standard that the property owners consider to be appropriate for their domestic employees is considerably lower than what they consider as normal for themselves (Cock 1989 [1980]: 35). Nowadays, most of the domestic quarters have working toilets and electricity, but some domestic workers recount that they had to struggle with their employers in order to get these amenities. At the end of the 19th century, male African servants usually had to sleep on the kitchen floor. When domestic work became black women's work, English sensibilities demanded better accommodation for them. Detached rooms in the yard, called 'back rooms', became the norm for in-house domestic workers. During apartheid there were even building regulations prescribing a certain distance between the dwellings for Whites and domestic quarters (Ginsburg 2011: 10-11). Within such suburban homes, the micro-segregation of apartheid is often continued today; in some properties there are still back entrances for the domestic quarters, which continue to "create separate social universes for the two groups" (Cock 1989 [1980]: 35). This inequality, which was once produced out of feelings of racial superiority, is maintained, consciously or unconsciously, and serves as a sign of distinction between the domestic workers and the property owners.

In the domestic quarters, domestic workers continue to live under the rules of their employers, which many describe as a 'lack of freedom'. Domestic workers are often not allowed to live there with their children, or to receive visitors or to sublet parts of the cottage or room, which is for many township dwellers an important form of income generation. This is one of the reasons why many domestic workers engage in circular migration and maintain a home in the rural areas or another country, where relatives look after their children. In Lebo's (the daughter of a domestic worker in Linbro Park) case, she and her sister grew up by themselves at the rural home because, as a result of family conflicts, their relatives did not look after them.

> Me and my sister, we never lived with our mam in one place. She was always working, since we were kids. My sister was about three and I was five. Since then we always have to look after each other. We lived together in a house without an adult or anyone since I was twelve. It was hard; we had to wait for her to send money home, so that we can buy food … They didn't allow her to live with her kids there, I don't know why. They only allow us to visit. It was tough. You know, when you are a girl, you need that thing of your mam, you know, when you met your first boyfriend, you have to tell somebody, your mam. We didn't have that. It was tough. But we managed to behave well, because we know we have to, otherwise … we going to disappoint her and ourselves (Lebo, 20-year-old daughter of a domestic worker, June 2012).

During apartheid such prohibitions on living with one's children were related to pass laws and the migrant labour system (Cock 1989 [1980], Ginsburg 2011). Nowadays, this is continued through the individual wishes of the employers not to have African family life on their properties. Living in a tiny room while cleaning the employers' ostentatious house forms part of the everyday life of these domestic workers, observing the

2 Some property owners deduct rent for from the salary for living on the property, others do not charge. By law, employers are allowed to deduct 10 per cent of the salary for accommodation (Department of Labour 2012).

privileged life of their employers' children who attend private schools while their own offspring are far away and have few prospects of getting a decent education. Such experiences result from the deep entangledness of the different social strata in the city and form part of everyday life for many domestic workers in Linbro Park, which many interpret as racial and economic inequalities. Such aspects of the conviviality in cities shaped by inequality tend to go unseen, unless one draws the entanglements under one's analytical lens.

The property owner is simultaneously employer, landlord and neighbour. Many workers do not dare to question the working and living conditions their employers-landlords offer them. They are in a situation of multiple dependency, as conflict might not only result in their expulsion from the residential quarters, but also dismissal from work. People without South African citizenship in particular are in position where they lack bargaining power, as they depend exclusively on this salary, cannot access social grants or ask family members to support them, and find it difficult to find accommodation. Yet property owners see the domestic workers who live on their property predominantly in their roles as workers, and not as fellow neighbourhood residents. When talking about neighbour relations or relations with tenants living on the same property in conversations with me, property owners would, for example, never talk about their relationships to domestic workers, which, for them, fell into a totally different category.

Forbidding domestic workers to have family members and sometimes even visitors can be seen as an imposition on the right to family life. It therefore makes sense that Coser (1974) called domestic work a *greedy institution*, an institution which makes total claims on the person, seeks exclusive loyalty and reduces claims to competing roles and status positions (Cock 1989 [1980]: 81-2, Coser 1974). In order to avoid this 'greedy institution' with its strict regulations by employers, many domestic workers live in township areas and prefer to commute. But apart from the 'lack of freedom', which is how domestic workers in the interviews and conversations refer to such rules, living in a white suburb also has advantages. Linbro Park, with its large properties, the abundance of space and tall trees, is experienced by many as a hiding place, a place where they can withdraw. During apartheid, moving into domestic work was an important strategy of accessing residential space for many women who did not have a husband and were therefore excluded from getting a township house (Ginsburg 2011: 132). Nowadays, in the context of the shortage of affordable and safe housing in Johannesburg, having a whole room of one's own in a gated and walled property may not be the worst option for establishing oneself in the city or surviving after a household falls apart.

