Women’s Experience of Working Shiftwork in Nursing: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

The context of shiftwork in the early 21st century is changing rapidly and in comparison to previous centuries those involved in, or required to work shiftwork are now spread over many different sectors of the community. Shiftwork research stretches back over the last five decades or so, although around thirty years ago the amount of research done in shiftworking industries increased and has continued to do so till today. The overwhelming majority of the body of shiftwork literature explores psychological and physiological responses to working shiftwork, and primarily utilises male subjects in a quantitative framework.

In nursing, which is the context of this study, shiftwork has been a feature for as long as nursing has been around. Here in Australia women comprise the majority of nurses and midwives. Recent figures from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia report that women comprise 90% of the 373 394 Nurses and Midwives (Nurses and Midwives Board of Australia, 2016). Very little research effort has been concentrated on women’s experience of shiftwork, and how children, their care responsibilities and unpaid housework impact on the women’s experience of shiftwork. Neither in the shiftwork literature, nor the sociological literature has this experience of working shiftwork for women been examined in significant detail.

The research question that this study sought to answer was “what is the lived experience of women who work shiftwork in nursing and care for children?” The aim of the study was to understand the experience and to identify the implications of these two roles on both the women and their families and on their nursing work.

This study has explored the experience of working and living for women with children who undertake nursing shiftwork. To examine this experience, a phenomenological framework, based on Heidegger’s (2008) work was chosen, semi structured interviews (data collection conversations) were used to collect the data from ten participants, all of whom had children and had experienced working nursing shiftwork. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the narratives of the participants.

In the initial phenomenological analysis, themes of Being Guilty and Being Juggler were identified from the participants’ narratives. The theme of Being Guilty centred around the women’s feeling of not being ‘enough’ in all the parts of their lives; that is, not being what they considered was the ‘the perfect mother’, as well as wife, and nursing shiftworker. Within Being Juggler there were three sub-themes that combined to constitute the major theme. The theme Being Juggler focused on the women’s management of the components of their lives and the
compromises they made to work and care for their children and home. The themes were then situated within the context of the wider sociological literature, primarily women’s work, gender roles and motherhood. This re-contextualising of the themes within the sociological literature added to the gendered issue for the women who worked shiftwork.

Implications of the findings are that clearly the ‘problem’ of ‘doing it all’ belonged to the women in the study, which mirrors other literature in women’s work. This issue has broad ranging implications for social change in the women’s work area, as well as in nursing over the medium to long term, which would improve women’s ‘lot’ of managing the ‘second’, ‘third’ and fourth’ shift. In the short to medium term, nursing education and nursing services need to provide very clear guidelines for ‘self-care’ when working shiftwork. This education should include the impact of shiftwork on physiological (including sleep) and psychological health, as well as strategies to mediate the effects of shiftwork. Pre-service education of nurses serves as an initial place where education would be of value, however, nursing services should also institute programs into orientations to the workplace as well as new graduate programs.
Statement of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis.

Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged. I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses.

Name: Annabel Matheson

Signed: ____________________________

Date: 10th April 2017
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As this thesis is about women and their lives, this last section of personal acknowledgements are for some women that I have had the good fortune to have spent time with in my life. This thesis is for you:

My mother, J.E.M., who always believed in me,

My Aunts, C.A.H and L.B.C who have provided guidance and care in the stead of my mother after she was gone,

My partner, S.L.C., who helped me carry the dream (tirelessly over so long), and

To our children, E.J.M.C., X.P.M.C and I.A.M.C who this dream is for, as the future.

Further acknowledgements may be found in Appendix Five.
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Chapter One – Background to the Study

Introduction

This chapter introduces the study, and the organisation of the thesis. A brief introductory description of my personal journey described below, outlines my interest in undertaking this examination of shiftwork experiences of women with children, and prefigures my argument that shiftwork produces particular difficulties for female nurses who have the responsibility of children. These difficulties are largely unrecognised formally in the preparation of registered nurses for their professional life. In the remainder of this chapter, the context and background of the study is introduced and described and definitions of shiftwork are discussed. I conclude the chapter with a brief overview of the dissertation and a description of each chapter.

Call to the Question

I had been a registered nurse for nearly twenty years when this study was commenced. Over that time I had worked in clinical settings for the first eight years and then moved into academia. In my clinical experience I worked for the first part of the time on a rapid rotating roster and then I moved into a job where I worked permanent night shifts. In this position I worked five eight-hour shifts from Sunday to Thursday. After a period of time I then moved to a permanent roster of two morning shifts and three afternoon shifts per week and no weekends. When an opportunity arose where I was able to move into a teaching role and was able to work regular hours I moved to the university setting.

I had never thought I felt tired from the shiftwork until I finished working shifts, and then I realised how tired I previously had been. And I was one of the lucky ones – I had been able to sleep reasonably well during the day. The sensation was a bit like banging my head against the wall: I did not notice it was hurting until I stopped. I worked with many women over those years, some who worked rotating shifts, and some who worked permanent night shifts so they could care for children. One woman I worked with had only ever worked permanent night shifts in her twenty-five year career, during which she had also managed to have nine children in close succession. When I worked with her, seven children were still at home and I wondered even as a second year nurse how she was able to manage! I remember her telling me that the only time of the year that she ever slept at night was on annual leave. Even her days off (she worked four ten-hour night shifts per week) she ironed overnight. I remember her saying she usually ironed until about 3am and then went to bed. She also talked as though shiftwork gave
her the ability to work when she could not have worked day work. I remember thinking about this and being amazed about the commitment to both her family and her work (given she slept mainly during school hours – about five hours all told). Her story twenty years later is still as clear as when she first shared it with me, and as I worked with her regularly, she would tell me little vignettes of the day that had passed or the weekend.

Prior to this study I had been involved in some other shiftwork research which piqued my interest in shiftwork. One of the recommendations from that study was to explore shiftwork from a qualitative perspective (Matheson, 2008). At that time I found no research that explored shiftwork from a qualitative perspective and was interested in how people functioned working shiftwork and managing home. When I worked permanent night shifts I had no dependents to think about and I could sleep when tired – most of the day if I liked. I wondered what women with children did; particularly when I remembered the story of the nurse I worked with who had the nine children.

Many years later once I had children and was working regular day hours, I wondered how women who work shiftwork managed childcare, sleep and maintaining the family home as well as working in a profession that required a high level of alertness and vigilance to ensure that patients received high quality care. Now, working as a nursing academic and being responsible for preparing my students for life and work in the nursing profession, where shiftwork is a fact of life for most newcomers, this ‘idle wonder’ has become the impetus for a search for more knowledge about this issue – and hence this study.

**Context and Background of Shiftwork**

The context of shiftwork in the early 21st century is changing rapidly, and in comparison to previous centuries those involved in, or required to work shiftwork are now spread over many different work sectors of the community. Industries such as agriculture, telecommunications, printing, health, broadcasting, food production and transport, which are strongly influenced by accelerated urbanisation, all utilise shiftwork as a means of increasing productivity or for customer service (Frost, Kolstad, & Bonde, 2009; Kogi, 1985; Rutenfranz, Colquhoun, Knauth, & Ghata, 1977). With globalisation and the increasing need to conduct work across time zones, workers in industries that traditionally did not use shiftwork (such as the banking and finance industry) are also now being faced with extended business hours. The use of workers located in multiple time zones to extend the working day has some advantages over shiftwork, provided the need for assistance can be satisfied via the telephone or the internet. There remain, however,
many industries where workers in multiple time zones is not a viable alternative so that in many different circumstances shiftwork needs to continue.

Readers of literature or history will know that in the centuries prior to the industrial revolution people worked extended hours and some of this work was also organised shifts. Within taverns and wealthy houses, servers and cooks worked for feasts, celebrations and regular meals, and women have worked irregular hours as midwives for many centuries. Other known shiftworkers include gatekeepers, shepherds, police, soldiers and sailors (Kogi, 1985). The idea of spreading work across the 24 hour period is certainly not new either, as in ancient Rome Julius Caesar decreed that supplies for the local market should be delivered at night to lessen traffic problems in the city streets (Reilly, Atkinson, & Waterhouse, 1997).

For the worker, many of the major effects of shiftwork stem from the evolution of humans as a diurnal species (Barton, Folkard, Smith, Spelten, & Totterdell, 1995; Barton, Spelten, Totterdell, Smith, Folkard, et al., 1995; Monk & Folkard, 1992). Until the invention of reasonably effective artificial light sources, humans may not have questioned the natural circadian rhythms of their bodies, even though they were not aware of the physiology involved. Although shiftwork existed long before the invention of the light bulb (Gordon, Cleary, Parker, & Czeisler, 1986) it was the availability and use of artificial light (commencing with the effective use of lamps and extended by the development of the electric light bulb) which enabled work to be undertaken for as long as was either needed or wanted during periods of darkness (Grossman, 1997). The advent of the light bulb gradually increased the organisation and use of teams or shifts of workers to continue production after dark. Forges, paper mills, glass works and metallurgical industries were using shiftwork by the 1800s but the opening of the first power plant in 1882 enabled the potential for 24-hour production (Gordon et al., 1986; Haus & Smolensky, 2013) and formal organisation of shifts for workers. In Western Europe in 1904, 2.8% of the population worked shiftwork (Pati, Chandrawanshi, & Reinberg, 2001).

As an area of research interest, shiftwork has been a focus for both employers and employee representative groups. The initial stimulus for much of the currently available shiftwork research was for employer interest and was focused on the pursuit of the perfect shift system, which would facilitate a 24-hour workday. As it became apparent in the research that there is no “optimum shift system” (Knauth, 1993), the research focus moved to investigating the shiftworkers themselves, studying different personality types and other personal traits to identify the “perfect shiftworker”.

Chapter One – Background to the Study
In Europe the number of people working shiftwork has been reported as between 20% and 25% of the workforce (Knutsson, Hallquist, Reuterwall, Theorell, & Akerstedt, 1999; Puttonen et al., 2009) and 15% of workers in the USA work shiftwork (Chung, Wolf, & Shapiro, 2009; Puttonen et al., 2009). Figures from the USA report that 75% of nurses work shiftwork with 18% of those working permanent night shifts (Burch et al., 2009).

Within the shiftwork literature, the most commonly studied female participant is the nurse. Overwhelmingly nurses and midwives are female, consisting of 90% of the 374,394 of nurses and midwives (Nurses and Midwives Board of Australia, 2016), for example, and this number is not inclusive of female nurses on maternity leave or on a career break caring for children. Despite the plethora of shiftwork literature on nurses, the substantial sub-group of shiftworking women caring for children has received little attention. Specifically the experience of shiftworking nurses caring for children is absent from the literature and it is this absence that I am seeking to address through my research, focussing on shiftworking mothers as the chosen participants for the current study.

**Definitions**

As shiftwork encompasses a range of different working arrangements in many different industries, the definition of shiftwork has become more complex and more disparate over time and consensus amongst researchers has not been reached (Boggild & Knutsson, 1999). As there is no common definition of shiftwork, attempting to measure the type, frequency and duration of shiftwork internationally is a complex activity (Rutenfranz, Knauth, & Colquhoun, 1976). Researchers define shiftwork in two ways; either, by succession of work teams (and hence workers) in a workplace; or by the requirement for workers to keep non-standard working hours.

An early definition using the first approach (succession of hours) defined shiftwork simply as an ‘around the clock operation’ (Akerstedt, Torsvall, & Gillberg, 1982). This was later further developed to become an arrangement of work hours that employed two or more shifts of workers in order to extend the hours of operation beyond that of conventional office hours (Akerstedt, 1990). More recently again this has been reframed and expressed to describe shiftwork as a type of scheduling where workers replace the previous worker at the work station or job (Taylor, Briner, & Folkard, 1997). Contemporary papers define shiftwork as work that takes place either at changing hours of the day, such as rotating shiftwork or at constant but
unusual hours, such as permanent evening or night shift (Puttonen, Harma, & Hublin, 2010; Thomas & Power, 2010).

The second approach of working non-standard hours sees shiftwork as work occurring outside the hours of 6 am to 6 pm (Frost et al., 2009); 7 am to 6 pm (Chung, Wolf, et al., 2009; Monk & Folkard, 1992) and (Siebenaler & McGovern, 1991); 7 am to 7 pm (Wallace, 1983); 8 am to 6 pm (Tepas, Duchon, & Gersten, 1993). Other time-based definitions classify shiftwork as work based on commencement time prior to 9 am (Colligan, 1981).

Shiftwork using the second approach (non-standard working hours) was defined by Wilkinson (1992) in terms of the patterns of working hours the shiftworker worked. These are defined as three distinct shift patterns:

**Rotation**: rapidly rotating shift systems where staff do not spend more than 2 - 3 days on night shift and generally experience morning, evening and night shift in any fortnight period.

**Permanent nights**: fixed rotation (nights) or permanent night duty where the speed of shift rotation is effectively zero and all shifts are worked at night for an extended period of time.

**Permanent days**: fixed rotation (days) or permanent day duty where the speed of shift rotation is effectively zero and all shifts are worked during the day for an extended period of time.

The majority of employed nurses work rotating shiftwork in Australia with only a small minority working either permanent night shifts or permanent day shifts. Those who work permanent days tend to be nurses who either hold management positions or who work in community positions. This study concentrated on experiences of women who work either permanent night shifts or who work rotating shifts and care for children. There are particular challenges for this group of women and their families that include a lack of formal child-care availability either late in the evening or overnight. Childcare is primarily available throughout the day. Nursing day shifts usually commence at 7 am, and there would be some childcare centres open early enough for day shiftworkers to drop their children in prior to 7 am. Few childcare centres offer overnight care or care available until the end of evening shift (usually evening shift finishes between 10 pm and 11 pm), however, and it is that I am interested in exploring how this group care for their children and work shiftwork.

As I will argue in Chapter Two, the main body of shiftwork research focuses on the physiological impacts of shiftwork and has dominated the field to date, and there has been little attention to the lived experience of those nurses who undertake shiftwork while living in a family situation which involves the care of children. While there are a couple of studies that
explore the lived experience for nurses, one is focused in the early career of nurses in Iran and few had children in the study (Nasrabadi, Seif, Latifi, Rasoolzadeh, & Emami, 2009), and the other examines the lived experience of midlife nurses (West, Mapedzahama, Ahern, & Rudge, 2012). My study fits the gap in between; the time of having and raising children. My question was “how do they manage?” and “how do they get it all done whilst on shiftwork?” These questions originate with the nurse whose story shared above served as impetus, and to whom I referred to in Call to the Question and these have been reshaped as the questions that I set out to answer in this study.

Presuppositions

As outlined in Chapter Four – Living the Methodology, it was important in my role as researcher to reveal my part in the co-creation of the data. As data in phenomenological studies are co-created in the data collection conversations had with the participants of the study, it is important to demonstrate this process of how the data were created (Hastings, 2010). As I have been a shiftworker and am a mother, there are some things that I know about these roles a priori of the study. The revealing of my presuppositions is to demonstrate what I hypothesised may have been the experience of the women in this study. The presuppositions that I bring about the phenomena, my own subjective experiences, thoughts and understandings were brought forward into the conversation to cause a fusion of understanding between interviewer and interviewee (Hastings, 2010). In Chapter Eight, these presuppositions are examined in context with the data.

My pre-suppositions in this study were mainly centred on how the shiftworking mothers I interviewed managed everything in their lives. One pre-supposition I had was that the participants would speak about the difficulty in accessing childcare for their shiftwork. I had thought that the participants would talk about managing their time, some of the negative sides of shiftwork, and their career progression.

Organisation of the Thesis

Chapter Two provides the overview and context of the study by providing a detailed and comprehensive review of the shiftwork literature. The literature review provides the basis for addressing the ‘gap’ discussed above that my study has filled. As noted above, there has been a large body of literature published on the physiological impacts of shiftwork. These include physical health impacts such as cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disturbances, metabolic
syndrome and cancer. The second physical health impact identified in the literature is sleep. The review then identifies and moves onto psychosocial health and includes the topics of depression and anxiety. Then the emerging literature on work/life balance and shiftwork is examined, followed by existing studies on the subjective experience of shiftwork. The review comes to an end with a focus on women’s work and shiftwork.

Chapter Three describes the philosophical foundations of the study. It commences with an overview of hermeneutic interpretative phenomenology informed by Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) and Hans Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2002). Some of the major concepts within each of the philosophers’ work are explained. Following that section, I justify of the use of the methodology, rationalising this before describing the application of the methodology to the study.

Chapter Four explains the method of the study and describes how I went about my inquiry. This chapter discusses the roles of the researcher and participants, how the data were collected, analysed and interpreted, ethical considerations and how rigour was applied to the study. Chapter Four also introduces the participants briefly.

Chapter Five provides a detailed description of the participants and their life stories. Each participant is described and information about their lives is illustrated, whilst maintaining their participant anonymity.

Chapter Six is the thematic analysis based on the method outlined in Chapter Four. The two main themes are detailed. These main themes are Being Guilty and Being Juggler. The sub-themes of Being Juggler are also explained; these are Managing Children, Managing Home and Managing Self-Needs.

Chapter Seven presents my interpretation of the themes described in Chapter Six. After using a methodology primarily informed by Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, I further explore the findings from my study and situate them back into the published literature and social context to create meaning of the experiences of the women in my study.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis and the study. The chapter commences with a detailing of my presuppositions of the study. An explanation follows regarding how rigour was applied within the methodology and methods of the study. The significance of the work and implications of the findings are then discussed and in terms of its contribution as a new voice
to the body of shiftwork literature. Recommendations and further work are discussed prior to the conclusion of the thesis.
Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction
This chapter presents a discussion of the shiftwork literature relevant to the study. Firstly, some background to the shiftwork literature is provided for context to demonstrate the conceptual basis of the inquiry. The focus will then shift to the major areas of shiftwork research that have been published. Finally, the focus narrows to examine the shiftwork research that explores the experience for the shiftworker. The chapter concludes with the aims of the study.

There is a large body of published studies in the shiftwork topic area. Overwhelmingly the physical impact of working shiftwork has been the basis of the majority of the research in this area. There are smaller pockets of research that address psychosocial health and other areas. What is primarily missing from the discussion about shiftwork is the attention of the lived experience of workers. There are a few studies emerging in this topic area, however, to my knowledge my study is the only study to hand that explores the experience of shiftwork for women who also care for children.

Method of the Review
The aim of this paper is to review the literature pertinent to shiftwork, to identify the effect of shiftwork on the individual and to discuss the implications this has for nurses and nursing. Databases used in this review included CINAHL, EBSCO Host, JSTOR, and Medline/PubMed. Search terms used were: shiftwork, and shift work. Use of the word ‘work’ proved problematic for some databases as this retrieved all articles related to general work and these needed further refining to gain access to only shift work articles. Inclusion criteria included: human studies (non-animal), English language, and published between 1980 – 2012. Exclusion criteria included: research focusing on other topics but including shiftwork as a minor keyword (such as studies on work in general), and research that focussed on the organisational perspective. Duplicates between databases was very common.

Overview of Shiftwork Research
This overview outlines the primary areas that have attracted research effort in the area of shiftwork over the last forty years or so. There are two approaches that appear to dominate the shiftwork research reported in the literature: organisational and individually-focused. Most of the individually-focused research that I have studied does seem to be trying to examine the
experience of shiftwork and it has done this in relation on the effects on the worker in a variety of foci such as sleep, coping, physical health and psychosocial health. This has been achieved through means of questionnaires, hormone testing, sleep testing and reaction time tests. The *organisational* approach, which covers issues such as shift system organisation, worker alertness and vigilance, work accidents and incidents and work errors, is not as applicable here. This is because, even though being less vigilant as a result of sleepiness is still a person’s experience of shiftwork, the perspective of organisational research is generally to look at this impact on the work itself. This review is concerned with the *personal* approaches in shiftwork research, as my study has focused on the personal, affective, embodied and relational experience of shiftwork for women with children.

The main focus of research in the shiftwork literature has been in the areas of physical health and psychological/social health. The literature base spans a large range of different industries, professional groups, worker conditions and countries over about forty years. All shiftwork research that pertained to the individual experience that could be accessed, and was written in English was reviewed. Some studies reviewed are quite old (thirty years old), however, these have been reviewed either because no other research has been done in this area; the definitions used within the paper are considered the pivotal definition in the shiftwork literature; or the paper was considered a seminal classic in other ways (such as the beginning of a research area, or extending the understanding of research in a new direction).

There are some areas of research that have not been covered in this review. For example, while the women who were participants in this study spoke about their childcare (or indeed, lack thereof) the focus of this study was to explore their experience of *working shiftwork*. No type of childcare provision is discussed in this thesis, apart from where participants discuss their choices around use or non-use of childcare. Similarly, there is no ‘feminist literature’ review in this chapter, as the shiftwork literature takes a very biological, reductionist view of gender. There are very few sociological studies involving shiftwork and gender, and these are reviewed briefly in this chapter, although neither contain much feminist commentary about gender roles in society and shiftwork. There is significant discussion in Chapters Six and Seven about the lack of gender examination in the shiftwork literature, and this examination of gender is a significant gap in the shiftwork area that this study has gone a small way to fill.

For the purpose of this review the literature has been organised into sections, however inevitably there is crossover between sections. For instance sleep, metabolism, cardiovascular disease and weight gain have clear connections, but for the purpose for being able to clearly
document the review they have been separated into sections. Firstly, there is a section on physical health, which immediately follows this introduction. Within that section the research on cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disturbances, metabolic syndrome cancer and sleep are reviewed. Next a section on psychosocial health contains a section on anxiety and depression. Then there are three smaller sections: work/life balance, which is an emerging area of research in the shiftwork literature; the subjective experience of shiftwork; and lastly women’s work and shiftwork. The impacts of shiftwork on health are complex and areas of exploration tend to overlap.

**Physical Health**

One of the most researched areas in the shiftwork literature is the impact of shiftwork on the physical health of the shiftworker. Cardiovascular and gastrointestinal health have been the two major areas of interest, particularly since the definition of the ‘shiftwork maladaptation syndrome’ in 1985 (Moore-Ede & Richardson, 1985) now known as ‘shiftwork syndrome’ or ‘shiftwork disorder’ (Black et al., 2010). More recently, several large-scale studies examining increased risk of breast cancer in shiftworkers have been carried out (Viswanathan & Schernhammer, 2009). Other studies on cancers such as endometrial cancers (Viswanathan & Schernhammer, 2009) and colorectal cancer (Schernhammer et al., 2003) have been published. There has also been a surge of research examining a possible association between shiftwork and metabolic syndrome and this is reviewed in this section (Pan, Schernhammer, Sun, & Hu, 2011). Sleep and its quality and quantity are other major areas that have attracted research effort in the literature surrounding the physical health of shiftworkers.

Reproductive health has not been an area within the shiftwork research that has been studied extensively, however, there are emerging reports that shiftwork has an adverse effect on reproduction for women (Caruso, 2015) and men (Frazier & Grainger, 2003). Low birth weight has been associated with shiftwork during pregnancy in a number of studies (Frazier & Grainger, 2003; Mozurkewich, Luke, Avni, & Wolf, 2000; Sahu, Srivastav, & Jain, 2015). Frazier & Grainger also reported an increased risk of miscarriage (spontaneous abortion) and difficulty conceiving, as did others (Frazier & Grainger, 2003; Nurminen, 1998). Others have reported a small increased risk of endometriosis in pre-menopausal women (Schernhammer, Vitonis, Rich-Edwards, & Missmer, 2011), which may be one of the many factors related to issues with reproduction. The authors of the study have cautioned that fertility is a multifactorial and complex process and that shiftwork is only one of the many factors involved
(Schernhammer et al., 2011). There is minimal research in this area, and as mentioned previously, fertility is complex. Isolating shiftwork as a single cause or association would be fraught without strong causative research to substantiate such a claim.

Similarly, shiftwork and the menstrual cycle have received little research effort (Hatch, Figa-Talamanca, & Salerno, 1999). Premenstrual symptoms such as reduced sleep quality (Baker & Driver, 2007), menstrual irregularity (Baker & Driver, 2007; Lawson et al., 2011); and dysmenorrhea (pain associated with the menstrual cycle) (Chung, Yao, & Wan, 2005; Labyak, Lava, Turek, & Zee, 2002; Mahoney, 2010) have been reported in the literature. One of the difficulties of examining the association between shiftwork and any potential menstrual problems is that women’s menstrual cycles are characteristic of their individuality and it would be inconceivable to try and describe all of the symptoms that women may experience during their cycle. As the research in this area is reasonably limited, it is unknown whether the menstrual cycle exacerbates symptoms related to shiftwork, or the reverse is true and that shiftwork exacerbates symptoms related to menstrual cycle. Further discussion on menstrual cycle and links to gastro-intestinal problems are discussed in the later section on gastro-intestinal disturbance.

Reproductive physiology is an area that has not been well addressed by the shiftwork literature. There are few studies that examine the changes for women over their working lives, such as pregnancy and menopause whilst women work shifts. There is also little research on women’s fertility and shiftwork, or on the use of hormonal contraceptive devices, such as the oral contraceptive pill, the intrauterine device such as Marina™, the hormonal implant such as Implanon™ or the hormonal injection such as Depo Provera™, and shiftwork.

In this next section the review moves away from the limited research in menstrual cycle, fertility issues and pregnancy to cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular disease has received extensive research over the last forty years or so (Rutenfranz et al., 1977). In early research, studies examining the health effects of shiftworkers considered the risks and effects primarily within a symptomatic framework. More recent research has begun deeper investigation of the causal mechanisms behind the symptoms that shiftworkers report (Puttonen et al., 2010). This section of the review firstly examines the research related to the symptom or condition and then if causal mechanisms have been postulated, the section explores the research on these.
Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular disease has been studied more comprehensively than other shiftwork-related disorders. Much of the early research was done in Scandinavia, where teams of researchers have examined the potential effects of shiftwork on the cardiovascular system for over two decades coming to no definitive conclusion (Boggild, 2009; Frost et al., 2009; Knutsson et al., 1999; Puttonen et al., 2010). Anecdotally, shiftwork is believed to have a detrimental effect on the shiftworker’s cardiovascular system, and morbidity/mortality rates seem to reflect this (Akerstedt & Knutsson, 1997; Boggild & Knutsson, 1999; Puttonen et al., 2009). This assumption has been further strengthened by a range of research studies in this area: (Akerstedt & Knutsson, 1997; Akerstedt, Knutsson, Alfredsson, & Theorell, 1984; Boggild & Knutsson, 1999; Karlsson, Knutsson, & Lindahl, 2001; Knutsson et al., 1999; Orth-Gomer, 1983; Tenkanen, Sjoblom, Kalimo, Alikoski, & Harma, 1997; van Amelsvoort, Schouten, & Kok, 1999, 2004). These have all pointed to the increased relative risk of development of cardiovascular disease whilst working shiftwork although the causal effects have not been well established. It is important to note that cardiovascular disease is multi factorial and a single casual mechanism is unlikely to be indicated.

More recent research tends to caution against absolute causal effect as the evidence seems to be limited (Frost et al., 2009), and some research reports no association between shiftwork and cardiovascular disease (Hublin et al., 2010). The relative risk of cardiovascular disease in men who perform shiftwork has been reported to be 1.5 times the risk in men who work during the day (Akerstedt et al., 1984), although others suggest risk factors of 0.64 – 2.25 (Boggild & Knutsson, 1999; Frost et al., 2009), and a higher relative risk has also been suggested in shiftworking women (Ha & Park, 2005; Kawachi et al., 1995; Knutsson et al., 1999; Puttonen et al., 2009). A recent systematic review that pooled data from over two million people reported risk ratios for myocardial infarction as 1.23, ischaemic stroke as 1.05 and other coronary event as 1.24, however, higher risk of mortality from these events was not observed (Vyas et al., 2012). Rotating night shiftwork was independently associated with an increased risk of hypertension (a precursor to cardiovascular disease) in black people but not in white people in a longitudinal study drawn from the Nurses’ Health Study II undertaken in US (Liehu, Curhan, Schernhammer, & Forman, 2012). However, other studies reported no difference between night shift work and day shift work (Burdelak, Bukowska, Krysicka, & Peplonska, 2012). Increased Body Mass Index (also associated with cardiovascular disease) was associated with night and
rotating shift nurses, but not with permanent day shift nurses in another study (Smith, Fritschi, Reid, & Mustard, 2013).

Although these relative risks seem low, it may become a much more significant risk for shiftworkers when combined with other factors known to contribute to cardiovascular disease, like obesity, poor eating, high caffeine intake, and smoking, and for women, when the cardiovascular protective effects of oestrogen cease after menopause (Canuto, Garcez, & Olinto, 2013).

Inquiry into a hypothesised causal link or mechanism of action forms much of the recent research effort between cardiovascular disease and shiftwork (Frost et al., 2009; Knutsson, 1989; Peter, Alfredsson, Knutsson, Siegrist, & Westerholm, 1999; Sokejima & Kagamimori, 1998; van Amelsvoort et al., 1999). Various studies have examined diet (Knutsson, 1989); smoking (Nabe-Nielsen, Quist, Garde, & Aust, 2011); lack of physical activity (Nabe-Nielsen et al., 2011); physiological indicators such as cholesterol (Karlsson et al., 2001), stress (Peter et al., 1999), weight gain (Caruso, 2014; Peplonska, Bukowska, & Sobala, 2015; Smith et al., 2013), length of working hours (Sokejima & Kagamimori, 1998), hypertension and masked hypertension (high blood pressure during normal activities but lower blood pressure when measured in a clinician’s office) (Landsbergis, Travis, & Schnall, 2013; Lieu et al., 2012), higher concentrations of cortisol (Manenschijn, van Kruysbergen, de Jong, Koper, & van Rossum, 2011) and the desynchronisation of circadian rhythms (Knutsson, 1989).

One theory for a causal link between shiftwork and cardiovascular disease proposes that the sleep loss incurred by shiftworkers is a significant factor because the movement of the circadian rhythms, by either sleep loss or a change in the time of sleep, constitutes a major metabolic challenge to the body (Akerstedt & Knutsson, 1997; Frost et al., 2009; Puttonen et al., 2010). This theory encompasses the research that examines inflammation, blood coagulation, cardiac autonomic function and the interaction cortisol and catecholamine (stress related) and cardiovascular disease (Puttonen et al., 2010). Another premise is that loss of sleep or disturbed sleep affects the immune system, although the exact causal factor here is unknown (Akerstedt & Knutsson, 1997). Another hypothesis attributes cardiovascular disease to the effects of a stressful work environment on the cardiovascular system (Akerstedt & Knutsson, 1997; Puttonen et al., 2010). A final theory canvasses the idea that the elevated morbidity/mortality statistics for cardiovascular disease may be directly related to lifestyle factors, such as the type of food eaten and when it is eaten (Akerstedt & Knutsson, 1997; Costa, 1997; Frost et al., 2009; Knutsson, 1989; Lennernas, Hambraeus, & Akerstedt, 1993; Moore & Halberg, 1986;
Tenkanen, Sjoblom, & Harma, 1998; Thomas & Power, 2010), and use of other drugs such as caffeine, alcohol, sleeping aids and other non-prescription drugs (Frost et al., 2009; Gordon et al., 1986; Wallace, 1983).

This area has been continuously researched for over two decades, and results are conflicting as to whether shiftwork plays a role in cardiovascular disease. A number of causal mechanisms have been proposed, although there is no single theory that has received overwhelming support. As Henrik Boggild (a shiftworker researcher of note) wrote in his editorial “Settling the Question – the next review on shift work and heart disease in 2019” that twenty years of studies have not yielded any firm answers and a further review is set to take place in ten years to try and settle the debate (Boggild, 2009). Certainly some of the evidence being reported now indicates a higher relative risk, however whether shiftwork is the causative agent or whether the lifestyle choices of the shiftworker are of greater import is still unknown.

**Gastrointestinal Disturbances**

Gastrointestinal disturbances associated with shiftwork have been reported in the literature for more than two decades (Burch et al., 2009; Caruso, 2014; Edell-Gustafsson, Kritz, & Bogren, 2002; Knutsson & Boggild, 2010; Pitsopoulos & Greenwood, 2002; Rutenfranz et al., 1977; Sveinsdottir, 2006). Symptoms range from dyspepsia, gastritis, colitis, and peptic ulcer (Knauth & Harma, 1992; Knutsson & Boggild, 2010) to indigestion, appetite disturbance (Verhaegen et al., 1987), irregularity of bowel movements, constipation, heartburn, abdominal pains, stomach grumbling, flatulence, and gastroduodenitis (Costa, 1997). Some “mystery” digestive troubles (Knauth & Harma, 1992) and some “other” digestive diseases have also been reported (Rutenfranz et al., 1977). Several factors that may be involved in the other gastrointestinal symptoms reported among shiftworkers include circadian rhythm desynchrony of the gastric functions (gastric secretion, enzyme activity, and intestinal motility) (Costa, 1997), types of food consumed (Costa, 1997), drug intake (Burch et al., 2009; Gordon et al., 1986), psychosocial stress (Levenstein, 1998), long shifts (16 hours evening night combination shift) (Çelik, Veren, & Ocakci, 2008), and for female shiftworkers, the menstrual cycle (Simmons, Heitkemper, & Shaver, 1988).

The circadian rhythm of gastric acid secretion has not been examined as closely in relation to shiftwork as have other human circadian rhythms (Moore & Halberg, 1986). Circadian rhythm desynchrony has been accepted for some time in the shiftwork literature as a significant part of the sleep disturbances related to shiftwork, but not in others areas of the shiftwork research (Costa, 1997; Cruz, Della Rocco, & Hackworth, 2000; Howarth, Pratt, & Tepas, 1999)
(Akerstedt, 1988; Brugne, 1994; Monk, 1991). Although the symptoms of digestive disturbances have been widely reported, the causal mechanism is not well understood. The available research on the circadian rhythmicity of gastric secretion is more often related to ulceration than to shiftwork. One such study reported that the circadian rhythm of gastric acid secretion entails high rates of acidity during the evening and low levels in the early morning (Moore & Halberg, 1986). If these reported low levels of gastric acid secretion counteract efficient digestion during the early hours of the morning, several previously mentioned symptoms might occur.

Gastrointestinal function during the menstrual cycle is another element that may confound the data on digestive disturbances, or there may be a cumulative effect of shiftwork and the menstrual cycle. Diarrhoea, abdominal pain, nausea, and appetite changes have been reported during the premenstrual and menstrual phases of the cycle (Gill, Murphy, Hooper, Bowes, & Kingma, 1987; Moore, Barlow, Jewell, & Kennedy, 1998; Simmons et al., 1988). These symptoms have also been reported in other studies as directly related to shiftwork (Costa, 1997; Knauth & Harma, 1992; Verhaegen et al., 1987). Although it is difficult to distinguish whether these symptoms are directly related to shiftwork or are directly related to the menstrual cycle in female shiftworkers, similar symptoms are also reported in male shiftworkers. This would confirm that while the menstrual cycle may affect the gastrointestinal system of women, shiftwork also has an effect. For menstruating women working shiftwork there may be a cumulative effect where women experience symptoms more acutely.

Another recent study cannot confirm a relationship between shiftwork and upper gastrointestinal, non-specific gastrointestinal, peptic ulcer or gastritis (van Mark, Spallek, Groneberg, Kessel, & Weiler, 2010), although abnormal eating behaviour was positively associated with shiftwork in a recent study conducted on nurses (Wong, Wong, Wong, & Lee, 2010).

Again, confirming an absolute causal mechanism for the association between shiftwork and gastrointestinal disturbances, has been the focus of the research in this area. However, as this section indicates gastrointestinal symptoms are diverse, and seem to be caused by a variety of factors. It is likely, in time, that the highly complex and individualistic nature of people’s responses to different stimuli on the gastrointestinal system will be better understood. Currently, however, efforts to demonstrate an association and provide evidence for the causative agent have not been successful.
Metabolic Syndrome

Metabolic syndrome is a “combination of metabolic disorders that include central obesity, raised plasma glucose, triglycerides, increased blood pressure and reduced HDL cholesterol” (Canuto et al., 2013). Metabolic syndrome is associated with the development of both cardiovascular disease and type two diabetes (Wilson, D’Agostino, Parise, Sullivan, & Meigs, 2005), and therefore could be reviewed in the sections on cardiovascular disease and gastrointestinal disturbances. However, this area has been well researched in conjunction with shiftwork and there is now a substantial literature base. This section will examine the available evidence on the association of shiftwork and metabolic syndrome and the proposed causal mechanisms for the association.

A number of studies have reported an association between shiftwork and metabolic syndrome (De Bacquer et al., 2009; Esquirol et al., 2009; Karlsson et al., 2001; Karlsson, Knutsson, Lindahl, & Alfredsson, 2003; Lin, Hsiao, & Chen, 2009; Pan et al., 2011; Pietroiusti et al., 2010; Sookoian et al., 2007). Another study proposed that the evidence for the association between shiftwork and metabolic syndrome is suggestive but not conclusive (Wang, Armstrong, Cairns, Key, & Travis, 2011). Additionally, a further study reported an acceleration to metabolic syndrome or worsening of symptoms in shiftworkers who worked throughout the 24 hour period rather than day and evening shift (Lin et al., 2009). Others, however, do not find sufficient evidence for an association at this stage (Canuto et al., 2013; Wehrens, Hampton, Finn, & Skene, 2010).

There is a combination of symptoms that comprises metabolic syndrome and different studies have reported diverse results. A range of metabolic syndrome definitions are used in research and depending on which definition is used, the results will be affected (Wang et al., 2011). Some reported impaired glucose metabolism (Suwazono et al., 2010), increased weight (Antunes, Levandovski, Dantas, Caumo, & Hidalgo, 2010; Manenschijn et al., 2011); diabetes (Pan et al., 2011; Suwazono et al., 2010), lipid disturbances (Karlsson et al., 2003), elevated blood pressure (Lin et al., 2009), increased cortisol levels (Manenschijn et al., 2011), increased inflammation (Sookoian et al., 2007) all of which has been implicated in the development of cardiovascular disease (Puttonen et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2005).

The possible causal mechanism for an association between shiftwork and metabolic syndrome seems to be largely centred around circadian desynchrony (Burgueno, Gemma, Gianotti, Sookoian, & Pirola, 2010; Staels, 2006). “Unfavourable” changes in food habits, both amount and type of food, irregularity of meals and smoking have also been implicated as a possible
mechanism, although one study reported that nutritional intake between rotating shift workers and day shift workers was similar (Pan et al., 2011). Work stress and socioeconomic status was proposed in one meta-analysis (Kivimäki et al., 2006). Others, however, have been more cautious about asserting a cause (Puttonen et al., 2010).

There are several differences between the studies reviewed above; firstly there are differences in the definition of metabolic syndrome used in the study (and subsequently which symptoms the study chooses as variables). Some studies have used the definition agreed on by the National Cholesterol Education Program expert panel on detection, evaluation, and treatment of high blood cholesterol in adults (Biggi, Consonni, Galluzzo, Sogliani, & Costa, 2008) whereas others do not clarify which definition they used (Lin et al., 2009). The main sticking point is that there are slight differences between definitions (such as threshold waist measurements) that would clearly affect the outcome of a study (Eckel, Grundy, & Zimmet, 2005). The second difference is that between studies there are often different and inconsistent shift system patterns used, which could confound the findings. If similar shift systems were used a comparative analysis would be more straight-forward.

The research on a possible association between shiftwork and metabolic syndrome is relatively new (less than two decades) and only as larger studies and subsequently meta-analyses and systematic reviews are undertaken will studies be able to provide clarification of this association. It is probable that the mechanism for the development of metabolic syndrome is more complex than shiftwork, however, this is not known at this time.

**Cancer**

Cancer is “the name given to a collection of related diseases. In all types of cancer, some of the body’s cells begin to divide without stopping and spread into surrounding tissues” (National Cancer Institute, 2015). Most of the work in the area of shiftwork and cancer has occurred after 2000 and since the turn of the century there has been quite an emphasis on examining relative risks and the possible causal mechanism. This section reviews the literature in this area.

In 2007 The International Agency for Research on Cancer (Press Release N° 180) stated that “shiftwork that involved circadian disruption was probably carcinogenic to humans” (Haus & Smolensky, 2013; International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2007). This release particularly referred to increased rates of breast cancer in nurses and flight attendants (International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2007). The first hypothesis of an association between breast cancer and light at night was proposed by Stevens in 1987 and was based on
circadian desynchronisation caused by use of electric light since the industrial revolution (Stevens, 1987).

A number of studies have reported higher rates of breast cancer in association with shiftwork (Arendt, 2010; Benabu, Stoll, Gonzalez, & Mathelin, 2015; Davis, Mirick, & Stevens, 2001; Hansen, 2001; Hansen & Lassen, 2012; Hansen & Stevens, 2012; Lewy, Haus, & Ashkenazi, 2007; Megdal, Kroenke, Laden, Pukkala, & Schernhammer, 2005; O'Leary et al., 2006; Schernhammer et al., 2001; Schernhammer et al., 2003; Spiegel & Sephton, 2002; Viswanathan & Schernhammer, 2009). Some report an odds ratio of 1.5 for women who worked night work for at least half of the year (Hansen, 2001). Others however, have disputed, this with no association between breast cancer and shiftwork having been found (Pronk et al., 2010), though some argument regarding methodology exists (Girschik, Heyworth, & Fritschi, 2010).

A study published the same year as the International Agency for Research on Cancer (Press Release N° 180) (2007) found no association between breast or prostate cancer and shiftwork (Schwartzbaum, Ahlbom, & Feychting, 2007), although others dispute this finding based on the limitations of the study (Pukkala & Harma, 2007). Others have theorised that there is a moderate risk associated with shiftwork, where more shiftwork leads to higher undesirable side effects (dose-effect) (Benabu et al., 2015). This dose effect means that the more shiftwork that was worked the higher the ‘dose’ and subsequent side effect, in this case, cancer. One study reported higher rates even after a relatively short time (Hansen & Stevens, 2012); whereas others suggest a cumulative effect over 20 – 30 years (Kolstad, 2008; Pesch et al., 2010; Schernhammer, Kroenke, Laden, & Hankinson, 2006; Schernhammer et al., 2001) A meta-analysis reported an increased cancer risk of 48% (Megdal et al., 2005), whereas a more recent systematic review and meta-analysis stated that there is weak evidence that there is an increased risk of breast cancer for those who work night shifts (Kamdar, Tergas, Mateen, Bhayani, & Oh, 2013). One other systematic review, however, disagreed with the previous two discussed and found there was limited evidence for a causal association between breast cancer and shiftwork and insufficient evidence supporting an association between shiftwork and prostate cancer, colon cancer and cancer in general (Kolstad, 2008).

Other studies on cancers such as endometrial cancers (Viswanathan & Schernhammer, 2009) and colorectal cancer have been published (Schernhammer et al., 2003). Modest increased risk for prostate cancer has also been reported (Conlon, Lightfoot, & Kreiger, 2007; Kubo et al., 2006), although other research did not find any association (Kolstad, 2008; Schwartzbaum et al., 2007).
There are several postulated causal mechanisms: melatonin suppression by night time light exposure (Arendt, 2010; International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2007; O'Leary et al., 2006; Schernhammer et al., 2003; Schwartzbaum et al., 2007); increasing levels of oestrogens, sleep deprivation (Costa, Haus, & Stevens, 2010) and growth of hormone dependant tumours (Schernhammer et al., 2003). Breast cancer risk increased for women whose circadian rhythms of cortisol and prolactin did not phase shift (move their rhythm) under a period of external cues (Lewy et al., 2007). While this study is applied research, its implications are important for women working shiftwork as a result of circadian disruption. It is not yet known what the causative agent is and large, well-controlled studies are needed to answer this. The main issue with the current studies is while some use large sample sizes their methodologies differ and it is difficult to come to a clear conclusion (Costa et al., 2010). In all probability the causal mechanism is likely to be a combination of the factors discussed above.

This section has provided some limited emerging evidence for an association between shiftwork, particularly at night and some cancers, most prominently breast cancer. While the meta-analyses with their large combined samples are good guides, further work needs to be undertaken, particularly controlling for light exposure and levels of hormones and examining the exposure for an extended period of time.

**Sleep**

Sleep has been defined as “a reversible behavioural state of perceptual disengagement from and unresponsiveness to the environment.” (Carskadon & Dement, 2011, p.16). The average sleep length for a healthy young non shiftworking adult is 7.5 hours through the working week and 8.5 hours on the weekend with an overall average of 8 hours (Carskadon & Dement, 2011). Although there is individual variation in sleep length, it is commonly accepted that around 8 hours per night is what most healthy non shiftworking adults require. The quality of sleep depends on a range of factors; both internal and external. For example, a new baby is often the cause of decreased sleep quality and is an external factor; whereas a dose of influenza will usually cause a decrease in sleep quality and is considered an internal reason for the disruption. Sleep is composed of several different components; non-rapid eye movement (NREM) and rapid eye movement sleep (Carskadon & Dement, 2011). Usually when a person falls asleep they experience NREM first and REM occurs around 80 minutes later, with sleep cycling through NREM and REM for the period of the sleep (Carskadon & Dement, 2011).

Sleep has been researched primarily as an objective measure (quantity) although a subjective (quality) focus has also been reported. Various studies have established that shiftwork affects
sleep quality and quantity (Akerstedt, 1988; Akerstedt et al., 1982; Folkard, Monk, & Lobban, 1978; Kogi, 1985; Rutenfranz, Haider, & Koller, 1985; Winwood, Winefield, & Lushington, 2006). The reduction in quantity and quality of sleep is partially related to the need to sleep because of the work schedule occurring at the most inappropriate point in the circadian cycle (Adams, Folkard, & Young, 1986; Akerstedt, 1985).

Previously, to study length of sleep periods, or quantity of sleep, instruments such as polysomnography or actigraphy tend to be used (Ancoli-Israel et al., 2003; Borazio & Van Laerhoven, 2012; Gale, Signal, & Gander, 2005; Morgenthaler et al., 2007; Paalasmaa, Waris, Toivonen, Leppakorpi, & Partinen, 2012). These instruments use computer analysis to determine the length of time a person is asleep, and other sleep characteristics such as mid sleep awakenings and duration of sleep onset. In more recent times use of wearable technology such as Fitbit™, Apple smartwatch and Bellabeat™ jewellery has allowed people to monitor their sleep quantity and quality at home in their normal environment. For sleep researchers, these wearable technology devices allow exploration of similar parameters of sleep with greatly reduced costs, and with similar results to actigraphy in normative settings (Kay et al., 2012). Use of smart phones and applications such as iSleep™ have also reported greater than 90% accuracy of sleep parameters (Hao, Xing, & Zhou, 2013). The development of these newer technologies is useful for researchers as they are more aesthetically pleasing to participants and may be more acceptable as a research instrument. There is some research that has reported overestimation of sleep by both wearable technology devices and actigraphs compared to polysomnography (Kay et al., 2012). Polysomnography is still considered the ‘gold’ standard in sleep measurement, however, it is neither readily available nor inexpensive for many people (Baroni, Bruzzese, Di Bartolo, & Shatkin, 2015; Borazio & Van Laerhoven, 2012; Paalasmaa et al., 2012).

Sleep has also been researched using subjective questionnaires (Monk et al., 1994). There are several questionnaires that use a diary type format such as the Pittsburgh Sleep Diary (Monk et al., 1994) or others that explore particular components of sleep, such as daytime sleepiness in the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (Johns, 1991, 1994). Questionnaires are often used in conjunction with other sleep measurement devices in research.

The next three sections review the literature on shiftwork and sleep quantity, sleep quality and fatigue.
Sleep Quantity

Sleep quantity is the amount of time that an individual slept. As stated above, the average sleep length is around 8 hours (Carskadon & Dement, 2011). Shiftworkers who work overnight sleep throughout the day. Up to 20% of workers do not tolerate working overnight well, mainly as a result of circadian disruption (Scott & Ladou, 1990). Decreased sleep quantity and quality in male shiftworkers in relation to shiftwork has been established (Akerstedt, 1988; Akerstedt et al., 1982; Folkard et al., 1978; Jay, Aisbett, Sprajcer, & Ferguson, 2015; Kogi, 1985; Paech, Ferguson, Banks, Dorrian, & Roach, 2014; Rutenfranz et al., 1985; Sallinen et al., 2003), however, this has not been studied in as much detail in women. There is some research that examines shiftwork and decreased sleep quantity and quality for women, however, it is sparse (Cruz, Detwiler, Nesthus, & Boquet, 2003; Florida-James, Wallymahned, & Reilly, 1996; Garde, Hansen, & Hansen, 2009; Ha & Park, 2005). Furthermore, for women, sleep can be affected by their menstrual cycle and there is little known about the impact of shiftwork on the sleep of menstruating women (Baker & Driver, 2007); or on reproduction (Caruso, 2015; Harrington, 2001).

Decreased sleep has been associated with poorer immune function, and susceptibility to the common cold (rhinovirus) (Cohen, Doyle, Alper, Janicki-Deverts, & Turner, 2009). Sleep has also been reported to have a role in metabolism and healthy weight maintenance, learning and memory and cardiovascular disease (Bauer et al., 2012). As mentioned above, the postulated decreased sleep quantity and quality experienced by shiftworkers is related to when shiftworkers sleep, as well as the amount of time they sleep. Humans are essentially a diurnal species and therefore working at night may increase the risks of disease (Barton, Folkard, et al., 1995; Barton, Spelten, Totterdell, Smith, Folkard, et al., 1995; Monk & Folkard, 1992). As previously indicated, emerging studies of shiftworkers are reporting higher rates of cancer (International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2007; Viswanathan & Schernhammer, 2009), and cardiovascular disease (Boggild & Knutsson, 1999; Frost et al., 2009).

Women, shiftwork and sleep quantity were explored in relation to other care duties that women need to undertake. The impact of shiftwork on sleep and family life among rotating-shift nurses using a time budget method was studied by Kurumantani et al. (1994). Sleep was decreased if the subject needed to perform other duties (domestic or otherwise). Instead of sleeping for seven or eight hours when they had time off work, family responsibilities were undertaken rather than of catching up on their sleep debt (Kurumantani et al., 1994). This ‘second shift’ for working women has been reported elsewhere, most notably in the seminal work The Second
Shift (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Most day working women, however, are not actively caring for children or undertaking household duties during their main sleep periods.

Other studies have reported decreased sleep quantity when workers have children or elders to care for at home (Clissold, Smith, & Acutt, 2001; Sallinen et al., 2005; Scott, Hwang, & Rogers, 2006). Insufficient sleep was found to be associated with increased reporting of symptoms such as mental tiredness, exhaustion, altered mood (Chan, 2009; Edell-Gustafsson et al., 2002). Conversely, another study reports poorer sleep among shiftworkers even when household duties are controlled (Geiger-Brown, Trinkoff, & Rogers, 2011). These studies mentioned above are rare, as they take into account the other time constraints that all women, particularly shiftworking women have apart from work.

**Sleep Quality**

Sleep quality refers to perceived deep sleep experienced by the person who has slept (Winwood et al., 2006). Also, sleep quality has been linked with how the individual feels on waking, ease of waking, tiredness, mood, feelings of restoration and refreshment (Harvey, Stinson, Whitaker, Moskovitz, & Virk, 2008). Global sleep quality among permanent night-shift nurses was significantly poorer than that of the day-shift workers in one study (Ruggiero, 2003) and in rotating shift nurses in others (Chan, 2009; Garde et al., 2009; Karagozoglu & Bingöl, 2008; Niedhammer, Lert, & Marne, 1994; Skipper, Jung, & Coffey, 1990; Winwood et al., 2006), yet there was no association reported with shift systems in another (Sveinsdottir, 2006). Poor sleep quality, higher workload perception, lack of exercise and lack of support was associated with fatigue in an Australian study of aged care (eldercare) nurses (Samaha, Lal, Samaha, & Wyndham, 2007). Some shiftworker control over scheduling was trialled in an attempt to increase sleep quality, however no change in sleep quality was reported (Garde, Nabe-Nielsen, & Aust, 2011).

**Fatigue**

Fatigue is a prevalent condition that has often been associated with shiftwork (Akerstedt et al., 1982; Josten, Ng-A-Tham, & Thierry, 2003; McGettrick & O'Neill, 2006; Rogers, Hwang, Scott, Aiken, & Dinges, 2004; Rutenfranz et al., 1985; Samaha et al., 2007). It is characterised by performance lapses and workers experiencing difficulty keeping their eyes open, and some sleep-like electroencephalography (EEG) patterns may occur (Akerstedt, 1988). Chronic fatigue has also been defined as persistent tiredness (Ruggiero, 2003; Samaha et al., 2007). Fatigue increased (because of less sleep) when other duties were undertaken (Clissold, Smith, Accutt, & Di Milia, 2002; Kurumatani et al., 1994; Scott et al., 2006). The literature is unclear
as to the exact mechanism of chronic fatigue in shiftwork; though a number of theories have been proposed. Firstly, one theory suggests that the circadian rhythm desynchrony where sleep is being taken at an inappropriate time in the circadian cycle is a problem (Adams et al., 1986; Akerstedt, 1985) and another suggests that the fatigue is related to the decrease in sleep quantity and/or quality (Edell-Gustafsson et al., 2002; Kurumatani et al., 1994; Ruggiero, 2003). The relationship between the amount and quality of sleep for an individual working shiftwork and the impact on the longer-term effect of chronic fatigue is unknown.

The other issue with fatigue is the associated decrease in alertness and often performance on simple and complex tasks. The accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl both occurred at night, and the subsequent intensive investigations attributed them to worker error caused by lack of vigilance (Folkard, Totterdell, Minors, & Waterhouse, 1993). Other studies have also reported that errors and near errors increase with shiftwork and become more frequent the longer a shift continues (Rogers et al., 2004). Errors can be incidents such as medication errors, as well as needle stick injuries and blood/bodily fluid exposure. One systematic review reported a higher incidence of work related injuries were associated with shiftwork (Zhao, Bogossian, & Turner, 2010). Fatigue can also affect the drive home after work (Lee et al., 2015). This study reported that even for workers with a short commute home are at risk (Lee et al., 2015). The impact of a study of this nature is greater considering the public health risk of having fatigued drivers on the road endangering the lives of others.

Various studies have established that shiftwork affects sleep quality and quantity (Akerstedt, 1988; Akerstedt et al., 1982; Folkard et al., 1978; Kogi, 1985; Rutenfranz et al., 1985). This loss of sleep, accompanied by the trough in the temperature cycle at 0400, which is important for sleep (Haus & Touitou, 1992; Minors & Waterhouse, 1992), may have important implications for worker safety and for patient safety in the context of nursing (Dingley, 1996).

The research focus of sleep within the shiftwork area has decreased in recent years as researchers have noted continued reporting of sleep disruption and shiftwork for over twenty years (Akerstedt, 1988; Akerstedt et al., 1982; Folkard et al., 1978; Kogi, 1985; Rutenfranz et al., 1985). The focus in the research has moved into trying to find the best shiftwork system for workers to reduce the effects of fatigue on the workers.

This section has examined the impact of shiftwork on sleep. I have separated the sleep area into several categories: sleep quality, sleep quantity and fatigue. It is clear from the available research that shiftworkers experience decreased sleep quality, usually attributed to the time of
day that the sleep period occurs, often decreased amount of sleep and resulting fatigue which has been reported to have consequences of performance. While it is acknowledged that shiftwork in a range of industries is required, research in the sleep field has tried to find shift systems that least impact upon the person and in earlier research try to find the perfect shiftworker for the role undertaken, which I address below.

**Psychosocial Health**

In addition to the concerns about physical health effects of shiftwork it has also been studied in regard to psychosocial health. Psychosocial health is a term that means “a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being” (Martikainen, Bartley, & Lahelma, 2002, p.1091; World Health Organisation, 1948). In this context, the term is important as shiftwork has such a vast impact on the lives of shiftworkers, from the physical effects through to the mental and social impacts, and hence is important to consider in this review.

Shiftwork research has a history of more than fifty years and in that time a range of concepts have gone ‘in and out of fashion’ in the shiftwork research area. Research has at different times focused on personality traits in the attempt to find the perfect shiftworker. These include extraversion and neuroticism; and chronotype. I have included them here as an introduction because while they are important parts of the research area, these are not a concern to the individual themselves, but rather to shiftwork researchers. It is prudent to note that chronotype testing is not undertaken prior to entry to either medical school or a degree in nursing and these shiftworkers would usually not know whether they displayed stronger eveningness traits or not. Chronotype is “an attribute of human beings that reflects their individual circadian phase. These phases reveal at what time of the day the individual’s physical functions, hormone levels, body temperature, cognitive faculties, and eating and sleeping patterns are active.” (Levandovski, Sasso, & Hidalgo, 2013, p. 4). The individual circadian phase for sleep encompasses terms such as ‘night owl’ or early bird’ which are commonly used to describe people’s natural waking habits.

Neuroticism and extraversion are believed to be important in shiftwork tolerance, and their analysis has been undertaken in order to anticipate the kinds of workers who will perform best in shiftwork (Barton, Spelten, Totterdell, Smith, Folkard, et al., 1995; Folkard, Monk, & Lobban, 1979; Iskra-Golec, 1993). Extraversion is one of the dimensions in the five factor model, a personality model that describes a number of personality traits. The five factor model of “personality is a hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to
Experience.” (McCrae & John, 1992 p. 175). The dimension of extraversion is characterised by individuals who are active, cheerful and sociable (Matsumoto, 2009). Neuroticism is also one the dimensions in the model that characterises the extent to which an individual chronically engages in dysfunctional emotional, behavioural and cognitive actions (Matsumoto, 2009). Early studies in shiftwork reported that individuals who scored highly on neuroticism (Adams et al., 1986; Meers, Maasen, & Verhaegen, 1978) and introversion (that is, the opposite of extraversion) (Nacheiner, 1975) were less likely to tolerate shiftwork. Higher reported scores of neuroticism and lower reported scores of extraversion was linked to higher rates of difficulty coping with shiftwork in one study (Humm, 1996), though the study author suggests that the effect of neuroticism and less shiftwork tolerance capacity by the shiftworker was bidirectional (that is, it is difficult to determine whether the inability to cope well with shiftwork is as a result of neuroticism, or whether the shiftwork caused an increase in the neuroticism scores). Non adaptation (inverting of the circadian rhythm of cortisol) to shiftwork by people rating more highly on neuroticism was also reported in another study (Hennig, Kieferdorf, Moritz, Huwe, & Netter, 1998), although no relationship between cortisol and neuroticism was reported in a slightly later study (Schommer, Kudielka, Hellhammer, & Kirschbaum, 1999).

The concept of chronotype or “morningness/eveningness” has been described and studied in the shiftwork literature for over two decades, with the aim of identifying the workers with greatest tolerance for permanent night work and rotating rosters. The concept of morningness/eveningness was initially described by Horne and Ostberg (1975), who used a questionnaire to categorise people as either “larks” or “owls” (Horne & Ostberg, 1975). Other authors have subsequently developed questionnaires to examine morningness/eveningness (Folkard et al., 1978), although some questionnaires are still based on the work of Horne and Ostberg (Barton, Spelten, Totterdell, Smith, Folkard, et al., 1995). Early studies in shiftwork reported morningness to be a factor in an individual’s ability to tolerate shiftwork (Akerstedt & Froberg, 1976).

The relationship between morningness/eveningness and morning levels of salivary cortisol was studied (Bailey & Heitkemper, 1991) by collecting demographic and, sleep-related data, and analysing early morning saliva. This sleep-related data suggested that the group of subjects classified as “evening” people went to bed later, woke later, and generally felt less refreshed on waking than did the group classified as “morning” people (Bailey & Heitkemper, 1991). Other studies of this type have also reported similar results (Costa, Lievore, Cesaletti, Gaffuri, & Folkard, 1989; Folkard et al., 1978; Horne & Ostberg, 1976). Chronotype has been primarily
related to sleep habits (Carrier, Monk, Buysse, & Kupfer, 1997; Chung, Chang, Yang, Kuo, & Hsu, 2009; Kudielka, von Kanel, et al., 2006), however, other studies have identified differences between chronotypes in the areas of cortisol rhythm (Kudielka, Federenko, Hellhammer, & Wust, 2006; Vidacek, Kaliterna, Radosevi-Vidacek, & Folkard, 1988); body temperature (Bailey & Heitkemper, 1991); and the regulating of lifestyle (Monk, Buysse, Potts, DeGrazia, & Kupfer, 2004). There have been few recent research studies in this area and further work is required to establish accurately whether chronotype is a significant factor for shiftworkers and their experience.

While the personality traits of extraversion and neuroticism and chronotype have been popular in the shiftwork research area at different times, the individual working shiftwork may be unaware of the literature base and fewer studies in these areas are being published now. The main section of psychosocial health below has been divided into two main subtopics; anxiety and depression; and individual and situational differences.

**Anxiety and Depression**

The definition of anxiety that is used here is “anxiety is a future oriented mood state associated with preparation for possible, upcoming negative events; and fear is an alarm response to present or imminent danger (real or perceived)” (Craske et al., 2009, p. 1067). Often people who experience anxiety can have symptoms such as feelings of tension, recurring intrusive thoughts and physical symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, sweating, dizziness, trembling, nausea and increased blood pressure (Craske et al., 2009). Depression is characterised by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, feelings of tiredness, and poor concentration (World Health Organisation, 2016) or a period of “at least two weeks during which there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities.” (Driesen, Jansen, Kant, Mohren, & van Amelsvoort, 2010 p. 1063).

There has been a recent resurgence of research that examines shiftwork and anxiety and depression. Research conducted in 1995 reported that chronic mental health effects have been indicated as one of the long term effects of shiftwork (Barton, Spelten, Totterdell, Smith, Folkard, et al., 1995). Women were much more likely to report anxiety and depression working rotating shiftwork in some studies (Bara & Arber, 2009; Scott, Monk, & Brink, 1997; Selvi, Özdemir, Özdemir, Aydin, & Besiroglu, 2010) whereas others have reported a greater effect in men (Driesen et al., 2010). This last study did not have significant numbers of women who reported depressive symptoms, however, as the authors point out women are more likely to
work part-time and may not feel the emotional burden that men do of being the bread winners (Driesen et al., 2010). This financial burden whilst working unsocial hours, missing important milestones in children’s lives and social events may be part of the explanation of the greater numbers of men reported symptoms of depression.

There also seems a dose-effect response as one study reported that anxiety and depression was an issue for up to 20 years after stopping shiftwork (Scott et al., 1997). This finding was similarly reported in another study conducted on nurses in Iran (Ardekani, Kakooei, Ayattollahi, Choobineh, & Seraji, 2008), however, the authors suggest the finding could be in part attributable to the role of nurses as well as shiftwork as nursing is considered a low status job in Iran.

Anxiety and depression associated with shiftwork have been reported elsewhere (Drake, Roehrs, Richardson, Walsh, & Roth, 2004; Glazer, 2005; Harrington, 2001; Kubo et al., 2008; Moraes de Almondes & Araújo, 2009; Scott et al., 1997; Suzuki et al., 2004; Tamagawa, Lobb, & Booth, 2007). An association between daytime sleepiness and fatigue and anxiety and depression in a large population study has also been reported (Theorell-Haglow, Lindberg, & Janson, 2006). However, there are studies that find no association between shiftwork and anxiety and/or depression (Moraes de Almondes & Araújo, 2009; Øyane, Pallesen, Moen, Åkerstedt, & Bjorvatn, 2013). Others found some traits of anxiety were increased with shiftwork but not others (Yavuz, Pýnar, Osman, Adem, & Lütfullah, 2010). Given the disparate types of methodologies, participants and settings used it is difficult to draw conclusions about the association between shiftwork and anxiety and depression.

One final point is that it is important to consider in all these studies that the participants are still in the shift system. Workers who find shiftwork too difficult often self-select out of it, either by changing shift if viable or by leaving and finding another job. It is possible that the effect of shiftwork on the development of anxiety and depression conditions is underestimated because of the ‘healthy worker’ effect.

In summary, there seems to be contradictory evidence about the effect of shiftwork on anxiety and depression. As people who score highly on anxiety scales and neuroticism scales pre shiftwork are much less likely to tolerate shiftwork well (Saksvik, Bjorvatn, Hetland, Sandal, & Pallesen, 2011), it is difficult to ascertain whether the shiftwork caused the anxiety or depression or that the prevalence was there and by working shiftwork the prevalence surfaced.
or worsened. At this time there is no clear consensus within the literature about shiftwork’s effect on the two conditions of depression and anxiety.

**Work/Life Balance**

The last decade has seen the emergence of research that focuses on balance in work and free time for workers. There are several approaches that researchers tend to use in this area; home/work (work/family) conflict from an organisational point of view, often using job satisfaction as the measure of work/family conflict. The second approach examines the work/family conflict from the point of view of the individual and the family. Other concepts such as the influence of the partner/spouse on the shiftworker, the effects of children and their needs, and the effects of the age of the shiftworker will be discussed as well.

Job satisfaction was used to describe work/life balance in one study (Lourel, Ford, Gammassou, Gueguen & Hartmann, 2009). The impacts of both work and home on job satisfaction were explored, and high levels of home-to-work and work-to-home conflicts were associated with intentions to quit the particular job (Lourel, Ford, Gammassou, Gueguen & Hartmann, 2009). Others have suggested that difficulty balancing childcare, shiftwork and rostering led to shorter tenure in nursing (nurses leaving nursing because they were unable to resolve the work family conflict satisfactorily to suit their situation) (Duffield, O’Brien Pallas & Aitken, 2004). Other studies report that higher expectations from the organisation often lead to higher work family conflict (Allan, Loudoun & Peetz, 2007). High work family conflict is also associated with low co-worker and supervisor support from the organisation (Schluter, Turner, Huntington, Bain, & McClure, 2011).

A change in shift length from 8 hours to 12 hours was trialled in a study to examine the effect of decreasing the number of shifts worked per week and to allow workers a greater amount of time off in one block (Loudoun, 2008). Loudoun’s study concluded that there were no advantages nor disadvantages for psychosocial health between the 8 and 12 hour shifts (Loudoun, 2008). The argument that going to work for longer periods and then having greater amount of time off all in one time period is the basis for studies such as Loudoun’s. The counter argument for working women is that accessing childcare for 12 hours rather than 8 may be much more difficult unless workers live or work in areas with extended childcare hours. While centres in large metropolitan areas may routinely open 12 hours per day, this is probably not the case in rural or remote areas. Even for those women who live in metropolitan areas, the extended childcare does not allow for travel to and from work, nor for unplanned overtime. For
women who do not have good support from families, or are single parents, the extended shift may make it too difficult to organise childcare to gain the benefits of extra time off.

Work/life balance was better achieved by midwives in a group practice setting, where each midwife was allocated a number of women to care for, for the entire ante, peri and post-natal period (Fereday & Oster, 2008). The midwives organised appointments around their own schedules, to meet their requirements as well as their caseload. Midwives were also on call for women in their load and often would work on their days off to assist labouring women. Days off were then rescheduled (Fereday & Oster, 2008). Flexibility in this study was the most important factor in being able to manage the midwives’ home requirements, such as dropping off and picking children up from school (Fereday & Oster, 2008). Mostly, however, other types of shiftwork do not have the flexibility to work in this manner. It is clear from this group that the healthcare organisation was supportive of the type of work scheduling that was being undertaken in this study.

Work/family conflict (from an individual perspective) is one of the more heavily used approaches to exploring work/life balance in the literature. Women often report less balance in being able to manage both work and family requirements, particularly if they work non-standard work schedules (i.e. shiftwork and weekends) (Liu, Wang, Keesler & Schneider, 2010; Haines, Marchand, Rousseau & Demers, 2008; Hosking & Western, 2008; Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). Some studies did not report higher work/family conflict when the worker undertook shiftwork (Lallukka, Rahkonen, Lahelma & Arber, 2009), however, this study was primarily concerned with middle-aged workers (between 40 – 60 years). One study reported that higher levels of work/family conflict for women suggested that social isolation because of shiftwork and family responsibilities was significant to the diagnosis of depression in both genders (Haines, Marchand, Rousseau & Demers, 2008). The more days worked per week, and working Sundays, were mostly highly associated with work/family conflict in one large study that used nursing cohorts from four countries including Australia (Barnes-Farrell, Davies-Schrils, McGonagle, Walsh, Di Milia, Fischer, Hobbs, Kaliterna & Tepas, 2008).

The nature of workers’ domestic circumstances has been primarily examined in terms of impact on sleep for shiftworkers. In two studies the addition of children to a shiftworking household meant more marital instability (James & Sudha, 2015; Sallinen et al., 2005), and more sleepiness and domestic disruption (Lushington, Lushington, & Dawson, 1997; Sallinen et al., 2005), particularly for female shiftworkers (Lushington et al., 1997). Other studies report family-related advantages and disadvantages of shiftwork (Barton, Smith, Totterdell, Spelten,
Several of the studies reviewed, examined the reactions and feelings of the partners of shiftworkers (Newey & Hood, 2004; Smith et al., 1993). In one study 53% of these were unhappy or very unhappy with their partners’ shiftwork, and a third of all respondents had tried to persuade their partners to change their working hours (Smith et al., 1993). This type of research is rare in the body of shiftwork literature, although some research has explored whether partner support helps a worker to better tolerate shiftwork (Robson & Wedderburn, 1989). The partners of shiftworkers are a very important group in this context, because domestic disruption is likely to negatively affect the shiftworker’s experience of their work. Another study examined subjective health with shiftwork advantages (Taylor et al., 1997) and suggested that workers did enjoy some shiftwork advantages, such as a good family life and financial benefits, although the advantages were small (less than 10%) (Taylor et al., 1997). Coping strategies in relation to shiftwork have been examined from a range of perspectives, mainly from a behavioural point. Often research is examining the coping strategies that may be detrimental to how a person manages their shiftwork and home life. The day to day strategies that can help shiftworkers sleep are an important matter to consider, as I have demonstrated already that fatigue is one of the most prevalent shiftwork effects (Akerstedt et al., 1982; Josten et al., 2003; McGilchrist & O’Neill, 2006; Novak & Auvil-Novak, 1996; Rutenfranz et al., 1985). Smoking and alcohol consumption have been reported in the shiftwork literature as coping strategies for shiftworkers (Dirkxx, 1993; Gordon et al., 1986).

One study examined the effect of family support on shiftworkers (Pisarski, Bohle, & Callan, 1998). This study reported that with better family support, the shiftworker reported fewer physical symptoms related to their work (Pisarski et al., 1998). One systematic review reported that people with some personality factors such as scoring higher on flexibility and extraversion and lower scores on morningness, languidity and neuroticism were better able to cope with the rigours of shiftwork (Saksvik et al., 2011). Interestingly, this study also found that younger male workers were better able to cope as well, with women reporting higher levels of sleep disruption and other health indicators (Saksvik et al., 2011). Remarkably, the study does not comment on the reasons women did not sleep as well as their male counterparts. While it may not have been their focus of their study, social commentary surrounding this review would suggest that the woman’s unpaid home roles may figure significantly in sleeping patterns.
Exercise has also been explored as a useful coping strategy in the shiftwork literature. Research in this area has mainly concentrated on the relationship between circadian rhythms and exercise, although there is a small amount of research concerning shiftwork. Several studies have examined the effects of exercise on the phase and amplitude of the circadian rhythm of sleep (Atkinson, Coldwells, & Reilly, 1993; Redlin & Mrosovsky, 1997). Field-based research in the area of shiftwork and exercise has also proposed that physically fit workers reported coping with their shiftwork better (Harma, Ilmarinen, & Knauth, 1988; Harma, Ilmarinen, Knauth, Rutenfranz, & Hanninen, 1988). Several positive effects of exercise programs on shiftworkers have been reported (Harma, Ilmarinen, & Knauth, 1988; Harma, Ilmarinen, Knauth, et al., 1988). These included a reduction in work-dependent fatigue and musculoskeletal symptoms related to shiftwork in female nurses and nurses’ aides. Although a couple of the studies concerning exercise have been applied research (simulating shiftwork), and do not directly examine shiftwork, the outcomes reported are similar: exercise programs undertaken during shiftwork are highly beneficial. For women who are already pressured by the amount they have to do with work and family responsibilities, the pressure to exercise may take time from their sleep period.

Three studies reviewed reported higher ratings of satisfaction when the participants have some control over their shiftwork (Paget-Wilkes, 1997; Pryce, Albertsen, & Nielsen, 2006; Wortley & Grierson-Hill, 2003). Self-rostering means that staff can roster themselves on and off duty at times that suit their family needs and sporting/religious commitments, and the benefit to the organisation is a higher level of satisfaction (Paget-Wilkes, 1997; Pryce et al., 2006; Wortley & Grierson-Hill, 2003). These results, whilst heartening, are likely to cause other management related issues such as appropriate staffing for the least favoured shifts, such as night shifts and weekends.

The literature reported in this section is characterised by studies that examined organisational issues such as scheduling, support and outcome measures like job satisfaction to describe work/life balance, or exploring how work family conflict impacted on the individual. Interestingly this literature is disparate, and few studies examine similar issues within the work/life balance area. This is possibly because of the newness of the area and the many areas within it that could be explored. Apart the experience of the midwives in the group practice (Fereday & Oster, 2008), the other studies reviewed used quantitative methods to describe work/life balance.
These are of course multi-factorial issues involving such complex matters as the presence or absence of the support of a partner or the needs of children as the key determinants of an individual’s ability or willingness to endure either the circadian or psychological effects of shiftwork. It is difficult to draw conclusions regarding shiftwork and its effect on domestic circumstance, as the methodologies of the studies have all been quite different. It is clear that this area of research needs significant work using both subjective and objective perspectives to understand how and what social support assists the shiftworker tolerate their shiftwork. As a body of literature these studies confound the issue, because it is likely that greater sleepiness and domestic disruption occurs in any household, regardless of work status, because of the addition of children. What is not known here is whether there is a significant difference for individuals working shiftwork over the general working population once children arrive. It may be important to consider the different issues for shiftworking males and females with the added responsibilities of children. Another issue is that the social support required for females may be different from that required for male shiftworkers, and this is another area where further work is required. It is possible that a single definitive answer about work/life balance is not likely because of humanity’s individual differences in values, personality, living standards and culture.

**Subjective Experience of Shiftwork**

This next section examines the research on the subjective experience of shiftwork. In this particular area of the shiftwork literature there were very few studies published that explored the experience of shiftwork. In addition to the significant number of quantitative studies that explore shiftwork that have been discussed above, two qualitative studies were obtained, both using a phenomenological framework, that examined the experience of shiftwork. One of the studies concentrated primarily on midlife (collecting data from nurses who were 44 years and older) West, Boughton, & Byrnes, 2009) and the other study explored night shift experience for Iranian nurses (Nasrabadi et al., 2009. Both are reviewed below. Two other qualitative studies, one a grounded study piece and one a qualitative descriptive study were found (Garey, 1995; Hattery, 2001). These have been discussed further on in this section.

Social disruption was observed as an important theme in both studies, for different reasons (Nasrabadi et al., 2009; West, Boughton, & Byrnes, 2009). Nasrabadi et al. (2009) found that the social disruption was partially about family responsibilities of caring for a young family, however, socio-cultural impacts were reported to be of greater significance for the participants.
(Nasrabadi et al., 2009). This study was conducted in Iran, where new graduate nurses commence their professional working life on night shift and continue permanent night shift for at least two years. Only then can they apply to move to day shifts if they can find someone to cover their night shifts (Nasrabadi et al., 2009). Nearly all of the participants in this study emphasised negative reactions from family and the general public for working night shifts (Nasrabadi et al., 2009). Also it was often not just the continuation of the night shiftwork, but the leaving of the home, husband and children for work that attracted disapproval from family and the general public. The study by West et al. (2009), conducted in Australia did not report similar findings of disapproval for being at work at night, although it was similar in that, the ‘juggling’ of the non–work and work/life was a difficult balance, with the participants reporting feelings of regret and guilt, and the inability to cope relating to their perceived role. My own findings in this study support those of West et al. (2009), where was more internal pressure to conform to the expected role of family member, wife/partner, parent etc., whereas the Iranian study participants described more external pressures related to their multiple roles (West et al., 2009).

Participants in both studies described the experience of the health-related impacts of their shiftwork. The Australian study participants express primarily their tiredness and fatigue related to their shiftwork, whereas the Iranian study participants describe tiredness, fatigue, skin changes, nervousness, nutritional imbalances and listlessness (Nasrabadi et al., 2009). At this point the similarity of themes in these studies diverges. The Iranian participants emphasised that night work gave them greater freedom and the opportunity to learn more about the profession. Several participants describe job related and personal satisfaction with the night shift role, which helped offset the negative impacts of their shiftwork (Nasrabadi et al., 2009).

The Australian study reported that participants describe themselves as ‘the sandwich generation’ both in terms of their home lives, (in their caring responsibilities for children/grandchildren and elders), and their work lives. They noted the impacts on their work of new graduates in the work place, as well as sacrificing their own weekends off to allow younger staff to socialise on Friday and Saturday nights. This study also found that participants rarely recognised the needs of the self, which was most evident in the interviews from rural participants (West et al., 2009). The rural participants also described themselves to be resigned to their fate, as there were fewer perceived work options available (West et al., 2009). Throughout the study the concept of trying to ‘juggle’ all that needed to be done was clear, whether it be work or personal responsibilities, and therefore the personal need for regularity.
and control was highlighted. When this was not forthcoming, participants described a sense of anger towards their employer at the constant changing of work hours and duties.

While both of these studies provide a valuable insight into the experience of the shiftworker for my own inquiry, there is a gap between them in terms of focus on beginning and midlife professional lives. In the Iranian study the participants are younger and while some mention of responsibilities of caring for young children were made, mostly these were not evident. In the Australian study, the other end of the spectrum was highlighted as one of the themes (the personal temporality) discussed the care responsibilities of grandchildren, and elders. It is here, between the early career nurses and the midlife nurses with grandchildren, that a gap exists within the literature that my study has filled. Not only are there few studies published that use the voice of the shiftworker and reveal their experience, there is a gap in the literature examining how care responsibilities for young children impact on the work/life, home life and self of the shiftworking nurse. My study has examined the impact of working shiftwork and managing children, which sets it apart in the literature base.

The other two studies that have explored shiftwork using a qualitative approach, are more sociologically focused (Garey, 1995; Hattery, 2001). The more recent study, Hattery (2001) focused on the costs and benefits of using non-overlapping shiftwork as a strategy for balancing and weaving work and family. While this study was not focused on the shiftwork, per se, it is invaluable in its contribution to exploring the use of shiftwork to help families balance their work and home life. Hattery’s study provided examples where women worked permanent night shifts so that they could minimise the use of paid, external childcare. By the woman working overnight, with the children cared for by their father, and the father working through the day with the mother caring for the children, families were able to take advantage of both parents working without the added costs of childcare. The parents in this study were willing to tolerate the extra stress of parenting and working because they felt that their children were advantaged by having a parent caring for them instead of a non-family member. Mothers felt that they could ‘be there’ for their children (Hattery, 2001). The issue with this study is that in the cases cited it was the mother who worked permanent night shifts, while the father slept overnight. The mother slept in the evenings when the father arrived home. The women were not only sleeping outside the normal nocturnal hours and were still sleeping less hours than optimal (5 – 6 hours per sleep period). This study also focused on women who worked during what would have been their sleep period. The women were caring for their children whilst tired after shift, they slept for a short period after their husband/partner returned home from work. The majority
of the time that the father was on his own caring for the children, both he and the children would have been sleeping (barring illness).

The earlier study, Garey (1995) employed a sociological exploration of how shiftwork allows the woman to appear as a ‘stay-at-home’ mother throughout the day, whilst having the benefit of working overnight. The women were able to be involved in ‘symbolically-invested activities’ of stay-at-home mothers by volunteering at the school, being available for her children throughout the day and ‘being the mother in the house’. These women were able to construct their concepts of motherhood around the invisibility of their work, so that for all intents and purposes they appeared as stay-at-home mothers to society, but they did so by ‘devaluing their sleep’ (Garey, 1995). The culturally constructed view of motherhood is also highlighted in my own analysis in this study and was upheld by the invisibility of their work (Garey, 1995).

This section has reviewed four studies in the area of subjective experience of shiftwork. While the first two focus on the shiftwork and offered a valuable glimpse into both before children and mid-life juggling, the latter two reviewed, offer a deeper examination into the life of the mother who works shiftwork. While neither of the latter two used phenomenological framework, they have provided some valuable insights for this study.

**Women’s Work**

This particular section examines the shiftwork literature in terms of gender difference. The shiftwork literature has not entirely addressed the home-related work time for a worker’s ability to manage shiftwork. As this literature review has reported, working shiftwork has an effect on both physical and psychological health: therefore, for shiftworking women who then commence another ‘day’ of work when they get home, the effect of the home based work may impact on the shiftwork and vice versa. There have been some shiftwork studies that focus on women’s home based work, and these are reviewed below. It does seem extraordinary however, particularly when the gender split in nursing is considered, that there are so few studies exploring the factors that impact upon a woman’s capacity to work shiftwork and manage her family and home. One study comments upon what they see as the “paucity of research directly examining the impact of work schedules and preventative measures at work on work-family conflict” (Camerino et al., 2010, p. 1105). In Australia and other westernised countries there is a higher percentage of female nurses, as I have already noted. The shiftwork literature tends to categorise the impact of shiftwork on work/family conflict as primarily being time based.
(Barnes-Farrell et al., 2008; Camerino et al., 2010), however, only few studies have examined the work-family interface in terms of stress and burnout (Camerino et al., 2010).

There are some studies that mention children and/or the multiple roles of women and shiftwork (Alward & Monk, 1991; Camerino et al., 2010; Clissold et al., 2002; Clissold et al., 2001; Dirkxx, 1993; Garey, 1995; Hattery, 2001; Kurumatani et al., 1994; Maher, Lindsay, & Bardoel, 2010; Pisarski et al., 1998; Sallinen et al., 2005; Scott et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 1997; Verhaegen et al., 1987; Watanabe et al., 2004) and a few studies examined the impact of childcare, parenting, and domestic responsibilities on shiftwork and sleep, which are further discussed below (Clissold et al., 2002; Clissold et al., 2001). Studies that examine the dual roles of women are important to the body of shiftwork literature itself as the issue of dual roles makes it difficult to conclude whether fatigue, for example, is related to a nurse’s shiftwork or to her domestic responsibilities (Clissold et al., 2002).

This last premise was supported by several studies (Kurumatani et al., 1994; Sallinen et al., 2005). As an example of the difficulties women with children face in their dual roles one study commented that only 50 subjects in a cohort of 625 had children, as nurses with children tended to withdraw from the labour market during the early years of the children’s lives (Watanabe et al., 2004). The withdrawal of nurses from the labour market was also reported in an Australian study (Duffield, O’Brien Pallas & Aitken, 2004). Another Japanese study reported that nurses who worked the three rotating shift system felt greater work-family conflict, whereas the permanent night shift nurses did not (Fujimoto, Kotani, & Suzuki, 2008). Interestingly, greater childcare support from institutions assisted this (Fujimoto et al., 2008). The details in the study are unclear about whether hospitals and the like in Japan have childcare centres as part of the campus or whether financial assistance was provided (Fujimoto et al., 2008). Also as both this study and the Watanabe et al.’s (2004) study both discussed, having children was seen as a major barrier to return to work in Japan (Fujimoto et al., 2008). While this phenomenon is not exclusively Japanese, as evidenced by the Duffield et al.’s study (2004) above, few details regarding the breakdown of household duties and childcare responsibilities were provided.

Having at least one child aged less than seven years has been clearly shown to reduce the main daily sleep period and preclude any nap before the next night shift, and therefore increase subsequent sleepiness (Sallinen et al., 2005). Mothers of small children spent more time on housekeeping and childcare than they spent on free-time activities or on sleep. Instead of sleeping for seven or eight hours when they had time off, this group did not catch up on their sleep debt because they had family responsibilities (Kurumatani et al., 1994). In one study
instead of getting involved in physical activity during their leisure time (off shiftwork time) women were much more likely to undertake household duties and childcare (Fullick et al., 2009). Men in the same study were conversely more likely to get involved in physical activity during their leisure time (Fullick et al., 2009).

Dual roles at work and at home are of particular relevance to nursing with its predominantly female clinical workforce, and recent research has suggested that the impact of unpaid work for women can results in up to six hours extra work per day (Craig & Bittman, 2008). Unpaid domestic work and the sleep of nurses was the focus of Clissold et al.’s (2001) paper, which described the loss of sleep when shift-working women needed to complete other duties. This is of particular concern for both patient and worker safety in health care if extra fatigue is added on top of the shiftwork related fatigue consequent to rhythm desynchrony. The combination of work and domestic duties needs to be examined in regard to shiftwork, as this extra work may be replacing sleep. This is described, for example, by Watanabe et al. (2004), who report the sacrifice of sleep prior to night shifts by nurses with childcare responsibilities in comparison to nurses without children (Watanabe et al., 2004). It is not surprising that in the study (625 participants) above there were few nurses with children (50). As noted by Crabb (2014), in another study, Japanese women undertake approximately five times the childcare and housework compared with their husband (Crabb, 2014).

The “gender split” was also one of the most significant issues in a study by Taylor et al. (1997) which explored the positive aspects of shiftwork. Financial benefits and a good family life were reported as the advantages of shiftwork (Taylor et al., 1997), yet this study used almost an entirely male cohort of subjects. Because women tend to assume the primary responsibility for childcare and domestic affairs, it is more difficult to establish if the male shiftworker has the double responsibilities of the paid shiftwork and the unpaid domestic work in a male-dominated study. If workers need to work both in a paid job and also have domestic responsibilities, then they may be fulfilling both of those roles to the detriment of their health, for example, by decreasing the amount and quality of their sleep to undertake home duties. It is perhaps surprising that although nursing is primarily a female profession and that many nurses are also the primary care givers for their children, that no nursing-based study has taken these important gender based issues into account when examining the shiftwork of this group.

As another example of women’s domestic responsibilities, Scott et al. (2006) reported that nurses who provided care for both aged relatives and dependent children reported higher levels of sleepiness, mental and physical fatigue, and stress. This study examined the impact for
nurses of caring for dependents outside of paid work. While the majority of the literature cited so far, has concentrated on the presence of children, having dependent elders may well have a similar impact on the time requirements of the women outside of paid work.

Managing family and work responsibilities is made easier for some women by choosing to work permanent night shifts (Barton et al., 1993; Dirkxx, 1993; Verhaegen et al., 1987). In some of the earlier studies preference for permanent night shift was reported to add stability to family life and the care of dependents (Barton et al., 1993; Dirkxx, 1993; Verhaegen et al., 1987). One study reported that 55% of the cohort gave family reasons for preferring permanent night shifts. Out-sourced childcare and eldercare is likely to be decreased for permanent night shiftworkers as the worker could care for dependents through the day and work night shifts.

Permanent day shifts (mirroring a non-shiftworker) have been reported to disrupt family functioning least (Tai et al., 2014). Like the permanent night shiftworkers discussed in the previous paragraph, the constant shift whether day or night would assist in planning family life.

Where shiftwork is undertaken with family support, the shiftworker reported fewer physical effects of their shiftwork. Further work exploring family support in the context of shiftwork would be of tremendous value in ascertaining whether this is primarily related to domestic assistance, childcare assistance, or emotional support (Pisarski et al., 1998) as authors such as (Alward & Monk, 1991) have previously commented that nurses’ satisfaction with shiftwork was affected by their family situation. In an earlier study Verhaegen et al. (1987) also hypothesised that permanent night nurses would not tolerate shiftwork as well as rotating shift nurses. Instead, the permanent night shift nurses returned more favourable ratings of shiftwork despite less sleep. It is possible that the differences in domestic circumstances consequent to the seven-year age gap between the two shift pattern related groups may provide at least part of the explanation (mean age of permanent night shift group was 38 years and rotating shift group 31 years) as it is reasonable to postulate a potential 5-7 year age gap in the children also. (Verhaegen et al., 1987). The seven-year age difference may have also been significant in terms of reproductive age and pre-menopausal signs and symptoms. The rotating group had the highest number of unmarried nurses, who may therefore have sought support and social life outside the family unit. One of the explanations given by the researchers for the favourable ratings, despite less sleep, of the permanent night-shift group was the choice available to this group and their ability to order their family lives around work to a greater extent than could the other groups (Verhaegen et al., 1987).
Women in the workforce have another set of factors that influence their health and wellbeing, a ‘second shift’ (Hochschild & Machung, 2012), after they finish their paid work. There is a large body of literature on the work/life balance and women’s second shift at home if they work in the paid workforce. The second shift is the home related work that mainly women do after their paid job (Bianchi, 2011; Craig, 2007; Craig & Bittman, 2008; Craig & Brown, 2014; Hochschild, 1997; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004; Milkie, Raley, & Bianchi, 2009; Nomaguchi, Milkie, & Bianchi, 2005; Roberts, 2007; Ruth Eikhof, Warhurst, Haunschild, Bergman, & Gardiner, 2007; Venn, Arber, Meadows, & Hislop, 2008). While rates of women working have in general increased over the last fifty years (Hochschild & Machung, 2012), division of labour at home has not changed significantly, with women still reported as doing the overwhelming majority of work at home (Craig & Bittman, 2008; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Maushart, 2008). This extra work has not been factored into the debate regarding shiftwork and women’s capacity to deal with physical, psychological and social impacts of this type of work.

As well as the second shift, a third and fourth shift have also been proposed (Hochschild, 1997; Venn et al., 2008). The third shift is undertaken temporally during the first two shifts. This third shift is the emotional involvement of worrying about, thinking about, anticipating and planning the physical and emotional needs of their families (Hochschild, 1997). Some examples might be, working out timing for dropping off and picking children up from various after school activities, another example might be the planning of that night’s dinner on the drive to work. The fourth shift is the use of time in the period normally allocated for sleep. The fourth shift is the involvement with family members overnight, and the domestic duties related to this, such as attending to children when they have woken, dealing with the physical needs the child has as well as the upset child (Venn et al., 2008).

Sleep is also further decreased for women who both work and have young children that need attention through the night (Craig & Bittman, 2008; Venn et al., 2008). The research suggests that women who work outside the home also sleep less than their employed male counterparts (regardless of children) and childless women (Craig & Bittman, 2008; Venn et al., 2008). The combination of sleep loss because of to the fourth shift and shiftwork has not been examined in the shiftwork literature. It has been well documented that fatigue is associated with shiftwork (Akerstedt et al., 1982; Josten et al., 2003; McGettrick & O’Neill, 2006; Rutenfranz et al., 1985), however, there is no discussion on the effect of sleep loss related to family needs.
Alternative work scheduling, such as shiftwork, has also been examined to investigate whether non-traditional working hours allow better work/life balance and decrease the work/family role conflict (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). For women, working shiftwork was demonstrated in this study to decrease work/life balance unless they worked significantly less hours (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001).

It is important to note that when women work, whether it is part-time or full-time, research reports that women still do more housework and caring for children than their male partners (Barthe, Messing, & Abbas, 2011; Crabb, 2014; Craig & Bittman, 2008; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2015). The issue of dual roles, that is the organisation required in getting children, up, dressed, fed and off to childcare or school, whilst trying to get ready for work, and attending to housework are similar for all working mothers. However, an important difference occurs when a mother is a shiftworker and the possibility of sleeping during the day while attending to children becomes at best disturbed and at worst absent (Kurumatani et al., 1994).

Overall the shiftwork literature reviewed on women and nursing in shiftwork does not take into account the multiple roles that women play in their lives and the time that these roles (and hence extra work) take. It is postulated that at least part of women’s ability to tolerate shiftwork may be related to non-work variables. While other literature has examined the time impacts of children in families (Craig & Bittman, 2008), the shiftwork literature has not explored these issues for women in particular. Few studies report the impact of the second ‘shift’ that women undertake once they return home after work. As women form the overwhelming majority of nurses (Nurses and Midwives Board of Australia, 2016), it is important to consider the fatigue and performance issues that relate both to the shiftwork and to roles at home. Fatigue has been demonstrated to have a detrimental effect on error rates (Folkard et al., 1993), and exploration of the effect of situational differences on fatigue as well as the influence of shiftwork is required to better understand the role of fatigue on the occurrence of errors. It is possible that the physical and psychosocial effects that have previously been solely attributed to shiftwork, may be in part attributable to the unpaid domestic ‘work’ that is performed by women before and after their paid shiftwork. Because discussion about gender roles and unpaid work is largely invisible within shiftwork research, there is almost no mention of the impact of the unpaid ‘work’ performed by women for example childcare and domestic work. Hence, the impact of 'women’s work' on an individual’s ability to tolerate shiftwork and their performance whilst shiftworking is not clear.
Conclusion to the Chapter

In this chapter I have reviewed the main areas of research effort in the shiftwork literature. Research fashions seemed to determine the main topics of particular eras in the literature; for example neuroticism enjoyed research popularity, which has now gone slightly out of favour, and new research in relation to shiftwork has begun to emerge in the literature. Overwhelmingly, however, two topics stand out; the effect of shiftwork on the development of cardiovascular disease and gastrointestinal disturbances. While these two topics have been foci for research effort in this area for several decades, there are other topics beginning to gain ground - metabolic syndrome (including the work on shiftwork and diabetes) and the potential association between shiftwork and cancer. These two areas have started to receive greater interest, with the majority of the research occurring after the turn of the century. For the four areas of physical effects related to shiftwork, there is still controversy within each topic area regarding a potential association, and no definitive answer.

Of importance in the literature is the effect of the ‘healthy worker’. This phenomenon occurs where the worker able to cope with the rigours of shiftwork and therefore remains in the shift pattern. Others, whereas, who find shiftwork too difficult to manage either physically or because of other circumstances, self-select out of the shift pattern. This is a potential source of bias within the literature, as only the people coping become the sample in studies. This has been noted and commented upon by Knutsson & Akerstedt (1992) (Knutsson & Akerstedt, 1992) who documented that there was perhaps “underestimation of the potential deleterious effect of working conditions on health” and research is usually unable to capture those who self-select out of shiftwork (Knutsson & Akerstedt, 1992, p. 163). Others have commented about the issue with the ‘healthy worker’ in their studies as well (Ha & Park, 2005; Sterling & Weinkam, 1985).

I have also focused on the issue of women’s work. While there are some studies that have provided insight into women’s work and shiftwork, there are still gaps in the body of literature that this study aims to fill. It is still difficult to understand whether there is an impact from the ‘second’ shift or the unpaid domestic work on the shiftwork and how the worker performs whilst at work.

Also identified, in the literature review, is the absence of rich, elaborated accounts that detail the experience of being a shiftworker for the individual (and in particular the individual woman). In reviewing the shiftwork literature the overwhelming majority of research into
shiftwork has been undertaken from a quantitative perspective, with few studies examining shiftwork using a qualitative framework to elicit the shiftworker’s voice in relation to shiftwork. The value of a qualitative framework and attention to the embodied, emotional and relational experience of working shiftwork is that it enables the narrative of the individual to shine. In planning this study, I believed that use of a hermeneutic phenomenological framework would bring forth the narratives of people who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Phenomenology also brings forth understanding, interpretation and meaning of the phenomenon. The ‘gap’ that my study fits into is the time in a woman’s life when babies are born and children are raised. In this period of life, families are busy and often are setting up homes. My study fits between the two other qualitative studies that I have been able to find of the early career study by Nasrabadi et al. (2009) and the midlife study of nurses by West et al. (2009).

Within the shiftwork literature, the most commonly studied female participant is the nurse. This large professional group (shiftworking women caring for children) whose shiftwork experience is absent from the literature are the chosen participants for the current study.

Globally, women undertake almost twice the amount of housework that men do, regardless of their paid working arrangements (Crabb, 2014, page 112). In the last thirty years or so women have been undertaking paid work in greater numbers than in earlier periods, yet statistics suggest that their contribution to the household does not decrease in line with their paid work. Even if women work full-time they still contribute around 25 hours of housework per week, excluding childcare. If childcare is included, women undertake an extra 41 hours of housework and childcare if they work full-time (Crabb, 2014, page 121). For shiftworkers this potentially means reducing their sleep period to undertake housework or childcare.

**Aims of the Study**

It is in response to the ‘gap’ within the shiftwork literature, and the burgeoning area of study known as the ‘second shift’ that this study sought to explore women’s experience of shiftwork whilst in a caring role for young children. The aims, therefore of this study were to:

- Describe the experience of female nurses caring for children whilst working shiftwork
- Explore how women conceptualise their experiences of trying to achieve a work – life balance whilst caring for children and working shiftwork as nurses
- Identify self-perceived social, health, financial and personal impacts for the woman as they work and care for children

Guiding this agenda, as noted above, and based on the gaps and silences in the literature reviewed in this section, the research questions that have been isolated as most needing further inquiry are below.

**The Research Questions**

The research questions which will guide the approach to my study are:

1. What is the experience of working shiftwork for women who also care for young children?

2. What are the perceived social, health, financial and personal impacts of working shiftwork whilst caring for young children?

These questions required me to use an approach that would allow access the *experience* of shiftworkers who care for children, and describe their subjective perceptions of the effects of this on their interpersonal, health, economic and emotional situation. To achieve these ends, I have selected the philosophical framework of phenomenology as methodology for the study. Chapter Three addresses the philosophical framework, and methodology that were used in this study.
Chapter Three – Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology, which has guided my study’s evolution. It provides a detailed discussion of and rationale for the choice of phenomenology and its relevance to a study of how women nurses experience their lives as shiftworkers with care of young children. The chapter begins with a general introduction to phenomenology, its development, and the concepts that are used to frame the study. This is followed by the justification for the use of the methodology and then implications of using this phenomenological framework for conducting the study.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is essentially the study of lived experience (Laverty, 2003; van Manen, 1990). There are two main branches of phenomenology, descriptive and interpretative (Connelly, 2010). Edmund Husserl is often referred to as the father or founder of phenomenology (Koch, 1996; Laverty, 2003) and he developed the first of the branches, transcendental (or descriptive) phenomenology. This branch of phenomenology came to mean the study of a phenomenon as the consciousness becomes aware of it as an ‘object’ or ‘thing’ (Koch, 1996). This phenomenological approach asked questions such as “what is it like?” and used a type of ‘bracketing’ of prior assumptions to form the answers in a descriptive manner (Koch, 1996) that would represent the phenomenon to others.