For Zuzile, living in Linbro Park is a refuge from township life, which she feels is marked by intense sociality and social control. Because of the large properties, one's private life is less exposed to the neighbours. Being a domestic worker almost allows them to live a bit as if they were suburbanites, a lifestyle which many township dwellers aspire to. It is quiet, one lives surrounded by trees and birds, and there is a lot of space in their view.

> I like this place, it's not noisy, it's easy going. If I want to talk to someone, I go out to talk to someone, if I don't want to talk to anyone, I can hide myself. There is privacy. But in the location [township], you can't hide. I don't mean I hate my place, my location. But

> the life they are living in the location, I don't like it. It's full of noise. I wish I was rich, I could buy my house (Zuzile, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

This is an example of how the entanglements between the domestic workers and employers bring the workers certain advantages, namely, that they can profit, at least a bit, from the amenities of living in a suburb. A major worry for domestic workers who immigrated from other countries is xenophobia and police violence. On 11 May in 2008, young men attacked Alexandra residents whom they categorised as *amakwerekwere* (foreigners). The attacks which the media and many analysts referred to as xenophobic violence spread rapidly to other township areas and, within a few days, led to 62 deaths and tens of thousands of internally displaced people (Worby et al. 2008: 23). These violent events were exceptional in their extent, but the underlying hostility and resentment against foreigners was and still is quite commonplace and present in everyday urban life. In interviews, domestic workers from other countries reported experiencing hostility in daily interactions in public spaces, taxis and shops, as well as with neighbours. The image of South Africa and Johannesburg suffered considerably because of the xenophobia-related violence; going to work in *John*, as Mozambicans call South Africa and Johannesburg, has come to be seen by many Mozambicans and other foreigners as going to live in a violent and hostile place.

> This citizen of this country, any time, they can start the xenophobia. So as far as they know that you are a foreigner and that you are staying here [in Alexandra], they just mug you. The problem is that they come at night, which means, no matter what ever, they gonna go and get you inside your place. Staying in Alexandra would be cheaper [than in Linbro Park], but I can't risk my life (Simon, gardener in Linbro Park, May 2012).

Some domestic workers carefully hide their illegal status from neighbours and friends for fear of becoming a target. Many domestic workers and other marginal workers choose to stay in the white Linbro Park which they perceive to be a safe place, a hideout where they are protected from xenophobia. Simon explained that he did not like to go to the CBD, because he might be stopped by the police and they then demand money. While on the streets of Linbro Park, the police also often check the identity documents of domestic workers, in contrast to the anonymous CBD, these police officers from the Sandringham police station eventually become acquainted with the domestic workers and do not check their papers anymore. Living in Linbro Park thus gives foreign domestic workers a sense of protection from the dangerous anonymity of the city; it is a place where they can carve out a more or less safe existence for themselves within what they experience as a dangerous and violent country.

Living in a suburb also means that domestic workers who usually do not have cars are confronted with the lack of public transport and dominance of automobility typical of the Johannesburg suburbs. Transport in Johannesburg is still marked by the apartheid legacy: the apartheid state tightly controlled the mobility of the Black population and economically delimited their access to automobility (Graham 2007). Private motor transport has primacy in the suburban life of the city (Czeglédy 2004). Property owners drive in and out of the suburb several times a day. Because of the low residential density, it is not profitable for minibus taxis to pass through Linbro Park. Apart from month end when the demand is higher, one usually has to wait for 30 minutes

to two hours for a minibus. Except for some better-off workers who own a *skorokoro* (an old car), most of the domestic workers move around on foot or use minibus taxis. Distances are large and a walk to London Road, which is on the major transport routes, can take up to 40 minutes. For domestic workers who do not live in the same suburb as they work, walking for two hours or more everyday forms part of the daily routine. This reality rarely enters depictions of Johannesburg's northern suburbs.

Cock reports that in the Eastern Cape during apartheid, domestic workers suffered from social isolation because of the inhumane working hours and the lack of free time to attend church or socialise casually with friends and family (Cock 1989 [1980]: 46-49). Nowadays in Linbro Park it is rather the high costs of transport, the danger of walking at night on the streets and the lack of integration into the urban transport networks which makes living in Linbro Park socially isolating. Several domestic workers told me that their friends and relatives who live outside Linbro Park hardly ever come to visit because they would have to walk long distances on the dark deserted roads. "They say: 'Eish, we want to visit you, but your place…'" (Bianca, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

Except for running errands, attending church services and visiting friends and relatives, the daily routine and social life of domestic workers takes place within the neighbourhood. The streets and fences, the boundaries between the public streets and private properties, are important spaces of sociability. When walking from one property to another, when taking the dustbin onto the street or working in the proximity of the fence, one would exchange greetings with workers from nearby properties, complain about the hard work and the treatment by the employers and talk about personal relationships.