The second main branch of phenomenology was modified and developed by Martin Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl in his early career. Interpretive phenomenology (now known as hermeneutic phenomenology, or ‘hermeneutics’) arose out of the work of Heidegger and was further developed by Gadamer (Gadamer, 2004; Heidegger, 2008; Inwood, 1997). As this study uses an interpretive framework, this will be explained in further detail.

This section of the chapter briefly discusses a range of important concepts of hermeneutic phenomenology. These have been explored from the perspectives of Martin Heidegger and to a lesser extent Hans-Georg Gadamer, both German philosophers. While both philosophers wrote on a myriad of different areas, this introduction will only cover the parts of the philosophies that are relevant to my study. Firstly an overview of hermeneutic phenomenology is presented, followed by the concepts of Being, Time, Understanding, Interpretation and Meaning, Authenticity, Language, the Fusion of Horizons and the Hermeneutic Circle. The
chapter then moves on to considerations such as the role of the researcher and the participants, ethical considerations and an explanation about how rigour is achieved in this study.

**Hermeneutic phenomenology**

Hermeneutic phenomenology is primarily concerned with the lived experience of people who have experienced a particular phenomenon (Connelly, 2010). It has been described as study of the life world or the lived experience (van Manen, 1990). Essentially the hermeneutic phenomenologist wants to know “what is the experience like” and attempts to understand and illuminate the experience (Laverty, 2003). Heidegger focused on understanding being and beings in their worlds and proposed that humans do not relate to each other in a theoretical manner, but from a position of being already connected (O’Brien, 2002), as ‘we are always already in the world’ (Draucker, 1999). Hermeneutic phenomenology from a Heideggerian tradition seeks to understand how humans understand their worlds, and is therefore an ontological enterprise (Mackey, 2005; O’Brien, 2002). Husserl coined the phrase “to the things themselves” (Overgaard, 2004, p.1) meaning that the researcher must aim to ‘reduce’ things down to the simplest description. Heidegger agreed with this premise, however, he emphasised understanding rather than description (Dowling, 2007; Heidegger, 2008).

Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology comprises some fundamental concepts, two of the most important for my study are the concepts of ‘Being’ and ‘Time’/Temporality.

**Being**

Heidegger’s central focus was on Being. Heidegger referred to ‘Being’, most particularly as the meaning of what it is to be human (Laverty, 2003). Heidegger referred to the mode of being in the world as ‘Dasein’ which means ‘to exist’, ‘to be there’, ‘to be here’ and also the ‘type of being in the world’ or the way in which humans are in the world (Inwood, 1997; O’Brien, 2002). Part of the reason that Heidegger used the word Dasein is that he wanted to create meaning of our Being as different to our genus and species (Dasein originally in German was da sein or ‘there being’, but to differentiate being from Being, the ‘d’ is capitalised in English (Horrocks, 2000). Fundamental to Dasein is our ability to be aware of ourselves (O’Brien, 2002) and to be self-interpreting beings (Salem-Wiseman, 2003). An important characteristic of Dasein is that to each of us we are our self and able to inquire into our possibilities (Annells, 1996). Dasein is ‘thrown’ into the world with its birth, but once Dasein is thrown in, it has control over its existence (Inwood, 1997). Hence Dasein can decide not just to be or not to be, but how to be in the world (Inwood, 1997) (my italics).
The concept of Dasein is important for this study into lived experience as it provides an understanding of how persons are aware, are self-interpreting, and can question possibilities. Thus participants in this study, women with children who work shiftwork, can be seen to have a capacity to represent, reflect upon and interpret their experience of being who they are.

**Time/Temporality**

For Heidegger, temporality (or time) is primarily about the connectedness of Dasein within the world (Annells, 1996) (rather than a more conventional view of linear time). Thus we make sense of, or understand the world from within the temporality of our existence, not while detached from it (Annells, 1996). Time is critical to Dasein. “Dasein’s Being finds its meaning in temporality” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 19). Heidegger creates a finite time for Dasein and its possibilities, between the time of throwing into the world of birth and the time of death and demise. Death is important in time and temporality as it puts an end to Dasein’s possibilities of being. Dasein is aware of death and of the end of its possibilities; hence Dasein is ‘ahead of itself’ (Inwood, 1997). Heidegger argues that if Dasein were not aware of its own death as an actuality at some time, then many things and experiences would be forever postponed (Inwood, 1997).

Just as the future is important for Heidegger, he sees the past as forming a basis for our perception, assumptions and prejudices. We understand and interpret the world as it forms us from our past, while at the same time, because of the co-constituted nature of Dasein in the world, we are constantly constructing the world around us (Laverty, 2003). This unity returns us to the concept of connectedness of Dasein’s Being and Time.

The importance of this concept of time for the study lies in the capacity of individuals to experience time: past, present and future, all at once. Thus the experience in the present is influenced by the past, and by the possibilities in the future. Participants are able to reflect on experience through the lens of past, present, future and interpret that experience, thus giving and articulating its meaning for them.

**Understanding, Interpretation and Meaning**

Heidegger described Dasein as being in a world that is both familiar and is understood (O’Brien, 2002). Heidegger’s legacy changes the idea of understanding from something that is a derivative phenomenon to something that is the keystone of human experience (Couzens Hoy, 1993). This new centrality of understanding means that understanding is not just one of the possible behaviours of Dasein, but the mode of being for Dasein (Couzens Hoy, 1993). In this
way understanding takes the ‘knower’ out of an objective, disengaged position and places them as connected to the world (“we are already always in the world” (Draucker, 1999, p. 361). The subjective ‘knower’, then, knows its possibilities and is able to project itself upon them (Gelven, 1989). Understanding operates by projecting possibilities. What this means is that interpretation is the working out of possibilities that understanding generates.

To throw before ourselves our possible ways of existing, is an essential characteristic of what we are. “It is as if understanding were like a searchlight, illuminating what lay before Dasein” (Gelven, 1989, p. 89). According to Gadamer understanding for human beings is about reaching an understanding with respect to something, with another person (Gadamer, 2004). Gadamer clarifies that if two people understand each other independently of any topic, then they understand each other not only in this or that respect, but in all essential things that unite human being (Gadamer, 2004). Both Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s central focus on understanding originates from the position that Dasein’s mode of being is primarily focused towards understanding.

Heidegger emphasised that the interpretative function of understanding is not something ‘extra’ or special, but the way in which understanding is completed (Gelven, 1989). That is, interpretation must occur for understanding to take place. Interpretation is a pre-condition of understanding that makes explicit meaning. In other words, interpretation works out the things, events and interactions that understanding projects (Gelven, 1989). Given this, interpretation makes explicit what is within the range of human awareness, or our experience (Gelven, 1989). Heidegger’s account of interpretation includes three basic considerations, which I will elaborate here; (1) the as-structure, (2) the fore-structure, and (3) meaning (Gelven, 1989).

1) The As-structure: This is based on our seeing the world as ‘ready-to-hand’. In making the as-structure explicit, I am pointing out (or projecting upon) the purpose and usability of a thing. Heidegger explained that, if I merely look at an object and do not make use of it, the further away I become from its proper meaning (Gelven, 1989). When I interpret something, I do not add on an external meaning or significance. Rather, I make clear, what is already there (Gelven, 1989). Heidegger used examples of the use of things in the world to explain this, like the hammer. For example, if I claim that a hammer is a hammer in order to nail wood, I am interpreting the hammer or more precisely my everyday understanding and relationship to the function of the hammer (Inwood, 1997). But even if a hammer is in the location of hammers, and looks like a hammer, unless it can function as a hammer it cannot be said to be a hammer (Gelven,
1989; Inwood, 1997). In understanding ‘shiftwork’ as a thing in the world, I can interpret it from my own, first-hand knowledge of being a shiftworker, easily retrieved and usable because it is already there for me. Also in understanding caring for children is a thing in the world, I can again interpret what this is from my own first-hand knowledge.

2) Fore-structure: This is the making explicit of the as-structure, and requires aspects of what has already been interpreted to be available in advance of the actual moment of interpretation (Gelven, 1989). Heidegger explained that there were three elements of fore-structure: fore-having, foresight and fore-conception. Fore-having is the understanding of the background context in which concrete interpretation takes place, for example, the complexity of wires and parts of a car. When I am hurrying to get from one place to another, I am not aware of the spark plugs and individual wires, that are all very important (Gelven, 1989) Fore-having is prior awareness of purpose and function (Gelven, 1989), like my fore-knowledge of the reasons that nursing work needs to be set up in ‘shifts’ over a day. Interpretation is the awareness of the as-structure, which does not occur unless something forces me to become aware of the as-structure (such as the stalling of the car - or the tiredness of a shiftworking body). Its function is to direct our attention to a specific area of problem. For example, in the case of a stalled car my attention turns to the particular part of the car that is preventing it driving. I might ask “Is it out of petrol?” Fore-sight is something we see in advance, that is it is part of the way we interpret something when we come across it. Heidegger describes it as ‘taking the first cut’ (Heidegger, 2008). In the car example, fore-sight can be understood as knowing where to look for the problem for why the car will not drive (Tietz, 2001). Fore-conception helps us to interpret the phenomena (for example what is going on with the car) and why nurses need to work at night. It functions in terms of a conception by which the as-structure is made explicit (Gelven, 1989). In every interpretation, there is a fore-having, a fore-sight and a fore-conception, all based on Dasein’s use of the world as ready-at-hand (Gelven, 1989).

3) Meaning: To understand the meaning is to understand the as-structure of a ready-at-hand object (Gelven, 1989). So, when I understand the meaning of an object, I understand that object as that object, in terms of its purpose and use. For example I understand the meaning of a hammer is to nail wood (Inwood, 1997) and that nursing shiftwork allows the necessary full-time 24-hour care for the ill. When this occurs, the
way in which I use the world becomes meaningful to me. Meaning is not something added on to understanding; rather it is an a priori characteristic that allows us to put experience into words (Gelven, 1989).

For Heidegger, Dasein are not simply in the world able to choose to understand the world around, rather it is their mode of being and, central to their experience of being human (Couzens Hoy, 1993). Choosing to understand the meaning made by others is the task I have taken on here, using these conceptual tools to assist me in this work.

This section has discussed meaning and interpretation, primarily from a Heideggerian perspective. Another concept that was important in Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology is Authenticity.

**Authenticity**

*Authenticity* is an important concept for Heidegger because it assists us to understand the world around us. If we live inauthentically all our lives we become closed off to the possibilities of understanding the world around us, whereas, living authentically at least some of the time helps us understand and interpret the world around us. This concept, like a number of Heideggerian concepts, is complex and complicated, however, it is one of the key concepts in allowing ourselves to be open to possibilities, including understanding. This section will describe the parts of authenticity and provide examples that illustrate this difficult concept.

Authenticity, from a Heideggerian stand point was not about being non-genuine, but more about being faithful to one’s self and one’s existence. As an illustration, when a close friend or family member dies we look at our lives and see the menial and meaningless nature of much we do in our everyday lives (create a garden, paint the house and cook the dinner) and often think about the bigger things at that time of grief, such as why we did not spend more time relating to and with the person who has died. We often commit to making sure our other relationships are more meaningful.

As creatures with limited life spans our Being is caught up with time, in that, we are born into a world that has a history, which existed before us and will undoubtedly exist after we die. We are so busy in our ‘everydayness’ that we do not live authentically all the time. To put it simply, we do not keep our eye on the ball and can get lost in menial projects and this prevents us in understanding the world and others in it.

From a pragmatic point of view, living inauthentically means that we make decisions, carry them out and keep on going. Importantly, living an authentic life requires consideration of all possibilities in every scenario in life. This could lead to a very stagnated life, because if I
considered all known possibilities every time I needed to make a decision, I could still be considering the possibilities related to getting out of bed, when the night arrived. Another example might be; when I began to write this large piece of work, for the most part, I did not think about writing it in Mayan, Ancient Greek or Italian. I speak in English, therefore I simply assume that that is the language I will write this thesis in (that is, assuming that my ‘true’ self is English speaking). I do not contemplate whether I could uncover the truth more if Mayan was used. I speak, read and write in English, so without conscious thought (until now!) I write my research in the language of my birth. If I did, however, stop and consider all the possibilities between starting this study and writing up this thesis, I could be still trying to start the research when, unfortunately, facticity overtakes me and death occurs.

To understand authenticity, a discussion around fallenness or falling is useful here. Heidegger describes falling as away from oneself and into the world (Inwood, 1997). This falling into the world ends up with the state of not being ‘true to oneself’ or inauthentic. Another way to put this is to use the expression ‘to think for oneself’. It is inauthentic (in Heidegger’s mind) to simply pass on something we have heard without thinking it over ourselves, even if it is correct information; it is the uncovering of truth for ourselves (Inwood, 1997). As Heidegger wrote:

Dasein has, in the first instance, fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self, and has fallen into the world

Fallenness occurs because of the way we engage with the world around us. For example; some of the ways in which Dasein falls are chatter (perhaps a better word in the Australian context is gossip), and curiosity (perhaps again better understood in the Australian vernacular as needs to know-it-all). Chatter was thought of as “roughly, conversing in a critically unexamined and unexamining way about facts and information while failing to use language to reveal their relevance” (Wheeler, 2015). Chatter and curiosity lead to ambiguity and duplicity (a loss of any sensitivity between genuine understanding and superficial chatter) in our relations with others, and as a result Dasein is considered fallen (Inwood, 1997; Wheeler, 2015). Fallenness and therefore, inauthenticity is a way of being in the world, where Dasein engages in moving away from one’s truth to tumble into the ways of the world. Relationships where we engage in gossip and rumour mongering are considered inauthentic, as we are engaging with the “they-say”.

Fallenness is also pitted against truth, in that:
Because Dasein is essentially falling, its state of Being is such that it is in ‘untruth’ (Heidegger, 2008, p. 38:220).

When Dasein is falling/fallen the Being is also inauthentic, as it is led by chatter, curiosity, ambiguity and duplicity where it is only interested in the hearsay or ‘they-say’. Heidegger believed that continuously living in fallenness and inauthenticity was to become absorbed in the world and therefore not authentic (Inwood, 1997). The issue with fallenness is that it is closing off or covering up any real understanding of the world through a fascination with the world (Wheeler, 2015). A good example of this would the current world’s fascination with celebrities; fans follow them on social media, read all about them in tabloids and watch them on television but do not know or understand who these people really are, what they think or feel and experience the world. The fans may know the star’s name, birthday, all their films, and other parts of their biography, but they only know information that is officially released by the star (or what is leaked to the media). They do not know the heartbreak of the marriage failing or a miscarriage or the joy of falling in love or having a baby. They do not know the star at all. Some stars then find themselves ‘falling’ into a belief about the ‘perfect body’, get ‘caught up’ in the duplicity of the media’s portrayal of how one should look, they pay lots of money for fitness, and surgical procedures to assist them they (and then so do some of their followers). In this way, the world has its own designs on Dasein, such as the media, religion, and education that advantage some over others, and create a difference in power, such as gender, race and class.

Inauthenticity is conforming to social norms and practices because “that’s what one does” (Inwood, 1997, p.27). Heidegger postulated that humans spend much of their lives in the inauthentic state known as ‘they-self’, where decisions are based on others outside themselves (Inwood, 1997). While the common vernacular use of the word ‘inauthentic’ is associated with ‘non genuine’ Heidegger does not use it in this way. It is a state where our actions are based on the ‘norm’ or normative action for the situation. It is also the state that moderates our responses to particular events, or cedes to the anonymous ‘they’.

Authenticity, on the other hand, is the concept of being true to one’s self, always doing what it believes in the best thing for itself and acting in full awareness of the state one is in regardless of the ‘they-say’. It is a state where Dasein is fully disclosed unto itself and freely chooses a response or makes up its own mind. The other state, inauthenticity is part of being human and part of being ‘already always in the world’ where we do not exist alone without the anonymous ‘they’.
Heidegger believed that most humans lived much of their lives in this inauthentic state, and, there is an argument to suggest that in terms of preventing anarchy, responding in a normative fashion may be of great value to society. Say, for example that everyone refused to obey traffic lights and signs, quite quickly there would be many accidents and people killed. Behaving in a socially acceptable fashion may be considered inauthentic, however, it is of value for a society to have its members behave in such a manner, both for personal gains (such as loss of life after driving through a red light at a traffic light) and for overall societal gains (less overall need for welfare or compensation after loss of life by obeying certain ‘rules’ in society). Another example of acting authentically would be when an artist, moves to a new artistic method to ‘follow one’s heart’ rather than do portraiture of wealthy clients to pay the bills and cede to others’ idea of what an artist does.

As a researcher, I need to come closer to an understanding of the experience of the phenomenon at hand; in this case, working shiftwork while caring for children. I must attempt not to engage in the traits of fallenness and inauthenticity. By being authentic in our manner and language, we disclose our interest in the phenomenon and engage with the person’s experience to enhance understanding.

**Language**

Language is bound in all encounters that people have in the history of cultures and experiences (O’Brien, 2002). It is in language we disclose ourselves, and open access to meaning (Heidegger, 2008). Heidegger also suggested that ‘talk’ was the basis of all language (as opposed to sentences, grammar and so on). If talk is the basis of language, then ‘hearing’ and ‘keeping silent’ is also part of language (Gelven, 1989). It is in the give-and-take of talking (and therefore listening and keeping silent) that conversation, and interpretation occurs (Gelven, 1989). Heidegger maintains that talk is essentially a characteristic and a means of human beings interrelating with one another (Gelven, 1989).

Gadamer goes further in his work on language, as he believed that language is the instrument in and through which all meaning and interpretation can be built, as language exchanges take place between two people (Gadamer, 2004, p. 390). For Gadamer; “conversation is a process of coming to an understanding” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 390). True conversation, where the participants are focused on a shared common subject matter are bound to each other in creating meaning (Gadamer, 2004, p. 390).
Even when interpreting written text, rather than conversation, the I, as the interpreter still participate with the text, bringing my past historical and cultural experiences to the interpretation and this becomes part of my understanding of the world or another (Gadamer, 2004). Interpretation is part of understanding and like Heidegger, Gadamer also purported that interpretation completed the cycle of understanding (Gadamer, 2004).

**Fusion of Horizons**

According to Gadamer, a horizon is the “wide superior vision that the person who is seeking understanding must have” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 304). Because we can look back and forward at once as human beings in any particular time and place, a fusion of horizons is the continuous linking of the historical horizon with the present horizon. Also to look ‘beyond the horizon’ is to see the phenomenon as a whole, and therefore better, and more completely, (Gadamer, 2004, p. 304). Fusion of horizons is a metaphor for the joining of the past and all it encompasses with our present, which helps “shape this moving horizon out of which human life always lives” through a process of understanding and interpretation (Gadamer, 2004, p. 303). It is by remaining open to possibilities that understanding occurs. It is the fusion of the researcher’s (interpreter) and the participants’ horizons in hermeneutic investigation that is the goal (Annells, 1996). In hermeneutic writing, the researcher articulates how they participate in the co-constitution of the data/text and then explains how the researcher’s horizon and the text’s horizon are fused (Koch, 1996).

**Hermeneutic Circle (spiral)**

The hermeneutic circle is a metaphor that describes the experience of moving between the whole and the parts in order to arrive at an interpretation of the ‘truth’ (Koch, 1996) and therefore understanding (Annells, 1996). The acquisition of new knowledge and/or understanding is the focus of the hermeneutic circle; it renders clear what appears to be unclear (Debesay, Naden, & Slettebo, 2008). The individual parts of the text are interpreted and the interpretation of the whole is determined by the parts (Gadamer, 2004). Understanding takes place when a fusion of horizons occurs between the past preconceptions and prejudices of Dasein and the present (Gadamer, 2004). Interpretation comes to an end when a ‘good Gestalt’ has been reached, that is when “an inner unity” of the text emerges, “which is free of logical contradictions” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 210).

**Justification for Use of Phenomenology**

As noted in the previous section, there is a plethora of literature, using quantitative approaches that describes shiftwork, some of the physical, psychological and psychosocial implications of
working shiftwork, and some of the long term outcomes for shiftworkers. However, there is very little research that examines the lived experience of shiftwork for these people who do it and there is a specific ‘gap’ in shiftwork research that provides an understanding of women’s experience of working shiftwork whilst caring for children.

A method of inquiry was needed to gain entrance to understanding and interpreting this, rather than simply using a descriptive representation to illuminate the ordinary process of the phenomena at hand (Dowling, 2004). For these reasons a phenomenological approach based on the Heideggerian tradition has assisted me to gain entrance to an understanding of a facet of human experiences (in this case, living a shiftwork life whilst caring for young children). Although the review above indicates that I was unable to locate existing research on this topic using Heideggerian philosophy as a framework, this framework has been extensively used in other qualitative studies (Greenfield, 2011; Morrissey, 2011; Suhail & Ghauri, 2010; Wilding & Whiteford, 2005), and as I will argue here, is both appropriate and generative for my study.

The next section attends to the application of hermeneutic phenomenology to the lived experience of shiftworking mothers who are nurses. Hermeneutic phenomenology is primarily interested in understanding and interpreting the lived experiences of people. This ontological approach addresses the meaning of experiences for the people who have lived them.

**Application of Hermeneutic Phenomenology to this study**

As hermeneutic phenomenology forms the philosophical basis for this study, the methodology, data collection and analysis also need to reflect the intent of the philosophy. Discussed within this section is the application of hermeneutic phenomenology to the study and its components such as the participants (including myself as the researcher), data collection, and interpretation.

**The Role of the Researcher**

To be a phenomenological researcher requires an interpretive, naturalistic approach (Koch, 1996) with a particular interest in, or orientation to, the phenomenon under investigation (van Manen, 1990). This means that my own background, history and current positioning in the field cannot be ignored or silenced in the framing of the study and its implementation at every stage. As a researcher who has worked shiftwork for 10 years as a single woman without the associated demands of family and children, I have had considerable interest in the effects of this type of work on the physiological health of the shiftworker (Matheson, 2008).

But as a mother who is currently experiencing the effects of my own family life on my emotional, mental and physiological capacities in the work environment, a phenomenological
approach means that I bring a strong subjective understanding and interest in the phenomenon I have chosen to study. This assists in satisfying what Van Manen (1990) sees as a key requirement for the phenomenological researcher. Such inquiry must always be mindful of the original questions, it must be steadfastly oriented to them and it must have an attitude of care (O’Brien, 2002). I, having ‘been there’ as a shiftworker and now a mother maintain ‘steadfast orientation to the phenomenon of interest’. I have been there myself and through the conversations with the women I interviewed I am still there, as I conduct this research. Because the end product of phenomenological interviews is produced by both interviewer and interviewee, or ‘co-created’, the data that are constructed is a fusion of the researcher’s and the participants’ understandings of the experience (Lowes & Prowse, 2001). As the researcher in this phenomenological attitude, my role in the data collection phase, as well as during later analysis, has been to reflect upon and understand my own experiences, assumptions and prejudices towards the phenomenon (Koch, 1996; van Manen, 1990). This process is known as co-constitution of the data (Koch, 1996).

At this point, a short discussion on bracketing is warranted. Bracketing is a term that was first used by Husserl to set aside oneself for intentional reflection on a phenomenon (LeVasseur, 2003). The term, bracketing, means to hold in abeyance any preconceived ideas that the researcher may have about the phenomena under study (Polit & Beck, 2017). Later philosophers, such as Heidegger did not agree with Husserl that reflection could occur outside one’s consciousness, and one’s previous experience of a topic be set aside (LeVasseur, 2003). Heidegger emphasised in his philosophy the concept of ‘the lived world’ which encapsulates all that a being is, including past experiences (LeVasseur, 2003). The Heideggerian expression, used below, succinctly describes this concept, “we are already always in the world”, which captures all that a being is (Draucker, 1999, p.361). Following a Heideggerian Phenomenological philosophy, meant that I did not bracket out my own experience of shiftwork.

As a researcher who has worked in nursing shiftwork, I have come to the study as the researcher with ‘presuppositions’ about shiftwork. In the section above, on Understanding, Interpreting and Meaning, I discussed how Heidegger described how Beings created meaning in their world. In order to create meaning, interpretation must first occur (Gelven, 1989). Interpretation consisted of three components; the as-structure, the fore-structure and meaning (Gelven, 1989). Within fore-structure, there are three sub-components (fore-having, foresight and fore-conception). Fore-having is having an understanding of the background or context of the
phenomenon. I am able to open myself to interpretation as I have an understanding of the experience of working shiftwork. In interviewing, transcribing, interpreting and understanding the data in this study my subjective experiences of the phenomena of shiftwork will also be laid open and analysed. Reflecting the Heideggerian tenet (“we are already always in the world”) (Draucker, 1999) my analysis includes the narratives of the participants, my own presuppositions as researcher, and the processes by which these viewpoints are merged in the interpretation as a fusing of horizons. Discussion also includes descriptions where my presuppositions (or fore-having) as researcher might disagree with the participants’ views and their reports of lived experiences of the phenomena (Draucker, 1999).

Participants

The participants in this study have been invited because of their lived experience of the phenomena under investigation, and their capacity to reflect upon and speak about their experiences (O’Brien, 2002). As the researcher, I metaphorically place my own feet in the footprints of the participants in order to share, interpret and understand the experiences they relate (Conroy, 2003; van Manen, 1990). It is the participants’ footprints that add to the hermeneutic spiral (Conroy, 2003).

A sufficient number of participants were chosen and interviewed to ensure “penetrating” analysis was achieved of the co-created datum from each interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As both methodological and pragmatic imperatives needed to be satisfied; and as there will always be an infinite number of lived experiences that could be recorded from inquiry into one phenomenon, pragmatic restrictions in the research process needed to be considered (O’Brien, 2002). Kvale and Brinkmann suggest that the number of participants regularly chosen by phenomenological researchers for an interview study tends to be around 15 +/- 10 (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The authors also note that the number of participants is governed by a combination of the time and resources available as well as the “law of diminishing returns”, where, after a certain point more participants do not add significant new information (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). While this information has provided guidance for me in a pragmatic sense, I still needed to remain close to Heideggerian tenets of the uniqueness of lived experience of each person so that the final number of participants was determined as the understanding of the phenomenon emerged from the process, rather than having been prescribed ‘in advance’.
Interviews (Data Collection Conversations)

The interviews (or conversations) took place between the interviewee and myself as interviewer. The co-created products of the conversation were both a method for gaining access to the narrative of the lived experience of the phenomena, as well as a means by which I developed a conversational relation between two people as we focused on the meaning of the experience through the conversation (van Manen, 1990).

As noted above, language is the instrument in and through which all meaning and interpretation can take place between two people (Gadamer, 2004). Language is also the medium of conversation, both in speaking and in silence (van Manen, 1990). Recent conversational analysis studies have highlighted the importance of the non-verbal elements of language (through facial gestures, posture and expressive movements that often accompany and add to language in conversation) (Liddicoat, 2011; Wooffitt, 2005). A conversation is a process of coming to a shared understanding for the participants (Gadamer, 2004).

As this study used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the data collection conversations (interviews) were one-on-one to ensure that as researcher I was open to the lived experience of the individual participant, in their verbal and non-verbal language, in their speaking and their silences (van Manen, 1990). The conversations were recorded using a digital recorder and field notes were taken where appropriate, with further notes taken directly after the interview to ensure clarity of thoughts, presuppositions and interpretations. This reflection on the interview allowed the opportunity to consider and re-consider insights and changes in understanding that challenge the pre-suppositions of the researcher. The reflection also allowed for the recording of the parts of the conversations that the transcribed text cannot, that is, the silences of the women as they considered questions, or the change in atmosphere in one interview when the participant’s husband came home and sat in the same room.

The conversations between interviewer and interviewee were interactive like any conversation. ‘Steadfast orientation’ or ‘constant mindfulness’ to the original question is important within the interview conversation, so at times I, as the interviewer, needed to gently guide the conversation (van Manen, 1990). This ensured that the conversation remained focused on the phenomena at hand, whilst gathering narratives in the form of stories and anecdotes to enrich the data for interpretation (van Manen, 1990).

As the products of the conversations were co-created by interviewer and interviewee, the presuppositions (fore-having) that I brought about the phenomena, my own subjective
experiences, thoughts and understandings were not be bracketed out as in descriptive phenomenology, rather they were brought forward into the conversation to cause a fusion of understanding between the interviewer and interviewee (Hastings, 2010; Lowes & Prowse, 2001).

**Transcribing the Interview**

It is through transcribing of the interview that the language becomes accessible to the researcher, changing it from oral to written discourse (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Transcribing is not a simple clerical task; rather it is part of the interpretative process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). What is gained in transcription is the written discourse of what is said; however, as I suggest above, what is lost can be the voice, intonations, and non-verbal body language. The transcripts alone can be decontextualised renderings of interview conversations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). To assist with overcoming this, field notes taken during and after the interviews were incorporated into the transcripts to extend the limits of the written discourse only. There is a range of useful models for this sort of transcription that incorporates the non-verbal, and embodied meanings of participants (Reid, Kamler, Simpson & Maclean, 1996). Transcription was attended to as soon as possible after each interview, while memories of the conversation and the interpretation I made of the non-verbal meanings were still fresh.

**Interpreting and Understanding (Data Analysis)**

Interpreting and understanding the lived experience of the phenomenon is the aim of analysing the data in a phenomenological study (O'Brien, 2002). Each text must be carefully read and **entered into**, this then commences the process of **caring** for the text (van Manen, 1990). This reading and re-reading is to identify themes, similarities and differences with and between each text (O'Brien, 2002). The texts were interpreted using the seven-step approach outlined and adapted by Kvale & Brinkmann, from Radnitzky’s (1970) hermeneutical canons of interpretation the texts was interpreted (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The *first* canon involves a continuous back and forth movement between the parts and the whole. Starting with the text as a whole, its different parts are interpreted and out of these interpretations are again related to the whole text.

The *second* canon is that interpretation of meaning ends when a good Gestalt is reached, that is, an inner unity of the text that is free of logical contradictions.
The *third* canon is the testing of the interpretations of the parts against the global meaning of the texts.

The *fourth* canon is the autonomy of the text; the text should be understood on the basis of its own frame of reference. This means that the identification of the themes from the interpretation of the text should be self-evident within the conversations, and provide ‘evidence’ for the themes.

The *fifth* canon is that the hermeneutical explication of the text concerns knowledge about the theme of the text. This is where I, as the researcher, bring knowledge about the phenomena to the interpretation, both as a result of personal experiences and also familiarity with the literature associated with the phenomena.

The *sixth* canon is that an interpretation of a text is not presuppositionless. This canon describes what I, as the researcher, understand and make explicit about my own assumptions, presuppositions and experiences of the phenomena.

The *seventh* canon states that every interpretation involves creativity and innovations. The interpretation goes beyond the immediately given and enriches understanding by bringing forth new differentiations and interrelations in the text, extending its meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

This in-depth engagement with the lives and words of my participants is an intensely interactive relationship between my role as a researcher and the individuals whose experience I am studying. As part of the research process ethical considerations have therefore been taken into account.

**Ethical Issues in Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

The ethics of undertaking a study using a phenomenological method or tradition need to be considered carefully, as the phenomenological philosophy focuses on the intimate and personal experience of a phenomenon for people, which could potentially be distressing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It was important that I, as the researcher had an attitude of care (O’Brien, 2002). This attitude of care was demonstrated in the careful consideration of the participants. During the design phase of phenomenological studies, it was important to ensure that the potential benefit of the study outweighed the any potential detrimental effects for the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Further technical information about the process of ethical approval is situated in Chapter Four.
Questions of Rigour in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

There is much debate within the qualitative literature about rigour, and little consensus about what rigour is, and how to establish it in qualitative research (Koch, 1996). Central to the idea of rigour is the interweaving of the philosophy throughout the study framework, from conceptualisation through to interpretation (Koch, 1996). Rigour has been defined for use in judging the quality of qualitative research by Koch (1996), who argues that rigour has several concepts that must be addressed by the researcher in qualitative research. This section outlines the process by which I determined rigour in my study. I have returned to this topic in Chapter Eight where I illustrate how these processes described below were achieved in my study.

**Credibility** is essentially the validation of “the constructions of the researcher” (Moules, 2002, p.16). This has also been described as the detailing of the researcher’s qualifications, experiences, perspectives and assumptions (Byrne, 2001). One way that researchers commonly use to check their “constructions” are credible is to use a peer debriefer (Byrne, 2001). A peer debriefer acts as a fresh set of eyes or perspective and attends to the research process and analysis with a critical approach (Byrne, 2001). Often, researchers return to their participants to ensure that their meaning and interpretation is correct (Moules, 2002).

**Transferability** is the capacity for readers to find meaning and applicability of the study into other contexts (Moules, 2002). Others have described it as a recognition that resonates with the lived experience of the phenomena (O’Brien, 2002). What Ladwig calls ‘socially recognisable evidence’ approaches the idea of a face validity of the results of the inquiry (Ladwig, 1994). This concept differs from the requirements for generalisability that is used in quantitative research (Moules, 2002).

The **dependability** of the research is assured by documenting the process by which the inquiry and interpretations have been “arrived at”, using the data from the transcripts to clearly reflect the interpretation (Moules, 2002).

Another way in which rigour may be established is a set of verification strategies (Morse, Barratt, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). **Methodological coherence** is required to ensure that there is congruence between the research question and method. **Appropriate sampling** of participants who have lived experience of the phenomena is needed, along with **concurrent collecting and analysing of data** to ensure a mutual interaction of what is known and what one needs to know. This requires constant attention to the phenomenon and this has been described as a ‘steadfastness orientation’ (van Manen, 1990). The next part of the strategy is **thinking**
theoretically. This concept is the reconfirming of the ideas and themes that emerge from the data. Lastly, theory development is the movement with deliberation between the micro perspective of the data and the macro conceptual/theoretical understanding of the analysis. In synchrony, these strategies incrementally and interactively contribute to reliability and validity and therefore rigour (Morse et al., 2002).

My study used both of these methods (Morse et al., 2002; Moules, 2002), as both methods added strength in both methodological and rigour areas. The first method added strength to ensuring the process of the study is rigorous by ensuring that my assumptions as researcher were articulated within the data, that transferability to other studies and contexts was considered in the interpretative phase, and that the process by which the interpretations have been arrived at are clear. The second method ensured that the traditions of hermeneutic phenomenology were woven through the entire study. Each method offered a slightly different approach to ensuring rigour, and combined they offer both methodological coherence and credibility, giving confidence in the outcomes of the study.

**Conclusion to the Chapter**

In this chapter I have firstly, provided an overview of some tenets of hermeneutic phenomenology that inform my study from a Heideggerian and, to a lesser extent Gadamerian tradition. Then I have presented the justification for the use of phenomenology in this study. Given that the prime motivation of my research question was about the lived experience of my participants, phenomenology was chosen as a method which could assist me to gain access and understanding about the life world of shiftworking mothers with young children. The last part of the chapter has addressed the application of the philosophy to the research study, and discusses how the hermeneutic phenomenological method (or tradition) was interwoven throughout the study.
Chapter Four - Method – Living the Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes and explains the application of the philosophical framework to my study in greater detail. Firstly, my own pre suppositions are outlined and then discussion moves to the data generation process. In this process I describe my co-contributors (study participants), and discuss the method of data generation and analysis. Finally, discussion will turn to issues such as ethics, rigour and validity, which were introduced in Chapter Three.

The role of the Researcher

Presuppositions

In keeping with the phenomenological philosophy I begin with an outline of my own presuppositions. A presupposition is a presumption, or belief about some information in either discussion or discourse that is taken for granted by the speaker or writer. A presupposition also assumes that the listener or reader will understand the assumptions made about the topic (Beaver & Geurts, 2014). There is an entire branch of linguistics dedicated to this area, however, in this research I am using the term ‘presupposition’ to designate my beliefs and thoughts about what the data may hold in this study. From a Heideggerian perspective, a presupposition is fore-having. As an element of fore-structure, fore-having is imperative to interpretation, understanding and meaning (Gelven, 1989). By bringing my presuppositions forth, I am opening myself to the meaning of the experience of the phenomenon under investigation and bringing what I already know or assume to the conversation. By bringing my presuppositions to the conversation I have them either rejected or kept based on my early interpretation of the conversation. This element of thinking about presuppositions is called fore-sight, the concept of ‘takes the first cut’ of my fore-having (or presupposition) (Heidegger, 2008, p. 191).

Prior to undertaking the literature review and then again prior to the data collection conversations with the women in this study I wrote down my presuppositions about what I thought might come out in the data. Reflection of my personal assumptions and beliefs about what the experience of the participants might be like were examined and re-examined throughout the study. As this study utilised hermeneutic phenomenology I did not bracket out my presuppositions, rather I brought these to the fore and questioned them as part of the study process to stay close to the hermeneutic tradition, as discussed in the previous chapter. This re-
examination of presuppositions combines the first two elements of Heidegger’s fore-structure (fore-having and fore-sight). The bringing forward of presuppositions (or prejudices) is also the constitution of the “fusion of a particular present” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 304), which opens us to understanding and hence produces the condition by which we may create meaning of a particular experience. Furthermore, understanding becomes the fusion of a range of horizons (both historical and in the present of all participants in the conversation) (Gadamer, 2004, p. 304). As the products of the conversations were co-created by me as the interviewer and each interviewee, the presuppositions that I bring about the phenomena, my own subjective experiences, thoughts and understandings were not be bracketed out as in descriptive phenomenology, rather they were brought forward into the conversation to enable a fusion of understanding between the interviewer and interviewee (Hastings, 2010; Lowes & Prowse, 2001). This fusion has also been described as a binding of the participants in the conversation (Gadamer, 2004, p. 390).

I had thought that the participants would talk about managing their time, childcare issues, some of the negative sides of shiftwork, and career progression. As outlined in Call to the Question I had experience with shiftwork and experience with being a working mother but not simultaneously, and I marvelled at women maintaining both roles in their lives and remaining sane. As part of my role as Researcher, I needed to lay open my presuppositions about what I might discover in the study. As part of the reflexivity cycle I revisited these after the data was analysed. They are presented in Chapter Eight – Concluding Thoughts.

**The role of the Participant**

All of the participants had lived the experience of working shiftwork whilst caring for children. A purposeful and snowballing sampling method was used to access participants who had the lived experience that I wanted to explore. All of the participants were registered nurses with children. They were of varying ages, diverse in work type, age and partner status. In response to several radio interviews as well as word of mouth referrals, each participant contacted me out of an interest to talk about their experience with shiftwork and caring for children. Often they had spoken to other women who subsequently contacted me about participation in the study. I chose their pseudonyms based on the era of the name that the person had (usually this was determined by the popularity of names in the year they were born) and I chose a name that felt true to the era. The pseudonyms were Jennifer, Karen, Rebecca, Rachel, Tracy, Fran, Alex, Beth, Katrina and Alison.
Described below in tabular form some of the relevant participant demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Partnership Status</th>
<th>Work Status</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Ages of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Previously single, now in a relationship</td>
<td>Part-time (4 shifts per week)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Single, previously married</td>
<td>Full-time (5 shifts per week)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Part-time (2 - 3 shifts per week)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Preschool/primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Part-time (2 - 3 shifts per week)</td>
<td>1 (pregnant with 2nd)</td>
<td>Toddler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Part-time (2 - 3 shifts per week)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fran</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Part-time (3 shifts per week)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Single, previously married</td>
<td>Full-time (5 shifts per week)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Full-time (5 shifts per week)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Part-time (Previously full-time (4 ten hours shifts per week) now 3 eight-hour shifts per week)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Full-time (5 shifts per week)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the participants were women who had given birth to children and who were registered nurses who were in employed in public and/or private health services. There was a range of inpatient and outpatient settings that the participants primarily worked in. Work areas such as medical, midwifery, aged care, theatre, emergency and surgical were represented in this sample.

The participants worked a variety of shift rotations. The sample varied between 2 shifts per week to 6 shifts per week. Some worked night shifts as a preference, others actively tried to avoid night shifts. Some worked in several places undertaking diverse roles that mainly saw them working day shifts with some evenings occasionally. The next chapter describes each participant in greater detail.
Interviews (Data Collection Conversations)

The interviews (or conversations) took place between the participant and me, either at the participant’s home or in my office. In line with the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, outlined in Chapter Three, the data collection conversations (interviews) were all one-on-one. This was to ensure that I was open to the lived experience of the participant, and the meanings available in their verbal and non-verbal language, in their speaking and their silences (van Manen, 1990). The conversations were recorded using a digital recorder.

As language is the instrument in and through which all meaning and interpretation can take place between two people (Gadamer, 2004, p. 390), I ensured that the interviews were in a place where the participant would feel comfortable, and where she could be given as much time as she wanted to speak. Being particularly mindful that language is also the medium of conversation, both in speaking and in silence (van Manen, 1990), I noted pauses, body movement and in one case, tears (as the participant remembered the blur that life was whilst working shiftwork when the children were young). In each case prior to, and after the digital recorder was used, further general conversation ensued as I got to know the woman a little. I was mindful that the conversation should not just be the interview. I felt that to come in and just record an interview would have felt like I was a thief in the night coming to take something of a vulnerable nature from the woman (her lived experience) if I could not be involved in other conversation.

A purely transactional exchange would have been disrespectful to the philosophy and the participant, as every true conversation is one where the participants open themselves and become bound in the common subject matter (Gadamer, 2004). To be allowed access to the lived world of the woman that I was interviewing, I felt I needed to gain her trust so our conversation could come to a shared understanding. I felt that we needed to be on the same ‘wavelength’ as it were. As data collection interviews are in themselves arranged conversations (that is, ethics must be ensured, participants must be sought, the study must be described and consent must be gained), opening myself up for the true conversation prior to the recorder being turned on provided a way by which the participant and I might be bound together in the conversation (Gadamer, 2004), I found that this also settled the participant and gave them space in which to open themselves to the matter at hand. To start the more formal part of the conversation with a shared understanding allowed me to begin the interpretation within the interview context.
Usually I spent one to two hours with each woman. The interview part of the time usually took about one hour, slightly less in one case and more in others. I had a number of questions to direct the conversation (see Appendix Four), ensuring that the interviews were semi structured and interactive, where I tried to keep a steadfast orientation to the task at hand (van Manen, 1990).

In order to ensure also that I was interpreting and understanding the participant in our conversations, I used a technique of member checking within the interview rather than returning the transcript to the participant for checking later. The main reason that this was done in this was to support the hermeneutic tradition; the understanding of another through the use of language. As temporality of the conversation is gone after the conversation is conducted I saw that to try and re-have the conversation through the checking of a transcript alters the interpretation (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2011). I tried to make sure that I had interpreted, and understood the meaning of the conversation (interview) prior to leaving it by using a summary approach where I recounted to the participant the main themes that I had heard, understood and interpreted and I asked her to either confirm these or assist me in clarifying my interpretation of the conversation. Each participant confirmed the themes that I brought forward and usually elaborated on them further. By undertaking this technique I was both member checking and beginning the analysis of the data collection conversation.

Interpreting and Understanding the Conversations (Data Analysis)

Each conversation was then transcribed verbatim. I did this myself in order to enhance the interpretive moment – reliving words, gestures and other non-verbal meanings such as laughter, pauses and sighs. After transcription I listened carefully to each conversation whilst re-reading the text of the conversation to ensure that I had not missed the words, silence and essence of each conversation because talk is the basis of language, and ‘hearing’ and ‘keeping silent’ are also part of language (Gelven, 1989).

Each text was carefully read and entered into, so that the process of caring for the text could commence (van Manen, 1990). This reading and re-reading was to identify themes, similarities and differences with and between each text (O’Brien, 2002). Using the seven-step approach outlined above, and adapted by Kvale & Brinkmann from Radnitzky’s 1970 hermeneutical canons of interpretation, the texts were interpreted in the manner I have described in detail in Chapter Three.
For the first canon I read and re-read the text in entirety to develop an understanding of the essence of the conversation and begin to identify topics and themes. I then examined each section for how it related to the emergent themes.

For the second canon I continued to immerse myself in the texts, moving backwards and forwards until I was satisfied I had an understanding of the themes as distinct entities and in combination were a reflection of the whole experience for that participant.

For the third canon I compared the themes within text and between texts to gain a greater sense of individual and shared themes in this experience.

For the fourth canon I used both the member checking method during the interview along with the rest of the text to confirm that my interpretation and understanding of their experience was accurate and also to verify that the themes had come from the text (conversation) and were not pre-suppositions of my own. I allowed the texts to speak for themselves.

For the fifth canon I, as the researcher, brought knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation to the interpretation, both as a result of my personal experiences and also my familiarity with the literature associated with the phenomena. As the interpretation and understanding process proceeded I ensured that the knowledge of the literature whispered alongside the stories of the participants about their shiftwork experience. This allowed an understanding of the shiftwork milieu, overlaid with their experience of caring for their children.

For the sixth canon I commenced with my reflection upon presuppositions prior to the first interview conversation, where I expressly recorded my own presuppositions of this experience. I used these notes of my presuppositions to reflect upon as the conversations continued and themes emerged.

For the seventh canon I challenged the texts again, through the lens of theorists that I had been reading, to be able to situate the interpretations in the social context. I read the participant words seeking answers to questions that my reading raised and to bring forth meanings and understandings in the co-created understanding of the narrative.

The backwards-forward movement within and between texts of the conversations permitted me to analyse, reflect, interpret and understand the meanings of the phenomenon at hand; that is shiftwork experience whilst caring for children. I have used the participant’s words as example to illustrate and illuminate my interpretations and understandings. A true conversation is interpreted by the participants and has shared meaning, but may be differently interpreted and
understood by others not in the conversation; therefore my interpretation of the lived experience of working shiftwork whilst caring for children presented here is not the only interpretation possible, but is the one that emerged through the fusing of horizons within the interview. In a paradigm of multiple truths, there are as many interpretations as there are interpreters. I have presented one interpretation of this phenomenon, claiming its validity on the basis of the application of the hermeneutic method.

The first part of analysing the data consisted of reading and re-reading the texts of the conversation to come to know the talk. In this part of the process it became apparent that things that the participants said were layered; in that often they spoke to a range of themes and meanings. In the presentation of the data, I have used several different types of punctuation to assist readability of quotes.

Parentheses, or round brackets have been used in the quotes to explain missing information that will assist the reader in understanding the context of the quote. Square or box brackets have been used to insert missing words that will assist in understanding what the woman meant in the particular quote. The example below has been copied verbatim from the section in Chapter Six on Being Guilty to illustrate how both sets of brackets have been used to increase understanding of the quotes and therefore, to assist meaning and interpretation.

...that worries me, so if they’re sick or something like that – that’s when I feel guilty going. But because I work one shift, I tend to have to force myself to go, even if they’re sick, because I can’t [call in sick].-Well, here I am [working] one shift this week (Fran’s permanent shift) like really, why do they get sick on that one shift. So that’s my guilt...They would say “Oh here’s Fran working one shift, and she’s called in sick, because her children are sick” - so I tend to push myself to go (Fran).

This excerpt also clearly demonstrates the richness of the data and the intertwining of the layers of meanings in a single response.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was sought and given by Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee (15/10/2012). The approval number was (2012/166) and a copy of the approval can be found in Appendix One.

To ensure that the participants felt comfortable, the setting of the interviews was either at my office as primary investigator or within the participant’s home environment. It was not envisaged that interviews in this study would cause distress however it was not possible to
predict whether emotional issues might be raised for participants, and if this was to happen then consideration was given to the management of this. As part of the ethical approval participants were given the opportunity to continue, pause the interview, suspend until a later date, or terminate. Community health centre and employee assistance program numbers for follow-up counselling was also to be supplied to participants. No participants asked to pause, suspend or terminate the interview.

Participants were provided with Participant Information Sheets which contained plain language information about the study. Participants were informed about the study purpose, length of interview, method of collecting data (in this case audiotaping), data management and confidentiality. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour, or for the time that the participant wished to speak about the phenomenon under investigation, and was audiotaped. Security of information and confidentiality were assured with pseudonyms given to participants. Participants were invited to sign an informed consent sheet if they wished to participate, and were notified that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

The study has complied with the requirements of the appropriate privacy act, regulations and code of practice. No names, nor personal information have been used for any other purpose that the results of this study, and no identifying information has been included in any reports or publications. Secured data will be destroyed appropriately five years after the completion of this thesis. All computer files (recordings of interviews and transcripts) have been stored on the Charles Sturt University network and are password protected. Backup of these files occurs each night. No identifying data will be stored with interview transcripts.

**Rigour**

It is the methodological rigour with which a hermeneutic inquiry is carried out that assures its quality and value for the field. In Chapter Three I outlined the two methods by which I established rigour within my study. Below are the processes I completed to ensure quality in my study. In Chapter Eight rigour is re-examined as part of the reflexive nature of hermeneutic phenomenological research. This is done to ensure that methods and processes to establish rigour are carried throughout the study.

To ensure credibility I shared my data, interpretations and understandings (constructions) with my supervisors to confirm my reflections. One supervisor was very experienced in phenomenology and both in qualitative research in general; one had experience of nursing and shiftwork and both had experience of being working mothers. One supervisor had had
extensive experience in fields other than nursing, which ensured a critical eye for a quality study overall.

As previously mentioned, instead of returning transcripts to participants for checking I provided, within-interview a thematic summary that I believed was more congruent with my methodology. When I summarised the themes, the women further explained and had illuminated what I had said, often adding further parts to the narrative to give it richness. The co-constitution of the narrative, and the phenomenological notion that one can never step in the same river twice, means that returning the narrative as text to the participant at a later occasion, time and space have changed and they reinterpret their narrative through different eyes. This decision was based on the methodological rationale that hermeneutic phenomenology research is contextual, in time and space (McConnell-Henry et al., 2011).

Returning the transcript, may have been a threat to rigour as the participants may have interpreted particular concepts as more important and overemphasise these believing that that was what I wanted as the researcher. As McConnell-Henry et al. (2011) argue this is known as the ‘halo effect’ where the participant wants to say ‘the right thing’ to help the researcher. Also, because the participants had often revealed quite personal stories about their lives and experiences I considered that to have it laid bare on paper may have brought up issues for the participants, which is a potential risk in qualitative research (McConnell-Henry et al., 2011). Exploiting their misery and their feelings of guilt, was not what I, the researcher wanted for the women who gave up their time to speak with me. The other concern about returning the transcript is that if the participant disagreed with the interpretation, the researcher may be put under pressure to change the interpretation, which may endanger the integrity of the study (McConnell-Henry et al., 2011).

Transferability was achieved by using the available literature on shiftwork experience to whisper alongside the analysis phase. Other published studies that I have found and reviewed did not have the same focus as my study, nevertheless, some studies did have similar themes or findings. Whilst hermeneutic phenomenology assumes multiple truths and the uniqueness of the experience of Dasein, there are some similarities that may be shared. Within each interview at different points I brought up an anecdote from another interview (such as “another participant found it easier to manage her week if she planned her meals particularly for the children. Does this resonate with you?”). I thought it was not only valuable to have transferability post interpretation and understanding, but within the process of collecting the narratives; to understand whether there were any shared experiences with the participants’ lived
experiences. I hope that the presented text has the capacity for readers to find meaning and applications of the study to different contexts.

To warrant dependability within my study I have documented both in this chapter and Chapter Three the methods and processes by which I completed the study. I have recorded the process by which I analysed the texts, using the adaptation from Radnitzky’s 1970 hermeneutical canons, which has been described above (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Both the theory and how I executed dependability of the process has been laid out as part of demonstrating rigour.

The second way in which I established rigour was use of the verification strategies by Morse et. al. (2002). More detail about these strategies is found in Chapter Three.

To ensure methodological coherence I chose a method by which to answer my research question that aimed to illuminate the experiences of working and living for women with children who undertake nursing shiftwork. The use of interpretative (or hermeneutic) phenomenology as described by Heidegger, and later expanded by Gadamer are methodologically congruent to answer the study question. The methodology of this study was consistent with the collection of data as conversations that were analysed using Radnitzky 1970’s canons seven step approach outlined and adapted by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). Also congruent to the method the use of Gadamer’s (2004) fusion of horizons where the interpreted narrative is a fused understanding of both the participant and the researcher.

I achieved appropriate sampling by choosing participants who have lived experience of the phenomenon. Ten women were spoken with to form the basis of the interpreted narrative and the basis of this work.

I completed concurrent collecting and analysing of data to ensure a mutual interaction of what is known and what one needs to know. This could be described as steadfastness orientation to the phenomena (van Manen, 1990). Once I had undertaken an interview the conversation was transcribed, making note of the ‘talk’ and the silence of the language used. The analysis was commenced and prior to undertaking another interview, a preliminary analysis where the themes of the single text emerged.

The next part of the strategy is thinking theoretically. This is the reconfirming of the constant rise of ideas from the data are reconfirmed and verified back in the data. As each theme was identified I re-examined the narrative to confirm that it was grounded in the data. I also sought to verify the ideas from the body of shiftwork literature as well.
The last part of the strategy is *theory development* which is the deliberate movement between the minutiae of the data and the theoretical development. As I engaged in the backwards-forwards interpretation of the texts, theoretical understanding emerged and was developed supported by the participants’ words, anecdotes and language. This particular phase of the strategy is the often referred to as either the hermeneutic circle or hermeneutic spiral. This has been discussed in Chapter Three. In synchrony, these strategies incrementally and interactively contribute to reliability and validity and therefore rigour (Morse et al., 2002).

My study used methods of both Moules (2002) and Morse et.al. (2002). I felt that both methods add strength in methodological and in relation to rigour areas. The first method adds strength to ensuring the process of the study is rigorous by ensuring that the assumptions of the researcher are articulated within the data, that transferability to other studies and contexts is considered in the interpretative phase, and that the process through which the interpretations have been arrived at is clear. The second method ensures that the traditions of hermeneutic phenomenology are woven through the entire study and are encapsulated in the analysis and interpretation. This part of the second method requires appropriate sampling of people who have experienced the phenomena, and concurrent data collection and analysis. Theoretical thought and development ensures that the movement between the whole and the parts is undertaken. Each method offers a slightly different approach to ensuring rigour, and combined they offer both methodological coherence and credibility.

**Conclusion to the Chapter**

In this chapter I have discussed the application of a hermeneutic phenomenology methodology in this study. Each part of the process from the interview conversations to the theory development has been presented here. While each part has been discussed as a separate entity, nothing in this process was segmented quite this clearly. Rather, the inquiry has been a backwards-forwards examination, reflection, interpretation of the conversations to come to a place of understanding of the lived experiences of the participants in the study. Having outlined the ways in which I collected, co-produced, “in-indwelt” and analysed the experience of my participants I now turn to the next chapter to introduce the participants in the study.
Chapter Five – The Participants

Introduction

This chapter will introduce each of the participants that contributed to this research. To collect the data for this study I spoke with ten women who were all registered nurses and who cared for children ranging in age from 9 months to 20 years. All were currently working some form of shiftwork when I spoke with them. I will describe each of them in detail here and they have been presented in the order in which I spoke with them.

Jennifer

Jennifer was a 44-year old single mother to one child. She decided in her late thirties that she wanted to have a child, and given she did not have a partner at the time and had not had one for some time, she made the decision to have a child on her own. At the time of data collection, Jennifer had a primary school age son. She had very good family support from her father, her godparents and cousins, all of whom live in the same town. Jennifer was a clinical nurse working in medical or higher acuity areas. She worked four days per week and tried to structure her shifts around her son. When she spoke with me her son was present and playing in the background, around the house and in the backyard.

Jennifer talked about the need to be incredibly organised to manage her shiftwork around the needs of her son. She planned her shifts and who would pick up/drop off her son at school months ahead. Social occasions were also planned a long time ahead as many of Jennifer’s friends were also nurses. Jennifer felt she could not ask friends and family to care for her son to enable her to socialise on her own because of the amount of time she needed help with her son for her to work. Jennifer’s independence was very important to her and she clearly felt the burden of imposition on her family of her need to ask for help to care for her son.

Karen

Karen was a 45-year old recently-single mother to two children. Her children were in late high school, when I spoke with her. Karen had worked a lot of shiftwork when the children were young and worked her shifts around her husband’s roster. To maximise the amount of money she received for the time she was away from her family, Karen mainly worked night shifts in a small rural hospital. She worked two shifts per week but routinely picked up two extra to have more money coming in. She did not use childcare through the day to care for her children when they were small, and reported that she would sometimes fell asleep while they were awake. Karen has mainly worked in aged care and more recently administration.
Rebecca
Rebecca was a 30-year old married woman with three children. She came from a farming background and married a farmer. Rebecca’s husband managed the farm they live on. Her children were preschool and infants school age. Rebecca worked in a small hospital in emergency doing night shifts, usually Fridays and at least one other day to bring in money for ‘extras’. One of Rebecca’s children had very severe asthma and this was a significant worry for Rebecca when she was away at work because she worried her husband would miss the early signs of an asthma attack (which has happened in the past). Rebecca often went without sleep for almost two days, as her husband may have needed to work any day of the week on the farm and she was expected to find assistance in caring for the children if she needed it.

Rachel
Rachel was a 26-year old woman who worked permanent part-time with a daughter who was just under one year old. At the time of the interview she was three months pregnant with her second child. Rachel was different from most of the other women I spoke with as the division of labour within her home was roughly split 50/50 despite Rachel working two days per week. Rachel’s husband left work early on the two days Rachel worked, to enable him to pick up their daughter from day care and would prepare the meals and clean and wash at home as necessary. When Rachel came home at about 9 pm, everything was done and she and her husband sat down to dinner together. Rachel talked about enjoying work and thought it was good for both her and their daughter to have the two days apart. Rachel felt that her daughter needed the social interaction of day care and that she (Rachel) needed adult interaction that was about more than being a mother. Rachel had returned to her job in operating theatres where she had worked prior to the birth of her little girl, though on reduced hours. Rachel reported that mostly she had good support from her husband in doing the unpaid work related to household tasks and childcare.

Tracy
Tracy was a 47-year old married woman with two primary school aged children. She worked in a variety of areas but mainly in education or with women and children. After her children were born, Tracy returned to shiftwork on a part-time basis until this became too much after the second child. Tracy felt as if she was missing too many important moments in her family’s lives. She worked her shiftwork around the family requirements, and while she expressed regret that sometimes she missed her children’s weekend sporting matches she believed she had achieved a better balance in working casually. Tracy’s husband ran his own business so there
was some flexibility if one of the children was ill and could not attend school, as he was able to stay home to care for the child if Tracy had booked a shift to work. Tracy was very positive about how shiftwork allowed her to be with her family when she chose and still earn a good wage.

**Fran**

Fran was a 37-year old married woman with three children, two in infants/primary school and one at preschool. She worked seven night shifts per fortnight in acute care areas, although only three shifts were permanent. Fran worked her night shift from Thursday to Monday in one week and Friday to Monday the next, although only three shifts per fortnight. She worked the extra shifts (four extra shifts per fortnight) as a ‘casual’ to earn more money to pay the increased mortgage associated with a new house. Only when Fran took annual leave did she have a weekend to spend socialising with family and friends. Fran returned to full-time work soon after our interview when her youngest child commenced school, as the work arrangement she was under required this. She was concerned about how she was going to manage but did not want to lose her job. Fran and her husband were building a much bigger house and Fran was working extra shifts to pay for the mortgage. The Sunday night shift (Fran’s last shift for the week) was the hardest for Fran as she arrived home after her shift and got the three children ready for the day. Her husband then left to go to work as he started early, and she then drove the children to school. On Mondays at her daughters’ school a regular assembly occurred and Fran found it difficult to stay awake for this. When she arrived home with her youngest child they spent the day cleaning and keeping very busy. Her husband usually arrived home early and they had an early dinner. On the nights that Fran worked, her husband managed the children after dinner. Fran tried to attend weekend sporting events and children’s parties for the children, although she often missed out so she could sleep. Working part-time since her first child was born nearly ten years ago had been one of the advantages of shiftwork as she had not needed to use much formal childcare for any of the children, while still contributing financially to the family. Fran had good family support in her town if she needed it.

**Katrina**

Katrina was a 40-year old married woman with two children, both of whom were at primary school when I spoke with her. She worked casually at a base hospital and fitted it around her family needs. After her first child was born, Katrina returned to shiftwork trying to accommodate it around her husband’s work. When Katrina was on night shift her mother-in-law would take the child for a few hours, although Katrina said she felt guilty leaving the child
there too long and would shorten her sleep period to go and get him, even if she was working another night shift that night. When the second child was born, Katrina left her permanent position as the family could manage financially for her to be home. She has returned to work now, as she reported that she feels her husband would like her to work and as the children are at school she can do a couple of night shifts each week. When she has dropped the children at school she goes home and sleeps until it is time to retrieve them.

**Beth**

Beth was a 58-year old married woman with three children, two were young adults and one was in high school. Beth’s experience with shiftwork has allowed her to provide for her family after her first husband died as a result of a car accident when her first two children were very young. Beth’s parents were available to assist her with childcare so she was able to work. A number of years later Beth married again, and the family moved about half an hour away from Beth’s home town for work reasons. Beth had a third child who was a number of years younger than the first two children. Beth’s husband was a teacher and Beth worked evening shift for the years when the child was not of school age. Beth would care for the child at home until about 2 pm and then drop the child at the school where her husband worked. The school administration staff looked after the child until school finished. This arrangement allowed both Beth and her husband to work, and their child to be cared for by people she knew. Beth has worked all her childbearing years and shiftwork has allowed her to have a career as well as financially support the family. Even though Beth’s older children were adults Beth maintained a very close relationship with them. Her youngest child was now a teenager and she was still very involved in many aspects of her life. Beth worked a mixture of days and evenings in an education role. Some of the evenings were late as she needed to stay until after the night shift had started as part of her role. She was usually home from work around midnight.

**Alex**

Alex was a 40-year old single woman with one primary school aged child, at the time I spoke with her. She had been single since her child was a baby. She received no childcare support from her child’s father, but had her mother and brother close by, and they assisted at different times with her son. She worked several part-time jobs to support her family. Alex worked in two education roles as well as working evenings and night shifts on the weekends. When she did her weekend night shifts, her son either had a sleepover at a friend’s house or at his grandmother’s. Alex used her annual leave to work extra night shifts at another facility to build up financial resources for the year, as the Christmas close-down period did not allow for many
extra casual shifts. Alex spoke about a very organised routine that was planned some weeks ahead to ensure she had care for her son and took advantage of any night shifts she could work. A few years ago Alex was diagnosed with cancer and endured surgery and chemotherapy whilst still caring for her child.

**Alison**

Alison was a 46-year old married woman who worked in a fairly high pressure role. Her role was non-clinical, however Alison still worked a mixture of days, evenings and weekends supporting nurses and patients. Alison had two primary school aged children and her husband was the primary care giver, although Alison was the general overseer of the family. Alison’s husband worked school hours and was able to pick the children up in the afternoon for their after school activities. Despite Alison’s husband providing care for the children, Alison did most of the cooking and housework. Alison cooked a number of meals on the weekend that were reheated for early in the week. The housework was done on the weekend as well. Alison tended to work a ten-hour day even on a day shift, and so only saw the children in the evening just before bed. While her husband provided the day to day care, Alison tended to direct the care, leaving a list of things needed to be done for her husband, such as purchasing new school shoes, taking a child to the dentist or cooking a meal. Alison would make the appointments for the children and leave a recipe of what she wanted her husband to cook.

**Conclusion to the Chapter**

This chapter has presented a brief overview of the background story of the women who participated in this study to help me come to an understanding of what it is to work shiftwork and care for children. As a group, they are typical to the sort of shiftworkers found in nursing who care for children. As individuals each of the participants bring to my study diverse perspectives in how they manage their lives and the lives of their families.
Chapter Six – The Experience of Caring for Children whilst working shiftwork

Introduction

As this study used a hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy and method to gain understanding and create meanings about the experience of working shiftwork whilst caring for children, I needed a data collection method that would gain access to this experience. As has been discussed in Chapters Three and Four, language is an instrument by which we can create meaning and interpretation (Gadamer, 2004, p. 390). Therefore, using conversation in the form of interview as the key data collection ‘tool’ is methodologically congruent with hermeneutic phenomenology. The hermeneutical canons outlined in both Chapters Three and Four supported my analysis of the texts of the conversations that I had with each of the women who became participants for my study. In this chapter I present the narratives of the participants organised into the themes that emerged from the interviews. Guilt is discussed first, as it was the major finding of my study. In my discussion of the second theme (Being Juggler), I have organised it as several sub-themes that contribute to the theme.

The women I interviewed did not discuss their actual work in much detail, usually only discussing the area, type and amount of shiftwork they worked in. They seemed to understand that being a nurse required them (in the main) to work shiftwork, particularly if they wished to stay working clinically. Most of the participants spoke about shiftwork as if it was a ‘given’ in the situation of being a nurse and they accepted this without question. None disclosed that they were looking to change their shiftwork situation to work only work that was conducted throughout the day. The women saw being a shiftworker as an intrinsic part of their identity. Also, there was acknowledgement that some of the experiences that shiftworking nurses had may be similar to those of working women who work days. However, the ability to choose work times throughout the 24 hour period is unique to shiftwork.

The themes emerged from the texts as I followed the hermeneutic canons. I also applied Heidegger’s work on understanding (As-structure, fore-structure and meaning) in order to ensure that I had ‘thought theoretically’ and had woven my themes from the narratives of the women I spoke with, as well as my own presuppositions (fore-having) and the shiftwork literature base. The themes that emerged are Being Guilty, and Being Juggler. Being Juggler is organised into three subthemes. The table below illustrates the themes and sub-themes:
Throughout this chapter, and the next, a range of terms derived from Heideggerian Phenomenology are used to provide congruence between the data and the theoretical framework that this study used. These have been defined and discussed in Chapter Three in greater detail, but will be reviewed here briefly prior to presenting the data.

Firstly, Dasein is a German word used by Heidegger to mean “to be there” or “to exist” (Inwood, 1997; O’Brien, 2002). The word Dasein was used to denote our (human beings’) existential difference from other beings, such as animals around us. Dasein’s ability for self-awareness (O’Brien, 2002) and the capacity for self-interpretation (Salem-Wiseman, 2003), allows us to interpret our experiences and possibilities around us.

Also discussed in earlier chapters is the concept of authenticity. Heideggerian authenticity is the notion of ‘being true to oneself’, rather than ‘genuine’ which is the way in which the word authentic is used in the modern vernacular (Inwood, 1997). Being true to one’s self is an important construct in Heideggerian Phenomenology as Dasein because it is counter the ‘pack mentality’. Authenticity requires a thoughtful and mindful inquiry into what ‘one should do’. As discussed in Chapter Three, Dasein spend much of their lives, from a Heideggerian point as living inauthentically (or falling) in the ‘everydayness’ of the world (Heidegger, 2008). For example, I may not care to go to work but I do so because I understand that money comes from working and money allows me to pay bills, mortgage and buy food and other salient pleasures. If I were to live authentically, I may decide that working is for the birds and that I (being faithful to my true self) would consider all possibilities and come to a decision that I would rather read philosophy all day, or cook or garden. While this may be a more authentic approach, I am still bound by the facticity of the capitalist society in which I live and if I do not pay my bills and the mortgage then ‘they’ will cut off my electricity and eventually ‘they’ will evict me from my house. Therefore, I act inauthentically by going about my daily routine to work. This is the concept of fallenness, it is living by the ‘they-say’. Fallenness comes from chatter, curiosity, ambiguity and duplicity where Dasein is only interested in the ‘hear say’ or ‘they-say’ and are

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not fully disclosed unto themselves (Inwood, 1997; Wheeler, 2015). In the example above, I am following the ‘they-say’ by deciding that being evicted is bad and without thinking about it, or considering all the possibilities that this may open, I do what I can to avoid being evicted. I do not consider other possibilities and imagine how being evicted may not be all bad as ‘they’ have suggested it would be. Fallenness is about following ‘the pack’ or doing what ‘everyone’ does, whereas authenticity is a careful considering of all possibilities open to one (Inwood, 1997; Wheeler, 2015).

**Being Guilty**

This theme of *Being Guilty* illuminates the experience of shiftworking mothers and the conflict they experience in working. This theme of *Being Guilty* is about experiencing guilt, which reveals how the women I spoke with felt towards their children, and to a lesser degree their workplace. As further illuminated in Chapter Seven, some of the women I spoke with experienced guilt to a greater extent than others. For some of the women, their feelings of guilt were palpable. Their body language mirrored the distress they felt as they related their feelings of guilt. In that moment, I understood Gadamer’s concept of the true conversation, where the participants are bound together over the subject matter. I felt, in that instant, particularly with one woman, the guilt in the air within my office where the interview took place, and I felt her guilt in me as she sat and wrung her hands as she discussed leaving her children to go to work. In Chapter Seven I use a quote from Macbeth because I was struck by the similarity of the feelings it evoked, despite the reason for feeling guilty being entirely different. Even as I write, I recall the feelings of guilt from that day of the interview, I feel them somatically as a heaviness in the pit of my stomach. I had never met this participant prior to the day of the interview and I have never seen her since, though her narrative and the feelings that I felt she revealed that day have stayed with me. This is her, and the others’ stories of experiencing guilt.

As discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven, in the section on Guilt and Care; Heidegger believed that our guilt arose from the primordial Dasein and the result of this guilt is the feeling or sense of indebtedness (Heidegger, 2008). Indebtedness, Heidegger suggested, was the origin for why Dasein care for others. We care for, or are indebted to others because we are guilty as part of our makeup. Primordial, in this context does not mean primitive or ancient, it means the prime closest to (for example, understanding), or most complete or detailed (Dreyfus, 1991). In this case primordial Dasein is the closest to the true Being. Accordingly, therefore, guilt felt as Dasein is a universal feeling.
Experiences of feeling guilt/guilty were brought up by nearly all the participants during the interviews. Some of the women spoke about the guilt of working whilst their children were young, others spoke about the guilt of needing to rely on other people, whether family or friends to help care for their children. Still others, spoke about their guilty feelings about how they parented their children whilst working shiftwork. There were two main aspects to the feelings of guilt that the women I spoke with articulated. This first aspect was simply the need to leave their children to go to work (as briefly mentioned earlier in the paragraph), and for many, night shifts offered a way in which others in the household such as their husband and children were less inconvenienced. Tracy discussed this in her comment:

“.. [on] returning to work and being able to do shift work and thereby minimise the amount of time my child spent in day care really did ease a lot of my guilt and made it possible for me to return to the work force. Without the option of doing evening or night shifts I believe that I would not have returned to the work force as it would have been too difficult to find child care that both my husband and I would have felt comfortable leaving our baby in for 9 hours (a full day). Hence shift work kept me in the work force and as my children became older and were all at school my hours and the shifts I worked did increase.” (Tracy)

Here, Tracy recalls the positive nature of shiftwork for her family, as it allowed Tracy to go to either an afternoon shift (starting approximately two or three o’clock post meridian), or a night shift (commencing approximately ten or eleven o’clock post meridian). Both of these shifts either minimised or eliminated the need for paid childcare. This was an incentive for Tracy to return to work when her children were young.

The second aspect was the feelings of guilt associated with not being able to go to work for family related reasons. For some participants, they experienced guilt when they needed to finish work early or call in sick to work when their child was ill. This produced doubled guilt, both towards the workplace and also that they were leaving their children when they were ill or injured.

“...that worries me, so if they’re sick or something like that – that’s when I feel guilty going. But because I work one shift, I tend to have to force myself to go, even if they’re sick, because I can’t [call in sick].-Well, here I am [working] one shift this week (Fran’s permanent shift) like really, why do they get sick on that one shift. So that’s my guilt...They would say “Oh here’s Fran working one shift, and she’s called in sick, because her children are sick, but” - so I tend to push myself to go” (Fran).

The quote above is what Fran imagined others in the workplace would say if she called in sick when her children were ill. Fran also expressed how she felt worried if she needed to go to
work if the children were sick because her husband does not easily wake up at night and she was not sure of him hearing the children if they were ill. She spoke about feeling guilt towards the workplace if she was not able to fulfil her commitment of three shifts per fortnight. Fran espoused Heidegger’s ‘they-say’ succinctly here, showing how she was shaped and responded in an inauthentic ways because of ‘they-say’.

“I do get the guilt from staff. And I’ve had them say it “oh, you called in sick – you’re working one shift.” I just say “Well, I can’t help my children being sick, and they’re my priority.”” (Fran)

The two quotes above deal with different sorts of guilt; the first quote is Fran’s fear that if her children were ill, they will not be adequately cared for by their father, because she, as the mother should care for her children. This guilt is mostly self-imposed about what Fran believes her role is, firstly mother and secondly worker. The second quote describes the externally imposed guilt that Fran felt her colleagues foist upon her for taking sick leave to care for her children.

This excerpt above by Fran is a good example of what the women felt when they expressed that they felt guilty about working shiftwork whilst they raised their children, particularly as in this instance when they or their children were ill. The women knew that if they called in sick, that there would be an impact on one of their colleagues and someone else would need to come in. This guilt about, and, for their children was a common thread throughout most of the interviews I did. Tracy, below discusses how in her family her husband was able to occasionally care for the children if they were ill.

“He has definitely taken [time off work] – because there was that guilt, for me about [cancelling a casual shift]. I’m only casual. So quite frequently, if the children were sick, he would take the day off... Because I just felt, I can’t ring up and say “I can’t come. (Tracy then talked with her husband about managing the children if they were ill) “Oh, what are we going to do with her tomorrow or him tomorrow?” “I’m meant to be at work at this time, how’s that going to work”? And he might say “Well that will be fine, I can juggle that.” It really depends, on what’s going on in his work life as well.”(Tracy)

So while Fran felt pressure from her colleagues and guilt about calling in sick she still did so to care for her children, whereas circumstances were different for Tracy’s family, and her husband was able to take the occasional days off to care for their ill children. While they may have experienced feeling guilty slightly differently, there were similarities throughout the interviews. Jennifer sums up the experience of guilt for her as a parent:
“Yeah and I think all that (raising children) comes with guilt too, like I think parental guilt is actually one of the most amazing emotions ever and I think until you have a child you wouldn’t know that that was the case” (Jennifer).

To Jennifer, the love of her child is linked with the guilt she felt for and about him. This feeling of guilt is what Heidegger termed ‘indebtedness’. Jennifer, both cares for her son and cares about him. Care, from a Heideggerian perspective has possibilities. Jennifer has worked out what she can to keep herself and her son in the life that she wants, trying to balance it with the guilt of needing to work shiftwork and being away from him to earn money. This, for Jennifer and for most of the other women I spoke with is like a set of antique balance scales, trying to balance each side so that the plates that hold the weights are in equilibrium. The guilt that the women spoke about was also related to leaving their children. Tracy, below was discussing her feelings when she left her daughter in the early days after returning to work.

“I’d feel really anxious and I still do with (her daughter). Even though, I left her with someone who was a nanny, [who] loved her and had Juliette (who also was a child around the same age). Even still, she still goes on about the fact that, I put her to sleep and she went to sleep there, before I would leave.” (Tracy)

Others also expressed feeling that they would be judged about their decision to have children whilst working shiftwork. Katrina’s quote below conveys a slightly different perspective from what Fran expressed above. Here, ‘they’ do not accommodate family life for shiftworking mothers. Katrina identifies the tension that is produced when the person is ‘forced’ into inauthenticity by the norms of the larger social world, in this case working in a full-time capacity when they identify that they would prefer to be working casually. These participants work in different places and ward types so what these vignettes are describing is a similar narrative from different viewpoints.

“I know when I went casual a lot of them on the ward said, oh you’re doing what we wish we could, and when I was stopping work. And that’s the shame, I just feel for them, these ones that are juggling and – and if they do request (particular shifts on a roster), there’s so much within – I just notice, it's backstabbing, all that stuff goes on, you know like ‘These mothers “Oh you made the decision to have children and you’re working so you have to”‘ you see that, they don’t accommodate (family life) and I don’t know, it’s – that’s why it's just difficult… That’s what I ultimately I thought, I can just come in and just witness it all [as a casual].” (Katrina)
Katrina felt guilt for needing to ask for consideration around the roster from her colleagues. Some discussed that they would go to work when they were sick themselves because they felt too guilty about taking their one or two shifts off per week if they were ill:

“Well there was no one else. You just took a pill or something like that because if you’ve have got a bit of gastro or something like that and you just know that there is nobody else to come in as I said you feel that obligation. You know that they have helped you out and they’ve done everything in their power and if you don’t turn up somebody is going to be doing a double shift. Sometimes we would split shifts so if somebody couldn’t come in you would stay half a shift longer and the next person would come in half a shift early. You know how hard that was?” (Karen).

While Karen knew that going to work unwell was also not good for her patients, the overwhelming feelings of guilt that Karen felt towards letting a colleague down meant that she felt she had to go work.

This theme also explores some of the guilt that women experienced at needing help from others and the guilt they felt at encroaching on the carer’s time. Some women spoke about needing to rely on others to assist with care for children, and how this generated feelings of guilt. One participant spoke about this as “not wanting to be a burden” to others. Jennifer called this experience of guilt “parent guilt”. This particular feeling of guilt was something that the participants believed non parents did not feel, and also they believed that their male partners (if they had one) did not experience in the same way. This generally was expressed about going to work instead of caring for their children or in some cases in needing to have assistance in caring for children whilst sleeping after a night shift.

“Yeah well you’d only sleep till [one o’clock]. I have a very good mother-in-law and she used to have them. I used to drop them down there. So she would have them, but I would feel guilty, you shouldn’t but you would think, I should be looking after them, I had that sense that they were my children and I wanted to be looking after them. I know I shouldn’t have had [feeling of guilt] but I just wanted to be a complete home mum that was my whole aim in life was to have children and once they came along I wanted to [care for them].” (Katrina)

and

“I felt, I still feel guilty. There’s huge guilt. But I reckon there’s more guilt on mothers than there is on fathers. Yeah, he might feel a responsibility but doesn’t feel guilty if he’s not there.” (Alison).

Both of these participants experienced feelings of guilt if they were away from their children, Katrina felt that she should be caring for them instead of sleeping after her night shift and she
felt guilty for asking her mother-in-law to assist her. Alison, however, felt guilty if she was away from the children for work. Even though her husband was caring for them she still felt she should be there caring for them, as ‘they-say’ good mothers should be, despite being the primary wage earner.

For Jennifer, who was a single mother, needing to rely on others to assist her with raising her son was something about which she experienced feelings of guilt. The quote below relates to Jennifer’s account of how she managed the period of time between when her son finished school and when she finished work, which was about half an hour. By the time Jennifer travelled to the school, her arrival time would be about 45 minutes after her son finished school and the school where her son attends offers no after school program for working parents.

“...it becomes a guilt thing. I think that you feel reliant on somebody else or you're asking someone to pick them up at school or you're asking someone can you just wait until I get there to pick them up? Or you feel reliant, I suppose on a lot of people so you can live a life that actually flows through on a day to day routine” (Jennifer).

Jennifer frequently asked other mothers to either take her child home for the 45 minute gap where she would collect him or wait at the school until she finished work. She also experienced feelings of frustration at colleagues who took a long time during handover (handover is when one nursing shift communicates the diagnosis and treatment of the patients on the ward to the oncoming shift of nurses) when she needed to leave on time, because she had someone at home (often her father, or close friends) caring for her son.

“Well you feel bad enough that they’re (her father) going home at half past 10 so if you do an evening shift you start to feel antsy at about 10 o’clock and the other idiots that you are working with have no idea of what they’re doing. And you’re ready to go and you’re trying to play team work and you’re going my father’s got 20 minutes to drive home and [I really feel] that I need to go, girls I need to go!” (Jennifer).

The frustration that Jennifer was expressing about leaving work on time was related to her guilt about needing to use her family and friends for assisting with care for her son. The concern that she expressed in this excerpt is not just that she wanted her ageing father to be able to get home at a reasonable hour, but also that she did not want to keep her father waiting for her any longer than necessary. When the participants used childcare other their partner, such as a parent, other family or friends, they articulated another layer of guilt associated not just with the caring for the child/children but the encroaching of time for the carer involved.
Katrina’s words above also expressed this guilt felt towards the use of her mother-in-law’s time. Katrina was so burdened by these dual feelings of guilt caused by her sense of ‘using’ her mother-in-law and being away from her children that between night shifts she would often only have four hours sleep from 9 am until 1 pm. She would then pick her child/children up from her mother-in-law and care for them for the rest of the day, cleaning and cooking for the family, as well as putting the children to bed prior to going to the next shift. I asked her whether she had another sleep in the evening prior to returning to work while her husband cared for the children and prepared them for dinner, bath, and bed, but she answered that he was tired and had worked all day, and that ‘anyway’ the children preferred her to do these tasks for them. Again, the excerpt from Katrina illustrates the fallenness in ‘they-self’.

In the previous paragraph, some of the feelings that Katrina expressed relate to what she saw as her role in the family. While she needed to work night shifts, and hence sleep during the day, she also was the Mother, and mothers have particular roles ascribed to them by society. In her everydayness of living in society, Katrina has also ‘fallen’ into believing that mothers have a particular role. Katrina felt that she should undertake this role. In fact, she did not consider her possibilities, she responded inauthentically, and becomes fallen into the mother role. Similarly, Rebecca also makes a variety of comments where she also demonstrates that she has fallen into the mother role and has conformed to traditional gender roles.

“I've got stuff to do and the house is a mess and I come out and the kids have got toys everywhere. “I've got to clean this” (Rebecca thinks) which is stupid because it's not going to kill anyone having a few toys on the floor. But it's got to get done Yeah well I'll come out and I try to have everything sort of done by the time Mick gets home from work because I know, I like having it done and in my head I think it's good for him to walk through the door to a relatively clean house.. It's that whole 50's housewife thing that really I don’t live up to but it's, I like to think I try... And meets [him] with a beer and the paper...” (Rebecca)

The excerpt from Rebecca’s interview above illustrates her capacity to question the ‘they-say’ or the gender roles, that she sees. Rebecca is experiencing cognitive dissonance between her ingrained feelings of gender roles and her more modern ideals. In some ways, while she questioned the traditional gender roles and thought for herself (“which is stupid because it's not going to kill anyone having a few toys on the floor” ), which I am interpreting as an authentic response, she was still burdened by the primordial guilt and she was not quite able to dismiss the idle chatter of the ‘they-say’ to not worry about the toys on the floor. Rebecca identified the contradiction of her gender role with her feelings and while she may not be
always to respond authentically (and consider the possibilities of not worrying about the toys on the floor), she articulated the incongruence. Her discomfort at the conflicting feelings also demonstrates that her mode of Being was not necessarily congruent with the gender role she has been thrust into. This incongruence adds friction to her already burgeoning feelings of guilt.

Tracy further explained the guilt about leaving her children with someone else while she went to work:

“Because, when you start, when you go back to work, there’s that guilt, about going back to work and leaving your children with someone else” (Tracy).

Tracy was speaking about her husband, and felt guilty for leaving her children to go to work. For Tracy though there was a double burden of guilt; that of leaving the children as well as the feeling of missing important parts of their lives.

“And the missing out, so that guilt is also about not being there for the children, but also missing out for yourself” (Tracy).

This excerpt is interesting, as it unfurls several issues for Tracy. The double burden of guilt, which I commented about above, as well as Tracy’s feelings of her own ‘missing’ out of seeing her children take their first steps or kick their first soccer goal. Others also spoke about the sense of missing out on things that their children experienced. Fran adds to the discussion in this quote.

“So when I pick up my extra shifts, that’s what often happens - I miss a netball game (watching the children play), I miss taking the kids to a birthday party, or whatever it is, and having that social time with the mothers and that’s when I get a bit guilty, I think, oh here I am, they’re out having a nice time, and I’m stuck in bed because I’ve got to go back to work tonight” (Fran)

Fran felt though she ‘should’ be watching her children play sport, but here she spoke about the same issue as Tracy above – her missing some socialising because she needed to sleep between night shifts. Fran’s feelings that she ‘should’ have be watching her children play netball come both from the sense of missing out herself but also that ‘good mothers’ watch their children play sport. Once again, the ‘they-say’ about what ‘good mothers’ should do forms part of the reaction felt by Fran. Her response indicated both the guilt of missing out, as well as a bit of resentment about needing to sleep (“and I’m stuck in bed because I’ve got to go back to work tonight”). The loss of quality time with children was also expressed. Beth talked about how shiftwork impacts on her time with her children. For Beth, it wasn’t the loss of seeing her
children achieve something, like Fran and Tracy expressed, it was simply the inability to spend time with them (and her husband).

“Painful often, yeah I think just the shift work. You are not your own person really and especially when you’ve got children. I think that really eats into your family time; your relationship time with your husband; your children; your friends; your social life.” (Beth)

Women also felt guilty if their husband or partner cared for their child or children whilst the woman slept. Rebecca commented also that she felt guilty trying to sleep after a night shift when she could hear the chaos that her husband was dealing with in organising the children.

“I just want to go back to bed, and then I feel guilty because Mick’s up with them and I’m in bed and I’m relaxing, it’s like you feel guilty because it’s like I’m the mum, I should be doing this.” (Rebecca)

Rebecca’s quote above illustrates some interesting points about the experience of guilt. Rebecca described guilt at needing help when caring for her children, particularly after a night shift, but in this case it was her husband that was caring for them on a weekend day. Rebecca describes similar experience of guilt as other participants discussed, however, she also appreciated that her husband would not experience the same feelings of guilt if the role was reversed. Interestingly Rebecca saw herself as ‘relaxing’ when she was in bed after a night shift, again, this is an example of the ‘they-say’ and what ‘they-say’ good mothers should be. Rebecca felt she should not be in bed trying to sleep after a night shift, and hence this produces feelings of guilt both because of the ‘they-say’ of Heideggerian inauthenticity and indebtedness to care for others. Rebecca felt as though she ‘should’ care for her children. The above vignette further discusses how Rebecca experiences this struggle with guilt about the role she should be undertaking, that of wife, mother etc. and contrasting this with the role her husband has. The other interesting point about the feelings of guilt were that when the women in my study had reduced or no sleep, they found themselves having little patience with their children and reacting to the children differently than they would like to, as a result of lack of sleep.

“.. then I feel a bit guilty that I’m rousing(rousing here means getting cross, in this case, with the children) on the kids when they’ve really done nothing wrong and it’s just the fact that I’m not, I mean I’m not tolerant at the best of times” (Rebecca)

The quote used above demonstrates how Rebecca felt her guilt was further increased as she felt upset at the impact her shiftwork (in this case, the impact was lack of sleep) was having on the children and her resolution to be more patient. Other women I spoke with described similar cycles of impatience, anger and then feelings of guilt that they had been angry with their
children when they identified that it was not the children’s fault, it was simply because they (the women) were tired. This dissonance between what the women feel they ‘should’ be doing versus what they want to do resonated through most of the interviews. Katrina, who left her children with her mother-in-law while she slept, also felt similar guilt, as illustrated below. Katrina felt as though she should not leave her children with her mother-in-law all day whilst she slept: that she, as the mother should be looking after them. Prior to her response in the next quote I asked Katrina whether she left her children with her mother-in-law all day so she could sleep as much as possible between night shifts. Her answer is below.

“….no, not the whole day. I'd be up, and once I'd wake up I'd have a snack and then I'd go down for one – two (hours) something like that.” (Katrina)

Others reported similar experiences. Here Alison adds to the discussion.

“I try to rationalise it [the guilt]. If it was Ivan, fathers traditionally work long hours, they always have. When we were growing up, lots of kids’ fathers worked very long hours, come home after dinner, I didn't feel they felt that guilt. That was their role. And I think well you know our roles are reversed so should I still have that [guilt]? It’s not successful really; I haven’t been able to eradicate my guilt. Being the carer has been the woman’s role.” (Alison)

The conflicting roles of women here have generated the experience of guilt; the carer role and the salary/wage earner role. While men have also had significant changes in their gender role in recent decades, the participants questioned whether men would experience guilt in the ways they (women) felt. Alison’s comment about the traditional women’s role of caregiver is, from Heideggerian philosophical view, fallen, as Alison has been lured into listening to and believing the ‘they-say’, which sets up traditional roles models for men and women, and places women at home to care for others. Traditional role models require humans to respond in an inauthentic manner and follow previous generations without thinking about what other avenues may be open to them and considering all possibilities. Despite Alison being the primary wage earner at the time I spoke with her, and reportedly holding quite a bit of power within the relationship, she was still unable to let go of the ‘they-say’. Humans spend much of their lives in an inauthentic state, where the gossip or idle chatter of the ‘they’ matter, and Alison is not alone, as I have discussed in Chapter Three and at the beginning of this chapter.

Rebecca, below, was recounting a day where she was caring for the children after a night shift when she had had no sleep. Rebecca’s frustration with the children stemmed from her lack of sleep and her own impatience. Consequently, her anger drove her to feelings of guilt both for not being there for her children overnight, and for being impatient and upset with them when
she was there. This double burden of guilt, comes both from the primordial guilt as well as the listening to the ‘they-say’ of trying to be a ‘good mother’.

“Lots of videos for the kids, it wasn’t a good day for the kids. The morning was okay, and I was reasonably okay, but by just before lunch I was snapping and cranky and that! I just put movies on, said “That’s it, we’re laying on the lounge.” Yeah, and I was yelling at them and it wasn’t their fault, they’re only kids…. I was cracking over little things because I was just frazzled” (Rebecca)

Again, the expectation that the women care for their children after a night shift but there is not the same expectation on their husbands is part of the ‘they-say’ where the women feel the mode of Being for Dasein here is a good mother. They fall into inauthenticity as they engage in the ‘they-say’ of what a ‘good mother’ should be. Perhaps more importantly in the scenario below that Rebecca presents of a shiftworking father at a Mine, there would be no expectation that the father would feel guilt for sleeping, nor would the husband feel pressured to get up and “do something” as the participants in this study have described. These statements from Rebecca are poignant because while there may be no overt pressure for the woman to reduce her sleeping time and get up to care for the children to relieve her husband, other family or friends, the participants still experience it and can give examples of the things ‘they-say’ that produce her guilt.

“... I’m sure they don’t, you talk to the women whose husbands work at the mine and they don’t give it a second thought. Nor do they get up and care for them [the children]. And then they go to the pub when they wake up” (Rebecca)

The feeling of guilt at being away from their children has meant that even on free weekends the participants would not choose to go away without the children. The participants who spoke about choosing not to socialise away from their children said that this was because they inherently experienced feeling guilty at the time they were away from home at work, and that because of that guilt they often chose to miss social events to be with their children. The feeling of guilt that Alison discusses in the quote (of not being able to go away with friends, as her husband does), stems both from the primordial guilt that she felt and also her belief that ‘good mothers’ do not leave their children unless it is for something essential, like work. This quote from Alison below conveys her experience:

“I don’t go on a lot of – you know, people go on girls’ weekends or couple weekends, I don’t do that. And I don’t want to do that. Ivan does, once a year. Yeah, Ivan does with the boys (men friends for a fishing trip) but I don’t. And I think that’s why (her own feelings of guilt). No, I don’t want to
be away from the boys because I don’t really see them really a lot during the week.” (Alison)

For others the experience of guilt was overlaid with other feelings such as pressure and duty:

“I think you feel in this society if you're not contributing, and I think your husband does like you to contribute financially it's just.... (sigh)... when I went back to work I felt [that] he felt better – he felt better. And I just felt that sort of pressure of being at home (and of not contributing financially) It was unspoken (the pressure). And once I worked it was like, yeah he was a bit more satisfied that I was contributing too. That’s how I felt.” (Katrina)

The pressure of doing what her husband wanted was evident in how Katrina spoke in the particular exchange above (and also below). Katrina did not want to work shiftwork, and had been working four ten-hour night shifts per week. She had eventually been able to negotiate two eight-hour night shifts and two eight-hour day shifts with some other casual work on the side and considered herself part-time. This excerpt above was full of emotion, as Katrina paused at one point, sighed, and then the words came tumbling out.

The silence in this conversation was as poignant as what Katrina said throughout her time with me: her body language was pained at different points. She wrung her hands at one point, when speaking about her wish to be with her children in contrast with her husband’s wish for her to return to work. Katrina’s meaning was in the ‘talk’ and the ‘silence’. Heidegger maintained that ‘talk’ was the basis of language, however, as discussed above in Chapter Three, ‘keeping silent’ is also part of language (Gelven, 1989). In some ways what Katrina did not say in the silences from the excerpts above and below this commentary, ‘spoke’ loudly into the room. Katrina was trying to find a way to tell a stranger (me) about something intensely private that had caused tension within her family, something she had not spoken to many people about. A number of participants had similar experiences, if not as stark as this comment by Katrina. She went on to explain:

“..financially wise, I felt that pressure from my husband, I did. I have to say, like I probably wouldn't say that to everyone, but yeah because he felt, he didn’t value, I don’t think completely, what I did at home with the children or with (the house), and that, I think it was conditioning from his family passed down to him, because his mother’s always worked, she was never there (at home with the children). But then I see other people where the husbands were quite happy for the wives to stay at home until the children went to school or, but then there's not many of them nowadays either” (Katrina)
This particular participant expressed her unambiguous desire to stay home with the children. Even though Katrina’s family were reasonably financially secure (by her reckoning), Katrina felt the pressure and guilt from not earning an income to be greater than her enjoyment of being home with the children. She did go back to work when she had a pre-schooler and a toddler to assuage her own feelings of guilt, but primarily to appease her husband. Like others I have quoted in this section, Katrina responded inauthentically to her guilt, as she was doing what others wanted her to do, in this case her husband. Katrina’s guilt had two faces, one of leaving her children to go to work and the second of not contributing to the household financially. The second origin of her guilt was brought to bear by her husband as well as her own feelings of doing what ‘they-say’. The ‘they-say’ for Katrina here, was doing what her husband wanted because ‘good wives and mothers’ obey their husbands and in this instance, return to work, even though she did not want to. Despite the two (and conflicting) origins of guilt, in the end the pressure felt by Katrina from her husband won out against the guilt for her children. She had not been able to resolve those feelings, and speaking about it with me produced her uneasy body language and narrative. Katrina’s excerpt above demonstrated distress at her response to her guilt.

What is overwhelmingly clear in this section, is that while Dasein may be primordially guilty from an indebtedness to care (Heidegger, 2008), the guilt for the participants in this study also stemmed from the ‘they-say’ of idle chatter. Whether the guilt was caused by the constant clamouring of the media and its messages about what a ‘good mother’ is or whether it was the ‘they-say’ of the mothers at school, playgroup or social group, it combines with the primordial guilt to double the burden of these women. The response to the ‘they-say’ of idle chatter is the state of fallenness where the women I spoke with responded to working shiftwork in an inauthentic manner. Only one woman (Rachel) did not express feeling guilty about returning to work after having her daughter.

Importantly, if the women felt guilty, why did they continue to work shiftwork? In one case, Katrina, put it succinctly that her husband wanted her to work. She stated that she felt they were ‘comfortably off’, and she would have been happy to have a reduced standard of living to stay home with her children. Potentially, others could have also done this, reduced their standard of living to be able to manage on one wage. None of the other women brought this up as a suitable resolution for their guilt. The idea of “keeping up with the Jones’” may have been part of this, for example having a bigger house or nice holidays. These things, however, come with higher costs and presumably the requirement for the women in the partnership to work.
This concept of “keeping up with the Jones’” is an example of the fallenness of Dasein, in that some of the women did not want to work shiftwork but felt they needed to do so.

Interestingly while women experienced feeling of guilt towards their children, workplaces, and colleagues, most still believed that shiftwork had a positive impact on their families’ lives (in terms of being able to afford things like holidays, better Christmas presents and choice of schools). The positive impact that the women all referred to was financial, though a couple of women also talked about needing some time away from the children (Rachel, Tracy and Alex) and wanting to work because she loved nursing (Beth). Their accounts illustrate a sense of their primordial guilt, overlaid by their fallenness as authentic Dasein because much of their guilt about their children was about what they thought ‘good mothers’ should do.

More interesting though, was the lack of guilt felt towards their partners in terms of their relationship if they had one. This particular theme did not emerge for these women at all. I was struck by this, as I had thought that the women may speak of the lack of relationship building time that they had with their partner because of shiftwork. All participants were asked about their family and personal relationships, and while they may have chosen not to discuss their relationships with their partners in the interview, it is significant that I found no evidence of this particular form of guilt as I analysed, and re-analysed the data.

In this section I have discussed the themes of experiencing feelings of guilt that emerged from the interviews. The participants experienced feelings that were sometimes conflicting in nature for them and in most cases multi-faceted. Most, for example believed the financial impacts of their shiftwork for their family were very positive, but along with these feelings were feelings of guilt for almost everyone in their lives, but particularly their children. The sense of peeling back layers of experienced guilt came out in a number of interviews, in sometimes very confronting ways. A few of the interviews were characterised by this guilt, Katrina in particular, but also Jennifer, Rebecca, Tracy and Karen’s. Their guilt stemmed mainly from leaving their children.

**Being Juggler**

The theme of *Being Juggler* also arose strongly in the participants’ accounts of how they managed to do everything that they felt needed to be done in their lives. This consisted of managing children, home and relationships with partner, children, friends and colleagues all while working shiftwork. The phrase, Being Juggler was used by the first woman I spoke with (Jennifer), and for her (and others whom I later spoke with) this metaphor explained how their
lives felt maintaining all the roles they were in. Jennifer said that she felt like a juggler sometimes trying to keep all the balls in the air. The sub-themes of Managing Children, Managing House and Managing Self Needs come together to form the major theme of Being Juggler.

Teasing this theme out was difficult as much of the ‘juggling’ that women do in the house and for the children are entwined; that without the children, the jobs around the house would not need to be done and the way these women would work their shiftwork would be different (for example, they could sleep all day after a night shift if they did not have care responsibilities for children).

**Managing Children**

All of the participants that I spoke with were the primary carers of their children (except Alison, whose husband spent more time with the children, although Alison planned and organised the care needed for the children), both when they were young and as they grew. Not only did the women have the day-to-day care of the children, but they tended to also be the person in the relationship that managed the ongoing planning around managing the children, regardless of whether they worked full or part-time. This ongoing planning, such as when people needed to go to the dentist or have their haircut was one of the major aspects of ‘being juggler’. As a mother, they organised things from working out what the family would have for dinner through to organising new clothes, shoes or birthday presents for the children. In some cases the woman might not physically go to the shops and buy the clothes or shoes, but might have to ask their partner to do this for them. One participant explained:

‘I hate shoe shopping. He (Alison’s husband) might notice (that the children need new shoes) but may not do it. Michael was complaining to Ivan for two weeks about his school shoes and finally I said, “Can you go and get him new school shoes?” And he went up two sizes, the poor child.’