Many domestic workers spend their time after work doing household chores and grocery shopping, carrying out additional income-generating activities, visiting others and frequenting the local shebeens. In one deserted property there is a *spaza* shop (a small store) and a traditional healer offers his services. Unless employers forbid visitors, workers' quarters are important places for socialising, with a constant coming and going of relatives, co-workers, friends and members of credit and savings associations.

> We just know each other, we meet on the streets, we meet in our rooms, we meet anywhere. Some other people go to London Church, they meet each other there. Some they go to Morgan [the shebeen]. I go all these places. They go to Pharaoh [another shebeen] and meet people. Mostly men. Ja, we just meet, even in the taxis, sometimes we just chat through the phones (Sara, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

In 2012 there were two shebeens in Linbro Park, where men and, less often, women would go. Both were former suburban houses, now deserted dwellings, which were transformed into simple places of leisure where people engaged in drinking, listening to music, smoking, discussing and playing pool. Both shebeens were parochial spaces in Lofland's sense, that is, spaces where people know each other from being neighbours, co-workers, friends or acquaintances (Lofland 1989). One would usually sit together in groups of close friends but also interact with others one was acquainted with. These were not places where strangers would venture, as they would not even know these shebeens existed.

> And you see the problem with shebeens is, Barbara, a guy from River Park comes in over here, a worker from Linbro Park gets broke, and to get money he tells them what his boss does and how much money the boss has got and where his gun is. And then of course, he knows to come back, to rob the place (Baldwin, property owner in Linbro Park, March 2011).

The white property owners regarded the shebeens with suspicion. They saw them as uncontrolled spaces of trouble and vice, of prostitution and drug trade; spaces from where crime in the suburb was planned and committed and spaces where domestic workers accidentally or on purpose shared private information about their employers with criminals. This shows how many property owners tend to see the private and public lives of their domestic workers as a disturbance in 'their' suburb, thus demanding that this be under their control. Not least because of the fear of crime, property owners have tried to have illegal shebeens closed down several times.

The property owners of Linbro Park have organised themselves into formal neighbourhood organisations, the most important being the Linbro Park Community Association (LPCA).[3] The residents run a security initiative which they call a Community Policing Forum (CPF), a subforum of the Sandringham CPF.[4] The security initiative organises a neighbourhood watch, called Block Watch. The Block Watch has not always been functional owing to a lack of involvement by residents, but the idea is that every night two residents patrol the whole suburb for about an hour. During the height of apartheid, the suburb had an active associational life and property owners would socialise on the horse grounds, at the tennis clubs and at ballroom dancing. Many property owners claim that they moved to Linbro Park because they wanted to live in a place where they could keep their own horses, their children's favourite sport. Property owners called this lifestyle 'country living in the city' and it still today forms part of the collective and individual identity of Linbro Park property owners. Nowadays, their children have grown up and associational life has been reduced. Neighbours who consider themselves friends now prefer to socialise in restaurants, bars or gyms outside of suburb or meet for a *braai* (barbecue) at their homes. Yet in the wake of the decline of the former spaces of association, new realms of interaction among property owners have subsequently emerged, one being the virtual space of the internet, where property owners exchange news about security, governance issues and stray horses, and the other being the CPF and Block Watch. Many of the property owners who moved to the suburb after the height of associational life have gotten to know each other through Block Watch. Often family members or tenants who live on the same property go on Block Watch together. Neighbours who have only read about each other

3 The LPCA is organised as a section 21 company (a non-profit organisation). It is run by a steering committee of property owners which meet once a month. They represent the interests of the neighbourhood vis-à-vis the local government and private developers, and engage in the maintenance of urban infrastructure, either by pressuring the responsible service delivery entities to fix it, or by fixing it themselves. A couple of years ago they collected money for a concrete wall around the suburb, which served as a protection against trespassers from the nearby open veld.

4 Community Policing Forum (CPF) is a structure of community involvement in policing and an important element of the community policing approach which is practised by the South African Police Service (SAPS). The CPF aims at liaising between residents and the police (National Crime Prevention Centre 2000, SAPS 2013). The security initiative has long organised Block Watch and the Domestic Watch.

in the web-based forum meet for the first time physically during Block Watch and use the hour in the car to exchange news and discuss issues around family, business and development of the suburb. One could say that security governance replaced horse riding as a sphere of neighbourly sociability. Fighting criminals together also creates a sense of belonging and togetherness. I was told that some members of the CPF get up in the middle of the night whenever there is a break-in, and chase after fleeing criminals. Such chases have been reported on the web-based forum and photographs of caught criminals posted.