(Alison)

When retelling this short exchange between Alison and Ivan about their son needing new shoes, Alison’s exasperation was palpable. So, while Alison’s husband may have noticed that their son needed new shoes, he did not take steps to purchase them until Alison asked him directly to do so. Other examples, such as appointments, buying presents for children, organising sport for children, also tended to be planned by the woman in the relationship. Even when women primarily worked night shift, they still tended to undertake tasks that could have been done by the partner prior to the woman coming home, such as making school lunches, helping the
children get ready for school and preparing breakfast. Below Fran describes her mornings when she returns home after night shift:

“.....sometimes the kids are up and ready and dressed, I tend to do the lunches then, get them ready for school, stay up [to take them to school], after doing that whole day of breakfast, lunch, dinner.....Netball training, whatever might be on – then go to work (on night shift)” (Fran)

In this excerpt, Fran is describing how when she arrived home from night shift, she started another ‘day’ of work. She dropped the children to school and had a short sleep between about 10 am and 2 pm prior to picking them up to go to whichever after-school activity that the children had on. After this, Fran prepared the dinner and then got ready to go to work at 9.30 pm, where she worked a ten hour night shift. Both in this excerpt and the one above by Alison, these women saw the home as their domain, and that they manage it. Fran spoke about her husband ‘helping her’ by doing things with and for the children, rather than ‘helping the children’. This small distinction reveals that Fran believed that the house and children’s management was owned by her and that if her husband ‘helped’ it was Fran he helped not the children (for example). This is part of the mode of Being for Dasein. The other concept from a Heideggerian perspective is that these women feel like they need to do these things because that what ‘good mothers’ do. ‘Good mothers’ manage their homes, cook meals and look after their families, regardless of what paid work they undertake. Below Katrina explains how, while she felt fatigued after night shifts, she still felt it was her job to carry the majority of the household tasks. I had asked her whether she found night shift easy to manage from a health and fatigue perspective.

“No terrible, terrible. You don’t feel like cooking, you don’t feel like cleaning up. No, no night [shifts] are terrible. (on being asked whether Katrina’s husband helped once he was home after work) No. Not really. No I just keep going. (I asked whether the care of the boys was undertaken by her?) Yeah pretty much because I always felt he was primary breadwinner – like so he was full-time, I didn’t feel that he should then have to cook, because I wasn’t working as much” (Katrina)

In the passage above, Katrina puts forward that her husband was the breadwinner and suggested that he should not have to do work once he is home. At this point in Katrina’s life she was working two day shifts and two night shifts per week (each shift was eight hours). She also did some casual work at different times. She worked 32 hours per week and her husband worked 37.5 hours. Earlier when Katrina’s children were very young she had worked four ten-hour night shifts per week (40 hours per week), and still gave greater recognition to her husband’s
job even though she worked more hours per week and earned close to his wage. Katrina believed that ‘good mothers and wives’ would not insist that their husbands undertake work at home that she traditionally saw as women’s work. While Katrina’s beliefs about gender roles might be seen as an aberration in the data, the research on gender equity in the domestic sphere would suggest that she is in the majority of women both in Australia and internationally. This research is discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

Rebecca was the only woman I interviewed who seemed struck by the contradictory nature of the traditional gender roles, but even she was not able at all times to respond authentically. Within the interview Rebecca self-analysed what she was saying, and saw her juxtaposed statements but still felt the unease of needing to conform to a particular gender role.

“But it's just this irrational thing that I have to have it done and so it's stupid, it doesn't make sense but... It's the traditional, yeah the dad does this and that, he shouldn't have to look after children for an extended period. They've just fallen into the way that their parents did it... Yeah I have those whole traditional things. Thinking, well this is my role and that's his and I feel bad when he has to take over mine... Yeah even, it doesn't hugely impact things but you do sort of lay there listening to all hell breaking loose thinking “Oh far out” and “Poor Mick”. ‘(Rebecca)

Interestingly, these women largely did not view this child-related work as something that their husband (if they had a husband) should undertake. Somehow they had come to expect that it was reasonable to expect a woman who has worked all night (and in some cases were up for the majority of the day before) to care for their children either between or at the end of night shifts. This belief in the ‘good mother’ is part of the inauthentic ‘they-say’. In fact, Rebecca actually says “they’ve just fallen” which is that inauthentic or fallen response to the situation. Rebecca identifies that ‘they’ have not thought about it, ‘they’ are just doing what their parents did. Fran continues this theme in her comments below:

“Well that’s why I do night [shifts].... I have never paid childcare. So I’m pretty lucky in that way. And I think if I had have, I would have had to work full-time. Like, if I didn’t have that support, I couldn’t have stayed home. [Fran’s parents are] pretty hands on. Yeah mum and dad now know that I’ll be going back to work full-time, so they’re willing to help me as much. They’re both retired now. Dad retired this year. So, they walk up to the school, pick the kids up, so like that’s why I’m not worried if I need that extra hour (of sleep) of an afternoon, too.” (Fran)

It is interesting that in this excerpt, Fran sees herself as ‘lucky’ as she has not had to pay for childcare because she worked night shifts. Overnight her husband looked after the children, but her parents played a significant part in assisting the family. Her parents were able to help out
by picking the children up from school if Fran had had something on at the school in the morning and had missed some sleep that day. At the time of the interview Fran worked three shifts one week and four the other week, usually Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Only one shift per week was permanent. On Mondays, either her youngest preschool age child would be at home with Fran or on the odd occasion Fran’s parents would care for him. Fran had to go back full-time not long after her interview with me, and was going to be working a full-time rotating roster. On an individual level, Fran was lucky to have good family support to care for her children. On a macro level, however, I note that Fran did not speak about how ‘lucky’ her husband was that she worked night shifts to earn extra money for the family and avoid childcare costs by doing so. Rebecca further discusses this:

“Yeah, you think I’ve got to get up (out of bed after night shift after one or two hours sleep) because I know Mick’s got to go and check the cows and how’s he meant to get that done (with the children)” (Rebecca)

Rebecca was describing a time when she needed to get up after a short sleep to care for her children so her husband could go to work. Again, like Fran’s comment above – Rebecca does not take note of her husband’s ‘luck’ at having both childcare taken care of and a part-time worker.

If children were sick, the women felt that they should not be going to work for their night shifts and usually called in sick. Interestingly, when I asked whether their husbands could stay home from their day work when children were sick, none of the women I interviewed considered that their husband would naturally think to do that, nor, interestingly, did they feel that it was part of their husband’s role. All felt that they should be the one to care for their children, even if it meant staying up throughout the day after a night shift. As noted earlier, Tracy’s husband was happy to stay home with the children if they were ill but Tracy needed to prompt the conversation with him. In the excerpt below Fran comments on a time when all her children all had bad colds and she felt she was unable to go to work that night.

“Steven’s good to help and everything, but they want their mother (when they are ill). So I tend to (stay home from work).” (Fran)

Fran’s husband did go to work the next day. Sometimes, when the husband would be the one caring for the children, but this mostly occurred in a situation where the woman was not available, such as:

“...quite often one of the kids will be sick – not often, it feels often. Or something’s up– they get injured and I’ll be away (for work). And I think I
must go back immediately. And he (Alison’s husband) goes, “why, I’m here?”. And I don’t think he would have that same sense of responsibility (to come home when he is away if an illness or injury occurred)…” (Alison)

In this scenario Alison was away doing some work for a couple of days and felt like she should return home to care for the boys. While Alison’s husband stepped in and sorted out the situation, Alison believed he may not have done this if she had been home. Alison did not think that her husband shared her sense of needing to come home when away if one of the children became ill or was injured. Alison felt that her husband would not see it as part of his responsibility, nor did she expect it. Several of the other women reflected similar thinking that their responsibility in caring for the children was different from that of their husband or partner’s.

Rebecca chronicles an experience when she needed to take her son to hospital after arriving home from night shift. Her son had severe asthma and her husband did not realise that the boy was in respiratory distress. When Rebecca arrived home she packed her son into the car and drove him to the closest Base hospital which was 30 minutes away. They spent the next 16 hours there, before being discharged home at midnight. Rebecca reported being very tired but ‘the adrenaline kept me going’, but that ‘after a night, you’re not at your best’. It did not occur to Rebecca that her husband could have driven the family, or that alternative arrangements could have been made for the other two children to allow both parents to be present with the sick child, or some other solution. It is reasonable that a mother would want to be with her son when he was ill, and it probably makes better sense to have the parent with a nursing background there on the presentation of the child. However, by the time Rebecca drove home she had been awake for 42 hours. This would present a significant danger to other road users (Barger, Lockley, Rajaratnam, & Landrigan, 2009; Keller, Berryman, & Lukes, 2009) as well as the occupants of the car she was driving, as well as to her patients in her workplace when she returned to her rostered shift. Rebecca, like other women I spoke with, saw the care of the children as being their responsibility; partly from their role of mother but also from their role of nurse. In this situation, the two roles (or modes of being) of mother and nurse combined, and Rebecca stayed in hospital with her son, both because she wanted to and because she felt it was her role to do this.

One of the benefits of shiftwork that the women reported was the ability to limit or not use paid childcare for children, which consequently made more money available for family requirements. When outside help was sought to help with childcare it was mainly from family
members such as the woman’s partner or extended family. The women in this study with young children tended to work night shifts, when their children were sleeping, thus making the childcare for their husbands easier than had it been through the day. The main way that women were able to limit paid childcare was to reduce their own sleep period to care for their children, so adding a double benefit for their families by providing free childcare whilst working night shifts. Others, like Tracy below, worked non-night weekend shifts so they could earn good shift penalties and still pay no childcare:

“I work [the weekend shifts] because the Sunday rates, the money is so good, it’s nearly impossible to say no to, I think. And once you’ve committed to doing that shift, on the Sunday. And it’s easy, [I] don’t have to worry about the kids, John’s at home, he’s got the kids.” (Tracy)

For most of the participants, family members provided the majority of the childcare, but some of the women also needed to use one variety or another of formalised childcare. Where family assistance was used for childcare, most of the incidences described by the participants were either weekends, or night shifts where formalised care would be hard to procure. One participant described a situation where both she and her husband were both scheduled to be working a night shift:

“I remember going to a woman – my kids were about 2 and 4 and saying “I do night duties and you said that you would look after my children ...”. She was recommended by a day care mum– and so you will be okay if I drop them off at 10 and pick them up at 7 and she said “Oh yeah that’s fine not a problem – and you will pack everything up for me and they will be – I said that’s fine. I will probably take them to a park or something.” “No 10 o’clock at night, no they will need to go to sleep.” And she just looked at me blankly [and] still did not understand that somebody would be working during that period of time. I think in the end I did use her a couple of times but not often no” (Karen)

This account of Karen’s experience of trying to use formalised care was not uncommon. Some participants talked about the jokes of other staff suggesting they bring their children in to work. One participant recalls working in a small community where children were brought to work overnight or before or after school. So while some of the participants’ experience was that they chose shifts that suited them based on their children and family situations, others worked when they could get work.

“Yeah as you say you know that it’s difficult – I have had people who have bought children in and we had a sleep over ... so they had not very young children but certainly I remember about 7 and 10 year old boys that would
and another from Karen

“I know one woman that I worked with that she had a younger child and she had only just started school so she must have been about 5 and she would bring her in on the morning shift and then the handyman would drop her off at school. It was a small community and we had to have staff.” (Karen)

As this participant was situated in a smaller facility, this may have been easier to manage for the woman that Karen refers to. Another woman (Jennifer) remarked that she was occasionally rung to do a night shift at short notice and that when she declined because she needed to look after her young son it was suggested she bring her son into the hospital and put him to bed in the paediatric ward.

“And if we had that we often joke and say ‘oh we can put them in paed’s (the paediatric ward) and I say ‘well I can’t I’ve got Jim’ (Jennifer’s son) and I have a little problem with that whole concept, he’s not sick and I don’t want him to get sick from being in paeds (paediatrics), it’s a double sided coin, yeah look I appreciate that’s a really nice offer but you’ve got the bubonic plague in there and I don’t want to go there but when they get desperate they start saying silly things to like that.” (Jennifer)

Some of the participants, when speaking about the lack of availability of childcare in non-traditional hours made suggestions about how this could be addressed. One suggestion from Jennifer was a crèche in the local hospital of a large country town, which is large enough to sustain a facility, particularly as the majority of nurses were women. Often though the availability of childcare outside the traditional hours of 8 am – 6 pm was a problem for many shiftworkers. Most childcare centres did not operate after 6 pm, particularly in rural areas. None of the other participants regularly used paid childcare after 6 pm as there was none available in the areas where these women lived. Jennifer says:

‘And you hear the nurses speak sometimes and they will actually say had they put the crèche in when they were talking about it (into the new hospital) which was just a rumour anyway we wouldn’t have a staffing issue because all the women who’d be back at work they could come back earlier.” (Jennifer)

Unfortunately for Jennifer and a number of other women, the crèche was not built into the new facility. If shiftworking women do not have care for their children they will delay returning to work as Jennifer has pointed out above.
Two of the participants were women who did not have a partner to assist with childcare. Both of these participants juggled their shifts to fit into the care provided by friends and family in order to work without the associated costs of childcare.

“So I’m able to request the shifts that don’t necessarily suit myself but suit my support network in order to get care (for her son).” (Alex)

and

“…. maybe my cousin would come in and pick Jim up from school and then dad would get here at 5 or 6 or whatever but that means I’ve got to be super dooper organised, have dinner planned for them, done because you're exhausted but you don’t feel as guilty at the end of the day that your father’s then cooking your kid dinner”. (Jennifer)

Both of these participants spoke about the need to be very organised and have a roster type plan of where their children were going on different days of the week. One of the women planned her son’s care month by month so she could share the care around and accommodate for her carers’ plans of their own. Even for women who did have a husband being organised was important in being able to juggle the children’s needs alongside everything else.

“And I think so as you get older I just find that my energy level isn’t as high as it used to be even 10 years ago, so I like to be organised and I think I have brought up my children the same way. Just wish I could bring my husband around to that way of thinking because he is not very organised but anyway.” (Beth)

Beth spoke about having everything planned out, from the meals for the week through to appointments and sporting fixtures all noted for the children. Beth went through a period of her life where she was a sole parent and needed to be very organised to juggle the shiftwork that she did around her young children’s needs.

“I guess as I said to you [I had to be] organised [as] that I was a sole parent and I needed to provide for these two young boys” (Beth)

Sometimes colleagues assisted so that school or childcare could be arranged around work. Beth worked in positions were she was able to start after she had dropped the children to school. In the quote below, Katrina expresses two positive reasons for her to work shiftwork; firstly a shortened six hour shift which fitted in with her children’s school hours and secondly that the Nursing Unit Manager was accommodating of her family needs by covering her patient load for two hours prior to Katrina arriving.

“Yeah because you’re casual, they like you to do 6 hour shifts, so that worked quite well… they used to say “yeah just start at 9am” especially the
Katrina was the only participant who expressed that she had had some positive experiences with colleagues and managers about managing shiftwork and family. Others, such as Fran, who called in sick when her children were ill, felt that her colleagues judged her for doing so. One participant (Rachel), who at 26 years old was younger than anyone else in the study had quite a different view about how she and her husband attended to the work of the home and the child.

Rachel experiences her husband to be equally involved in the care of their child and home, even though she was only working two days per week at the time of interview. Rachel narrated a story of her husband calling her at work to apologise for not getting everything done (prior to Rachel arriving home) explaining that their daughter had not been well and had required more care than usual. Rachel was the only woman in this study who expected her husband to contribute equally around the house and to care for their daughter even though she worked fewer hours than he did. She worked two days per week, while her husband worked five. The other women in the study overwhelmingly felt that raising the children, providing the vast majority of the care was their responsibility and that until the needs of their family, partner and work were taken care of, their own personal needs did not matter and were given lower priority. Rachel’s mode of Being was different from the other women in this study. Most of the women in my study were caught in the ‘they-say’ of inauthenticity in being a ‘good mother’, whereas, Rachel at the time I spoke with her, seemed to decide what was right for her family regardless of traditional roles and societal norms.

**Summary**

Using childcare provided by family and friends was the most common way that women managed their childcare needs. Quite a number of the women worked night shifts so that they could maximise the amount of money they earned with minimal output in childcare fees. As weekend and night shift attracted the greatest penalty rates these were the shifts of choice. Where women mainly worked night shifts they tended to reduce or eliminate their sleep period to care for their children, putting their own needs to sleep behind the others in the family. Usually they had few, if any expectations that their partner or husband would take an equal
share of childcare. A few participants had insight to see the double standards of the traditional gender roles for modern working women, but most of these women still felt somewhat burdened by the dual roles they held. One or two were notable in terms of resisting (or trying to resist) this trend. Rachel, in particular had quite different views about how care and household work should be shared with her husband at the time that I spoke with her. Other women such as Tracy and Alison also had greater expectations of their husbands, however, the primary organisation of children, family, household and health were still managed by both these women.

The sub-theme of Managing Children was one of the three sub-themes that contribute to the overall theme of Being Juggler. The participants revealed that there were positive aspects associated with their experience of shiftwork and managing children. For some, the ability to earn money at a time when care could mainly be provided by family and friends, was valuable as it allowed them to contribute to their family financially, either for the day-to-day expenses or to provide the ‘extras’ such as money for travel, extra Christmas presents or for schooling for the children. The second feature of the positive experience of working shiftwork was the capacity to obtain childcare that the participants did not need to pay for, ensuring that all of the money earned was available to be used for family needs, saving potentially hundreds of dollars per week. This incentive of extra money as a result of penalty rates related to the shiftwork and use of childcare provided by friends and family, combined to contribute towards participants experiencing shiftwork in a positive light. So, while the women did express some negative feelings about their shiftwork, such as guilt (which has already been discussed), there were also some positive benefits of shiftwork that most of the women identified.

What is clear from the participants’ accounts is that rarely did they think about the ‘cost’ of earning the extra money; in that, they needed to work extra hours and lose sleep to get it. I did not hear in the conversations that I had with these women a discussion of their husbands’ compromises to ensure family life ran smoothly. Commonly, these women remained awake throughout the day after a night shift to care for their children, with minimal reference to how their husbands supported them or assisted the family whilst they worked. The way in which women achieved the advantages of shiftwork was to sublimate their own needs for sleep to ensure that the positive incentives were not diluted by costs such as paid childcare.
Managing Home

The women I spoke with all talked about being the one to manage their home. This was not necessarily in relation to undertaking all the maintenance of the home, but the organisation of it all. Mostly, where the women were sharing the care with their partners whilst they worked shiftwork, the women made the dinners even though some of the time they would not be eating with the family. In the context of the interviews, when I asked some of the participants whether they thought it was reasonable that their husband or partner arrived home and cooked dinner, organised homework and prepared the children for bed, there was a wide range of responses. Some participants were of the view that their husbands were adults and should be able to care for themselves (Tracy and Rachel), whereas the rest of the women with partners still felt that it was their role to be caring for the family’s physical needs despite working. This was not contingent on working hours. Overall, though, the women felt that the planning and organisation of the home was their domain, and mostly they executed the overwhelming majority of it. Rachel, the youngest participant in the study, had a different view about what her husband should do in sharing the care of their child and work in the house, as has been noted above. Rachel expected her husband to cook the family dinner and did not leave instructions or recipes for him. While Rachel was the one who did the grocery shopping on one of her non-work days, she would leave the decision of what they would have for dinner to her husband. Others, like Alison, may have expected their husbands to cook but they left recipes and instructions and planned the meal despite not being involved in cooking it.

“He cooks if I tell him what to cook. So I can leave a recipe out or say to chop some veg or something and he’s fine with that. But he can, [and] on Fridays he has to choose the menu.” (Alison)

Alison cooked on the weekends and would try and prepare dinner for at least Monday and Tuesday so that her husband was only expected to prepare vegetables to go with the main dish she had already prepared. Alison remarked that she left a recipe or set of instructions out “on the bench” for Ivan (her husband) to follow each day, except Fridays where she expected him to organise dinner himself. Alison’s husband worked fewer hours than Alison, and with no shiftwork. Alison, mentioned in the interview that Ivan did the outside work because of her allergies. It is interesting to note, however, that the jobs listed as what Ivan did without Alison’s planning or organisation were chores that were mainly able to be done at a time that suited Ivan (such as weeding the garden or mowing the lawn on the weekend after their children’s sport). Certainly the frequency of Ivan’s own chores occurred less than the ones that Alison needed to
do. For example, cleaning, shopping and cooking for the family occur at a greater frequency than mowing the lawn. It is not possible to feed the children once per week; however, it is possible to mow the lawn once per week or at even longer intervals.

Mostly the women prepared food for the children, even if they were working an evening shift, and therefore would not be present at the time the children ate their dinner. They sometimes left their husband or partner to prepare his own dinner, or reheat left over food.

“We always had frozen meals, so even if I hadn’t made sure there was food for John, there was something in the freezer.” (Tracy)

Some of the women felt that it was their role to ensure they had meals ready or at least ensure that their husband had instructions about sorting out dinner. Overwhelmingly, the women undertook this job prior to going to work, if they were working an evening shift. Tracy even prepared her baby’s ‘food’ when she returned to work by expressing her breast milk at work to freeze for her husband or the day care mother to feed to their baby, as well as cooking and pureeing meat and vegetables when her son started solids

“— because of my area of expertise, they would often put me in a special care nursery. So it was quite easy and that was where the pumps were. So I would just fit it in around. Or with my meal break, I’d have my meal break and did that on the end. So that the person that was relieving me, just stayed longer” (Tracy)

None of the other women spoke about expressing their milk for their babies, but that may have been because they had finished breastfeeding their children prior to going back to work, or that Tracy continued to feed longer than others. In the quote below, Katrina expressed feeling very grateful for ‘help’ that her husband gave her in cleaning up the kitchen after dinner when she was at work.

“... I mean he's pretty good too, he realises, especially if I'm working, he’ll help, if I'm on an evening I'll do it, have the slow cooker on or something like that and he cleans the kitchen and does all that if I'm at work, so he realises, yeah” (Katrina)

Interestingly Katrina did not reflect that her husband’s cleaning of the kitchen was not her job, and that his ‘help’ was actually simply cleaning up his own, and his children’s dinner mess. Katrina’s mode of being here was ‘mother’ and as part of an inauthentic Dasein has fallen into listening to the ‘they-say’ of what ‘good mothers’ should do. In this situation, the ‘good mother’ should cook and clean up from meals after her husband’s busy day.
Like the preparation of the meals, organising and managing cleaning the house and undertaking jobs such as washing, ironing and the like, also primarily fell to the shiftworking women regardless of hours worked, rather than being naturally shared among the couple.

“So this morning when Ivan left I said, “Can you put a load of washing on?” Because I knew that we were going to need sports clothes tomorrow, but to do it tonight, to dry overnight. Told him what was for dinner and what he had to do with it. There it is, he wrote the instructions out to himself.” (Alison)

It irked Alison that despite her children needing sports clothes on the same days every week it was still her role to at least plan and organise for them to be clean and ready. Alison recounted another story where she had asked her husband to do some washing prior to leaving for work and when she arrived home that night after 10 pm the washing was still in the machine. Alison expressed frustration at needing to be involved in each part of the process for things that occurred within the home or in the organisation of the children, particularly as Alison saw her husband as the children’s primary carer. The cleaning at Alison’s house is done on the weekend mainly by Alison, although the house would become messy during the week.

“That drives me nuts... It’s (the house) a tip. I hate it. But I’ve got three boys and I’m not there... And you walk in and get cranky but I’ve had to really sit back and say mm-mm” (Alison)

Overall for Alison, working shiftwork involved a more explicitly understood additional role of managing the house from afar. It was clear from her accounts in the interview that she still saw herself as the manager of the home and she gave her husband instructions to follow in her absence.

“You have to be organised. If you’re going to work, you have to be organized. And because people often say to me “how do I do it?” You’ve got to be organised. Yeah [things like], who’s picking the kids up, who’s doing school work, who’s doing dinner, who’s got to be where, what needs to happen.” (Alison)

It seemed not to have occurred to Alison’s husband that he could use his own initiative and do some cleaning. While Alison was at times frustrated with having ‘to keep all the balls in the air’, she did not have the same expectation that Rachel did, in sharing care and work equally. Alison still undertook the majority of housework. Even those women who asserted that their partners or husbands were involved in caring for the children, whilst they were at work, did not tend to be involved in the housework. Tracy laughed when asked if she came home after evening shift to a clean house, even though she believed her husband did do a good job with
the children while she worked evenings and weekends. Part of the traditional female role is the management of ‘hearth and home’. For women who work, detaching this idea from their mode of being a mother is difficult.

The need to be organised was something that most of the women discussed. They felt this organisation was important in their experience of managing shiftwork whilst caring for children. None of the women suggested that providing the organising framework for the family should, or could, be their partner’s role. Some of the women mentioned that they did not think their husband or partner thought about ‘all this’, or worried about sorting everything out like the women did. Clearly, where the women did not have partners, the entire workload fell to them to organise friends and family to assist where possible.

Repeatedly, the women spoke about how they kept the ‘balls in the air’ in terms of their mental processes, juggling all that was needed to keep track of all the areas they needed to organise. One impression that I got when a couple of the women spoke about how they organised their lives was of a movie on loop, where their minds continuously planned the who, what, where, and how of their lives and their families’ lives. This also included the running of the household. Some of the women did not self-analyse their situation, they accepted that that was their ‘lot’ in life, and got on with what they needed to do.

Rebecca, in particular saw the ironic juxtaposition of how she felt, but she still felt controlled by needing to undertake traditional gender roles despite also working. Rebecca experienced a cognitive dissonance between her ingrained view of traditional gender role models and what they ‘should’ do, and a more modern sense of equality where she had rights as a woman to share the work at home. This is an example of being ‘controlled’ by the ‘they-say’ and as discussed throughout this section as the fallenness of Dasein.

“Thinking, well this is my role and that’s his and I feel bad when he has to take over mine...” (Rebecca)

What Rebecca referred to in the first part of the excerpt is the role of ‘good mother’ that ‘they-say’ women should be. She then follows this up with a critical examination of the gender role of her mode of Being (‘good mother’). The passage above continues in this vein, first the ‘they-say’ followed by a contradictory statement questioning the gender role stereotype.

Summary

I have demonstrated in this section how Being Juggler encompasses the sub-themes of Managing Children and Managing Home. The women I spoke with primarily cared for the
children and home and were the ones who organised what needed to occur for the family. While this would not be intrinsically different for women who work days, trying to manage on reduced or no sleep adds a greater complexity to the lives of shiftworking women. Along with this, was the management of their own needs.

**Managing Self Needs**

The theme of Managing Self Needs explores the physical and psychosocial effects of working shiftwork. I have already commented that one of the more palpable effects of working shiftwork whilst caring for children was the change in, and generally the decreasing amount of sleep that the women reported. Day-working women with children would also note a reduction in their amount of sleep but generally their sleep is conducted during the period of time that humans usually sleep (Barton, Folkard, et al., 1995; Barton, Spelten, Totterdell, Smith, & Folkard, 1995). Shiftworkers, however, as discussed in Chapter Two, have the double effect of decreased sleep, which occurs at a time that is not usual for humans, sometimes making it harder to go sleep and to stay asleep. Added to this, they experience the pressure to either be up caring for children, picking them up from school/day care or other activities as well as attempting to get enough sleep to keep going. Karen remembers:

“….that I would fall asleep on occasion so I have one vivid recollection of falling asleep and we were watching TV and it’s a nice easy occupation for the child and keep the child occupied and I must have drifted off and when I woke up the place was white and Jane had pulled the stuffing out of the cushions and distributed it [all] around the place while I was asleep.”

(Karen)

This vignette described a time when Karen needed to care for her two preschool children between night shifts. Karen fell asleep and awoke some time later to find the mess that one of her children had made, and expressed concern and a feeling of worry about what the children could have done while she was asleep that could have put them in danger.

The lack of availability or the affordability of childcare was something that was frequently raised by the women in this study. In many cases this led them to be caring for their children when they were very tired between night shifts or after night shifts. As noted above in some cases the benefit of gaining extra pay without incurring childcare costs was seen to be more advantageous than fulfilling their own needs for sleep. Falling asleep, whilst caring for children was something that the women who worked night shifts were concerned about, however, in situations where they were attending to child-related activities they felt that they should be doing that activity (such as driving the children to school rather than organising them to catch
the bus). This is because for most of the women in the study, their primary mode of being was ‘mother’ and ‘they-say’ that to be a ‘good mother’ women should put their needs last. On the last night shift prior to having days off work, the women often stayed up after the shift so that they could get themselves into their regular pattern (of sleeping at night), however this meant no sleep for many of them for over 24 hours.

“(on driving home after dropping the older two children at school after night shift) I still find I’m alright. It’s more picking them up. Yeah, I think “oh gee, I just want to sit now. I’m ready to sleep.” Sometimes I’ll put a DVD on and I might sit with him (her son) and I’ll lie down. But I find that makes me worse. So, I’m better just to keep going. So Mondays are my cleaning day (after Fran’s last night shift) because I generally work the weekend, when my husband’s home. So Monday I just spend the day running around like a mad woman cleaning, to stay awake. So I tend just to stay awake and clean – do what I have to.” (Fran)

After Fran has spent the day cleaning to keep herself awake, she goes and picks up her children from school, and starts the after-school activities and homework. The school her children attend is about 20 minutes’ drive from Fran’s home. Fran preferred to work weekends as the shift penalties were attractive for her and her family’s needs. Whilst she could get some sleep on the weekends between night shifts when her husband cared for the children, Fran did not sleep after her last shift as she needed to care for her youngest child. The ability to work without incurring childcare costs so that the family could build a new house was the primary motivator for Fran’s family. The cost for Fran was in both shortened sleeps between night shifts (to attend weekend sporting and social commitments) and after night shifts, in no sleep. Fran’s physical need for sleep was subverted into busyness to ensure she would not fall asleep and so be unable to care for her son or miss the other children’s school pick up.

Other participants felt the pressure to care for their children themselves and talked about feeling bad for sleeping whilst someone else cared for their children. As Katrina said:

“I would go home from work and then we would tag, and then I would stay up, he’d wait until I got home and then I would sit up till he (the elder child) went to school, he went to school and then I’d drop Sam off (at her mother-in-law’s house) and then come home and sleep, after 9:30. So you’d be sitting there 2 hours prior to school drop off and you’d be completely zonked. (on being asked would you leave Sam at your mother-in-law’s house all day so you could sleep?) No, not the whole day I’d be up, and you wouldn’t, once I’d wake up I’d have a snack and then I’d go down it would be 1 or 2(o’clock).” (Katrina)

At this point, Katrina worked 4 night shifts per week, and had two young children, one at preschool and later at school and one who was cared for, for approximately four hours per day,
by her mother-in-law. Katrina felt guilty that her mother-in-law was caring for her child and would shorten her sleep to less than five hours each day for the four days of her shift roster per week. Katrina would then be working until the next morning 9:30am when she was able to sleep again. Even when her husband returned home Katrina did not have a nap and leave her husband to get the dinner and attend to the children’s bed time routine. Katrina felt that her husband was tired after his day at work, and did not feel as though she was able to prioritise her physical need to sleep over his needs to rest when he arrived home. Coincidentally, Katrina’s husband also did not prioritise Katrina’s need for sleep either, despite wanting Katrina to return to work to assist the family finances.

Alex discusses how she felt grateful to have someone help her when her child was a baby and she was working night shifts. In this quote, Alex talked about having very little sleep prior to being woken after she worked a night shift:

"my mother, on occasions we’ve lived together, did not [understand the] concept of the night shift in that I would work a night shift and she would wake me at 9:00 as she left to work. And these were in the early days when he was a baby, in that I would get home at 7:30, and get myself to sleep. She would put him down (to sleep). But she’d open the door and I’d wake up. [She had] absolutely no concept that you might need more. And I would be so grateful – but I would be grateful for the fact (she was there), and I’ve always been so grateful." (Alex)

Alex would sleep when her baby slept after a night shift, and even though Alex’s mother woke her up Alex was still very grateful for the help she had. Alex framed her feelings around gratitude, and tried not to think of her own needs in this situation.

The excerpt below provides another illustration of the expectation that shiftworking women should subjugate their own needs to those of others, including their husbands. Despite having some flexibility in his work, Rebecca’s husband also considered Rebecca’s need for sleep between shifts as lower in priority than the particular farm job he wanted to do that day.

"Well, the other weekend he had to mark calves and it had to be done on the Saturday, he knew full well I work Friday night [shifts] and he just came home and said “Oh well you can fix that” and I wasn’t happy…(on being asked was Rebecca expected to stay up and look after the kids after the night shift)... Yes, I was tired and cranky and pissed off…. Yeah and he was out the door by the time I got out of the shower….. Kids were all up and going. I lost my block at him and I don’t think he’ll do it again in a hurry….. But I mean I know it (the shiftwork) affects him but he wants me to earn money so…..” (Rebecca)
Most of the women I spoke with did not see the inequality within their own homes, that is, of their sleep quantity and quality, versus that of others in the home. Only Rebecca commented on this inequality of sleep:

“...I’m sure they don’t, you talk to the women whose husbands work at the mine and they don’t give it a second thought. Nor do they get up and care for them [the children]. And then they go to the pub when they wake up’

(Rebecca)

Rebecca lived close to a mining town where many families had one partner employed on shiftwork. About 83% of people who work for mining companies are male (Gender workforce equality agency, 2014). This percentage comprises all positions in mining companies including administration and managerial positions. In the passage above, Rebecca was discussing that she thought it would be unusual to have her own situation reversed; where miners coming home from a night shift would have to care for their children throughout the day. The other part of the quote indicates that she did not think that they (the men who had worked night shifts) would feel sorry for their wives for having to care for the children while they slept. This is an interesting point that Rebecca made here, in that she has underlined the inequity of sleep that prevails among night shiftworking women but maybe not among men working similar hours.

Some participants felt that it was their responsibility to undertake work in the home that related to their children, even though their husband or partner may have been home at the time. Usually they managed this by reducing their sleep time. Some participants slept very little prior to their first night as well as between night shifts. One participant described her routine as having four-and-a-half hours sleep per day with no nap or second sleep prior to going to work. Other participants described a similar reduction of their own sleep time to ensure that family-related responsibilities were met. This is despite these women working shiftwork (primarily night shift) with young children. The women I spoke with did not use much paid childcare compared with women who work throughout the day. Working night shifts meant that when the women who I spoke with worked, their children were cared for by either family or their partner overnight. The inherent difference between the caring that needed to be undertaken by the family or partner overnight and that which the women did throughout the day is that the child or children tended to be asleep overnight, and therefore so could the carer. Throughout the day when the woman should have been sleeping after a night shift, she was up caring for the children who slept all night and presumably would not sleep all day, or only when a young child was napping.
The following quote from Rebecca captures her understanding of the different standards that are afforded men and women who work shiftwork. While I have mentioned this before in the sub-theme Managing Children, this passage is important both to Rebecca’s mode of Being and to her fallenness. This is contradicted with a more modern sense of equality between Rebecca and her husband. In this extract Rebecca is talking about reducing her sleep period so that her husband can go and do his work. What has escaped notice, however, is that her husband could take the children to undertake some, if not all, of the farm work that he does; it is just assumed that because he needs to get on with his work that Rebecca will reduce her sleep time both between shifts and at the end of her night shifts to! suit his needs.

“...if Mick had worked all night he’d come home and I doubt that he’d think "Poor Rebecca, she’s up with the kids". Yeah I don’t think they think the same because you think “I’ve got to get up because I know Mick’s got to go and check the cows” (Rebecca)

Other participants, such as Alex, felt that they needed to prioritise their needs differently. Alex works several jobs through the week and two shifts over the weekend to ensure her family has enough money for mortgage and bills. At the time that I spoke with Alex she was a single parent. Alex had experienced a major illness and required surgery some years prior to the interview for this study. During the time that Alex underwent further treatment she continued to work, to ‘make ends meet’. Alex did try and prioritise her need to de-stress, which she did by taking a brisk walk in her lunch time at work or prior to going to work. As Alex worked two shifts over the weekend (usually Saturday evening shift and then Sunday morning shift) she has prioritised her need to earn money for the family over socialising, which she rarely did. Alex indicated that if she wanted to catch up with someone she either did so at school or work or she suggested they get a take away coffee and go on a walk together. Alex’s self needs for socialising and personal relationships were prioritised lower than her need to provide financially and care for her son. Alex encapsulates her thoughts around meeting her own needs around socialising and relationships when she says:

“Circumstances haven’t led it to be that way” (Alex)

Summary

Each of the women spoke about compromising something in their lives to ensure that their commitment to family, children and work commitments were met. Mostly the compromises made for these women were either in relation to their own physical needs or to their psychosocial needs. The physical needs that women often compromised on primarily focused
around reducing their sleep times to care for children, or to undertake family or household related tasks. Sometimes this also included compromising the time to plan exercise, such as in Alex’s case above, or other healthful activities. In terms of psychosocial compromises, the women missed important events in their children’s lives such as their first sporting games, or goals in their sport. It is important to acknowledge here that women who work days may also compromise sleep and miss some of the things that the women in this study reported. However, generally these shiftworking mothers felt that most, if not all, of their neglect of self was attributable to the particular shiftwork pattern that they worked and not because they worked. It is probably reasonable to assume that a healthy child would not be awake all through the night when its day-working mother would have taken her sleep period; however, the women in this study frequently reported being the only person responsible for childcare during their regular sleep period that is the daytime. There would be some night shifts where mothers who work through the day will be awake through some, or all of their sleep period, assisting a child who is sick. However, once their children are of an age to sleep through the night, and are well, women who work during the day can also sleep.

The three sub-themes in this section of Managing Children, Managing Home and Managing Self Needs have contributed to the major theme of Being Juggler. There is an interesting synergy between managing self needs and managing children and home in that there tended to be a ‘pushmi-pullyu’ type of dynamic for the women. By this, I mean that as long as the women compromised their self needs, the needs of the children and of the home were attended to. The women often made remarks where they felt like they were ‘being pulled in many directions’ and this would resonate with many working women, regardless of the time of day they work. The difference here though is that most day workers would expect to get a reasonable amount of sleep between their work days, but the women in my study felt guilty for sleeping and they felt guilty if they were not what they thought was what ‘good mother’ should be for their children. If they were short of patience with their children, it would send them spiralling further into guilt. To compensate for this they would shorten their sleep period (if they got one at all) to undertake care for other’s needs and generally put their own needs behind all others. Interestingly, the women did not suggest that their partners or husbands had reduced their sleep period to share some of the responsibility of home and children and none suggested that they should either. This feeling of ‘needing to do it all’ stems from the mode of Being of mother, where ‘good mother’ is ascribed a range of virtues and talents. The inauthentic Dasein listens to the ‘they-say’ of the cultural and media comments about ‘good mothers’, of others around
them and, combined with their own primordial guilt they become fallen as Dasein. Their double burden of guilt stems from both their indebtedness to care as a primordial mode of Being and their belief that they do not live up to the expectation of the mode of Being ‘good mother’.

**Conclusion to the Chapter**

This chapter has illustrated the experience of managing children whilst working shiftwork for women. The Two themes of *Being Guilty*, and *Being Juggler* had a synergistic relationship for the women who participated in the study, in that, the themes were interwoven with each other. In the same way as a grape vine winds itself around the structure that holds it and itself, these women described complex narratives about their experience of working shiftwork whilst caring for children, which were then unravelled and interpreted into the two main themes.

The central tenet that emerges from the narratives is that women ‘manage’ by ensuring that they prioritise everyone else’s needs prior to attending to their own, because that’s what a ‘good mother’ would do. The women cared for those around them, including partner/husband and children as well as extended family and friends, with sometimes little regard for their own health and wellbeing. They felt grateful for the flexibility of shiftwork and being able to contribute to their family, while feeling guilty for leaving the children, husband and others to ‘help’ them when they went to work.

In the next chapter (The Meaning of Caring for Children and Working Shiftwork) I go on to further examine these findings in terms of the hermeneutic phenomenological theoretical framework that I have used and which provides further meanings and interpretations of the themes that have emerged from the data.
Chapter Seven – Creating Meaning from the Findings
~ What it means to work shiftwork for women who care for children

Woman Work (Maya Angelou) (extract)

I've got the children to tend
The clothes to mend
The floor to mop
The food to shop
Then the chicken to fry
The baby to dry
I got company to feed
The garden to weed
I've got shirts to press
The tots to dress
The cane to be cut
I gotta clean up this hut
Then see about the sick
And the cotton to pick.

Shine on me, sunshine
Rain on me, rain

Fall softly, dewdrops
And cool my brow again.

(Angelou, 2015)

Introduction

This chapter explores the findings presented in Chapter Six. The interpretations and meanings will be further unravelled and located back within the philosophical framework and social contexts used to understand the experiences of women working shiftwork whilst caring for children. The hermeneutic phenomenological philosophies of Heidegger and Gadamer have assisted me to interpret the experiences narrated to me by the women I interviewed. Utilising Gadamer’s concept of fusion of horizons to consider the experiences described by the women in this study has further illuminated the findings described in Chapter Six. Gadamer employed the phrase ‘fusion of horizons’ to describe the capacity of humans to fuse the past, present and future possibilities in an interpretation of an experience, and I have used this concept here to
illustrate the fusion between my interpretations of the experience and the participants’ narration (Annells, 1996).

Chapter Six reported two major themes and three sub-themes that were created in and through my analysis of transcribed interviews with participants as I engaged in subsequent reading and rereading and response to them. In this chapter, I firstly present the interpretations related to the theme Being Juggler, which contained three sub-themes. The theme of guilt is then discussed in greater detail, and situated within both the philosophical and social context to create meaning of the experience of working shiftwork whilst caring for children. I have already discussed the Heideggerian perspective of the reasons for Dasein’s experience of guilt in Chapter Six and this will be further illuminated in this chapter. In my study, guilt pervaded all parts of the lives of the women I interviewed. Here, I argue that the feelings of guilt they experienced trickled down into, and tainted, each of the other themes and sub-themes listed in the table below. The influence of feelings of guilt about working shiftwork permeated how the participants experienced their roles, their relationships, their shiftwork and their place in their world.

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<th>Theme</th>
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**Keeping All the Balls in the Air**

This section further interprets the theme of Being Juggler presented in Chapter Six, enlarging on the notion of the women keeping all the balls in the air and exploring in more detail what that meant for them. One of the women (Jennifer) I spoke with described her life as “trying to keep all the balls in the air like a juggler”. In a similar way, it is difficult for me as researcher to unravel the threads in the intricate tapestry of these women’s worlds, as many of the parts of these roles are inextricably linked. Often, whilst a woman is caring for her children she is also undertaking other domestic tasks such as washing children’s clothes, or preparing dinner. This task may be categorised as caring for children or it can be seen as a domestic task. It always involves more than a simple, discrete action, and in what follows, trying to keep these thematic balls in the air myself, this section explores women’s work and all it entails. It encompasses the day–to-day needs of caring for children, from organising food, clean clothes,
gifts, school requirements, haircuts and so on, to planning ahead for the children’s social and physical needs.

Almost all the women tended to have greater responsibility for managing their children and their homes than their partners did (if they were partnered). The only exception to this was Rachel, whose interview detailed that her husband, at that time, shared more fully in caring for their daughter and their home than the other women reported.

Rachel’s family differed from the other families of the women I spoke with, in that, they were still in the midst of childbearing, and Rachel’s husband was re-training. Rachel was three months pregnant when I spoke with her, and had a nine month old daughter, whereas all the other women had completed their families, and the children were preschool age and above. The difference in the way Rachel’s family worked may be explained in a number of ways. Firstly, Rachel’s age may have had bearing on how her family worked, and therefore her experience working shiftwork whilst caring for children. At 26, she was the youngest participant I spoke with, and perhaps she and other women like her, can finally take for granted the winds of feminist change in marriages, child caring and domestic duties that have not impacted on the lives of the older participants. But as I spoke with more women to gather their experiences, and their stories continued to be poles apart from the narrative that Rachel described, it occurred to me that there may be other reasons at play in Rachel’s family. Secondly, for instance, as her husband was retraining and Rachel earned a fair amount of the family’s income, it could be that she held greater power in the marriage. Certainly other research has reported that when the woman earns a significant part of the household income, their domestic work decreases (Crabb, 2014). Another possibility is that as the time of our interview was early in Rachel’s married life and early in her family’s journey as a unit together, as their daughter was aged nine months, the family was still working out how their lives would look. In the end though, a rationale for why Rachel’s family operated differently did not emerge from her narrative.

The other women all felt that managing the children and home was their responsibility, to the dereliction of themselves. The way they were able to ‘keep all the balls in the air’ was to subjugate their own needs, particularly for sleep, as I argue in the discussion of the next three sections.
My Children, My Responsibility

All of the participants saw themselves as having the responsibility as the primary carers of their children, both when they were young, and as they grew, even if their partner did deliver some or much of the actual care. Not only did the women mainly have the day-to-day care of the children, but they tended also to be the person in the relationship who managed the ongoing planning around managing the children, regardless of whether they worked full or part-time. They organised things from working out what the family would have for dinner, to selecting new clothes, shoes or birthday presents for the children, even when in one case (Alison), the woman did not physically go to the shops and buy the clothes or shoes, but asked her husband to do so. Mostly, though, the organisation and execution of tasks related to children were undertaken by the woman, even if she was partnered. These women saw themselves as undertaking much greater than 50% of the planning, organising and caring related to children.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, though, I felt that there was more to uncover in the data, to further illuminate the women’s experiences of the juggling aspect of their shiftwork. My questions troubled me: “Why did the partners of these women seem not to take issue with their wives’ tiredness and need for sleep and step up their commitment around the home?”; “Why did the women I spoke with feel as if they did not have the same right to sleep as their partners and to have the unpaid work shared between the couple?”, and finally, “Why was the management of the children and household the woman’s responsibility to the dereliction of herself?”. These questions were not, to my mind, answered in the initial analysis developed in Chapter Six and are further explored here.

Certainly, such questions are not exclusive to shiftworking mothers, and have been discussed elsewhere in relation to mothers who work throughout the day (Crabb, 2014; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Maushart, 2008). There is a significant body of literature that discusses this extra work as a phenomenon that has been coined as the ‘Second Shift’. This second shift encompasses the domestic and child-related work, undertaken at home by a care-giver after a day of paid work (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). In the book, The Second Shift, the authors report interviews with fifty families over a period of nearly ten years. Hochschild and Machung collected data on everything from how much time each member of a couple spent at work, through to who washed the car and how long each of these activities took. Then a dozen ‘typical’ families were selected for an in-depth in-home study where Hochschild and Machung spent months in each home listening, talking and collecting data. They then conducted follow-
up visits for between two and five years after the in-home study period. This seminal study produced some astounding results. First, it was shown that women were much more torn between the demands of home and work than their husbands. The second finding was that women mainly felt that the second shift was their responsibility (and most of their husbands agreed). And lastly, it was demonstrated that each year, women worked (combining paid work, childcare, and domestic chores) extra full month of twenty-four-hour days more than their husbands did (Hochschild & Machung, 2012).

One point (that I will come back to in a later section but it is important to note here), is that the husbands/partners of the women I interviewed also ‘agreed’ that the second shift was primarily the woman's responsibility. While they may not have been asked, nor answered any questions about this directly, as in Hochschild and Machung's study (2012), their acquiescence to their wives' working and caring for children without much sleep made this quite evident. The evidence is found in the family's choice to minimise childcare and the lack of sleep that ensued when the shiftworking woman cared for her children instead of sleeping. Of course, the woman may have stated that having the children home instead of sleeping would be manageable, however, the man did not insist on his wife's sleep as a priority. One of Rebecca's comments, previously cited, that a man who might be working shiftwork at the mine would not be caring for his children during his sleep period, if their roles were reversed is a good example of gendered expectations. Caring and cleaning work tend to be ascribed to women (Gerstel, 2000), and this was certainly the case in most of the women's experiences related in my study.

The traditional gender roles in western societies have often situated the male as the breadwinner and the female as the primary carer for the children, although more women work outside the home now than in previous generations (Raley, Bianchi, & Wang, 2012). More white women have entered the labour market in greater numbers in the latter part of the twentieth century, particularly in the more privileged classes (Brown, Small, & Lumley, 1997). Amongst minority groups such as Black, poor and immigrant women, however, working outside the home in large number has occurred for many decades (Duffy, 2007). Australian figures report that only 10% of wives were employed outside the home in 1950 compared to over 60% by the year 2000 (Evans & Kelley, 2008). Furthermore, children of working mothers also tended to be employed more outside the home once they were adults (Evans & Kelley, 2008). In terms of family background, education was seen as an important factor: the better-educated women were, the more educated they ensured their daughter were (Evans & Kelley, 2008). Women with young
children, historically, were more likely to have reduced participation and intensity in the workplace (less than full-time). However, nowadays children seem to have a reduced overall effect on the intensity of their mothers’ participation in the workforce (Evans & Kelley, 2008). Thus, while traditionally most women tended to remain at home to care for ‘hearth and home’, the evidence presented here suggests that most married women now work outside the home (Evans & Kelley, 2008). So, with women more likely to be in the paid workforce, what of the work at home previously undertaken by these women? There is still a disparity of unpaid tasks (domestic tasks and child-related work) between men and women in a household, and more often the job falls to the woman in the relationship to undertake the childcare and housework (Craig & Bittman, 2008; Milkie et al., 2009). In the next section I will discuss the unpaid work surrounding caring for children, and in the subsequent section examine other unpaid work.

**The Work of Caring for Children**

Caring for children at home takes time, and evidently, quite a lot of it. One study equated caring for three children, as akin to a full-time job in the labour market (Ekert-Jaffé, 2011). While men are doing more than their counterparts in previous times, the amount of time males engage in caring work is less overall than women (Crabb, 2014). Women are actually doing less overall housework than their historical counterparts, and there are two reasons for this. Firstly, women being employed in the labour market does not allow them the time to undertake the amount of housework and caring that women previously did when they did not work paid work. And secondly, many women outsource the labour required (paying for childcare or housework, for example) where perhaps a couple of generations ago this was only done by the very well off (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000).

Traditionally, the availability of childcare is fixed to day-time hours and during the five days of the work-week, with few providers offering care in the evenings, overnight or on weekends. So, for shiftworkers, even if they could organise care, it would probably be more expensive for the times outside the traditional workday. As the rotating shift roster (please see Chapter One for a definition) is the most commonly used roster system in nursing in Australia, finding childcare that is flexible enough to accommodate this would be difficult using organised childcare that generally operates between the hours of 6 am to 6 pm. Where women have family, such as a partner or an extended family that can care for their children when they are working, this sort of rostering system may be able to work for all concerned. Some of the women in my study, however, spoke about how childcare providers did not understand what
shiftwork really meant. This was one of the reasons that they did not use, or used only minimal childcare. I presented an excerpt in Chapter Six, where Karen recounted a narrative of a conversation she had with a home-based childcare provider. The provider was under the impression that when Karen said she would need to drop the children off at 10 o’clock and pick them up at 7 o’clock that this was during the day (even though Karen had explained she needed the care for night shift). Negotiation was also difficult with her workplace and Karen needed to juggle her roster to fit in with her husband’s work hours, as he was the primary wage earner. This quote below displays the juggle for Karen:

“So I get my roster from my work place and have all those shifts and think “Well we’ll see what happens when his roster comes out two weeks later” and then I would go in [to see Karen’s boss] and try to negotiate. And I’d know that I would be putting them in an awkward situation and there was no one else and I would say, “I can’t work (that shift)” and I remember at one stage I had a permanent two or three shifts a week and I would be standing there saying to them, “I can’t do it. If you can’t change it, I will just have to resign. I just don’t have a choice. I am trying not to threaten you but I have no choice in this.” So I really did feel for them. It sounded so much like a threat. If you don’t do what I want I am going – I’m taking my bat and ball and I’m going home. But you’re in that situation and you also know that your roster came out sometimes two weeks before his and yet there I would be saying “I know it’s been out for a while now but I can’t do it now.”’’ (Karen)

In the end, Karen left her permanent part-time position and worked casual night shifts around her husband’s roster, because it became too difficult and expensive to get care, and too hard to continue to negotiate with her workplace. While this sort of thing can, and does, occur for day workers, it is likely that they will have greater access to childcare than those who work either permanent night shifts or on a rotating roster. The other point here is that the task of finding the childcare fell to Karen, not her husband: the children were her responsibility to manage and therefore the childcare was hers to ‘juggle’. I note, too, that other women such as Rebecca, Tracy, Katrina, and to a lesser extent, Rachel, were also responsible for organising the childcare, even if they were not providing it. This responsibility, and the work involved in organising childcare, is part of the second shift and is another example of the second shift ‘belonging’ to the woman.

**Juggling Multiple Shifts**

For most of the women who worked night shifts, their partners cared for the children overnight. This meant, therefore, that the woman was usually there when the children were put to bed.
(assuming either an eight- or ten-hour night commencing between nine o'clock and eleven o'clock), and that she was usually there when the children needed help in the morning. It would be reasonable to presume that the children slept overnight mostly, and therefore, so did their fathers (only two children were under four years of age at the time of the interviews). In a number of cases in this study, when the woman came home after a night shift, she cared for her children throughout the following day. As I have previously asserted, babies and children do wake at night, however, once they are sleeping routinely through the night and are generally well, a night-time carer would be able to sleep as well. While people who work regular day work, for example, between 8 am and 6pm, will sometimes experience nights of wakefulness when their child will be awake because of illness or the like, the probability of this occurring every night is low. For the night-shiftworking women in my study, their sleep period was much reduced as a result of their care responsibilities during the day. In some cases, such as that of Katrina, she was routinely sleeping less than five hours per day in a period where she worked four ten hour night shifts per week. Others, such as Rebecca and Karen also revealed that they were awake caring for their children during their nominal sleep period on a reasonably regular occasion – working what Venn et al. (2008) called the ‘fourth shift' while they were meant to be sleeping.

So, the question is, why would these women do this? Why do they look after their children, when they are bone tired, after a night shift, with another night shift looming up in the evening? In my study, there were two reasons this occurred. Firstly, so the women could contribute their earnings to improving the family’s financial circumstances, and, secondly, they could reduce the family’s outgoing financial costs by caring for their children themselves, hence maximising the impact of their shiftwork penalty rates. Accordingly, those motives seem reasonable and practical enough. However, none of the husbands of the women in my study made the kind of sleep sacrifice that the women did. Nor, surprisingly, was there any sense of strong expectations from the women that their husbands should do this. This lack of expectation adds to the emphasis of female ownership of, and responsibility for, juggling the demands of the second shift.

Relevant here are two studies on the costs and benefits of tag-team parenting by using shiftwork (Garey, 1995; Hattery, 2001). Tag-team parenting was used by most of the women in my study, where one parent would be home through the day caring for their children, and the other would be home at night. The women in both these published studies worked non-standard shifts.
so that the children could be cared for by either of the parents. Like the participants in my study, the participants of these studies cited the savings on childcare as being a positive impact of the shiftwork (Hattery, 2001). Similarly, the women in the first study reported feelings of exhaustion, as did the women I interviewed (Hattery, 2001). In these studies, too, the father’s care period occurred overnight, when he and the children would sleep, and the women worked night shifts and then provided care throughout the day when the children were awake (Garey, 1995; Hattery, 2001). These studies, corroborate mine here, producing similar findings, from different methodological approaches. Hattery (2001) used a grounded theory approach in her study, and Garey (1995) used qualitative descriptive method where she used interviews and non-participant observation on hospital workers (non-specific to job type). In both studies, the women felt that they were similar to stay-at-home mothers (and hence ‘good mothers’, in the sense outlined in Chapter Six) because their participation in the workforce was seen to be ‘invisible’, and their children were cared for at all times by their parents (Garey, 1995; Hattery, 2001). Working overnight, for the participants in these studies, helped them feel like they were fulfilling the idealised gender norms of the ‘good mother’, because they were able to minimise external childcare (some childcare use was reported by Garey), or not use childcare at all, and still be able to attend all of their children’s activities. One of the participants in my study (Katrina) experienced a similar phenomenon, where she was working forty hours per week at one point and only having about five hours sleep per sleep period. Like the women described by Hattery (2001) and Garey (1995), Katrina's work-life was invisible to others as she was still able to care for the children half of the day and go to their activities once they were older. Katrina was working ten hours per night at work, then coming home and undertaking her ‘second shift’ from about 1 pm until she went to work that evening. While another participant, Fran, was generally getting more sleep, in some ways her work-life was also invisible, as she made sure she went to the children’s school activities, including a weekly assembly on Monday morning (after her last night shift for the week before).

As I will discuss later in relation to the guilt this induces, women are more likely to feel like they ‘need to do it all’ (Glavin, Schieman, & Reid, 2011; Haslam, Patrick, & Kirby, 2015). Motherhood has been traditionally constructed to be the highest calling, self-sacrificing and almost vocational in the way it is esteemed. This traditional role has the ‘good’ mother in the home, lovingly caring for the family and home while her husband is at work earning the money (Guendouzi, 2006). Rebecca addresses this traditional role for women in the following excerpt:
“Yes that whole 50’s housewife thing that really I don’t live up to but I like to think I try. (The good wife) meets you [the husband] with a beer and the paper. It’s just this irrational thing that I have to have it done and so it’s stupid, it doesn’t make sense but it’s the traditional [role], yeah the dad does this and he shouldn’t have to look after children for an extended period. They’ve just fallen into the way that their parents did it... Yeah I have those whole traditional things, yeah... Thinking well this is my role and that’s his and I feel bad when he has to take over mine.” (Rebecca)

The quote illustrates the internal struggle between traditional societal norms for women and Rebecca’s modern sense of equality for women (“It’s just this irrational thing that I have to have it done and so it's stupid, it doesn’t make sense but it's the traditional [role]”). Rebecca clearly understands the dualism of her situation. She wants to work and knows that it brings benefit to her family, but feels the weight of many generations of traditional women’s roles as well, and in the end, the traditional societal norm wins out, because the children are ‘her responsibility’ just as the second shift is.

Another of the participants illustrated on the back of her participant information sheet during the interview to explain how she felt she was being pulled in all directions (Jennifer). In the preface of her book, The Second Shift Arlie Hochschild describes feeling like the pushmi-pullyu (sort of antelope with two heads, one at each end) from the Dr. Doolittle books by Hugh Lofting (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). I was amazed when one of the participants (Jennifer) used a similar metaphor to describe how she felt. Hochschild’s own story is that of taking her baby to work for 8 months, whilst working as an assistant professor at the University of California, Berkeley. She described feeling relieved that having a child did not reduce her as a professional (pushmi head), but she wondered why children were not in offices more, and she questioned where were the children of her male colleagues (pullyu head) (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). This story illuminates some of the analysis that the participants expressed; the internal tension between working and caring for their family. As Rebecca so pithily put it:

“Yes definitely, if Mick had worked all night he’d come home and I doubt that he’d think “Poor Rebecca, she’s up with the kids”. It's just irrational to think that when you’ve been working all night. You talk to the women whose husbands work at the mine and they don’t give it a second thought. Nor do they get up and care for them (the children). And then they go to the pub when they wake up. Yeah I don’t think they think the same because it is, (the night shift) you think I've got to get up because I know Mick’s got to go and check the cows and I've got stuff to do and the house is a mess and I come out and the kids have got toys everywhere “I've got to clean this” which is stupid because it's not going to kill anyone having a few toys on the floor.” (Rebecca)
“and that’s his and I feel bad when he has to take over mine.” (Rebecca)

Rebecca could see both sides in this excerpt: she was experiencing a dissonance between what she felt she ‘should’ do as a ‘good wife and mother’ and what she felt as the inequality of women’s roles in the family. She could see the contrast between these roles, and she was uncomfortable about it. She wanted to emulate the ideal of the ‘good mother’ that is ingrained in many girls (pushmi head), but she also recognised and was in turmoil about, the inequality of gender roles in families where both parents work (pullyu head). It is this turmoil, the emotional labour associated with managing the family relationships and expectations that Venn et al. called the third shift (Venn et al., 2008). Rebecca believed that a man working shiftwork would probably get different treatment, and have different expectations regarding the right to sleep. She felt guilty about sleeping (even though she was uncomfortable about the dissonance) when her husband could be working as she saw it as her role to care for the children.

Fatigue associated with shiftwork, and the resulting decrease in alertness and vigilance has been researched extensively in the literature. Within the shiftwork literature, however, there are very few detailed studies that examine the impact of children for women who work shiftwork, considering the extent of the body of the literature as a whole. This is particularly interesting to note, as nurses are the most commonly-used female sample in shiftwork studies, and much of the shiftwork research focuses on the impact of shiftwork. The type of literature that examines this impact is more likely to be found in works on gender, rather than shiftwork research. It seems that in the shiftwork literature there is little or no discussion of the multiple roles for women who are in paid work in general, in the shiftwork literature. Some of the fatigue reported by shiftworkers in this literature could be, for women, related to the lack of sleep that they have because they care for their children instead of sleeping. Rebecca, in the quote above, provides the conventional, patriarchal reason for why she believed that men have a different set of standards related to their sleep after shiftwork: men who work shiftwork are usually the main breadwinner, and because of this, family life is probably structured around his shifts rather than others’ convenience. As mentioned above, though, there has not been extensive examination of how dual roles (or Hochschild & Machung’s (2012) ‘second’, and Venn et al.’s (2008) ‘third’ or ‘fourth’ shift) impacts on fatigue and other reported shiftwork problems. Also missing is discussion on who cares for the children when the shiftworker comes off shift. It
may be that male shiftworkers also spend much of their sleeping time caring for their children, however, this is not evident in the literature.

As mentioned above, though, few studies have quantified the effect that children have on the sleep and fatigue-related to shiftwork. One study is cited in Chapter Two, where the authors commented that only 50 subjects in a cohort of 625 female nurses in Japan had children (Watanabe et al., 2004) This was because nurses with children tended to withdraw from the labour market during the early years of the children’s life. These empirical findings support the interpretation of the narratives I found in my study, that most of the women I spoke with felt that they needed to contribute to the family, and liked to do so. But the flip side of this benefit resulted in additional emotional labour as they also felt guilty for leaving their children.

**Working to keep the Balls in the Air**

Early studies on childcare and parental roles throughout the 1980s suggested that there is no correlation between the amount of time that women spent at work, and time that men cared for their children (Raley et al., 2012). What this study reported was that regardless of whether a woman worked full-time, or was a stay-at-home mother, their partner’s amount of childcare did not change. It is also important to note that the majority of studies undertaken in this area do not focus on shiftwork, but rather on day work, where the assumption is that both parents are at work, and if one wished to decrease their time at work the other could increase theirs. In theory, the more time a woman spends at work, the less time she will have to undertake child related activities (Raley et al., 2012). This theory, however, is not borne out when one partner works shiftwork. If, for example, the father works through the day while the mother cares for the children at home, once the father is home the mother can go to her paid work. This situation is similar to the one Rebecca is describing in the quote above. This was also supported by two studies that I have previously cited by Garey (1995) and Hattery (2001).

Additionally, there is evidence in the literature that unemployed fathers tended to do less parental and household tasks than women who are unemployed, which again conforms with traditional societal norms of ‘good mother and wife’ (Drago, Black, & Wooden, 2005; Pailhé & Solaz, 2008). Similarly, a Norwegian study found that when couples both worked full-time, fathers did not contribute any more to the family work and responsibilities than when women worked part-time or stayed home with their children (Kitterod & Pettersen, 2006). Again, these studies focus on both parents working during the day. As women continue to have greater involvement in the labour market, there usually needs to be a negotiation in families where
there are two parents, for a different time allocation of previous roles (Raley et al., 2012). I have noted above that the relationship between the time a woman spends at work and the time she will have to undertake child-related activities does not meet the rational assumptions of Raley et al. (2012). Baxter and Hewitt in their 2012 Australian study noticed an unusual pattern occurring for working women in relation to domestic work (including childcare) (Baxter & Hewitt, 2012). For every one per cent of the household income that women contribute, they do seventeen minutes less housework per week, until the woman’s contribution reaches 66.6% of the household income. When this magical 66.6% is attained, for some unknown reason, women start undertaking more of the housework (including childcare) (Baxter & Hewitt, 2012).

This phenomenon was also noted in 2003 by another team that compared Australian and American patterns (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003). Interestingly, in the 2003 study, this pattern of the woman's housework 'curve' was only seen among the Australian example; the American data trended as predicted, in that, as women increased their paid work hours their unpaid domestic work decreased in a linear manner (Bittman et al., 2003). Unlike the Australian data, the American women surveyed did not increase their unpaid domestic work at any point as they increased their paid work hours. One postulated theory was that Australia had a strong male breadwinner culture and men’s housework hours remained static (Bittman et al., 2003). At no point did American women start to increase their housework and childcare hours as they increased their proportional family income like Australian women, however, their husbands decreased their housework and childcare contribution as their wife’s income exceeded their own. So, where does this leave women? As discussed above, women are still undertaking a greater proportion of the caring responsibilities as well as having a greater workforce participation (Crabb, 2014). How is ‘all this’ being achieved? Women are still spending over forty hours per week undertaking housework and childcare, even if they work full-time, and women working part-time undertake even more (Crabb, 2014). Women really are doing a second shift! So, back to the question – why do women do it? To answer this, exploration of the social context and gender roles for women is required.

**Gendered Roles for Women**

There are two opposing roles for mothers; one that is concerned with working outside of their home for pay, and the other that is concerned with caring for their children at home (Dillaway & Paré, 2008). The problem, for women, is that the intensive mothering role is seen as morally superior to the working role and that this remains the prevailing paradigm for parents.
Damaske, 2013; Hays, 1996). Women should want to stay home (the inauthentic ‘they-say’) and any woman that does not is “an unhealthy anomaly” (Gorman & Fritzsche, 2002). The reasons that women work are multi-factorial. Some work purely for money and would prefer to stay home with their children, but financially they cannot afford not to work. Others work because they love their work, they love the sense of achievement that work brings them. Whatever their reason, choosing to work or needing to work should not be valued less than staying at home to fulfil a traditional gender role. Yet ‘they-say’ in media cover stories almost every day that women only feel fulfilled once they have their children (Johnston & Swanson, 2006). The question that is not being asked here, is why men do not have the same two contradictory roles that they need to subscribe to? Men can work and be fathers and there is not the kind of pressure to be a particular kind of ‘good father’ in the same way as there is for women to be a ‘good mother’.

So, what is a ‘good mother’? The traditional mother can be defined as “as full-time, at-home, White, middle-class, and entirely fulfilled through domestic aspirations” (Johnston & Swanson, 2006, p. 509). Adrienne Rich in Of Woman Born writes about how girls are told that there is only one kind of womanhood available (Rich, 1995, page xxxii). Others discuss motherhood as a “competitive sport”, or the “ultimate female Olympics (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). The media hawks motherhood as “eternally fulfilling and rewarding” for women, and suggests there is only one ‘right’ way to do it (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, page 3). The problem with the ideology of motherhood (or the ‘good mother’) is that, according to Douglas and Michaels, it is contradictory. They suggest for motherhood, a ‘distortion of feminism’ has occurred, in that while women theoretically have a choice, the only ‘true and proper’ choice a woman should make is to have a child, as that is what defines her as a ‘real’ woman (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). Secondly, after having a child, the woman should raise the child in a selfless manner (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, p. 5). This selfless manner is constructed by putting the child/children as the centre of the woman’s existence, where she expends all her physical, emotional and financial resources on it/them.

Further, being a ‘good mother’ is the epitome of women’s work. She, the good mother is as close to perfect as is possible, she is put on a pedestal as the Madonna, calm, loving, selfless, and efficient. As Avital Nathman puts it in The Good Mother Myth:

“Her kids have always slept through the night, and even if they don’t, she still manages to look like she has had eight hours of uninterrupted sleep. There is always a well-balanced, home-cooked meal on her dinner table."
She holds down a fulfilling job, while still finding time to join the PTA, run the school’s book fair, and attend every soccer game. Her house is absolutely spotless, and if it’s not, she can effortlessly laugh it off. She has the energy and desire for a happy and adventurous sex life, and her partner is always satisfied. She is crafty, creative, and embodies the perfect blend of modern woman and hipster housewife. She is usually white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, married, and neither too young nor too old.” (Nathman, 2014)

This quote about the ‘good mother’ is a cultural construct of the gold medal winner in the ultimate female Olympics. This mother covers all of the family-focused shifts described above. She has time for her children's activities and attends them lovingly. She engages in activities for the school because that's what ‘good mothers' do. Not only is she an excellent mother, but she is also emotionally and physically available to her partner and his needs (the ‘good mother’ would usually be heterosexual). So, she is a ‘good mother' and a ‘good wife' as well. Nowhere in the quote above, is there any indication of who this woman really is, what are her loves, likes, and quirks? She exists for the service of others, her children, her husband and her community. Nowhere in the quote is there evidence for existing for herself. This is the ‘good mother’.

As each generation changes, the good mother myth must also change. In earlier decades, the ‘good mother’ in the quote above would not have worked outside the home. For example, in times gone, a ‘good wife’ was one who produced children for her husband, preferably sons (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, page 5). Now, as seen above, the ‘good mother' works in paid employment (and obviously does an excellent job) before returning home to fulfil every need of her brood and satisfy her husband. The ‘good mother' myth is flashed on our screens every day through the use of mass media, delivering messages about how women can further strive for perfection in motherhood (Nathman, 2014). There are social media sites like Pinterest, that show images of the next craft project with the children, and Instagram, to display the latest healthy meal that the ‘good mother's' children will eat. There is Facebook, where women put photos of their trophies (their children) dressed in their best, looking angelic. And lastly, there is Twitter, where funny anecdotes of the children may be sent out into the world of followers. These sites, plus the barrage of women's magazines, and television depictions portray an image of what women ‘should' be throughout their lives, but never more so than when they are mothers.
**The Good Mother**

The myth starts with a ‘good’ pregnancy and birth (Nathman, 2014). The ‘good mother' has a drug-free, natural birth. Her baby takes to the breast straight away and breastfeeding is easy and the ‘most natural thing in the world'. She breastfeeds her baby for the recommended amount of time. As the quote above starts, the baby of the ‘good mother' is a good sleeper and the ‘good mother' is able to prepare the home and dinner for when her husband returns home from work. For women who are unable to live up to all this, there is a culture of guilt, blame, and judgement (Nathman, 2014; Zimmerman, Aberle, Krafchick, & Harvey, 2008). Media has not brought women the support they often reach out for, on social networking sites, but judgement for falling below the perceived standard.

Ascribing to the ‘good mother' myth is buying into the inauthentic ‘hear-say' because it is doing what ‘they-say' a ‘good mother' should be. By believing and striving to be the ‘good mother' women become fallen, and are not living their lives in an authentic manner. The reason that women buy into this myth, is that mainstream, and now, social media portray the myth as a desirable goal to which women aspire. And it is not just women themselves who see and buy into the myth; men do and so do children. Female and male children also become trapped by the ‘good mother' myth. What about men, do they believe it? Given the statistics on the amount of housework and childcare undertaken by men which I have briefly discussed above, regardless of the work status of the woman – men are buying into the myth as well because the ‘good mother' will do the work, and mostly men are not doing very much in comparison.

The ‘good mother’ myth insists that the ‘best’ mothers always put their children’s needs before their own (Bowman, Bodsworth, & Zinn, 2013). Also, it would seem, that all of the responsibility regarding the day-to-day care, and the longer term plans for the children rests squarely upon the shoulders of the woman, regardless of her partner status. This was evident in the data collected from my participants. The women implied or stated that it was their responsibility to care for the children, and they felt guilty if they did not do what they thought they needed to. In this way, the women ceded to the anonymous ‘they' about what a ‘good mother' was and bought into the ‘good mother' myth.

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1 I remember in the late 1970s and 1980s feeling like something was wrong in my own home, because my mother worked, and she was one of the only mothers I knew who did. I felt that something was wrong with us as a family because of this. She worked because she loved her job. The advertisements on television at the time were of mothers in sparkling clean houses, lovingly preparing afternoon tea for weary children after school, and then a lovely dinner, not of busy working mothers who struggled to do ‘it all’.  

Chapter Seven – Creating Meaning from the Findings ~ What it means to work shiftwork for women who care for children
Two participants had husbands who assisted more readily with the child care, Rachel and Beth. Rachel would drop her daughter to childcare and go to work, doing a midday to 8 pm shift for the two days that she worked. Her husband picked their daughter up at 4 pm, and proceeded home to both care for her and cook the dinner for the family. Rachel describes her return home one night:

"Sometimes it’s later, like last night I ended up doing overtime. It’s a relief that when I’m home – like when I do get home, everything’s sorted, the house is done, the washing’s done, dinner’s ready…. We seem to share, when I’m at home I cook, when I’m working he’ll cook." (Rachel)

As I noted above, Rachel’s situation, where her husband does what needs to be done in the home, whilst caring for their daughter is unique amongst the women I spoke with. The division of work within Rachel’s home was different from that experienced by the rest of the participants in my study and reasonably unusual in terms of that related in the literature. In the literature, women did most of the childcare (Craig, 2005, 2006; Craig & Bittman, 2008; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Paillé & Solaz, 2008; Press & Fagan, 2006) and in some cases, missed sleep to care for their children (Garey, 1995; Hattery, 2001).

Beth was in a slightly different situation. She already had two teenage children when her last child was born, so Beth’s daughter was cared for by both her father and her two siblings. Beth recalls:

"And then I went back to work on a part-time basis. I think I only did 3 shifts a week. It was either James or myself (caring for Beth’s daughter) and there was sometimes that bit of an overlap but by that stage, the boys were 17/18 so they could be home [with her] for a short period of time.” (Beth)

And

"Well, he is a school teacher so just 9 till 3 so in that too that if I was doing an afternoon I could actually take her (Beth’s daughter) to school. And I did that for years and years and years” (Beth)

In the first excerpt, Beth was recalling that when she returned to work after maternity leave, she worked evening shifts, as this meant that the family was able to care for their sister/daughter, without the use of paid care. Sometimes, Beth would need to leave home prior to her husband’s return, and so Beth’s older children cared for their sister for a short time until their father arrived home. In the second excerpt, once her older children had left home, Beth explains how she would take her daughter down to the school where her husband worked and
leave her in the front office with the staff there. Her husband would then care for their daughter, giving her the dinner that had been left, bathing her and putting her to bed, prior to Beth getting home from work.

Earlier, when Beth’s sons were young, Beth had worked days so she could be with them in the afternoons. Her husband got the children ready for school when Beth was at work:

“Well the boys were 7 or 8, and their dad was there, so he would get them off to school and then I would be home in the afternoon, so I did that for quite a few years.” (Beth)

None of the other women in my study had the partner support with childcare that Rachel and Beth spoke about. Some studies reported in the literature suggest that fathers are becoming more involved in childcare, and some of the findings reported suggest that when women work full-time (or close to this) the father usually has more time alone with their children (Fothergill, 2013; Gracia, 2014; Raley et al., 2012). Another study reported that fathers may undertake other domestic work whilst they are caring for their children, if the mother is not present (Coltrane, 1997). But what this means is that the type of housework that men often choose to do is caring for their children, leaving the less appealing house-cleaning to their wife (Yavorsky, Kamp Dush, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2015).

Emerging from recent literature is the concept of the ‘new father', who, unlike his older colleagues, shares the childcare slightly more (Fothergill, 2013). Typically, these men are better educated and may be less traditional in their gender role views (Fothergill, 2013; Kiker & Ng, 1990). A more recent Australian study, however, contradicts the theory about better education (Craig, Powell, & Smyth, 2014), as this study reported that fathers across the education spectrum were spending more time with their children (Craig et al., 2014). Mothers still spend more overall time doing routine care, whereas fathers spent more time in leisure activities, although their routine care time had increased in this study (Craig et al., 2014). Overall higher rates of satisfaction on work/life balance measures were reported, where fathers cared for their children (Craig & Sawrikar, 2009). There is one other phenomenon reported in the literature, which seems to have led to fathers sharing more of the childcare, and that is the situation that emerged after the recession of 2007 to 2010 in the United States of America (Smith, 2015). Smith reports that in the four years leading up to 2011, the rate of children being cared for by their father, whilst their mother worked, went up four percentage points in urban areas (Smith, 2015). The reason for this rapid change was the significant amount of job losses
that the recession produced (Smith, 2015). As men lost their jobs, their wives sought out greater participation in the workforce to provide for their families (Smith, 2015). As I can find no other corroborating research, it would seem that this effect may have been localised to the particular circumstances in these areas in the USA at this time (Smith, 2015).

What about families where there is no father? As indicated earlier, two of my participants, Jennifer and Alex were single parents. They each had one child and these children were of school age at the time I interviewed them. Both these women used family and friends to assist in caring for their children when they were working. The other similarity between these women was that their social lives were limited primarily to the activities that the children did, and the friends that were made through these activities. Both women organised their work lives around the needs of their children. Alex worked extra hours per week for financial reasons and family provided childcare.

“Well we can look in advance, we can even plan and be organised like that's it we can pull out a 4-week roster and go righto we'll mark this day out and we go let's do to the park on Sunday.” (Jennifer)

Jennifer was narrating a story about meeting up with friends at a park, so their children could play whilst they sat and talked. Both women organised their work lives around the needs of their children. Alex worked extra hours per week for financial reasons, and family provided childcare.

“I tend to do afternoon shifts. I tend to do one afternoon during the week, and again that happens to be an afternoon that suits me. And I then choose to work on a weekend, on a Saturday afternoon, which again I know my child’s obligations are done, in that, their sporting obligations are met on the Saturday morning. I also choose a day at the end of the week (to work) so again homework and school activities and training and everything else is catered for. And I’m fortunate enough that that works for me and my workplace.” (Alex)

Alex felt that to be a good mother and provide her child with what she believed was a good life, she needed to work more than full-time. At the time that I spoke with Alex, she was the only financial provider in her home, as her ex-husband had moved overseas when her child was a newborn baby and has not been in contact with the family since. Jennifer also used her family to assist her with caring for her son; often her father cared for his grandson whilst Jennifer worked afternoon shifts.
Conclusion to the subtheme

The women in my study were mostly the primary carers of their children, regardless of the amount of time they worked. Some of these women had partners, who 'helped' but the majority of my participants assumed the majority of the child-related caring work within the home. This finding confirms results from studies undertaken in the women's work field (Craig, 2005, 2006; Craig & Bittman, 2008; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Pailhé & Solaz, 2008; Press & Fagan, 2006).

While some may see that this time allocation works well, in terms both of ensuring that children gain care from their parents throughout the twenty-four hour period, and of the associated decrease in childcare costs and illnesses; there is one disadvantage. All of the women I spoke with talked about the effect this had on their sleep. They ‘juggled’ work and family and decreased their sleep to ‘manage it all’. In line with the findings of Garey (1995) and Hattery (2001), my study has shown how women who primarily work night shifts (nine out of ten women worked either permanent part-time night shifts or a rotating roster including night shifts) are able to “stretch” their time to work and still undertake the traditional female role of caring for children, by not sleeping or by significantly reducing their sleep period.

Undertaking the majority of childcare by the parents throughout the twenty-four hour period may be viewed as an advantageous arrangement, and the resultant decrease in childcare costs; there is one disadvantage. The drawback in this arrangement for women was the associated reduction of sleep. They ‘juggled’ work and family, and decreased their sleep to manage ‘it all’. The women primarily worked night shifts (nine out of ten women worked either permanent part-time night shifts or a rotating roster including night shifts), and they were able to “stretch” their time to work and still undertake the traditional female role of caring for children by not sleeping or significantly reducing their sleep period.

In my study, the participants were the primary carers of their children. In most cases, the ‘help' that the women got from their husbands, was assistance in caring for the children overnight while the wives were at work. For the woman, carrying the majority of the care was driven primarily by feelings of guilt, both at a perceived sense of ‘abandoning' of their children to go to work, and also around their feelings about the traditional role that they were in, in conflict with the 21st century feminist ideals occurring around them. This collision of the traditional gender roles with the ‘modern working woman’ had an effect on all of the women I spoke with, to a greater or lesser extent. Alison, who was working more hours than her husband, for
instance, felt that she needed to cook the meals on the weekend to be reheated in the first couple of days of the work week, rather than leave her husband to undertake this. Even on night shifts when Alison’s husband did cook, Alison would leave a recipe out in the morning with instructions about any ingredients required. A number of the women talked about their sense of internal conflict about their ‘traditional’ role as wife and mother and working. As Annabel Crabb so blithely puts it: “‘working mum’ is a phrase I hear every day but I never hear ‘working dad’” (Crabb, 2015). The women in my study saw themselves as working mothers, who were trying to be ‘good mothers’, with responsibilities both to their work and home and they felt like they were being pulled in all directions as they were trying to juggle ‘it all’.

At this point I will move on to discuss the findings related to the sub theme of ‘Managing Home’ presented in Chapter Six, and what needed to happen to keep the family moving along, along with the women’s need to keep the home clean and organised. Some participants, such as Katrina and Rebecca, received very little assistance from partners or family, whereas, others, like Rachel, did. The participants also seemed to have varying perspectives about how they felt about their domestic roles, and whether they should be expecting support from their partners. Another interesting insight was the women’s own analysis or self-talk about what this meant. I have discussed, at length, earlier, the dissonance that Rebecca experienced between her ingrained traditional gender role and her more modern ideals of sharing childcare, though Rebecca spoke more about the role issues in her husband caring for the children than about his doing the housework. Some of the women analysed how they felt and some did not appear to think much about these issues. They may have expressed frustration or were more resigned to the situation, but they did not seem to question the gender roles in their lives. In the next section, I also discuss the social context and implications from the literature, in contrast and comparison to my findings.

**Home and Hearth**

For Rebecca (as briefly discussed above), the awareness of two conflicting points of view was unsettling. Rebecca articulated the dualism of traditional gender roles with the more modern view of equality, but she did not have a resolution for the conundrum that she felt. She rationalised that if she had been a man working shiftwork, she would been afforded time in bed without pressure (or potentially guilt), as she would have been the main breadwinner. Rebecca recognised that she was experiencing both external pressure (covertly from her husband) and internal pressure (mainly arising from guilt about the non-fulfilment of her traditional gender
role). The external pressure from her husband was illustrated in a vignette about her husband organising some farm work on Saturday morning after Rebecca had returned home from night shift and before she needed to go to another shift that night. It is likely that Rebecca’s husband did not even think about her need for sleep when he went to undertake his job. However, as Rebecca stated:

“well the other weekend he had to mark calves and it had to be done on the Saturday. He knew full well I work every Friday night and he just came home and said “Oh well you can fix that” and I wasn’t happy and he was out the door by the time I got out of the shower” (Rebecca)

At other times Rebecca generated her own pressure based on her feelings of guilt (which will be discussed in detail in the next section) and her contention that it was her role to manage the house and children, even though she worked:

“Yeah well I’ll come out and I try to have everything sort of done by the time Mick gets home from work because I know, I like having it done and in my head I think it’s good for him to walk through the door to a relatively clean house… Yes that whole 50’s housewife thing that really I don’t live up to but it’s, I like to think I try.” (Rebecca)

Rebecca articulated what some of the other women in the study also mentioned - that they ‘owned’ the domestic work. The women felt as though the domestic work associated with the family home was primarily *their* responsibility, regardless of the amount that they worked. As mentioned above, working night shifts can create an invisible work-life for women, both paid work shift, and second, third, and fourth shifts (Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Venn et al., 2008). This allows them to be accessible through the day to undertake both childcare and housework. Night work also allows women to participate in their children’s school activities, which they may not be able to do if they worked through the day.

For my participants, there was both the organising *and* the doing component in many of the jobs that needed to be undertaken. Even in jobs that may have been considered ‘men's work’ the women still organised and supervised the work. For example, if a plumber was required to fix a tap, it was mostly the women organised this, and had the plumber come during the time they were home (but otherwise could have been sleeping). A number of the women (Fran, Katrina, and Rebecca) did not think that their husbands would have come home from work to manage the plumber, even though that resulted in their wife having less sleep. Beth had more support than some of the other women, but this was primarily for the care of her daughter not for home related work. Only Rachel was in a marriage where her husband shared the care of
their daughter and the house. The other women spoke about their homes as being their responsibility, that they owned the ‘second shift’ and its extensions (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). This view is widespread through the published literature, regardless of the number of hours worked, the home and its associated work remains the woman's responsibility.

One Australian study reported that in families with two children, when the youngest was less than two years, women did up to sixteen hours per day of unpaid domestic work, including childcare, which is a formidable total (Craig & Bittman, 2008). Clearly, this amount of time does not take into account the other time where paid work is undertaken by the primary caregiver (usually the mother). The total time of unpaid domestic work does decrease as the children age, particularly after school age where the children are at school for around six hours per day, excluding transport or extra curricula activities (Craig & Bittman, 2008). Overwhelmingly, though, this work is undertaken by women, who do the largest proportion of all unpaid housework and childcare (Craig & Bittman, 2008). For my participants, these six school hours were seen as their time to sleep, and if the woman did not have other children at home and no other jobs needed to be done, some of these hours of sleep could occur.

There are other studies, however, where findings suggest that women are undertaking less unpaid housework now than in the 1960s (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). This has been partially attributed to increases in male assistance (increasing from the 1960s to the 1980s) (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010), but primarily it is because women are undertaking less domestic work at home because of their increased labour market participation (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). So, if women are not doing the housework, and men are still not undertaking half, who is doing it? In some cases, as I noted above, households are outsourcing the housework, though this is usually associated with women earning greater amounts (Baxter & Hewitt, 2012). In other cases, women (to whom the work has traditionally fallen) may be tolerating more untidy houses (Baxter & Hewitt, 2012; Robinson & Milkie, 1997). Some earlier research did predict that labour saving devices would decrease the amount of time spent on housework, but a more recent study refuted this claim (Bittman, Rice, & Wajcman, 2004).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported that women’s participation in the workforce increased from 48% in 1992 to 65% in 2015, and that women still undertook 1.8 times the rate of unpaid domestic work compared to men (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Other studies report that the difference between men and women’s contribution in a home with one small child was three to five hours (Craig & Bittman, 2008). The participants in my study have
undertaken a greater load of the household work, regardless of their working arrangements. One reason for this is the invisibility of night-work, as discussed in earlier above (Garey, 1995). Only Rachel, who was in her mid-twenties when I spoke with her, had ‘good’ support at home. No other women reported this in their interviews.

Interestingly, there is one earlier report that calculates how for every hour of paid work women are able to drop 26 minutes of unpaid work (Bittman, 1991). Comically, Bittman remarks that if women worked over 95 hours in paid work they would not have to do any unpaid domestic work (Bittman, 1991). The point, here, is that few men work these many hours and that all workers have, since World War II been reducing their paid hours. As women have entered the workforce in much greater numbers since WWII, this difference between the sexes is likely to be an increasing rather than a diminishing problem (Bittman, 1991). With the exception of Rachel in my study, the enculturated view of male breadwinner versus female home-keeper has held strong. Even those, such as Rebecca, who questioned this assumption, still could not beat the ingrained gender roles of our culture. And also, given that the average pay gap between males and females is 17.1%, it is a reality in Australian households that men earn more (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2014). Research also suggests that the 26 minutes savings that Bittman (1991) proposed has decreased to 17 minutes for each hour of paid work (Baxter & Hewitt, 2012), though the comparison still holds. There is over twenty years between the publication of these two studies, and they measure slightly different items, however, their central theme is similar: as women work and earn more, their capacity to reduce their unpaid time increases. The quibble over whether the reduction is 26 or 17 minutes is unimportant, what is important though, is the question about division of labour. In the end, however, women are still arguing about splitting household work in an era when more women work in paid work than remain at home as housewives (Evans & Kelley, 2008).

Like the research cited above, the women in my study primarily did the household work, despite their earnings. Alison and Beth both earned more than their respective husbands, yet they still undertook the housework and most of the cooking for the family. The theory posited above of male breadwinner and female housekeeper seemed to apply in my study as well. Further, the type of shiftwork that my participants worked seemed to increase the women’s capacity to do the housework as well as working night shifts. I have explained that there is a certain invisibility to working at night, accompanied by the resulting guilt of sleeping during the day (after all there is no expression about ‘sleeping the whole night away’ but there is an
expression about ‘sleeping the whole day away’ – which represents a person *lazing* away their time in bed during the day!). Garey (1995) reported on the ‘invisibility’ of night shiftwork, characterised by going to work when others are returning home from dinners, parties etc., and going home when others are starting their workday. Garey also noted how, for night shiftworkers, sleeping during the day in itself is an issue (Garey, 1995).

The reason that my participants worked night shifts and then stayed up to undertake the housework was because they felt that they were judged. They felt the judgement from others for their work in the domestic sphere, both in childcare and domestic chores, and they judged themselves against a media driven myth of the ‘good wife and mother’. The way my participants managed to work and keep their houses in the way they felt satisfied as wives and mothers, was to reduce their sleep needs to fit around the family. Nathman (2014) illustrates the myth that society subscribes to about mothering and being a ‘good’ keeper of the home when she describes the epitome of the perfect woman, as self-sacrificial in order to ensure all the needs of her children and husband are met, in a calm and joyful manner. In this way, the ‘good mother’ is idealised and mostly women fall short of such a comparison. Even common sayings such as “my wife doesn’t make lasagne like my mother did” are laden with emotional messages for women and are inherently a judgement that the wife is not as good as the idealised, saintly, self-sacrificial mother. This sort of message - one that many women still receive for much of their lives becomes ingrained. Women feel judged for everything they are to others.

The women I spoke to mostly did not feel entitled to ask for or demand assistance at home when they weren’t working as many hours as their husbands, despite the fact that they were working night shifts. Similarly, Hochschild and Machung (2012) in *The Second Shift*, discussed how household chores are divided up between men and women, and noted that in many cases, women did not feel as if they could demand more of their husbands. This led to a number of women reporting that they felt resentful of their husbands (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Although I did not directly ask the participants in my study about resentment, some offered comment about their feelings of ‘doing it all’. Katrina appeared to be the most resigned to her lot (as it were) whereas Rebecca (prior to her husband arriving home while I was interviewing her) spoke about having to get up to care for the children and clean the house when she had done a night shift, in a more resentful way. Others, such as Alison and Fran, articulated the burden they felt as if they needed to organise everything (even if their husband was going to undertake some tasks).
Hochschild & Machung discuss one way that women could fit both working outside the home and managing home and children. They named their theory ‘supermoming’ where the woman attempts to undertake both roles without imposing on their husbands (their italics) (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). This theory explained a way that the women in Hochschild & Machung’s study could absorb the pressure of both their paid work and their unpaid household roles (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Hays (1996) used a slightly different term (‘intensive parenting’), however, by and large, the concepts are similar. Both reflect a cultural construct of mothering primarily, and that ‘good mothers’ do everything they can to cushion the lives of their children, always putting their children’s needs first, and imposing as little as possible on their husbands. Others have termed it ‘momism’ (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). ‘Supermoming’, ‘momism’ or ‘intensive parenting’, the message is the same: women are there to raise their children sparing no financial, emotional or physical cost for the children at the expense of themselves. Being a ‘good mother’ means being a mother who cleans the home so that it is spotless for the little princes and princesses they serve; cooking beautiful, healthy food; being cheerful and good tempered, and being fulfilled by the role of caring for home and hearth awaiting the return of their husband (Douglas & Michaels, 2004).

Buying into this “female Olympics” of mothering has become a media-driven campaign to brainwash women into believing myths about motherhood. Douglas and Michaels (2004), contend that there has been a “Martha Stewartization of America” in terms of mothering, where mothers must demonstrate their proficiency at mothering, undertaking activities such as fashioning their lunches into animals for greater appeal, making dinners from ‘scratch’ to ensure greatest nutritional value and other activities designed to educate, protect, nurture and stimulate children (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, p. 9). Similar to the ‘pushmi-pullyu’ that Hochschild and Machung (2012) discuss in their book, Douglas and Michaels (2004) assert that the two cultural “riptides” that modern women experience are contradictory. There is a societal expectation driven by the mass media that women should “be more doting and self-sacrificial at home than Bambi’s mother, yet more achievement-oriented at work than Madeleine Albright” (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, p. 11).

Why do women compete in these Olympics, ones in which they can actually never win? Why do women not rebel against the myth that the media is selling? They do not rebel, because what they see on television are mothers portrayed as calm, loving, and self-sacrificial saintly figures. And in the advertising breaks, products are touted by mothers whose children are angelic and
well behaved, so women do not get respite from the illusion of the ‘good mother’ (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). If women are not receiving the messages from advertisers through the medium of television, there is also the Internet, radio, newspapers and magazines that depict women in similar roles as I have noted above. So, although some women do not conform to the social ‘norms’ that the advertisers have produced, many do. And if women do not conform, they feel they are harshly judged by others, often other women. It does seem extraordinary though, that women do not see through the thinly-veiled myth of the advertising industry that mothers have sparkling homes and good children. Perhaps one explanation on why women buy the myth centres on Heidegger’s fallenness and primordial guilt.

From a Heideggerian perspective, buying the myth occurs when women become fallen. As I have already discussed; this occurs when people listen to ‘idle chatter’ and are led by others such as media. ‘Chatter’ here, might be interpreted as ‘gossip’, or as ‘hearsay’ – such as “I read on the ‘net….’” or “I heard on the TV….”. Then women cede their decisions to the anonymous ‘they’ of the media, mothers groups and the internalised concept of what a ‘good mother and wife’ is. Once the woman cedes her decisions and is led by the anonymous ‘they’, she becomes fallen. The woman is ceding to entrenched and persistent ideas about what ‘one must do to be a good mother’, even if such ideas have been critiqued by feminists for decades now, and even if this leads to the dereliction of herself. This ‘supermoming’ or ‘female Olympics’ is what I saw, to a greater or lesser extent, with the participants in my study. The strength of the internalisation of the need for this behaviour is significantly demonstrated among these women, even though they are able to ‘be’ this wife and mother. There was one significant difference for my participants: as shiftworkers they were able to undertake all of the housework, primarily unnoticed, as usually their husbands are at work. As a society, we share expectations about people being ‘up and about’ during the day and for women whose work-life (at night) was largely invisible, this second shift was invisible and also taken for granted.

The problem for women generally though, who do not buy into the whole ‘good wife and mother’ myth, is that they may be the only one in their partnership that does not. It may be that her husband has expectations about the work that his wife will undertake at home, and that might include keeping a clean and nurturing home. This household work may be in addition to the woman having a full-time job. Sometimes, it is not simply the woman ceding to media and other external pressures, but it is her husband doing so, and putting pressure on his wife to be the ‘good mother’. This sort of pressure is difficult for women to resist: they already feel the
pressure from media, particularly social media, and to have their husbands also get on board creates an unrealistic expectation of them. I saw this with three of my participants (Katrina, Fran, and Rebecca), who clearly felt both the internal pressure of conforming to the traditional gender role as well as marital expectations about what a ‘good mother and wife’ is to be.

Pat Mainardi wrote about resistance theory in the home (Mainardi, 2000). Her theory about how men resist sharing housework is interesting, and in my experience, is consistent with what I have heard anecdotally in my interviews and heard echoed on television programs and advertisements. In her paper, Mainardi describes the dialogue in her own home with her husband and his response to doing the housework. Mainardi reasoned that theoretically, most men are happy to share the work, however, in practice, some men may not wish to undertake more work, particularly work that is unpaid and low-status. Mainardi illustrates men’s resistance to doing the housework in comments such as “I don’t do it very well, you’re much better at it” (meaning I have not trained for doing the dishes); “show me how it is done” (meaning I do not know how to do the job and I’m going to ask a lot of questions to frustrate you so that it is easier to do it yourself); “we have different standards, why should I have to work to your standards?” (meaning I’ll just do a bad job because I know you will be irritated by the standard and do it yourself) and so on (Mainardi, 2000, pp. 165 - 166). Mainardi lists more responses that men might use to avoid doing the housework. So while men may be happy with the idea of their wives working, they may not be willing to forgo their clean and comfortable house which their wife cleans and organises. In this way, the husbands also are ceding to the ‘anonymous they’ in what traditional gender roles should be. Sometimes, like Katrina, it is the wives who offer excuses for their husband’s lack of sharing the work in their home:

“he is primary breadwinner, like so he was full-time, I didn’t feel that he should then have to cook, because I wasn’t working as much. I mean he’s pretty good too, he realises, especially if I’m working now, he’ll help, if I’m on an evening, I’ll have the slow cooker on or something like that and he cleans the kitchen and does that – like if I’m at work, so he realises, yeah.” (Katrina)

It seems from the excerpt above that Katrina’s husband would rarely make the dinner for their children himself. When Katrina was telling me the part about her husband cleaning up, she seemed happy and almost proud that he cleans up after the dinner that he has eaten when Katrina is not there. She does not feel as if he should do more around the home; she now only works three shifts per week, whereas he works full-time. However, even when Katrina worked
full-time night shifts she did not expect her husband to undertake housework or childcare. Contrasting Katrina’s view with Rachel’s attitudes to housework shows that there are stark differences in how they feel that the household work should be divided in their homes. Rachel and Katrina worked similar hours, however, their attitudes reveal that Rachel believed the work should be divided as equally as possible, whereas Katrina felt that the housework was her domain despite her work status. While these different attitudes may simply be the results of differences in personal ideological strength between two individuals, they may, as I have suggested earlier, also reflect the idea that younger women have come to internalise more powerfully the idea that work at home should be shared more equally between men and women. So why does someone like Katrina provide excuses for her husband? One thought may be social conditioning. As noted in Chapter Five, Katrina is 40 years old, and she has grown up in a rural area where traditional gender roles tend to have remained dominant in what ‘they-say’ normal family relationship should be like. Women have traditionally been responsible for the home, but when women go to work, it would seem that in many cases, no negotiation for change in responsibility of home duties occurs.