As chapter 4 will show in more detail, a conflict emerged a couple of years ago over differing visions for the future of the suburb, and since then many property owners report a sense of what they call a 'divided community'. Clara, a 60-year-old property owner in Linbro Park, for example said: "The community is very divided. Everyone has their own criteria of what should happen" (Clara, March 2012). 'Community' refers in this quote solely to the property owners and 'divided' to the split among them; the milieu of domestic workers remains invisible in this conception of community.

In the interviews, I usually asked the property owners about who they knew in the suburb. Mandy, a 45-year-old property owner in Linbro Park, responded: "Ja, people know me, and I know all my neighbours, Andre, John, I know most people that used to live here, Alexis, Phil, I know everyone in Linbro Park" (Mandy, May 2012). Responding to my question, Mandy exclusively referred to other property owners, excluding the many domestic workers on her and neighbouring properties from the 'people'. Both quotes make clear how Linbro Park, as a collective space, is imagined by the property owners as a white suburb, where the black domestic workers are not seen as residents, neighbours, or citizens.

Their intimate entangledness with domestic workers, on whom they depend, is non-existent in this imagination of the world they inhabit. This also means that domestic workers are largely excluded from neighbourhood politics (see chapter 4). The LPCA is an organisation solely for the property owners, domestic workers are neither members nor part of the board, nor do they participate in the web-based discussion forums. This invisibility of the entanglements shaping lives in Linbro Park is characteristic of elites' lives in *cities of entanglements*. 'Invisibility', as defined by Honneth (2003), means the absence of recognition of the other as a fellow human being. This social form of invisibility can also have visual aspects, that is, the physical hiddenness of the spaces of domestic workers' public life. Invisibility is also defined by Goffman as the notion of the 'non-person', namely, people who are present during an interaction but are neither performers nor audience (Goffman 1959: 152). This is similar to what Siegenthaler refers to as "social (in) visibility; the lack of mutual visibility (intervisibility) in interaction creates marginalisation and exclusion" (Siegenthaler 2013: 171). For Brighenti, the relationship of looking at each other "constitutes the site of mutual recognition, misrecognition or denial of recognition of the other – in short, the site where we constitute ourselves as 'subjects'" (Brighenti 2010: 27). Turning domestic workers into non-persons means that one does not need to acknowledge their presence or regard their needs as individuals, rather they become reduced to the subject position as workers. Invisibility was also typical for domestic workers during apartheid (Ginsburg 2011). But it is important to note that domestic workers have agency and can resist, negotiate and make use of the invisibility. As described above, living invisibly in a white suburb can be a form of protection from police controls. In the realm of security governance,

however, their invisibility becomes especially troublesome, as their own security needs are anything but central.

Securitised Entanglements

Despite their exclusion from official neighbourhood structures, domestic workers become included in security governance in their role as employees. As in many other Johannesburg suburbs, security is a major issue in Linbro Park. Owing to its physical proximity to Alexandra township many think Linbro Park is a prime target for criminals. There are no streetlights in the suburb, and as a result of the untamed growth of bushes and grass on certain properties, many urban dwellers experience the neighbourhood spaces as uncontrolled and as a perfect hideout for criminals. Many people preferred living in a gated community to living in Linbro Park. Following Gabriel, 23-year-old son of a property-owning family in Linbro Park, many "people think that Linbro is crime ridden. My friends look at me and think I am nuts for living here" (Gabriel, May 2012).

A considerable number of the property owners in Linbro Park own guns or rifles, having learnt how to use them during their childhood on a farm or for sport. Besides sport, guns are kept for self-defence in violent encounters with strangers, as such as burglaries or car theft. Most households have a high fence and dogs, many also have electric fences, alarms and a contract with a security company. Domestic workers form part of the neighbourhood's security system: many employers send their workers to the monthly meetings of the Domestic Watch programme.[5] The Domestic Watch meetings, which last about two hours should equip "domestic workers with valuable crime-prevention knowledge and skills" (stated on the Domestic Watch timetable for 2013). The programme is implemented in various suburbs in Johannesburg in conjunction with the local residents' associations, the respective police station, and the private security company ADT, which acts as a major sponsor of the programme. The lessons address questions about what security companies do and how domestic workers should interact with them; they contain information about practices used by criminals, such as how they trick domestic workers into disclosing information about their employer's alarm system. Non-crime related topics such as first aid and domestic violence are also sometimes addressed. The aim is to sensitise domestic workers to security issues and to encourage them to report anything suspicious to their employers. As Clarno (2013: 1200) rightly observes, the programme aims to transform domestic workers from potential collaborators with criminals to auxiliary security producers.

Some of the domestic workers in Linbro Park enjoyed the meetings because they were a welcome break from heavy work, while others tried to avoid the meetings because it encroached on the time they needed to get their heavy workload done. Some workers stopped attending because their employers lost interest in sending them or

5 The meetings are officially called 'MAD Domestic Watch Meetings', MAD being the abbreviation for 'Make A Difference'. At the time of fieldwork, the Domestic Watch programme was running in about twenty neighbourhoods in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. In each suburb, there were monthly meetings to which all the domestic workers and gardeners in the suburb were invited.

the workers found it increasingly boring: "There is only so much to say about crime" explained one of them (Ayanda, domestic worker in Linbro Park, April 2012).

At a meeting held in April 2012, a resident from a nearby suburb, Birgit, gave a talk about 'inside jobs', as she had recently completed courses in the field of criminology and was running a small business offering polygraphy (lie detector) services. 'Inside jobs' refers to crime in which domestic workers are involved as collaborators with criminals. At the talk she explained to the approximately thirty domestic workers and gardeners present at the meeting that she could find out with her polygrapher whether a domestic worker had assisted a criminal. In the written version of her presentation which she sent around on the web-based discussion forum after the presentation, she wrote: "Do not get involved. You are putting your life at risk. If I am appointed, I promise you I will catch you out" (Google Group, April 2012). After the talk, the Domestic Watch convenor, Sophie, attempted to reframe Birgit's accusing tone and explained to the workers that Birgit was offering her help and that domestic workers should speak to their employers or to Birgit if they were approached by criminals.

In the round of questions that followed, Helen, one of the domestic workers asked: "What must we do in order for the police officers to understand that we are not the ones involved in the robberies?" (Domestic Watch meeting, April 2012). With this question, Helen attempted to reframe what the actual security problem was – the problem is not that domestic workers collaborated with criminals, but that domestic workers could be falsely accused of collaborating with criminals. As a response, Birgit recommended asking for a lie detector test at the police station and Sophie emphasised that one should create good relationships with employers and not gossip behind their backs, as this could make the domestic worker seem suspicious. This reference to gossip exemplifies how property owners and organisers of Domestic Watch programme saw sociability and communication among domestic workers as a security threat.

Following this, a domestic worker, Sara, made a comment, first shyly, then, when asked to repeat, in a more assured tone: "We are only talking about madams and bosses. Cause, the thing is, it's not only happening to them. We also get raped, we also get killed, we even get killed first" (Domestic Watch meeting, April 2012). Sara was attempting to redefine what security problems actually were; not only did employers need to be seen as potential crime victims but domestic workers' potential victimhood also required acknowledgement. Birgit and Sophie both interrupted Sara immediately and defended themselves. Birgit argued that they were aware of this, but that violence against domestics was simply not the topic of the lesson on this day. The convenor Sophie emphasised understanding:

> It's true, our gardeners and domestics are also suffering. What I have heard in the ten years of doing this work, is that black people can be very cruel to each other … There is more crime, more burglaries in Alex than in white suburbs. We just hear more about it. But I think sometimes, what happens, is … there is the English word 'unwittingly', if I give information out unwittingly, you are not consciously saying it to others (Sophie, Domestic Watch meeting, April 2012).

Trying to act as a mediator between the two clashing world views, the meeting convenor Sophie aimed to recognise the domestic workers' victimhood, yet also emphasised that spilling out information to criminals could happen without bad intentions.

During the Domestic Watch meetings Sophie often spoke in a high-pitched voice and lifted her index finger when speaking to the domestic workers. I noted in my fieldnotes: "Her tone of voice somehow reminds me of a kindergarten teacher talking to her pupils" (Domestic Watch meeting, April 2012). In the meeting a month after the talk by Birgit, Sophie apologised to the domestic workers as she had become aware that many of them had it found insulting. At the beginning of the meeting she said: "Birgit has good intentions, but she is not used to talking to my people, because this is what you are, my people … Now please give each other huggies and forgive her in your heart" (Sophie, May 2012). The domestic workers ignored her request to hug each other, as if feeling slightly embarrassed by the paternalistic tone.

People are affected by crime in very different ways, and therefore their perceptions of crime differ greatly (Statistics South Africa 2012b: 2). In a neighbourhood like Linbro Park, not all types of crimes are prosecuted or made socially visible in the same way. Definitions of what constitutes a threat, what are relevant security problems and what are necessary measures against them differ between milieus, so that security governance is a field where competing definitions become entangled, clash, and eventually impose themselves on others. The property owners in Linbro Park become targets of violence largely in relation to crimes aimed at their property. For the property owners, crime is something extraordinary which they try to avoid by investing time and money in block watch, security companies and alarms. For the domestic workers, danger is not something which they can avoid in their everyday life by retreating into walled places, rather, they are constantly exposed to it. For domestic workers, crime aimed at their property is only one threat among many others. A larger threat constitutes different forms of physical violence which are directed at them because of their nationality, gender, position in an intimate relationship or because of their occupation as domestic workers. It includes xenophobic violence, rape in public spaces, violence by intimate partners, and assaults by criminals who want to access their employers' property. By looking at how domestic workers are integrated into security governance, one can unravel their silent fights to be recognised not only as security providers and as security threats, but also as victims of manifold forms of violence.