Certainly the increase in women’s paid work has led to a decrease in unpaid work being undertaken at home, however, women still do a far greater amount of unpaid work, with the study noted above reporting up to four weeks of 24 hour-days extra per year (Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Yavorsky et al., 2015). In the study undertaken by Yovorsky et al., when they excluded childcare in the total unpaid hours, the difference of unpaid work between men and women was over four weeks of 24-hour days (Yavorsky et al., 2015). This study explored dual income families with infants. Hochschild & Machung’s study was undertaken in the 1980s, however it appears that little has changed in thirty years in the division of household labour, despite women’s increasing participation in the workforce.

Rachel and her age peers, however, might provide hope that change in the division of unpaid labour between men and women is coming. Perhaps the change will come too late for women in partnerships similar to Katrina’s or Rebecca’s, where they assume much of the responsibility of the housework. Even recent research quoted above still suggests a significant difference in the division of household work, and this looks unlikely to change for some time. Those, who are girls and young women now may reap the benefits of more equal division of unpaid work in their homes as adults, but the cogs of the sociological machine of gender roles are slow to turn.
In the section above, I have noted that women are still primarily responsible for organising and undertaking the work involved in managing a home. In the section ‘My Children, My Responsibility’ I discussed research that suggested men are becoming more involved in some aspects of childcare, however there is less evidence that there is ‘spill over’ into the housework area. I found little evidence in my own study either, that housework was being more equally shared among men and women. Rachel’s situation, as I have already discussed, was the only incidence of more equal sharing of both childcare and housework. Possible reasons for this have been considered. The participants in my study absorbed the work and stress of both roles, paid and unpaid by reducing their sleep time. While trading time is not a new concept (Craig, 2007), working shiftwork allows a greater amount of time to trade. As society is predominantly set up in a natural diurnal orientation it would be considered mostly unusual to be up at 2am vacuuming and dusting. It seems less strange for this to be happening at 2pm, even if the person has worked all of the night before. Shiftwork allows for this to occur.

**Conclusion to the subtheme**

The findings that have been discussed here reflect the participants' narratives situated within the literature on women's work and gender roles. The women in my study undertook most of the household duties or unpaid domestic work, regardless of the amount of time they worked (except for Rachel). I have discussed that domestic work has both an organisational component and a doing component – the ‘third shift' (Venn et al., 2008). Except for Rachel, the women in my study were ‘in charge' of both of these things in their households. Other chores, such as grocery shopping, were both organised and undertaken by the women. Most of the women I spoke with received very little contribution from their spouses in undertaking the housework, and some felt that this was their role, that they should be both working at home and undertaking shiftwork. I have also established that my findings align with the overwhelming majority of results in the literature – that women undertake the majority of housework in most households regardless of work status (Crabb, 2014). I have discussed the concept of ‘supermoming’, which provides explanations for some of the reasons why women may continue to ‘doing gender’ (West & Zimmerman, 1987). I have also examined the gender role myth from a Heideggerian phenomenological perspective.

This collision of roles that transect both home and workplace affected the women in my study, to a greater or lesser extent. All of the participants saw themselves as working mothers, with responsibilities both to their work and to their home, and they felt like they were being pulled...
in all directions. The invisibility of shiftwork allows women to financially contribute whilst still living up to societal expectations of the ‘good wife and mother’. The last sub-theme in ‘Being Juggler’ is ‘Managing Self Needs’. Having discussed both the childcare and unpaid household work that the women in my study did, I will now move onto discuss the phenomenon I am calling ‘The Burnt Chop’.

The Burnt Chop

This section explores how my participants ‘kept all the balls in the air’ by juggling their responsibilities, to be able to work and care for their children, by reducing their own sleep needs. By working night shifts and caring for their children, either part, or, all of the day, women were able to work without the financial impediment of childcare. The women in my study compromised their sleep for what they saw as the greater good for the family. It is probable that women compromise for their family, regardless of the time of day that they work, however, in the case of shiftworkers, it is a significant amount of sleep that was being lost to ensuring other duties were undertaken. Conversely, the women did not speak about how their husbands compromised what they were doing to ensure that their wives got enough sleep prior to going to their night shift.

What my findings add to the research on sleep and shiftwork, is the compromise women who work shiftwork make in decreasing their sleep time to care for children. I note, that in the shiftwork literature, there are few empirical studies about night shift workers and care responsibilities once they are home. While it has been established that shiftwork has an effect on sleep, what there is less evidence of, is whether part of that effect is as a result of external reasons (such as childcare responsibilities) rather than circadian desynchrony. Certainly in the shiftwork literature, there is not much discussion on the effect that children have on shiftworkers’ sleep. I have noted the one Japanese study reporting that night shift nurses slept less if they had childcare responsibilities in comparison to nurses without children (Watanabe et al., 2004). As discussed earlier, Hattery (2001) and Garey (1995) also published studies exploring the use of shiftwork to care for children. These studies, like my own, reveal the sacrifice of the mother's sleep to give the family greater financial advantage by having two parents working with no paid childcare needed. In both these studies, the father would have been asleep for the majority of the time designated as their care period, whilst the women were awake after a night shift because children would be awake. As my study also demonstrates, it is a decrease in the women’s sleep time that enables the benefits of the added financial bonus
of the second wage when the children are cared for by their parents. The issue of the second shift, (that is, the organisation required in getting children, up, dressed, fed and off to childcare or school, whilst trying to get ready for work, and attending to housework) is similar for all working mothers. However, there is a significant difference that occurs when a mother is a shiftworker. Any sleep taken during the day while attending to children becomes at best disturbed and at worst absent (Kurumatani et al., 1994).

I have mentioned the concepts of the third and fourth shifts in Chapter Two (the Literature Review) and in earlier sections of the current chapter. The third shift is the mental organisation needed for ‘keeping all the balls in the air’ of managing a family and a home (Venn et al., 2008). The concept of the fourth shift is getting up to care for children during the night (Hochschild, 1997; Venn et al., 2008). For the women in my study, the interruption of their sleep to tend to children did not occur overnight, but throughout the day, although the concept persists. Where the participants in my study differ though, was that they were actually still up, and only catching small amounts of sleep, depending on the sleeping routine of the child they had at home, and school/day-care pick-ups required. For Katrina (as an example), this meant getting up after four or five hours of sleep, between night shifts, to collect her children from her mother-in-law, before coming home to start the house-related duties. Others, such as Fran, used her day after the last night shift for the week to clean all day with her four-year-old son between the school runs for the older children. She talked about not sitting down as she would feel too tired if she did. Such a situation not only raises the issue that five hours sleep is less than optimum, but that it also raises the potential for an incident at work, or a car accident on the commute (Barger et al., 2006; Caruso, 2015; Keller et al., 2009).

Rebecca, in her quote, where she thought it was unlikely that male shiftworkers would compromise their sleep in the same way as their female counterparts, got right to the crux of the issue. As a society, we have greater expectations that women will be self-sacrificing if they want to be ‘good mothers’, which I have discussed in detail in the previous sections. Australians have a great expression for this: taking ‘the burnt chop’.

The expression is often referred to as, ‘the mother always gets the burnt chop', that is, the mother takes the worst of what is there (dinner, chair, a piece of cake etc.) to give her family the best, because her needs do not matter. The ‘burnt chop syndrome' seems to be part of the unique Australian vernacular and has been written about in blog posts, but has received very little comment from the academic literature. The intrinsic meaning of this phrase is the belief
that; as a woman, I am not as good or valuable, and should not have the same entitlement to things, food, and time to the same extent as others in my family. ‘Taking the burnt chop’ can both be taken literally or as a figurative meaning for the mother’s needs being last to be met.

In my study, the burnt chop was predominantly the amount of sleep that my participants had so they could care for their children and undertake the housework. Also, perversely, charring this chop even more, the women felt guilty for feeling tired and being irritable to their children when they had had so little sleep. Whilst the expression seems to be Australian in origin, it shares similarities to the concepts introduced earlier on ‘supermoming’ and ‘intensive parenting’. The ‘burnt chop’ and these other terms have some similar meanings; that the mother should be self-sacrificing for the benefit of her family.

The other side to taking the burnt chop is the idea of the selfless martyr who serves everyone: “Don’t worry about me, I’ll sit on the broken chair” or “I want the Earl grey tea but it’s my daughter’s favourite, so I’ll have the good enough tea” (Evans, 2012). Some writers have suggested that martyrdom associated with the burnt chop is simply a matter of giving it to someone else (Anderson, 2010; Charlton, 2013; Evans, 2012; Rose, 2015). This advice is good in theory, but it does not examine the entrenched gender roles that such a solution is based on. The martyrdom critique paints women as falling ‘victim’ to the ‘good wife and mother’ myth, and that it is their responsibility to climb out of their quagmire of that martyrdom. What the writers referenced above fail to note, is that the overwhelming messages that lure women into the ‘good wife and mother’ myth are entrenched in media, in many of societal roles models (for example, Martha Stewart, or perhaps like Donna Hay in Australia), and often in the men that women marry. Choosing not to be a martyr is not as simple as they portray in their writings (Anderson, 2010; Charlton, 2013; Evans, 2012; Rose, 2015). In previous times, women took ‘the burnt chop’ because society viewed them as less important than men and children, particularly male children, as breadwinners for the whole family who need the most nutritious food to keep them healthy to work. Also as caring was a woman’s role, she may have taken pleasure in being self-sacrificial and giving someone else the best chop. There are also links to selflessness in institutionalised Christianity, and women may have behaved in a self-sacrificial way for this reason also. The four writers above seem blind to the complexity of this issue when they suggest it is the women’s requirement to change their martyr type behaviour. None of them sees the intrinsic web that the ‘good wife and mother’ myth catches women in, and none seems to understand how the myth affects dynamics within the dynamics of class, culture and a marital relationship. It is likely that for many women who have subscribed to the ‘good wife and
mother’ myth, that their husband benefits by having a clean home and well-cared for children. As discussed earlier, resistance may occur if women suddenly demand equal division of household work and childcare in a marriage that previously worked because the wife did a greater proportion.

Studies like the landmark Hochschild and Machung’s study (2012) and the ABS data reported above (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016) suggest the capacity to change the situation for many women on a macro scale is limited (Crabb, 2014; Hochschild & Machung, 2012). The ramifications of giving someone else the burnt chop are widespread, and it is this matter that goes to the crux of feminism. If patriarchal households did not exist, and all members of the households were equal, then the chop (as it were) would be shared amongst the members of the home; and there would be no need for feminism. As it turns out, however, it is not as simple as the woman deciding she will not have the metaphorical chop. The other people in her household may not wish to undertake more work or share the chop when they previously have had a better deal and greater decision-making power in the division of domestic labour. Furthermore, while the woman may understand the burnt chop is hers, it may not occur to her that she could have something more than the chop as patriarchal oppression has conditioned her to believe others should have a greater right to power, decisions and in this case food (Hartmann, 1987). She then perpetuates these practices through her own behaviour and expectations. Mainardi’s treatise on the Politics of Housework points this out (Mainardi, 2000) as I have already noted.

The ‘supermoming’, ‘intensive parenting’ or ‘momism’ that was discussed in the previous two sections adds further confirmation of this. As previously mentioned, this ‘competitive sport’ of being a ‘good wife and mother’ for others in the household means there is little regard for the woman’s need (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). There is still a social expectation that women ‘should’ be totally fulfilled by their family life, and those who are not are made to feel guilty though the media, mothers groups and the like (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Johnston & Swanson, 2006). The ‘good mother’ is the one who always takes the burnt chop because she ‘always' puts the needs of others above her own. The cultural construct of motherhood is virtually impossible to live up to because the 'good mother' is a culturally constructed myth (Nathman, 2014).

Certainly in the case of the participants in my study, there seemed to be acquiescence by the women’s husbands that reducing their wives’ sleep period was acceptable, because in the
practice of their everyday lives, the child/children were being cared for at home by the woman after night shift, and they saved the fees associated with childcare. Maybe, it was just assumed that it would be okay to care for the children after a night shift. Maybe, the women had said it would be okay because they felt guilty for leaving the children or for ‘selfishly’ wanting to work. Both of these attitudes reflect traditional gender roles that in the case of women working shiftwork have not benefited the women in question. In either case, the women in my study slept less, at a time that is typically biologically more difficult to sleep, whilst still undertaking the household work. Conversely, their husbands slept at a time that is biologically easier for humans, without household tasks to attend to during this time. It is unclear whether the women in my study had internalised the social conditioning, or the anonymous ‘they-say’, that led to reducing their own sleep to attend to other duties, or whether they felt driven to do so because of external pressure from their husbands. They may have felt that there was nothing wrong in not sleeping and caring for their children. It is perhaps, the conditioning of the burnt chop scenario that has led these women to this situation without forethought about their rights as a worker. Part of overcoming patriarchal oppression (part of the burnt chop scenario) is recognising the oppression (Hartmann, 1987), or the sort of ‘consciousness raising’ that characterised second wave feminism in the last century. It is clear that among these twenty-first century women, none raised the issue of gender politics in the fact that their husbands did not insist on childcare being used in order for the woman to sleep properly.

As discussed above, it is difficult to understand how the decision came about for the women to care for their children after night shift occurred. Did it occur because ‘good mothers’ should care for their children and put their own needs (in this case, sleep) last? Did it occur because the women felt guilty for leaving her husband to care for the children whilst she went to work? Perhaps it was that women felt guilty for loving her job, or cared for the children to assuage her guilt. Whether the decision to care for their children was externally driven by their husbands or internally driven by themselves, the women ceded to what ‘they-say’ about what ‘good mothers’ are, and do. This intersected with what might be seen as the primordial guilt these women already felt, and they went without sleep to care for their children. It is the intersection of the guilt and the inauthentic Dasein (ceding to the ‘they-say’) that is of great interest. I argue, that the primordial guilt (arising out of these women when leaving their children) forms the weave and inauthenticity of Dasein (arising in the falling below the perceived standard of the ‘good mother’) is the weft in the tapestry of these women’s lives, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. And as discussed earlier, this metaphor is similar to the
pushmi-pullyu description used by Hochschild in the preface of the book *The Second Shift* (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). For the women in my study, the tapestry is held together by intersecting threads that create the fabric of these women’s Being: being a ‘good mother’ and being guilty.

Researchers such as Hartmann (1987) and Young (2001) argue that women have for many generations been ‘primarily responsible’ for the labour that occurs at home called housework; whilst their husbands went to work to earn money. This gender-based division of labour was framed by a capitalist and a patriarchal society, where the value of male work was measured in monetary terms and female work was unvalued in the same terms (Hartmann, 1987). This unvalued labour was therefore not counted when women commenced working outside the home in greater numbers. Assuming that humans each have 24 hours to achieve what they need to in their day, women who work outside the home need to find the time to achieve their home-related duties. They do so at the cost of other time such as leisure or in the case of the women in my study, sleeping. As Hochschild & Machung (2012) reported, the second shift primarily belongs to women and time needs to be found to undertake these duties. So whether it be child care or housework, there is a traditional perception that this sort of work belongs to women and is unnecessary for men to engage in.

Awareness and recognition of the entrenched gender role was not evident in some of the women’s lives. The narrative from Katrina, for example, displays no arguable perception of this, as she was so entrenched in her primary support role of wife and mother and her secondary role as a worker. Katrina did not want to go back to work, but her husband wanted her to return. When Katrina returned to work, both between and after the birth of her children, she worked night shifts for a long period. Katrina ceded to her husband’s wishes, even though she did not wish to work outside the home, and still bore the majority of the work around the home, and that associated with caring for the children. Katrina commented that she felt it was “a shame” that younger women did not care for their families and expected their husbands to cook after a day at work. At no point did she appear to recognise that when she worked night shifts she might have a right to sleep, and to manage her own needs over those of caring for her children and undertaking her homemaker role.

Others such as Rebecca articulated both their emotional and rational understandings of the traditional gender roles, while still being embedded in them;
“Yeah well I’ll come out and I try to have everything sort of done by the time Mick gets home from work because I know, I like having it done and in my head I think it’s good for him to walk through the door to a relatively clean house... Yes that whole 50’s housewife thing that really I don’t live up to but it’s, I like to think I try... And meets you with a beer and the paper”
(Rebecca)

While Rebecca was aware of the role she was undertaking and self-questioned the need for why she felt this, others such as Katrina, Fran and Karen did not question as much.

“It was (feelings of guilt), which I know I shouldn’t have had but I just wanted to be a complete home mum, that was my whole aim in life was to have children and once they came along I wanted to but – I think you feel in this society if you’re not contributing, and I think your husband does like you to contribute financially it’s just...(sigh)... when I went back to work I felt[that]he felt better – he felt better. And I just felt that sort of pressure of being at home (and of not contributing financially) It was unspoken (the pressure). And once I worked it was like, yeah he was a bit more satisfied that I was contributing too. That’s how I felt.” (Katrina)

While women such as Rebecca recognised the role that patriarchal oppression had in her life, the capacity for her to change it seemed limited. Resistance to change (or failure to share in the housework) is seen as a measure of patriarchal oppression (Hartmann, 1987; Mainardi, 2000). As discussed above, men may use a variety of responses to avoid sharing the work. In my study, the women in relationships experienced this to differing degrees; clearly, Rachel had greater help at home, as her husband shared a fair bit of the load, whereas Katrina recounted that she undertook the overwhelming majority of the housework and childcare regardless of her work hours. In her situation, Katrina displayed no perception of awareness of the proportional amount of work she was doing. Katrina felt her husband was “pretty good” as he would serve the dinner from the slow cooker if she was not there, and clean up the kitchen.

Iris Marion Young’s critique of the Heideggerian philosophy was helpful here, in understanding why the gender role entrenchment is so difficult to change. Heidegger’s ontology of building and dwelling may help understand gender role entrenchment. Young (2001) claims that Heidegger’s ontology of building and dwelling is biased towards men, in that building is seen as privileged and male based, whereas women ‘dwell’ in the home (that man has built), undertaking housework duties awaiting their man (Young, 2001). Even though Heidegger insisted that Dasein was gender neutral, other philosophies that Heidegger formulated such as this one on building and dwelling were indeed based on gender. Home for man is ‘nostalgic’ (Young, 2001) where a man is head of the household in the patriarchal model
(Hartmann, 1987). The woman reflects the man’s identity, in that they maintain his dwelling and all that he puts in it; his things and his children (Young, 2001). The price of this subjectivity of supporting the man, as Young so eloquently puts it, “is dereliction, having no self of her own” (Young, 2001, p. 253). This idea of dereliction of self-captures my argument about both eating the burnt chop and ceding to the anonymous ‘they-say' of what a ‘good mother' is. The reason that women do this is multifactorial; the external societal pressure is driven by the patriarchal class system, the church, the media, and the attitudes and behaviours of their husbands and other people they know (anonymous ‘they-say’). And they also experience their own internal pressure driven by their primordial guilt (which is discussed in the next section).

The women in my study put their needs aside to ensure that their husbands, children, and households were cared for to the dereliction of themselves (Young, 2001). Several of them were not aware that their needs were being sacrificed for others needs as a state of being. Some, however, did not experience the same issues around gender roles, as they did not have partners, and managed the organisation of their home lives alone.

Alex, for instance, was the sole carer for her child from very early on and needed to return to work to have the financial means to care for him. Alex was self-reliant and where she needed to use external help with her child, framed this in a grateful manner, even though she had had very little sleep:

“my mother, on occasions we’ve lived together, still does not (understand the) concept of the night shift in that I would work a night shift and she would wake me at 9:00 as she left to work. And these were in the early days when he was a baby, in that I would get home at 7:30, and get myself to sleep. She would put him down (to sleep). But she’d open the door and I’d wake up. (She had) absolutely no concept that you might need more. And I would be so grateful – but I would be grateful for the fact (she was there), and I’ve always been so grateful.’ (Alex)

Alex felt grateful because the family support she had, meant that she had not needed to use a significant amount of paid childcare when she suddenly found herself on her own as a new parent. Her mother cared for her child whilst Alex worked night shifts, and Alex had cared for him during the day when he was a baby. Alex’s gratitude stems from the indebtedness that she owes her mother. Even though Alex is also in dereliction of self in this instance, having had less than two hours sleep, she is not angry or resentful, or disappointed at being woken by her mother (even though the baby is in bed), she is grateful. Perhaps, Alex recognises her mother’s selflessness of looking after the baby whilst Alex slept for two hours.
This section has provided further interpretations and understanding of the theme ‘Managing Self Needs’, discussed in Chapter Six. The principal need that women were unable to meet was their need for sleep, although some also indicated that they neglected socialising as well. Shiftwork, for most of the women in my study, exacerbated the need to put their self-needs last, but shiftwork itself was not the principal reason that they did so. As discussed above, the perpetuation of the ‘good wife and mother’ myth means that women are judged by this standard and their capacity to live up to the expectations of the media, men, and of other women as well. The ‘good mother’ always puts her needs last, whether these are for food, water, or in this case sleep (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, p. 5). There are still powerful forces in society that imbue girls with only one way to be women, that is, to be a mother (Rich, 1995, page xxxii). The women in my study have experienced the pull of living up to the standard of the perfect mother versus the guilt when they do not meet the standard. This pull in two directions, I argue, means that the tapestry of their lives is always stretched.

Summary

This theme of ‘Being Juggler’ has three subthemes: Managing Children, Managing House and Managing Self Needs, which I discussed in Chapter Six. In this chapter, I have further illuminated their meanings and have provided social context for my interpretive conclusions. While I have separated them out, here, for a more detailed examination and analysis, these themes are united by similar threads. The first two are part of the unpaid work that women do, outside of their paid jobs, and both caused feelings of anxiety and guilt in the women I spoke with. The third subtheme is the method by which the women in this study assuaged their guilt and anxiety; by decreasing their own need for sleep, and to a lesser extent socialisation. All these threads, however, are driven by the inculcated need to live up to the ‘good wife and mother’ myth, propelled by traditional gender roles and beliefs. Falling short of this standard produces feelings of guilt, which I go on to address next. In some ways what these women experienced can be seen as universal and shared by all women: many day-working women experience the same sorts of feelings of guilt in leaving their children to go to work and having to start the second shift when they get home to look after home and hearth. Working outside the home for money unifies women, but, as my analysis demonstrates, working shiftwork divides them.

Day workers can usually sleep uninterrupted at night, if their children are not ill and old enough to be sleeping through the night. Night shiftworkers sleep during the day, when children are
more likely to be awake. Workers who work night shifts experience the particular effects of being able to make the decision to save childcare related expenses by caring for their children when they would otherwise be sleeping. The luxury of outsourcing this care and housework was not available to most of the women in my study, so they really were undertaking a full second shift after they finished their shifts, and they did so by reducing their own sleep period and other needs.

The literature around unpaid domestic work, motherhood and gender roles has informed and shaped the interpretation of the narratives of the women whose experiences I have documented here. Whether it be the ownership of the home domain (Hochschild & Machung, 2012); or the resistance to change (Hartmann, 1987; Mainardi, 2000) women are neglecting their sleep and other relationships to undertake the housework and childcare. The next section focuses on guilt and how the women experienced it in my study. Guilt was the major theme of my study, and it drove the women to sleep less so they could care for their children.

**Guilt**

This section, arguably, the major theme of the study further interprets and provides contextual understandings of the women’s experiences of feeling guilty. Their guilt was multi-faceted and experienced to a greater or lesser extent by all participants except Alex. To appreciate the somatic experience of guilt is difficult, as the nature and intensity of the emotion is always personal, but to help interpret the experience of the women in this study, I begin this section with some academic definitions of guilt. Then, discussion moves on to extracts from selected classical literature to illuminate the experiences of guilt that the women reported in my study. Use of literature adds a greater understanding of guilt, in terms of the psychological and visceral impact, whereas the academic definitions used in psychological literature do not convey the depth of feelings that people can experience. Further into this discussion I turn back to the Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy that has provided the framework for the study, both to provide additional understanding of guilt from a philosophical perspective, and in relation to its role for Dasein. Then guilt and care are analysed, again from a Heideggerian perspective. Lastly, I examine connections between guilt and women’s in order to provide cultural context to the experience of the women in my study and conclude my argument that women have continued in their housewife and mother role in an era where most Australian women work outside the home for pay. For all women, there is an element of
working two jobs, however, for night shift workers, this ‘second shift’ is done during the time that they would otherwise be sleeping, and is done to the dereliction of themselves.

**Meaning and Definition of Guilt**

Guilt is defined as “a 'private' experience involving pangs of one's own conscience” (Tangney, 1996, p. 742) and where “…the thing done or undone is the focus” (Tangney, 1996). For the participants in this study, feelings of guilt pervaded much of their lives. As well as this definition from Tangney, guilt has also been defined as “moral transgressions (real or imagined) in which people believe that their action (or inaction) contributed to negative outcomes” (Tilghman-Osborne, Cole, & Felton, 2010 p. 544). Guilt is usually experienced privately by people, and is characterised by “a sense of tension, remorse and regret” (Tangney, 1996, p. 742), over something that the person has done, or not done that has had negative consequences.

The academic definitions above provide ample description of the classification of guilt from a psychological perspective. However, they do not adequately reflect the anguished, or visceral feelings of guilt. For this, I have turned to literature to enrich the definition to better understand the experience of my participants. Many examples of literature focus on guilt as a theme. Shakespeare in *Macbeth* described guilt as “torture of the mind” and “life's fitful fever” (Act 3, Scene 2 ) (Shakespeare, 2011). In this scene:

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“Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave.
After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well.
Treason has done his worst; nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further.” (Act 3, Scene 2 20 – 29)
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Macbeth speaks of his own mental torture (and hence lack of sleep) for the crime that he committed. While this quote clearly fits with the classification of guilt defined above, the raw visceral nature of Macbeth’s speech assists greater understanding of how guilt is experienced by the person feeling it, and in this case, as something to be unfavourably compared with the peaceful sleep of death. These lines offer insight into the overwhelming feelings of guilt that Macbeth experienced after killing King Duncan. These feelings worked their way through
Macbeth’s entire existence, taking over his waking thoughts and his sleeping nightmares. While this sense of guilt may be extreme, in terms of its cause (his wife has goaded him into killing the King), the clear anguish and raw visceral terror that Macbeth felt illustrates the feelings of guilt in a way that the academic definition does not allow us to access.

Lady Macbeth urges Macbeth with “You must leave this” (and go back to the banquet) (Line 38), essentially meaning “What’s done is done”. Lady Macbeth soon becomes overwhelmed by guilt herself: and quickly finds that it is difficult to ‘leave’. She expresses her inability to rid herself of the feeling – “Out, damn’d spot! out, I say!—” (Act 5, Scene 1 Line 25) highlighting the experience of complicit guilt that Lady Macbeth feels. Tormented by guilt her mind becomes "infected" (Act 5, Scene 1, 50), and Lady Macbeth goes mad. The image of a woman who reputedly goes mad because of guilt provides greater understanding of the deep bodily manifestations of guilt, and how it works upon people. Whether Lady Macbeth did actually go mad because of her guilt, or whether it is possible for this to happen, is not important. What is though, is the concept that the guilt could work its way within to overwhelm and rule her life, in the physical as well as mental realm.

Nathaniel Hawthorne has also illuminated the psychological and physical feelings of guilt in his short story Roger Malvin’s Burial first published in 1832. This story follows the lives of two men, Roger and Reuben, on their way home from war (Lovell’s Fight) in 1725. The older man, Roger encourages Reuben to leave him in the wilderness, so that Reuben will have a greater chance of survival, and will then be able to look after his daughter, Dorcas, by marrying her. Reuben is easily convinced and promises to return to bury Roger. When Reuben finds Dorcas and eventually marries her he cannot bring himself to tell her about Roger. Reuben inherits Roger’s farm and becomes a wealthy man, however, he is tortured by the guilt of leaving Roger, of not fulfilling his last wish of telling Dorcas and of not returning to bury his comrade.

“There was now in the breast of Reuben Bourne an incommunicable thought; something which he was to conceal most heedfully from her whom he most loved and trusted. He regretted, deeply and bitterly, the moral cowardice that had restrained his words, when he was about to disclose the truth to Dorcas; but pride, the fear of losing her affection, the dread of universal scorn, forbade him to rectify this falsehood. He felt, that, for leaving Roger Malvin, he deserved no censure. His presence, the gratuitous sacrifice of his own life, would have added only another and a needless agony to the last moments of the dying man. But concealment had imparted to a justifiable act, much of the secret effect of guilt; and Reuben, while
reason told him that he had done right, experienced, in no small degree, the mental horrors, which punish the perpetrator of undiscovered crime. By a certain association of ideas, he at times almost imagined himself a murderer. For years, also, a thought would occasionally recur, ... that his father-in-law was yet sitting at the foot of the rock, on the withered forest-leaves, alive, and awaiting his pledged assistance. ... in the calmest and clearest moods of his mind, he was conscious that he had a deep vow unredeemed, and that an unburied corpse was calling to him, out of the wilderness. ... His one secret thought became like a chain binding down his spirit and like a serpent gnawing into his heart.” (Hawthorne, 2011, pp. 140 -141)

This quote, while long, clearly illustrates the kind of overwhelming torture that Reuben carried with him for 18 years. Reuben had deceived himself that leaving Roger was a noble act as he was carrying out Roger’s last wishes of marrying his daughter, although he did not tell Dorcas that her father lay in the wilderness unburied and that he, Reuben had left him in a cowardly way to die alone. The guilt that Hawthorne describes here is similar to that depicted in *Macbeth*, in that it wove its way into the very psyche of the character, so that Reuben’s personality changes as the guilt takes further hold. The other important aspect of this quote is that it demonstrates the visceral nature of guilt, in that, for Reuben the guilt works within him like a suppurating wound. Even after 18 years the guilt for Reuben had not diminished, possibly even, its hold over him had increased. This quote almost illustrates guilt as sentient, inherently evil working like a parasite within its host.

A more recent illustration of guilt in literature, is demonstrated in the novel *Atonement*, written by Ian McEwan (2001). Set in pre-World War 2 England, it portrays a story about a young girl, Briony, who mistakes a love scene between her sister, Cecilia and Robbie for rape. Later, when Briony sees a true rape happening to her cousin, Lola, Briony accuses Robbie, telling the police that she saw his face. Lola is unable or unwilling to name her assailant so Robbie is unceremoniously carted off to gaol and only released to join the infantry years later. Time passes and Briony realises that Robbie is not to blame, and goes to Cecilia’s flat to tell her that she is going to seek Robbie’s exoneration. Briony had viewed reopening the case as her way of seeking atonement, particularly as it becomes clear that neither Robbie, nor Cecilia will ever forgive her. The following quote is Briony, who having carried the guilt for years still holds hope of reconciliation:

“It was a pathetic source of comfort that he could not know what she saw. Strange, for all her guilt, she should feel the need to withstand him. It was that, or be annihilated.” (McEwan, 2005, p. 343).
The novel, however, is constructed as a story within a story. There is a twist in this utopian ending for the protagonist. Briony, the narrator of the story, adds a postscript supposedly written sixty years after the events of late summer, 1935. It is then revealed that the reconciliation of Cecilia and Robbie did not occur, nor did Briony ever receive forgiveness for her part in indicting Robbie for the rape of Lola. Briony writes in the postscripts, that many drafts had been written over the fifty nine years since the fateful day and “It is only in this last version that my lovers end well, standing side by side on a South London pavement as I walk away. All the preceding drafts were pitiless” (page 370). Briony reveals that in ‘reality’, Robbie died of septicaemia during the evacuation from Dunkirk in June 1940 and Cecilia was killed in a bomb blast in September 1940. Writing her novel for Briony was the way she assuaged her guilt by reworking the novel until the ‘ending’ was as she needed to expunge the feelings that went with having brought about the downfall of Robbie. Her description of reworking the drafts is in some ways similar to the constant rubbing of Lady Macbeth’s hand saying “Out dam’d spot”. In the case of Atonement though, the narrator, Briony, has dementia when the admission of the pitiless ending is made. So while Briony was not ‘mad, it is possible to argue that some of her past inhibitions have begun to lessen. Her admission in some ways precludes her from the readers’ forgiveness, where the account presented in the novel did not. The last draft had offered the reader closure, too, that it was alright in the end. Cecilia and Robbie found each other and were as happy as a couple in war time could be, and Briony had attempted to put right the wrong she had done (McEwan, 2005). But just as in Macbeth, McEwan shows that there is really no atonement or assuaging the guilt “for the thing done or undone” (Tangney, 1996, p. 742).

While the women I spoke with had not killed anyone, nor had they indicted another, or failed to fulfil a dying wish, the guilt they felt towards their inability to fulfil their many roles was palpable in some of the interviews. Only one woman (Alex) did not experience much guilt. She was a single mother and she did what she had to do to keep herself and her son in a good life. Mainly, however, the women consistently presented a narrative that showed how guilt was intertwined in many things they did.

The use of the literature above was to portray the visceral sense of guilt that the women spoke about during the interviews, and that I experienced myself, as they were speaking. Academic definitions of guilt provide a way in which guilt might be characterised, but do not do justice to the experience of guilt for people and how they endure the physical and emotional feelings

Chapter Seven – Creating Meaning from the Findings – What it means to work shiftwork for women who care for children
of guilt. While the literary examples offered above may be considered extreme, guilt is clearly an intensely personal experience, and where one person may feel guilty about a particular interaction, or omission, others may not. Like all feelings that humans experience, guilt is felt differently by different people. In this study the women spoke about their guilt both for things they could not do, but also for things that they had done. Some spoke about the guilt that they felt for using childcare, for not being available for their children when the children needed them, for being tired and moody toward their children or partner. And they also spoke about the guilt they felt towards their colleagues if they needed to call in sick to care for their children.

I have provided these literary representations of guilt to capture the intensity, effects and impact of this emotion, and now move, in the next section to discuss the philosophical basis of guilt from a Heideggerian Phenomenological perspective.

**Philosophical Considerations of Guilt**

**Guilt as a Mode of Being and Authenticity**

Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, set out to establish three modes of being. The first mode of being is that of Dasein, which is the condition or mode of being human. By this Heidegger means, that humans, whether they know it consciously or not, choose not just “to be or not to be” but how to be (Inwood, 1997). Heidegger considered that Dasein (or human beings) are able to choose particular roles in their lives such as “being a mother”, “being a wife” or “being a nurse” after they are ‘thrown’ into the world by the occasion (time and place) of their birth. Some roles are ones that people either ‘fall’ into (such as ‘being a daughter’), or ones that they choose, like the particular profession they wish to pursue. But even in roles that Beings fall into like “being a daughter”, (after all, if I am born female then regardless of whether I choose to be a daughter or not, I am one), what Heidegger was meaning in this context is that I can choose what sort of daughter I am going to be. It is, however, important to note that some circumstances place restrictions on the mode of being for all Dasein. For example, regardless of what height I am I cannot choose to be half a metre taller than I currently am, that choice was made by the unique recipe of genetics that I am made up of, and regardless of how much I try and choose a different height: “Existentiality is essentially determined by facticity” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 192) and I do not grow any further.

Regardless of free will and determining my own way of being, I am still bounded by the facts, and those are that I have no chance of being over two metres tall. Similarly, one cannot choose their race, or gender (although later one may take steps both medically and surgically to alter...
this). Also I cannot choose to be the Queen, if that so suits me. Nor can people choose the place they are born or the parents to whom they are born. So we can choose some of the ways of being, and some are imposed upon us. But all require a response from us, and this is where being in the world has a couple of different states. Heidegger’s concept that Dasein chooses a particular role is partially about how we see ourselves in the world, how we react to others around us, and the situations over which we have no control. Of course, these roles are all mediated by the physical, psychological, socioeconomic and sociocultural constraints we have in our physical presence (“Facticity”). Heidegger’s suggestion is that our role is partially based on some constraints, but Dasein is called to act in a way that is true to one’s self, or authentic.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Dasein exists either, in an authentic or inauthentic state (Inwood, 1997). ‘Authenticity’ is the concept of being true to one’s self, always doing what it believes is the best thing for itself, and acting in full awareness of the state one is in. The other state, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis ‘inauthenticity’, is part of being human, and part of being ‘already always in the world’ As Heidegger says: “… insofar as there is at all a being that we call Dasein or living, it is in a world” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 285) and this Dasein is “discovering: it already sees and already always has sighted other beings that itself is not” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 284-5, original emphasis). As humans we do not exist without these ‘other beings’ - the anonymous ‘they’ among whom we are thrown. Inauthenticity, then, is part of being in the world, conforming to social norms and practices (Inwood, 1997). In my presentation of data in Chapter Six, I have already demonstrated this inauthenticity in the mode of Being of my participants, where the import of the anonymous ‘they’ restricts them from choosing to do what they know might be the best thing for themselves. While usually the word ‘inauthentic’ is used to mean ‘non genuine’ Heidegger does not use it in this way. It is a state where our actions are based on the ‘norm’ or normative action for the situation. It is also the state that moderates our responses to particular events, or cedes to the anonymous ‘they’.

Using the height example from earlier, if I found myself distressed by being only 1.65m instead of my chosen 1.80 metres, it would not be a socially acceptable response to chop the legs off all those I come across who are greater than 1.65 metres, so that no one is taller than me. Nor, do I cut all the flowers in my neighbours’ gardens even though they are more beautiful than my own flowers because in this world ‘that’s not what one does’. I refuse to consider this even as a possibility, I do not even think of it. I either cut my own less-beautiful flowers, or buy some if the whim takes me. When I do not consider the possibility of cutting the flowers I am
an inauthentic Dasein. Further, I can be ‘inauthentically authentic’ if I consider the possibility of cutting the flowers, but make up my own mind to conform to the norm of buying flowers rather than stealing them. Similarly, the participants in my study, appear to have made up their own minds to forgo sleep and rest, in order to conform to the social norm of being a ‘good wife and mother’ rather than demanding support from their partners. All through the process of co-constructing the data presentation in Chapter Six, this puzzled and concerned me.

Heidegger believed that most humans live much of their lives in this inauthentic state, and, there is an argument to suggest that in terms of preventing anarchy, responding in a normative fashion may be of great value to society. Say, for example that everyone refused to obey traffic lights and signs, quite quickly there would be many accidents and people killed. Behaving in an ‘acceptable’ fashion may be considered inauthentic, however, it is of value for a society to have its members behave in such a manner, both for personal gains (such as avoiding loss of life after driving through a red light at a traffic light) and for overall societal gains (less overall need for welfare or compensation after loss of life by obeying certain ‘rules’ in society). While the women I interviewed were clearly in no apparent danger, running their homes whilst behaving in what they deemed to be socially-accepted ways both helped ‘keep the show on the road’ in their homes and fed their guilt. Ceding to the ‘norm’ for these women indicated that they were supporting and reinforcing the social structures that underpin societal gender roles for men and women. ‘Being’ guilty may be considered inauthentic as it surrenders to the social conventions of being a good wife and mother and feeling a need to be ‘doing it all’, in the fallenness of everydayness.

The mode of ‘being guilty’ described by the women in this study was their lived experience of caring for children, home, and partner whilst working shiftwork. They spoke both about ‘things done or undone’ or ‘getting it all done’. These feelings of needing to do things such as keep their home clean, work shiftwork and care for their children using minimal childcare, led to feelings of guilt when all of this was not achieved or completed. Their feelings of guilt were a burden to some of them—women who were still reliving the guilt of when their children were small, years later, when they spoke with me.

As discussed in greater detail, in the next section on Guilt and Care; Heidegger believed that our guilt arises from the primordial Dasein, and the result of this guilt is the feeling or sense of ‘indebtedness’. Indebtedness, Heidegger suggested is the origin of why Dasein cares for others. Hence, the mode of being for the women in my study, was feeling guilty, because of the
indebtedness they felt for the ‘unmotherly’ things they had done, or the things they had left undone in their roles of being mothers. This has happened because Dasein is always already in the social world, listening to the anonymous ‘they-say’, which prescribes ‘rules’ for what constitutes a ‘good mother’. The women in my study, felt as though they have fallen short of what they believe is a ‘good mother’. I have already discussed how the women were ceding to the social norm of ‘good mother’ and were unable to fulfil the traditional roles that society set out for them. An example of this, is when Rebecca describes yelling at her kids when she is tired from a night shift, and her husband had gone out to do some farm work. Rebecca felt a duty to care for her children, and, rather than insist that her husband stay home and care for them whilst she slept, and so she stayed up after night shift so her husband could work. Then, when she lost her temper as a result of fatigue, she felt incredibly guilty because she recognised that her yelling was primarily not about the children because of her own failure to be the ‘good mother’ even though she had chosen to do the thing a ‘good mother’ should do. This failure of course, is seen as originating in herself, and her shiftwork, rather than in the lack of support offered to her by her partner. For Rebecca in this example there is an opposing pull between care and guilt. Rebecca is indebted to her children to care for them and then guilty when she has not been, in her mind, a ‘good mother’. We have seen Rebecca’s words:

“...by just before lunch I was snapping and cranky and that, I just put movies on, said “That’s it, we’re laying on the lounge.” Yeah and I was yelling at them and it wasn’t their fault, they’re only kids…. I was cracking over little things because I was just- frazzled” (Rebecca)

In feeling guilty (or being in a state of guilt) most of these women are judging themselves against a social convention of a perfect wife and mother, to which has been added ‘shiftworker’. They are worrying about their ability to ‘get everything done’. For some women, feeling guilty was a response to leaving their children, as there are some sectors of the social ‘they’ that believe women should be at home with their children and childcare should not be used. While I have tried to characterise the complexity of this feeling in the particular case of Rebecca, here, it was striking that regardless of where their guilt originated, most of the women I spoke with felt it.

Later in this section, I will provide context to academic literature on women’s work to further illuminate the guilt that my participants felt. In Heideggerian philosophy Dasein is gender neutral, which is the basis of part of the guilt that these women felt. Without the literature on gender roles and women’s work that is referred to in this chapter there would be a lack of social
critique in this study as Heideggerian philosophy does not allow me analyse the power difference between the women I spoke with and their partners, which was important in determining who was entitled to sleep. By all accounts, the night shifts that the women worked, were best suited to the family as a whole: the children slept and the partner/father slept. The shiftworking mother was required to subjugate her own needs to do what was best for others in her family – to make this work - as I have already argued.

In this discussion of Guilt as a mode of being I have attempted to link the major analytic theme emerging from the data; Being Guilty, with part of Heidegger’s philosophy of Mode of Being and Authenticity. The next section of the chapter will clarify the part of the theme Being Guilty with Heidegger’s discussions on care.

**Guilt and Care**

Heidegger approached guilt by first writing about conscience, or the idea of Dasein having two consciences. One is described as the public conscience and the other the authentic Conscience of Dasein (Inwood, 1997). Traditionally regarded as the voice of moral reason from within all humans, Conscience tells the person what to do or not do as the authentic being, not as the ‘they-self’ or inauthentic social subject (Inwood, 1997). Dasein must decide a course of action deciding between a number of possibilities, some of which may be worthwhile but which may not be chosen. All actions and inactions of Dasein provoke unforeseeable consequences. Dasein does not always listen to its Conscience nor does it do what it is told all the time either (Inwood, 1997). The public conscience is the routine customary practice of ‘how we’ve always done it before’. In colloquial terms it is ‘the easy way’, allowing the inauthentic Dasein to allow the ‘they’ to shoulder the responsibility for the outcome; even if there is a negative consequence Dasein comforts itself with the idea of ‘following the rules’ (Inwood, 1997). In complex situations of indebtedness such as I have described above, the residual feelings for Dasein when authenticity creeps in, is one of guilt. And for Rebecca and other women in my study, just like the characters in the literary examples provided above, guilt weaves its way into the psyche of Dasein.

To understand this fully it is important to note that Heidegger described ‘care’ as having a dichotomous symmetry. The first category of care is the ‘caring for’, ‘worrying about’ type of care and the second category is the ‘taking care of things’ (Heidegger, 2008). Guilt and care have an inextricable link: guilt is ‘to feel responsible for’ (things done or undone) and the second category of care is ‘to take care of things’. As described above, this concept became
clear in my study during the analysis as I considered the themes that were emerging from the data. For the women I spoke with, the accumulation of roles they played in their lives demonstrated the link between guilt and care. For some this became overwhelming in terms of how they felt about each of their roles further fuelling the guilt. So why does Dasein have these lingering feelings of guilt? Heidegger postulates that indebtedness results from *primordial* guilt (Heidegger, 2008). This indebtedness reflects that we did not bring ourselves into this world, so we, ‘owe’ or are ‘responsible for’ becoming as authentic a Being as possible (Heidegger, 2008). As I have argued above, indebtedness produces a relationship between guilt and care. This is important, and I argue, central to this study, because guilt was effectively driving the women I spoke with through their lives, and this was occurring because of the outcome of the care they felt for their children, husband, home and others. The women in this study encountered the pushmi-pullyu experience of care versus guilt. As discussed above, the two heads of the pushmi-pullyu could be pulled in a range of directions. The women described caring for the people and things in their lives in a similar dichotomous way – they made decisions and did things to care for their families and to take care of them. It was the burden of ‘getting everything done’ and ‘being all to everyone’ that led to their feelings of guilt, hence the feelings of being pulled in all directions. The women felt guilty for the things they could not do and for all the things they did (and wished they could undo) and felt responsible for their partners, children, family and patients.

**Guilt and Women’s Work**

Most of the comments associated with guilt made by the participants stem from things done or not done, that the women felt were their responsibility. This comes from both the primordial guilt, as well as the practical effects of having children to care for, and care about in what still appears to be a patriarchal social world. Some of the women spoke about feeling guilty and put their work responsibilities, if they needed to stay home to care for sick children, and therefore had to cancel a shift. However their guilt was mostly associated with their children, family and home-based work rather than their paid work. The women overwhelmingly felt that the home-based work of raising children, managing the home and its work, and managing the family was their responsibility, regardless of the hours that they worked, as I have argued in *Home and Hearth*. Much of the guilt that they spoke about seemed to originate from trying to manage multiple roles and feeling like ‘they hadn’t done enough’ in any of these roles. Guilt was spoken about by the participants in connection with sleeping through the day, and they feel the need to get up and do the housework and care for the children, as well as leaving them at night to go to
work. From a Heideggerian perspective, there is an interweaving of the primordial guilt and the fallenness of Dasein, who listen to the anonymous ‘they-say’ about what ‘good mothers’ should be and do.

The published research literature on women’s work and guilt tells a similar story; one of too many things to do and not enough time to undertake them in. ‘Trying to manage it all’ for women both at work and at home is a common theme in studies that focus on work/life balance (Glavin et al., 2011; Haslam et al., 2015). The problem of ‘trying to manage it all’ comes from adding the role of mothering to outside work, and in this case shiftwork, on top of this (Guendouzi, 2006). Shiftwork already adds additional demands on the worker, physically, psychologically and socially, without further adding motherhood to this. Motherhood has been traditionally constructed with the ‘good mother’ at home caring for the family while her husband is at work earning the money (Guendouzi, 2006). Some of the narratives about feeling guilty that the women in this study spoke about were related to trying to combine these two roles.

Some of the women I spoke with did not question their roles and how these roles led to them feeling guilty and some did; none more so that Rebecca. Despite Rebecca’s questioning, and somewhat railing against the role of housewife, she still felt the need to buy into the traditionally socially constructed myth to be a ‘good wife and mother’, and this led to Rebecca feeling guilty. This role of the mother, embedded in family life at home, where home is her first priority (and indeed above anything she might wish for herself), is the central part of the discourse that this traditional role entails. When outside paid work is added on top of the mothering role, the dissonance between what the woman/wife/mother can do in the time available, and what she feels that ‘should’ be done as part of her traditional role becomes more evident. The capacity, to give ‘extra’ at work, like her husband may be able to do, is diminished for mothers, unless they have good support systems at home or children who do not need supervision (such as adult children). Similarly, volunteering at the children’s school or day care is less likely to occur, or cooking the family’s meals from ‘scratch’. Rebecca, in a number of her quotes, related an account of how she felt about her role in the home despite having worked a night shift the night before, and needing to work that night. Like the other partnered participants in this study, Rebecca felt that she ‘should’ direct and undertake the majority of work at home, almost notwithstanding the hours that she worked outside the home. Similarly,
I met Fran on the day after her last night for the week when she cared for her child and cleaned the house, so she did not fall asleep.

Feeling guilty for most of the women originated from two main sources as noted above. Most feelings of guilt were about leaving their children, and ‘dropping the ball’ in the home work that was required of them as the mother in their families. For most, the conflict of roles and then what was done and undone, was the issue that created the most guilt. Some others also spoke about feeling guilty about letting the team down at work if they need to call in sick. As Fran said:

“Oh here’s Fran working one shift (this week), and she’s called in sick, because her children are sick, but - so I tend to push myself to go. The only time I’ve ever really not gone, when the kids have been sick, is if all 3 are sick. And I just think that’s too much for Ben (their father), that is crazy.”

(Fran)

In this account, Fran relates a story about her children being sick when she was working part-time night shifts. Fran felt that if she did not go, there would be people speaking about her, in terms of her commitment to the job, particularly as she was only working part-time. Fran did not want to put pressure on other staff members, who would need to fill her vacancy. Other participants, such as Alison, spoke of the social obligation of caring for their children when they were sick, even if there is another parent home with the sick child.