Because their main mode of transport is walking, domestic workers are especially subject to crime than can occur in public spaces, like mugging and rape. According to domestic workers, criminals are said to know their walking routes and payment rhythms. Deserted, unkempt properties in particular are seen as dangerous, because criminals can hide in them and wait for victims. In 2011, a domestic worker was raped on a deserted property, and domestic workers pressed property owners to cut the high grass on that property. Despite the gravity of the crime, the grass was not cleared, as the members of the neighbourhood's security initiative were unable to reach the absent property owner and did not dare to clear the land without his permission. Instead, they recommended that their domestic workers avoid walking in the suburb after dark. This enraged domestic workers:

> They tell us "You mustn't go out at night". I tell them: "I come home from working somewhere, it's night, and the only person I know who can give me sugar to make tea, when I don't have sugar in my house, is staying at that place. So just because you don't want to clear this place, I have to sleep with hunger." They are not right (Zuzile, domestic worker in Linbro Park, May 2012).

The asymmetry of the patrimonial employer–domestic worker entanglements, coupled with the power inequalities between property owners and their tenants, thus profoundly shape the life of domestic workers in the neighbourhood, beyond the realm of work. The domination of this domestic work entanglement continues in the neighbourhood spaces where domestic workers are denied participation in neighbourhood politics and their leisure spaces are suppressed. It continues even into the realm of security governance where domestic workers need to fight for their security needs to be recognised. This shows how powerful and omnipresent the domestic work entanglement is with regard to sociality in Linbro Park: for both the domestic worker and the employer, it is almost impossible to encounter each other in other ways. The asymmetry characterising this form of entanglement makes it in many ways highly ambivalent. While the property owners recognise the existence of this entanglement to some extent, for example by giving domestic workers an important role in security governance, and by supposedly seeing them as part of the family, they also do not recognise it and thus render domestic workers in many ways invisible. The urban sociality emerging through these entanglements, connecting the suburban middle-class lifeworlds with the everyday life of less affluent urban dwellers in intimate, asymmetric power relations, is deeply ambivalent and ambiguous.

Conclusion: Invisible Entanglements in a White Suburb

Linbro Park is imagined by the white property owners as a white suburb in which their black domestic workers only live by virtue of their work duties, in order to clean their houses and protect their lives. Through manifold practices – suppression of their private lives, house rules, uniforms – domestic workers have become invisible as residents and citizens of the neighbourhood. Practices of invisibilisation do not make the domestic workers disappear, but in the work entanglements they become reduced from full human beings to workers dependent on their employers. This invisibility also has a few advantages, especially for domestic workers without residence permits, as Linbro Park allows them to hide from the police. It is hence important to acknowledge that domestic workers' agency can resist, negotiate and make use of the invisibility and the patrimonial ties to their employers.

In studying domestic workers' lives in neighbourhoods popularly represented as 'affluent', 'white' or even 'enclaves' by property owners, politicians and academics provide unexpected insights into the social processes and social relations that constitute these spaces. This shows the multiple realities that exist even within a small area like Linbro Park and the diverse, sometimes also contradictory and competing, ways in which suburban spaces are used and imagined. The focus on the forms of entanglements between domestic workers and employers unravels the many practices white property owners engage in to uphold the fantasy of a white, safe world in a rapidly changing city, a fantasy which constitutively depends on the marginalisation, exclusion and invisibilisation of their most intimate co-dwellers, their domestic workers. For the domestic workers, though, the entanglements with their employers are omnipresent, and they deal with what they experience as scarcely bearable asymmetry with practices of hidden resistance and gossip. What also emerges, however, are moments of intersubjectivity shared when drinking tea together, feelings of affection and patri-

monial ties. The domestic work entanglements are accompanied by certain registers of interacting and seeing each other, which urban dwellers reactivate in situations outside the employers' homes, consciously or unconsciously. The domestic work entanglements therefore shape urbanity in the city beyond the suburban homes and spaces, and their significance in *cities of entanglements* cannot be overstated.

Acknowledging the importance of the often invisible domestic work entanglements has implications for the way we think about space theoretically: it shows how in enclave-like suburbs, the conceived space (how the space is thought of and represented) and lived space (how the space is used and its everyday meanings) can diverge greatly, and even contradict each other. While the suburb is constructed mentally by the affluent residents as 'pure', homogenous, and secluded from rest of the city, in reality its spaces are populated every day by the 'other' as domestic workers. For many domestic workers and their families whom I met, this contradiction gives them a certain sense of superiority and control. They may have no money to live like the wealthy, but they nevertheless know the suburbs very well; they know its dirty laundry, in both its figurative and literal sense. The fact that domestic workers are highly aware of these entanglements, while the affluent residents tend to ignore them, gives the domestic worker a bit more of power in the unequal city.

Louis Wirth, the Chicago scholar, established a view which has long dominated Western urban studies, namely, that urban encounters are characterised by anonymous, 'rational' relationships and social distance (Wirth 1938: 61-63). Simmel argued that this Western, modern 'blasé attitude' resulted from the continuous exposure of the senses to the stimuli of the large city. Förster has criticised Simmel's basic assumption behind this attitude for being "deeply rooted in Western modernity and its history: the individual's claim to autonomy and to independence from social constraints" (Förster 2013b: 238). By hidden forms of resistance, domestic workers aim to reclaim autonomy in the troubling asymmetric relations, yet their profound dependency limits this. The intimate entanglements around domestic work therefore offer a perspective on urban sociality which could not be more in contrast to Simmel's understanding of urbanity. These entanglements are not about independence but rather about deep asymmetry and conflicted dependency. They are not about anonymity in public spaces but about intimate, everyday encounters in private homes.

Social dependence has long been recognised by the political anthropology of Southern Africa as the foundations of personhood (Ferguson 2013). During the expansion of the Ngoni (Zulu) state in the 1820s, people voluntarily subjugated themselves to the new state. Political power was based on wealth in people; it was a society founded not on the relations of exchange between equal individuals but rather on relations of dependence and hierarchy. Through hierarchical dependency, one could become someone, one could achieve social personhood (ibid: 226). According to Ferguson, apartheid and capitalism disrupted the political system, yet it did not break with this socio-political logic. During apartheid, workers travelled from rural areas in Southern Africa to Johannesburg to subjugate themselves to the oppressive system of the mines and farms. On farms, the logic of paternalism, the socio-political logic of social attachment via hierarchical dependence, emerged between white settlers and black workers (ibid: 229, 239). In the mines as well, there were reports that workers and managers understood their relations in quasi-kinship terms, despite all abuse and racism (ibid). Referring to Cape fruit and wine farms, Du Toit has shown that the supposedly

'pre-modern' forms of paternalistic labour relations were not replaced by the purely commoditised worker–employer relations that idealised models of capitalism imply (Du Toit & Ewert 2002: 91-2). Ferguson argues that in the current phase of massive unemployment in South Africa, the biggest fear for the poor is to become totally 'independent'; without any employer to look after them, without any state to provide them with social grants. "It is not dependence but its absence that is really terrifying – the severing of the thread, and the fall into the social void" (Ferguson 2013: 232). While social inequality means that one is hierarchically dependent on an employer, an abusive boyfriend or the state, 'asocial inequality' means that there is no one on whom one is able to make claims (ibid: 233).

This excursion into dependence, inequality and personhood in Southern African societies is important because it tells us a lot about urbanity in contemporary African cities. The lives of rich and poor, black and white, suburb and township in Johannesburg are not simply segregated and divided, as it is often recounted, but through the realm of domestic work they were and continue to be deeply connected and intertwined through patrimonial ties and asymmetric relations of dependence. The city is, therefore, "not a collection of independent realms … but a series of interconnected spaces and processes" (Srivastava 2014: xx). It is through such entanglements that lives unfolds in cities marked by inequality. Urbanity in *cities of entanglements* emerges in these "unexplored terrains of mutuality, wrought from a common, though often coercive and confrontational, experience" (Nuttall 2009: 11). Through entanglements the lifeworlds of suburb and township become "twisted together or entwined, involved with". These entanglements speak "of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited" (ibid: 1).

Domestic work is an important urban labour market in cities across the globe but especially in societies with high income inequality (International Labour Office 2013). This is may be one of the reasons why Western urban studies have yet paid little attention to domestic work; it is a female occupation, taking place unseen in the private sphere, moreover, it is not as established in Western cities as it is in the Global South. Analysing the relevance of domestic work for urbanity is therefore a contribution to Southern urbanism (Parnell and Oldfield 2014). It means putting these deeply colonial and postcolonial urban relationships at the centre of understanding urban sociality. As it is especially the poor urban dwellers and not so much the more affluent who are highly aware of these entanglements, placing these entanglements at the centre of analysis also means privileging the subaltern view, instead of the view of urban elites who imagine their urban world as disconnected and enclosed.

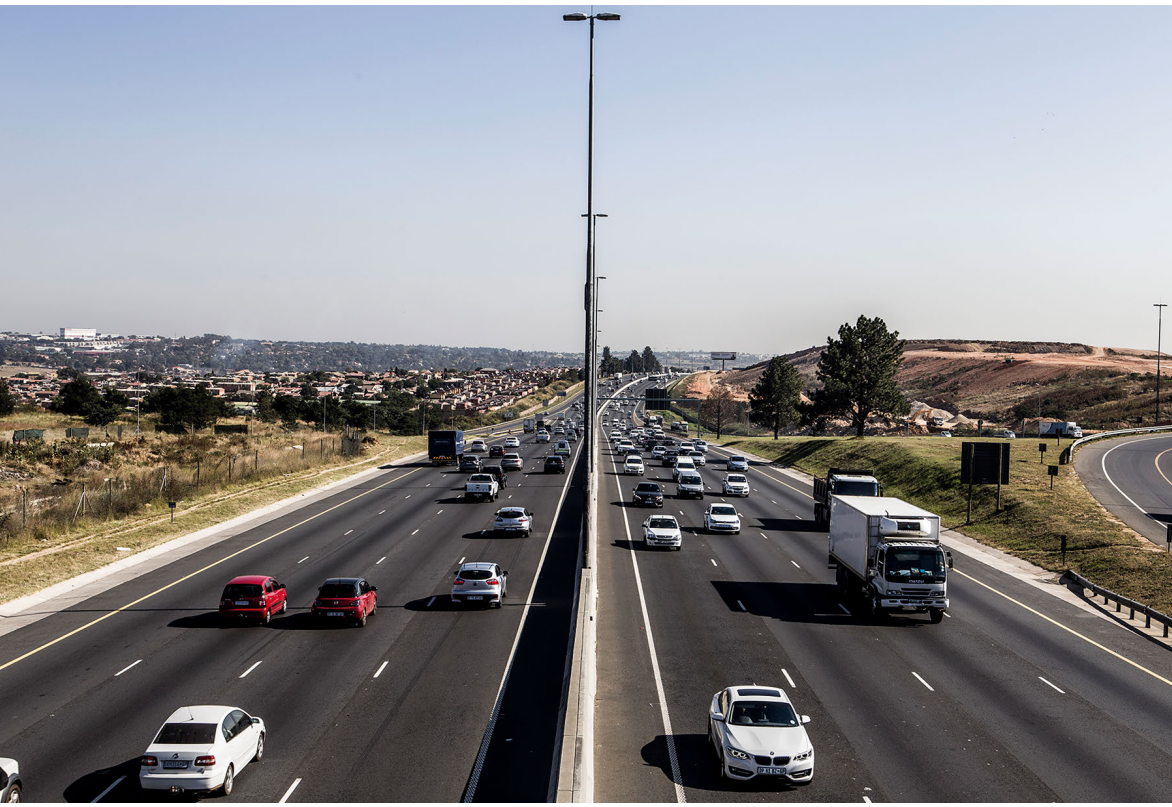
Domestic work is important for urbanity because it is in these quotidian encounters that habits and modes of seeing each other (dispositions) become learnt. Cock in her seminal study pointed out the importance of these everyday encounters for the everyday reproduction of racial attitudes during apartheid.

> Often the institution of domestic service is the only significant inter-racial contact whites experience, and they experience the relationship in extremely asymmetrical terms. Many white South African children are socialised into the dominant ideological order and learn the attitudes and styles of racial domination from relationship with servants, especially 'nannies'. The reverse is equally true in that many black children expe-

> rience the inequality of apartheid and the anger it generates through some experience of domestic service (Cock 1989 [1980]: 3).

In contemporary Johannesburg, domestic work relations are no longer embedded only in what used to be the apartheid black–white categorisation. With the rise of the non-white middle class it ceased to be a privilege of white milieus. Because of the low salaries of domestic workers, urban dwellers from aspiring but economically struggling milieus can afford to employ a domestic worker a day per week. There is currently a research gap on these new domestic work relations.

Domestic work in the post-apartheid city is about more than race, and what race means is rapidly changing, yet these intimate encounters continue to be a key site for the formation of urban knowledge – the stock of knowledge by urbanites that shapes how they understand their urban world and the social relations emerging in it. These dispositions influence the way in which urban dwellers interact with strangers and how they interpret encounters in other situations; be it at the mall or in religious spaces. Hence, it is of the utmost importance to recognise private spaces, homes and the intimate relations of property owners and their workers as being part of the urban and as exemplary of the everyday entanglements that link people and places in the face of seeming divisions.



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