The most overwhelming reason, that these women cared for their children when they were very tired; was guilt. Most of the participants felt as though they were spending enough time away from their children as a result of working, and for some participants, their children were really affected by their mothers going to work overnight. This quote below from Fran particularly illustrates this:

“..Livia [Fran’s second child] suffers terribly with separation from me. I don’t know where that has stemmed from, maybe because I have been home all the time. So I don’t know if that’s it. She’s still – well, see its funny, because on the night [shifts], normally they’re in bed before- 9:30 – no, but not on the nights I work - it’s funny, they sort of know. Because I must say “I’m working tonight”. Or I’m rushing to cook, eat up quick. So I probably put that in their head, and that night they tend to all still be up at 9 o‘clock, or – they’re in bed, but they’re awake. And she, out of all of them, tends to – I’ll walk you to the door, like she’s got to see me go. And give me that 600th kiss, before I go. The other two they’re not so worried and in the morning probably clingy.”(Fran)
While Fran understands her child is anxious when her mother goes, and that it is Fran’s husband and the children’s father who she is leaving them with (not a stranger), she still feels guilty that her work impacts upon the children, particularly this one child, in this way. Interestingly, problems with children experiencing anxiety have been found to be associated with shiftwork, particularly maternal shiftwork (Dunifon, Crosby, Kalil, & Houston Su, 2013; Han, 2008). These studies have varied foci, and ages of children, from infants to the end of primary school age and all conclude that children experience the anxiety of separating from their mother when they mother goes to her shift. So, while it is unlikely that Fran has examined the research on shiftwork and children’s behavioural problems, she has recognised that her daughter’s reaction is based on her shiftwork, and the separation anxiety that it brings. Knowing that she has, in part, caused the anxiety in her daughter, has further generated guilt for Fran.

Additionally, Fran is spiralled further into guilt about the impact of her work on the family. This feeling, stems from the idea that we, as women, should be ‘good mothers’ and ‘good mothers’ would not leave their children (abandonment!) to go to work. This feeling based on the societal norm feeds back into the primordial guilt of Dasein. Consequently, Fran feels guilty for going to work at all and leaving her children; guilty for how she reacts to the children when she is tired; and, perhaps worst of all, guilty that she is causing anxiety in her child.

As discussed earlier in My Children, My Responsibility, motherhood is seen as a ‘competitive sport’, where being totally fulfilled by domesticity is the gold standard (Douglas & Michaels, 2004, p. 3 & 5; Johnston & Swanson, 2006). These women may feel like they are not fulfilling their role of wife and mother, if they ‘abandon’ their children and go to work. They should be, as women, content with being at home caring for their children. Interestingly, these ‘good mothers’ of whom ‘they-say’, must also have plenty of financial resources, because the ‘good mothers’ must not need to work. Johnson (2006), describes the ‘good mother’ as being full-time, stay-at-home, white and middle-class. While Johnson (2006) does not clarify what middle-class is financially, it must be enough that women do not need to work for the pecuniary remuneration it brings to the family. This ‘sport’ of motherhood further propels women’s feelings of guilt as they compare themselves to a media-driven myth of the ‘good wife and mother’. While Fran articulated the guilt that she felt in regards to her daughter’s anxiety, others felt guilty as well.
Alison’s husband earns less and works fewer hours than Alison. However, even though their roles are reversed Alison still feels the guilt of not being there for her children, as this is the ideological role for women.

“And I don’t think he would have that same sense of responsibility…. Well he does have it, but that sense of guilt – I reckon its guilt….. I don’t know why that is because I try to talk to myself about it ….. I try to rationalize it. If it was Ivan, fathers traditionally work long hours, they always have. When we were growing up, lots of kids’ fathers worked very long hours, come home after dinner, whatever and there was none of that – I didn’t feel they felt that guilt. Maybe they did but I didn’t ask them….. That was their role. And I think well you know our roles are reversed so should I still have that? I don’t know” (Alison)

This “dialectical dilemma involved in balancing professional and maternal roles” (Guendouzi, 2006, p. 902) was explored in a United Kingdom study that studied conversations in a teacher’s staffroom/office. The study used data from teachers who were mothers. In that study, guilt was expressed as something that working women felt, because they were not fulfilling the societal demands of being a ‘good’ mother (Guendouzi, 2006). This study provides some interesting parallels to my study, in that some of the themes are similar (such as guilt, managing multiple roles), however, the women in Guendouzi’s study were teachers who work through the day (these were school teachers) and the women in my study worked shiftwork, and mostly night shifts. As I have already argued, shiftwork further enabled the women in my study, to put their own individual needs (such as sleep) behind the need they felt to work and care for the children, husband and home to assuage their guilt. As the women further pushed their own sleep needs into the background their mood deteriorated:

“..your level of tiredness has an impact I think on your level of crankiness”

(Alison)

A number of women spoke about feeling guilty as building up within them a cyclical pattern as they felt guilty leaving their children, then when they returned from work they were very tired and ‘snapped’ at them, and then the guilt of the impact of their work further crushed their view of their parental success. This cycle produced feelings of feeling bad for going to work, feeling bad when they responded negatively to the children, particularly in the face of their children’s pleasure at their mother’s arrival home and feeling bad because the house and all its work was not done. Rebecca identified that she knew that she was upset because she was exhausted, and had had no sleep, however, she still yelled at her children in this scenario. We
have already seen above, on reflection, Rebecca was able to identify her tiredness, but she was not able to control her mood, and thinking about it later she felt “bad” about her reaction.

While all working mothers may feel these sorts of feelings at some points in their parenting, the lack of sleep associated with shiftwork tends to have a detrimental effect on mood (Dinges et al., 1997). Dinges et al. (1997) in their study restricted sleep for their subjects to fewer than five hours per night for seven night shifts and then took measures of fatigue, mood, memory, and subjective sleepiness. Results revealed that the subjects reported feeling more stressed, angry, sad, and mentally exhausted (Dinges et al., 1997). Some of the participants in my study were sleeping less than five hours per ‘night’ and unlike the subjects in the Dinges et al. study (1997) were also looking after their children and working shiftwork as well, thus compounding their capacity to control their mood and the effect it had on others around them, primarily their children. This study only restricted their subjects’ sleep for seven night shifts, whereas some of the participants in my study had worked their particular shift pattern for years and would have had considerably longer periods of restricted sleep. The cycle of tiredness impacting on mood, and therefore, on temper, challenged the “good” mother social construction for these women, and produced feelings of guilt. When they lost their temper with their children, they were upset by upsetting their children and also by the impact of their work on their home life.

In my study the women felt guilty for leaving their children, and for requiring assistance with caring for the children, either from their husband, or from other family and friends. In another study, that explored work/life balance for women who work in the legal profession, women reported feeling similar guilt about the impact of their choice to work on their children (Bacik & Drew, 2006). In this study, rather than shiftwork being the main issue for women working outside the home whilst having young children; it was the ‘long hours’ culture that was discussed, as being particularly disadvantageous to women. Long work hours were seen as being a key determinant of one’s commitment to the job, and women who had child care and home responsibilities may not have been able to fulfil commitments of both home and work satisfactorily (Bacik & Drew, 2006). These women felt guilty for a number of things: for the impact on their work of needing to go home and care for children, and conversely, for leaving the children whilst they worked. Some of these women in this study decided that the only thing they could do was to leave their work in the legal profession, as working part-time was not common or practicable in the types of roles they undertook (Bacik & Drew, 2006). This study differs from my own, in that the women that I spoke with did not infer that they would be
leaving their job soon. By working shift (particularly at night) they were able to mediate their feelings of guilt, as they were able to care for their children throughout the day. As my analysis demonstrates, however, they could only do this by negating their own needs, particularly sleep, to care for the needs of their children.

Examination of the literature related to women’s work shows that guilt is a prevalent theme, particularly in work/life balance literature. A study by Glavin et al. looked at the ‘boundary – spanning’ of work demands onto home and family life (Glavin et al., 2011). The authors reported that their analysis demonstrated that guilt accounted for the positive association between the frequency of work contact and distress among women; that is, the more women worked the more distressed they felt (Glavin et al., 2011). One suggestion for the reason that this occurs has been that women’s increased participation in the paid workforce has not been matched by men’s participation on the home front (Sullivan, 2014).

Apart from studies published in academic journals into women’s work and guilt; other sorts of publications were examined to understand the impact of guilt on women who work and manage children. Articles on websites were also accessed along with blogs, and reader comments to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the lived experience of the phenomenon I was studying. I also sought information from popular and social media that related to my topic. Interestingly, the conversation traffic around this topic was very busy on blog posts, newspaper articles, and websites with varying sub-themes discussed and debated.

This example, is from The Slate Magazine (www.slate.com) (Grose, 2014). The article, which reported on a study undertaken by The Harvard Business Review called “Male Executives Don’t Feel Guilt, See Work-Life Balance as a Women’s Problem”. This article examined interviews with nearly 4000 executives of whom 44% were women. The women in the study tended to pay for help to care for their homes and children. Only 10% of the women had partners or husbands who stayed at home to care for their children. In comparison 60% of the men had partners or wives who stayed at home. Both males and females in this study saw the tension between work and family as being the woman’s problem to carry and solve. The comments that were written in response to this article were from readers of the website. Worryingly, the comments offered by readers of this article were divided along gender lines; with comments ranging from the unhelpful to offensive about women’s right for equality without feeling guilty. I have omitted the comments from females as they tended to agree and support the writer of article, and hence my own argument. I have quoted four responses from
males to illustrate the sort of attitudes that some women may experience from their own husbands, which would add to their feelings of guilt. Comments such as these were fairly typical of comments made.

“It is a woman's problem because women are the one's complaining about it. Men haven't changed, we're still the same. If women want to enter the workplace, it is their responsibility to make sure they have the infrastructure and support in place to raise the child BEFORE they have it. That includes having a backup plan in case your man leaves you, as divorce rates are higher than ever. What is happening is that women are just assuming that some man is going to come in and pick up the slack that these women left behind. Women claim they are independent but then turn around and still blame men for their problems. Which is it? The mistake women made is that they assumed that guys would sacrifice their own careers to help raise the kids at home. Wrong assumption. If you want to go in the workplace that is totally fine, but don't expect others to pick up your slack. Marriage rates are on the decline any way and there are more and more singles to begin with. I'm tired of men receiving the blame when the truth is that if women were truly independent they would make sure they either had paid help or some other arrangement to help them raise their children instead of STILL DEPENDING ON A MAN TO HELP THEM SUCCEED IN LIFE.” (JohnJacobs90).

And

“Get over it Jess (the author of the article) and go fix my dinner.' (Joe McDermott)

And

“The problem for mothers is that fathers aren't doing their share.(quoted from the article).“What shite. Don't you get tired of simply making things up?”(Danny Marks)

And

subtitle of the article under man posing for a picture from a work desk :"Don't worry. My wife's taking care of it.". A better subtitle with regard to family income would be "Don't worry. I'm taking care of it. (IanBoy)

Comments such as these, make it sound as though entering the workforce is a privilege, rather than a requirement to contribute to the family’s finances. It is also a woman’s right to contribute to society financially, by paying taxes from earning a wage, as well as it is a woman’s right to use whatever skills and intellect that she has innately, and has gained through education for the benefit of society. These sorts of comments further entrench and normalise the assumption that the traditional role of women is at home doing domestic work while men earn the money. These
comments demonstrate that not only women buy into the media-driven myth of the ‘good wife and mother’, but that men do too and put pressure on their wives to conform to social norms. There was also no acknowledgement that skills, and knowledge capital is lost when women do not return to work. The assumption in the first comment above, is that the children are the responsibility of the woman in the relationship, and that, it is up to her to sort out any arrangements if she chooses to go to work. Comments such as these above, further strengthen the findings that I have reported from my study that the women saw the children and home as theirs to manage and that their husbands agreed with this position. Both the women’s belief and her husband’s reinforcement of the position deepened the women’s guilt.

One particular quote from Alison from the findings in Chapter Six was noteworthy, because of her notion that mothers felt more guilt than fathers. This finding is similar to report published on the The Slate of the study done by The Harvard Business Review (Grose, 2014).

“I felt, I still feel guilty. There’s huge guilt. But I reckon there’s more guilt on mothers than there is on fathers. Because I talk to Ivan – quite often one of the kids will be sick – not often, it feels often, I’m sure it’s not. Or something’s – they get injured and I’ll be away and I think I must go back immediately. And he goes, why, I’m here? ….And I don’t think he would have that same sense of responsibility” (Alison)

This ‘guilt gap’ has also been identified in the academic literature, and has been defined as the feelings that women feel working outside the home, in contrast to the feelings of guilt experienced by men (Hays, 1996). Hays asserts that men, rarely need to justify why they are working, whereas women do (Hays, 1996). The gendered split of work and family usually assumes a man working outside the home for money, and the woman staying home and caring for the children and home. If a woman works outside the home, it is either viewed as optional, or as an abandonment of her husband and family to their detriment (Hays, 1996). Alison’s quote above illustrates Hays’ points; Alison felt guilty and knew her husband did not. Alison felt guilty for abandoning her children (particularly when they were ill), and for being the primary wage earner, as she still had a need to control and participate in the running of the home. Alison prepared most of the meals for the week on the weekend, and if her husband needed to cook she left a recipe out for him to follow. Alison also did the majority of the cleaning on the weekends to assuage her guilt. This phenomena was peculiar to Alison’s family as she worked much longer hours than her husband (he worked school hours), earnt more money, booked all appointments for the children, made lists for her husband to do (such as buy
new shoes for one child, take the other child to the dentist etc.) but yet felt guilty for not being the primary carer.

Mainly, the women I spoke to, however, were undertaking the traditional role for women and caring for their children as well as working, that is, they felt that ‘one’ should be a ‘good wife and mother’. Their guilt was driven by things that they did, or were not able to do, and by the indebtedness of care. Shiftwork enabled them to do this more efficiently than a woman who worked through the day as they either eliminated or minimised childcare by reducing their own sleeping period. Unlike day workers they were able to ‘do more’ for others (work, care for children and look after the home) because they saw their work times as being across a 24 hour period to time rather than a fixed shift which includes a period of unbroken sleep. As I have previously argued, it is unlikely that men who work shiftwork have the same home-work responsibilities as their wives.

Summary

The concept of guilt has been examined using Heidegger’s philosophies on mode of being, guilt, care and authenticity. It is clear from exploration of the topic, that for some people feeling guilty is overwhelming and controls how they experience the world. The roles that the women assumed in caring for their home and children were done at a personal cost to the women involved. Firstly, that cost was in the experience of feeling guilty for all that was done and undone in their lives. The second cost was their personal needs, primarily their sleep. Most of the women in my study assuaged their guilt by caring for their children through the day, to justify their right to work and by providing usefulness to the family as both worker and carer. By doing this, the family gained significant value of gaining the financial benefits associated with shiftwork without childcare fees (or minimal childcare fees).

For shiftworkers, though, a way to get around the modern time boggle of work, and family had been found; work at night. Shiftworkers, particularly if they are women, are able to work at night and care for their children in the day, whilst getting everything else done. When they are at work overnight both their partner and the children are sleeping. Writers such as Germaine Greer are fairly scathing about the women she terms “lifestyle feminists” whose feminism is all about money, sex, and fashion, and hence appear to be performing the idea of “having it all” (Greer, 1999). As Greer argues, the problem with people like Helen Gurley Brown asserting that women can have it all; is that she did not. Gurley Brown did not have children;
she was able to employ a range of staff such as a chef and housekeeper so she could go to the job she loved (Editor in Chief for Cosmopolitan for 32 years) and she therefore did not have to undertake significant amount of housework on arrival home from her paid work. As Annabel Crabb so wittily put it – “every working woman needs a wife” (Crabb, 2014). Patently Gurley Brown had the apparent assistance in her home that Annabel Crabb’s hypothetical wife would offer and in addition she had no children.

The trouble with believing that women can “have it all” is that women who feel like they are failing at “it all” are yoked with guilt that somehow they are not doing a good enough job. This is ostensibly what creates the need for “The Juggle” that I have discussed in the last section. And as Hochschild & Machung reported: “The second shift was their issue. And most of their husbands agreed” (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). So what the lifestyle feminists have left modern women with, after they won the rights to govern their bodies, earn money and wear the fashion they wished, is the burden of both a paid job, and the second shift, or even a third or fourth, whereas their male counterparts are still primarily working a paid job and doing little housework. Women just added more to their lot, without the luxury of getting rid of much. Some of the participants may have seen that they did ‘have it all’ – working while caring for their children, but what they didn’t have was much sleep, or a clear conscience to work without guilt.

There may be some, whose critique is that this conundrum is actually the fault of feminism. After all, without feminism women could have stayed home and had plenty of time to sort the house and children out while their hardworking husbands toiled. This predicament is actually about the resistance to feminism; the war on the home front, it also ignores social change and the imperative of late capitalist consumerism for families to earn more than some single (male) wage earners can provide. The male resistance to share the housework and childcare whilst the woman shares the economic burden of the family appears to be the battle front (Hartmann, 1987; Mainardi, 2000). This has led to women working and still retaining much of the home related work. This, as I have argued is the reason for women’s guilt when they work outside the home, and guilt for all that is done and undone.

**Conclusion to the Chapter**

This chapter has provided interpretation of the themes discussed in Chapter Six. The interpretations of the two themes of *Being Guilty* and *Being Juggler* (from Chapter Six) were
considered in conjunction with the philosophical literature that assisted in the interpretation of
the themes. As I read and re-read their words, I became convinced that many of the women in
this study were ‘derelict’; they felt guilty for going to work, felt guilty for leaving their roles
as mother and to a lesser degree, wife. They felt they needed to keep up the standard of the
‘good wife and mother’ and when they did not achieve this, they felt guilty. They undertook
the majority of the work related to the children and the home by neglecting their own needs
primarily sleep to ensure as Jennifer put it “to keep all the balls in the air”.

This chapter has demonstrated the process of further illuminating the experiences of my
participants, using Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology and academic literature on
women’s work, gender roles and motherhood. I have argued the need to use a further literature
base that foregrounds gender as a central determinant of women’s experiences within the
family, based on the inadequacy of Heidegger’s conviction of Dasein’s gender neutrality to
allow me to understand the meanings produced in our interviews. Heidegger’s philosophy
primarily deals with the state or condition of being human; whereas other literature I have cited
on women’s work gender roles and motherhood, has created a social context for the experiences
of the women in my study. Working with this contextual literature has added further depth in
understanding and interpretation, and has helped unravel the experiences of the women I
interviewed not just from a human perspective but also from a gendered perspective (Baird &

Using Heidegger’s particular phenomenology has allowed me access to the phenomenon of
shiftworking women with children, and both insight and understanding of their experience,
particularly in understanding their feelings of guilt. However it left me wondering how, and
could not help me answer the question of why these women were responsible within the context
of their marriages for all this. It seemed extraordinary that women in relationships reported
almost doing as much in terms of work, childcare and housework as their single counterparts.
I wondered what was going on, and it was this question that led me to the literature on women’s
work, gender roles and motherhood to help explain this and to provide social context. I felt I
needed an explanation for why the all this belonged to the woman, and became a burden for
which she felt guilty about, to what I came to see as the dereliction of self that can be said to
characterise the experience of women nurses who work shiftwork and care for children.
Chapter Eight – Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter will conclude the chronicle of my study of women’s experiences of working shiftwork while caring for children. I begin with a brief review of the previous seven chapters, what they contain and the line of argument they have followed. I then go on to discuss the summary of my thesis, and the value of the methodological frameworks I have chosen for the study, before moving on to a discussion of the Rigour of the approach I have taken, and the confidence this gives to my interpretative conclusions. After this section, I discuss the ways in which this research has fulfilled the aims of the study that I set out to achieve, and then the strengths and limitations of what I can claim, and recommend, on the basis of this inquiry. Some recommendations for actions within the nursing profession follow and then I conclude with some ideas for the continued future research that, I argue, this study has shown remains necessary.

Chapter Synopsis and Summary

In Chapter One I introduced the background to the study and the call to the question where I recount the story of my personal interest in shiftwork and this particular question. I have also provided some introductory material about shiftwork, including the general background and definitions of shiftwork that show the value and necessity of this sort of working arrangement to the economy and society in general, and to the nursing profession in particular.

I have reviewed and discussed a wide range of the research literature on the effects of shiftwork in Chapter Two. The literature was examined from two particular perspectives: physiological and psychological. Related to both these perspectives, and reflecting my own account of having been a shiftworker as a single woman who is now a mother working normal hours, I have also discussed in this chapter the literature relating to sleep and women’s work, as I believe this is important for understanding the experience of shiftwork on female nurses with children. The aims and research questions are presented as resulting from the gaps and silences on the existing research within the field.

In Chapter Three I explained and justified hermeneutic phenomenology and its application to the study. Heidegger’s phenomenology was explored in detail with some further material from Gadamer to add support for the methodology. The key concepts I have drawn on are Understanding, Interpretation and Meaning; Authenticity and Guilt. This theoretical framing
for my study, chosen because of the nature of the questions I wished to answer, has proven both valuable and generative of new learning. Its heuristic value in structuring and guiding my analysis of the data, as presented in Chapters Six and Seven, led, as I have explained there, to my seeking further explanatory theory for some of the experiences my participants shared at interview.

In Chapter Four I illustrated how the methodology was used to provide a framework to inform the study in ethos and in the practice. It is an interview study, and in line with both the theoretical and empirical framework described here, has been in every way a co-production of meaning between myself as researcher, and the ten women nurses who provided their support, time and frank representation of their experience as shiftworkers for me to understand and interpret.

In Chapter Five I introduced the participants to the research and provided some contextual information about them. Beginning my journey towards understanding their experiences I have also provided some background context about each participant.

As noted above, the data is presented and my analytic themes are introduced and discussed in Chapter Six. The two major themes of Being Guilty and Being Juggler are explored through the words of the participants. The theme Being Juggler has three sub-themes of Managing Children, Managing Home and Managing Self Needs. Each of these sub-themes is considered.

In Chapter Seven I provide further discussion and analysis of these and move towards consideration of the themes in relation to the methodologies of hermeneutic phenomenology and sociologically contextual literature. The study used a primarily hermeneutic phenomenological framework to guide the analytic study process and to explore and explain the meanings of the experience for the women I interviewed. As the analysis continued, literature on women’s work, gender roles, and motherhood was introduced to illuminate the meanings of the experience for these women as gendered beings, not simply as the gender neutral Dasein. The literature cited offered insight, from a perspective that is not about the entire experience of being human, as Heidegger postulated, but the unique experience of being a woman, and the sociological and political contexts in which this experience is situated. Two themes were strongly identified; Being Guilty and Being Juggler. These were explored within Chapter Six and the meanings and interpretations were expanded in Chapter Seven.

Through these chapters I have built the argument that women who work shiftwork and care for children must juggle their schedules, work/life, family responsibilities, household duties,
children and social lives around what their family, children and work require, in what appears to be to a still strongly patriarchal society. While many of these issues may well be present in the lives of mothers who also undertake paid employment, what is outstanding in this study is that in order to maintain their multiple roles, what ‘has to give’, what is forfeited by these women, is sleep.

**Value of the Methodology to the Study**

Hermeneutic phenomenology offered a theoretical scaffolding to explore and illuminate the experience of shiftworking women who care for children. This philosophical framework enabled me to access the experiences of the women I spoke with to interpret their experience of caring for children whilst working shiftwork. The framework allowed the participants to express and re-live their experiences, which may not have been possible with another methodology. The participants were able to identify what was important to them to highlight in the experience and to bring this forth in the narrative. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, participants were able to speak about their experience for as long as they wished. I did not constrain any interview; I allowed the conversation to go in the direction that the women indicated was important. Using hermeneutic phenomenology allowed (and in fact, encouraged) this.

Heidegger’s insistence that *Dasein* is gender neutral has been criticised in the literature (Holland, 2001). The general assumption that women have the same financial, political and sociological power as men, seems extraordinary, considering what I found. In my study that did not seem to be the case, and generally, literature on women’s work supported my findings. While Heidegger informed my understandings of the experience of the women in the study, it did not provide complete illumination for why the *all this* belonged to the woman. Literature on women’s work, gender roles and motherhood offered explanation for some of how the women in my study experience their shiftwork.

The guilt that the women in this study felt and expressed in their interviews was not just the guilt of Dasein, but also that of being a woman and what that encompassed. Heideggerian phenomenology provides a way in which understanding can be reached for the guilt related to being and the other literature provides the interpretation about these women’s experience sociologically.
Rigour

In Chapters Three and Four, I discussed the methods and processes by which I was going to ensure the rigour of the study. This section of the conclusion is to reflect upon how well the process I used to demonstrate rigour worked for my study. The processes outlined in Chapter Three and Four have been important in enabling me to do this, and there are several ways in which I ensured credibility in this study. As I described in Chapter Four, I took time to clarify “the constructions of the researcher” (Moules, 2002, p. 16). These included: my qualifications to take on the role of researcher in this inquiry, my experiences, perspectives and assumptions (Byrne, 2001). Throughout this work I have discussed my background experiences, beginning in “Call to the Question” in Chapter One. This section outlined my experience with shiftwork and being a mother, which did not occur concurrently. I detailed my presuppositions (or assumptions) in Chapter Four and here in this chapter I have reflected upon them as the study came to a close. I have used the qualifications and expertise of my supervisors to assist me in ensuring methodological rigour and I have also presented this work in several open forums, to lay my work open for critical review and response. These forums include several interviews with regional radio stations and one metropolitan station, several presentations within my University, one conference presentation at the International Council of Nurses Conference in Melbourne, May 2013, one paper and one poster to be presented at the Working Time Society Conference in June 2017 (International Society for Shiftwork Research), and one published paper on the literature review (Matheson, O’Brien, & Reid, 2014). I have also reviewed three papers in various journals on shiftwork, following the publication of my literature review.

Rigour in hermeneutic inquiry is also measured by the concept of transferability, which is the capacity for readers to find meaning and applicability of the study to other contexts (Moules, 2002). Others have described it as a recognition that resonates with the lived experience of the phenomena (O’Brien, 2002). I was able to demonstrate transferability through linking my findings with the body of research, mostly in the women’s work, gender roles and motherhood literature areas. When I have presented my findings in open forums, or have had conversation with registered nurses since analysing the data, I have had verbal and non-verbal feedback from women in the audience who identified with the findings. While this is informal, it confirms that the findings resonate with others who are living the experience (O’Brien, 2002).

The dependability of the research was assured by documenting the process by which the inquiry and interpretations have been “arrived at”, using the data from the transcripts to clearly reflect the interpretation (Moules, 2002). In Chapter Four, Living the Methodology, I detailed the
Appendices

process of the research, and set out the roles of researcher and participants, how the data collection conversations were conducted and how the analysis occurred. In Appendix Four, I have provided a copy of the trigger questions submitted for ethical approval. Another way in which I establish the dependability of the research, is the ethical approval that I gained from Charles Sturt University prior to the commencement of the study. A copy of the Ethics Approval can be found in Appendix One. This process worked well for my study.

I adopted a number of verification strategies guided by Morse et al. (2002) as outlined in Chapters Three and Four. These were: methodological coherence to ensure that there was congruence between the research question and method; appropriate sampling of participants who have lived experience of the phenomena; concurrent collecting and analysing of data to ensure a mutual interaction of what is known and what one needs to know. The next part of the strategy is thinking theoretically. This is the reconfirming that the constant rise of ideas from the data are reconfirmed and verified back in the data. Lastly, theory development is the movement with deliberation between the micro perspective of the data and the macro conceptual/theoretical understanding as demonstrated in first reading and presentation of data in Chapter Six. In synchrony, these strategies incrementally and interactively contribute to reliability and validity, and therefore to the rigour of my inquiry (Morse et al., 2002).

I demonstrate methodological congruence between question and method throughout this work. In my questioning I was interested in the women’s lived experience of the phenomenon under study; that is shiftwork with children. I maintained congruence by ensuring that I had a working knowledge of the methodology under scrutiny. Chapters Three and Four detail, firstly Heidegger’s philosophy of hermeneutic phenomenology and then how I have conceptualised and applied this for my inquiry.

I established appropriate sampling of the participants by using a purposive sampling method. The Participant Information Sheet that I submitted with my ethics application (Appendix Two) outlined the inclusion and exclusion criteria for becoming a participant in the study. The participant needed to be a woman, with children, working as a registered nurse on shiftwork. All participants met the criteria for inclusion.

In order to demonstrate the concurrent collecting and analysing of data, I ensured that I gave enough time to first, the data collection and then, the analysis phases of the study. Once I had recorded the first data collection conversation I set about transcribing the narrative as close to the time of the interview as possible. I returned to my office after meeting the first participant
and made some written observations. I then commenced the transcription, followed by preliminary identification of topics and themes, prior to meeting the next participant. This method of data collection and initial analysis continued for the duration of the data collection phase. As new themes arose in subsequent interviews, I included these in my organisational frame, questioning, expanding and strengthening my analysis as the interview progressed.

The next part of the strategy is *thinking theoretically*. Thinking theoretically (as I have already described) is where the common themes are re-confirmed back into the text of the narrative. As I analysed each interview, and then again when I brought the themes together, I checked and re-checked my ideas from the theory, and verified them back into the data. I have demonstrated this within the study within Chapter Six where I have used the words of the women themselves to reveal their experiences of the phenomena. I have allowed the participant voice to sound, and within the data, and to guide the analysis and interpretation. Passages that have particularly resonated with me, have been returned to again and again, worried over until I was satisfied I have fully respected the meanings that were being ‘found’. I have also returned to Heidegger to locate the themes from the data back to the philosophy to ensure that I was demonstrating that I had entered the hermeneutic circle (or spiral) – and continued to work with the text until I could illustrate that a ‘good Gestalt’ had been reached (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p. 210).

Lastly, *theory development* is the deliberate movement between the micro perspective of the data and the macro conceptual/theoretical understanding. As part of working with the narrative of the text, I moved in and out, working with the data and with the philosophy until there was good unity between the narrative of the text and the interpretations. For me, the last two in this set of verification strategies were not separate entities, but occurred together in the analysis and interpretation phase.

My study used these methods outlined above and introduced in Chapter Four – Living the Methodology. Both methods add strength in establishing rigour for my study. The first method adds strength to ensuring the process of the study is rigorous and ensuring that my assumptions as the researcher are articulated within the data, that transferability to other studies and contexts is considered in the interpretative phase, and that the process that the interpretations have been arrived at is clear. The second method ensures that the traditions of hermeneutic phenomenology were woven through the entire study and were encapsulated in the analysis and interpretation. This involved appropriate sampling of people who have experienced the phenomena, and concurrent collection and analysis. Theoretical thought and development
ensures that the movement between the whole and the parts was undertaken. Each method offered a slightly different approach to ensuring rigour, and combined, they have offered both methodological coherence and credibility. The chapters above show how I have engaged with both methods to confirm the rigour of the research process in my study and the reliability of my findings and interpretations.

**Presuppositions**

As outlined in Chapter Four – Living the Methodology it was important as my role as researcher to bring forward my presuppositions, or presumptions about what would emerge in the data. I had thought that the participants would talk about managing their time, childcare issues, some of the negative sides of shiftwork, and career progression. As a nurse whose career has taken several turns in its progress, this was an unquestioned assumption on my part. But the women I spoke with talked very little about their work. For most of these women, their shiftwork was something they did to assist the family, in affording a better quality of life. In the course of the data collection period, the participants mainly spoke about their work in terms of career, but their main concern at the time was their family. It seemed as though their shiftwork allowed them a sort of ‘holding pattern’ in their career, waiting until the time when their children were grown and they could focus on it to a greater extent. There may be some good reasons for this: firstly most of the women I spoke with were working part-time, usually with two to three shifts per week, and perhaps this had a bearing on how they thought about their work. Unlike colleagues who worked full time, attention to progressing their nursing careers could not be a major focus.

Interestingly, I did not think that the issue of guilt would predominate the data to the extent that it did. When I listed my presuppositions prior to the first interview, guilt did not feature on my list. Thus methodology allowed the participants to narrate their experience and the data was free from my presuppositions. I did not expect that the way that the women spoke about time would be so guilt laden, however, that strongly emerged as a key theme for most of the women in the study, and thus for my own thinking and theoretical understanding.

In terms of time, I imagined that the participants would speak about their ability to manage their time and how they allocated time for each part of their lives. While they certainly did speak about this, it was at odds with what I had presupposed, which was that their partners would have greater involvement. I had thought there may be greater partner involvement in both the organisation of the children and the completion of household work. From what I
gathered from the participants and their transcripts, however, this was clearly not the case. Mostly the work related to the children and house was primarily the women’s responsibility.

I had expected that the women would raise the issues of being a shiftworker and the trouble of accessing appropriate childcare for their children. While some of the women talked about this (particularly the women who were not partnered), I was surprised at how little paid childcare was used for women in order to sleep during the day. The women got around the lack of childcare by either sleeping less, or in the case of the non-partnered women, by using friends and family for sleepovers for the child/children. I had thought that the women would have considered the childcare issue in a greater way than most of them did.

In terms of work, I had presupposed that the women would speak generally more about their work situations and what they thought or felt about them. I had imagined that some of the well-researched negative aspects of shiftwork may be brought up, such as the physical issues (digestive, issues sleeping through the day, and alertness etc.). Apart from the tiredness, the other well-established effects of shiftwork were not mentioned. As noted in the literature review, most of these studies have been at scale–focused not on individual workers, but on the workforce as a whole, aimed at understanding optimal conditions for shiftwork, and addressed most usefully, perhaps, to the corporations or employers who use this arrangement for their labour force. As this was not the primary focus of my study, perhaps the women did not feel it was of great import. Although the women referred to work when discussing the need to cancel a shift as a result of illness of one of their children, they did not otherwise speak significantly about their work at all.

The last presupposition that I had was about career progression. I had thought that it may be mentioned as a negative aspect to working shiftwork, particularly night shifts. However, as I have noted, professional development and career progression did not feature in the conversations that I had with the women. It seemed that the women used their shiftwork as a ‘holding pattern’ which they were in until the children were older and they felt as though they had greater choices. It is possible for those whose children were young that they also had other pressures, such as a recent purchase of a house and therefore a mortgage, as well as school fees and other expenses, both in terms of money and time. I felt that for the women I spoke with, work was there primarily to provide financial assistance to their families. It allowed them to have the ‘extras’ or to save for school fees and have the choice of sending their children to private schools if they wished. I had thought that the women would cite night shift as the reason they hadn’t progressed, and to explain the lack of professional development available to them,
and other issues such as these. I had thought that they may bring up these issues in answering the first research question I asked, about their experience of shiftwork. But it just did not seem to be as important to them as I imagined it would be.

It can also be suggested that career and job-related issues were not brought up was partially because of the methodology I used. That is, because the data is co-created as a conversation between two people, when the participants did not explicitly speak about these issues, I did not actively pursue them. In a way, the qualitative researcher is like Alice (in Wonderland), and the White Rabbit is the phenomenon of interest. Like Alice, the researcher’s role to follow the rabbit down the hole as far as it goes, rather than force the rabbit into a particular burrow. At times I would ask clarification questions or for more information, but I wanted always for the experience I was recording to be theirs in the living and narrating, and ours together in the interpreting. For this reason, if they wished to speak about career progression and professional development, there would have been space in the data collections conversations. As the women did not speak about this, I have concluded that at that moment of their narration it was not important or pertinent in their minds to the phenomena at hand.

These are the presuppositions with which I began the study, and which were woven through the data collection conversations from the early stages of the research through to the analysis phase. The research journey has therefore been more like an expedition along meandering back lanes than travelling smoothly down the highway, and the findings, while not what I had presupposed, have emerged as unexpected in the body of shiftwork research and therefore I see them as of substantial significance for the profession as a whole.

**Fulfilment of Aims**

This study set out to explore the experience of shiftworking women nurses who care for children, and the study has achieved this aim. The two research questions that I set out to explore were:

1. What is the experience of working shiftwork for women nurses who also care for young children?

2. What are the social, health, financial and personal impacts of working shiftwork whilst caring for young children?

The experience of working shiftwork has been captured and explained in the accounts of the women I spoke with. They have reported their experience of being tired and working long
hours both in the home and in the paid workforce, and they reported their experience of feeling guilty for doing so.

*Being Guilty* was the first theme I identified. For some of the women the guilt seemed to be seeping out of their pores as they spoke of it, dripping like rain off an umbrella on a rainy day. Some of the women felt that they could not *be* enough, and could not *do* enough, either for family or work to relieve these feelings. They felt that they were lacking in something, unable to be the “good mother” that the anonymous ‘they-say’ of the social world they live in had predefined for them and for their partners and friends. They felt derelict in their duty to perform this role of the ‘good mother’. The way they assuaged their guilt was to reduce their own needs, such as sleep. The women I spoke with could not rid themselves of guilt no matter how little space they took up with activities that satisfied their own needs.

The other discursive theme, *Being Juggler* (which encompassed *Managing Children, Managing Home* and *Managing Self Needs*) captured how the women in my study dealt with the multiple demands on their time and resources, which produced the feelings of guilt that they experienced. Like the poem by Maya Angelou that I have reproduced at the beginning of Chapter Seven, the women in my study were seeking the soft rain that would provide relief from their multiple roles and tasks. As I have argued, these shiftworking women felt that home and hearth was theirs to care for at the expense of their own needs, particularly for sleep. The articulation of these two themes demonstrates the fulfilment of the aims of the study.

**Strengths and Limitations of the research**

Although the women in this study may be representative of shiftworking women with children, I do not claim that the themes developed in this study to be generalisable to all other individuals, or the population of shiftworking women caring for children. My interpretations about the experience of working shiftwork whilst caring for children were developed from the data collection conversations that I had with the ten women who participated in the time and place of this study. The sample was purposive and the participants came to me in a range of ways. Some heard a radio interview I did on the local radio station and contacted me after that. Others heard on the nursing “grapevine”, still others had their interest sparked thorough conversations with me or colleagues who had already expressed interest in the study.

However, it is important to note that the women who participated all lived in or around Australian rural or regional centres, which may have given the study a particular focus. It is possible that women either living in large metropolitan cities, or living in more remote
communities may experience different issues and narrate different stories from those told to me here. The women were all degree-qualified registered nurses, some of whom had gained their degree post registration. A few had also gone onto higher study and had attained post graduate degrees. Of those who were partnered at the time of the interview, the women held higher qualifications than their partners who overwhelmingly were tradesmen rather than professionals. I did ponder whether this difference in the level of male education mattered in how their familial roles were divided, and whether partnerships where the male had undertaken tertiary education would value the unpaid work differently, but this was not the aim of the study, and hence whether it would have made a difference is unknown.

The women who participated all lived in or surrounding rural or regional centres which may have given the study a particular focus. It is possible that women either living in large metropolitan cities, or living in more remote communities may experience different issues and narrate different stories from those told to me by these women. The women were all degree qualified registered nurses, some of whom had gained their degree post registration. A few had also gone onto higher study and had attained post graduate degrees. Of those who were partnered at the time of the interview, the women held higher qualifications than their partners who overwhelmingly were tradesmen rather than professionals. I did ponder whether the male education mattered in how roles were divided and whether partnerships where the male had undertaken tertiary education would value the unpaid work differently, but this was not the aim of this study. Whether this would have made a difference is unknown, however, it was outside the scope of this study to examine this in detail.

In summary, while the themes that have evolved in this study may resonate for other populations, in other contexts and for day working women, the themes developed here are based on the particular women interviewed, in the particular context at a particular time in their lives and I do not claim that they are applicable to other situations.

**Significance of the work**

As I look back over the study at this point, I believe that there are several areas to which my work can make a contribution: to the literature on shiftwork in general, and for shiftworking nurses in particular; and on gender roles and work within the home.

Firstly, any exploration of the lived experience of shiftwork is uncommon within the body of research on shiftwork. The majority of studies of shiftwork are undertaken using a quantitative paradigm, and are therefore not seeking information about the individual experiences
shiftworkers. Most of the literature tends to concentrate its effort on people’s capacity to tolerate the shiftwork with little respect to the other responsibilities workers may have. Where research explores common conditions related to shiftwork, such as fatigue and decreased alertness, there is no attention to the time allocated for sleep for the participants in different home/life circumstances, but rather an averaged sleep time. This lack of attention to the multiple roles of women may impact the amount of sleep they report whilst working shiftwork, as some participants may be reducing their sleep period to care for children or elders but this may not be reflected in the results.

This study has added weight to the literature on women’s work and the work of the home, building on the work that I have referenced throughout this thesis. The crucial difference between my study and the prior work in this area appears to be that the majority of studies that examine the gender divide in the unpaid work at home, generally use samples where the participants work during the day.

The combination of the two areas of work, the paid shiftwork and the unpaid work done at home has emerged as an important element of this study. While further research needs to be done to explore the amount of time shiftworkers spend on unpaid work, perhaps using quantifying instruments that look at time use, my work is important to start the debate for women who are shiftworkers. It seems well accepted in the literature on women’s work that in a nuclear family the women provide much of the unpaid work, almost regardless of paid work time. Yet there is little mention of how shiftworkers manage this. There is silence about how shiftworking women manage their unpaid work time, and an unexamined expectation that they still can undertake much of the work that a day worker or stay-at-home parent can. I have not argued here that the effects that the desynchrony of circadian rhythms can have on shiftworkers as outlined in Chapter Two, such as difficulty sleeping, may be a key reason why shiftworkers may find managing children and working potentially more difficult. Not one of my participants mentioned these – apart from the (self) imposed ‘difficulty’ around sleep which, I have argued, has a social rather than a somatic basis.

**Recommendations**

It is improbable that any single solution will be found to decrease the guilt of women who work in paid jobs. It is also unlikely that traditional gender roles will change quickly, so that the always-already social world into which all beings are thrown will see the equal division of unpaid work at home between the adults. The feelings of guilt and the gender roles are linked
and as social change moves towards greater equality within the home, guilt about “not being enough” will, hopefully, slowly decrease. These issues, unfortunately are generational and while I have identified this important issue, it is beyond the scope of this study to be able to recommend a solution.

Understanding and using this sort of knowledge about the effects of shiftwork, and the resulting health issues that might occur, however, would be an important step for the education of both nursing students and working nurses. This may help nurses to prepare for shiftwork, and in ensuring that women who work shiftwork have a raised level of consciousness that would help them make sure they do not miss or decrease their sleep period. There is an opportunity for pre-service education to include shiftwork education in the final year of the course, perhaps in a subject focused on transitioning to nursing practice. This education should include coping strategies for sleep, fatigue, and managing work/life balance as well as some practical guidelines on day-to-day management of their shiftwork. Health services also have an opportunity to include shiftwork education in their orientation packages. This would be particularly important for new graduates from university who may not have undertaken shiftwork previously, although it would be valuable for nurses who are returning to work after a period of leave (such as maternity leave).

One other recommendation that I see as a justifiable extrapolation from the data here, and in line with innovations already in place in some large public hospital complexes, is affordable and accessible 24-hour childcare. While the women in my study did not use much childcare, their reasons were usually related to cost and availability. If childcare was more affordable, and available at the times shiftworking women need it, means that what ‘they say’ about mothers who use it would have to change – and women may not feel obliged to exchange their sleep for caring for their children.

Future research

Having completed this study now, I see that there are several areas where future research may be concentrated. This study has furthered the understanding of the experience of shiftworking women whilst caring for children. Specifically, the study has expanded understandings of women’s experience of trying to “keep all the balls in the air”; juggling the competing demands on their time and energy that arise because they are nurses working shiftwork whilst caring for children. I have argued that the extreme guilt they experience as a result of having so many competing demands upon them – so much to juggle – leads them to neglect their own self needs
in the service of those of their family. This raises the question: does a nurse have a duty to self? Does the social milieu that places a woman in a subservient role to her partner and children mean that working shiftwork causes her to be in dereliction of this duty to self?

This study has identified some difference based on the narratives of the participants, but it needs to be followed by other studies to look at the effect of shiftwork on the unpaid work of women in the home, and whether there are discernible differences for day workers and shiftworkers.

Further research is needed to objectively examine the amount of sleep that women, in particular are getting whilst on either rotating or permanent night shifts, as well as the impact this has on the workplace and on quality care. This type of study would be useful in a range of age groups; from new graduates to older women who work shiftwork.

Questions such as this suggest that there are several directions that future research could take that would be of value to the fields of nursing, nurse education and work. Firstly, some research to further understand the nature of guilt experienced by working women, but apparently not experienced in the same way, or to the same degree by working men would enhance our capacity to better respond to the needs of working women in today’s society. Hays (1996) identified the ‘guilt gap’ between men and women’s experience of guilt when returning to work after having children, and this is an area that has potential for further research. Hays’ study (1996) highlighted the guilt that women felt leaving their children and going to a paid job that men did not report. Further, having an understanding of the impact of shiftwork on this guilt for both parents would be of benefit.

The second area that would be of use is an exploration into younger shiftworking families and how they manage raising their children whilst the woman works shiftwork. As discussed in Chapter Six, Rachel’s interview indicated that her family operated differently from the other narrations about the delineation of unpaid work within the home. A study of this nature may provide more conclusive evidence about the spread of change to social norms, and whether the ‘might of the feminist machine’ has reached Australian homes in the Y generation age, or whether, once couples had children, roles reverted to more traditional gender roles. I have not been able to detect a ‘metropolitan’/'rural’ divide in this regard in the study I have conducted, though the question that this might exist is inevitably raised by the fact that these women are all living in a quasi-rural location.
Finally, as alluded to above, research needs to be undertaken into the differences in unpaid work that is carried out by women who are shiftworkers and day workers. It is still unknown whether there is a role difference as a result of the shiftwork or whether there is only a time difference between the two groups of workers, and this is an area where future research could usefully concentrate.

**Conclusion**

This study has taken me on an exciting if unexpected journey of discovery. I have documented the experience of ten women who worked shiftwork whilst they cared for their children. As I identified the themes of *Being Guilty* and *Being Juggler* from the data collection conversations and ruminated upon these at length. I have become changed as a result of this study, and I now examine, in greater detail, the gender roles within my own life. As I read and re-read the texts, I thought about the division of labour in my own home. Sometimes, I recalled the women’s words in my head, as I negotiated change in division of labour to better suit a more modern world. And, for my children, I feel that it important to show that working women have the same rights to sleep, leisure and caring for their own self needs as the main breadwinner, so that they can expect the right to have this in their own adult lives in the future. It is troubling that in the early part of the 21st century women still feel unequal in a first world country and that they still feel like they need to do “it all”.

The slow vehicle of social change is particularly sluggish for women who work shiftwork, in that they appear to be able to decrease their sleep period immensely to care for others. In the end, the unpaid work that shiftworking women do is no different from that of day workers, but as I have argued here, the fact that it may be being done on little sleep is potentially affecting both physical and psychological health of the woman, and needs attention from both nurse education and the nursing profession as a whole.
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Appendices
15 October 2012

Ms Annabel Matheson
School of Nursing, Midwifery &
Indigenous Health
S4
BATHURST CAMPUS

Dear Ms Matheson,

Thank you for the additional information forwarded in response to a request from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

The CSU HREC reviews projects in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council’s National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.

I am pleased to advise that your project entitled “Women’s Experience Of Working Shiftwork While Caring For Children: A Phenomenological Study Of Nurses” meets the requirements of the National Statement, and ethical approval for this research is granted for a twelve-month period from 15/10/2012.

The protocol number issued with respect to this project is 2012/166. Please be sure to quote this number when responding to any request made by the Committee.

Please note the following conditions of approval:

- all Consent Forms and Information Sheets are to be printed on Charles Sturt University letterhead. Students should liaise with their Supervisor to arrange to have these documents printed;
- you must notify the Committee immediately in writing should your research differ in any way from that proposed. Forms are available at: http://www.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0010/176833/ehrec_anurep.doc
- you must notify the Committee immediately if any serious and or unexpected adverse events or outcomes occur associated with your research, that might affect the participants and therefore ethical acceptability of the project. An Adverse Incident form is available from the website: as above;
- amendments to the research design must be reviewed and approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee before commencement. Forms are available at the website above;

Version 3

www.csu.edu.au
CRICOS Provider Numbers for Charles Sturt University are 00009F (NSW), 01947G (VIC) and 03936B (ACT). ABN: 83 678 708 551

Appendix One – Ethics Approval
• if an extension of the approval period is required, a request must be submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee. Forms are available at the website above;
• you are required to complete a Progress Report form, which can be downloaded as above, by 15/10/2013 if your research has not been completed by that date;
• you are required to submit a final report, the form is available from the website above.

YOU ARE REMINDED THAT AN APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE CSU HREC CONSTITUTES ETHICAL APPROVAL ONLY.

If your research involves the use of radiation, biological materials, chemicals or animals a separate approval is required from the appropriate University Committee.

The Committee wishes you well in your research and please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Officer on telephone (02) 6338 4628 or email ethics@csu.edu.au if you have any enquiries.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Julie Hicks
Executive Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Direct Telephone: (02) 6338 4628
Email: ethics@csu.edu.au
Cc: Professor Louise O’Brien Professor Jo-Anne Reid

Version 3

FIA
Appendix Two – Participant Information Sheet
Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to participate in a voluntary research study conducted by Annabel Matheson, PhD student from Charles Sturt University, Bathurst. This research study is being conducted as part of my studies.

**Project Title:** Women’s Experience of working shiftwork while caring for children: A Phenomenological Study of Nurses

**Purpose and Design of Study:** This research seeks to understand the shiftwork experience for women who have care responsibilities for children. It will explore the personal, social, health and financial impacts for women who work shiftwork while caring for children. The research is a qualitative phenomenological study and the data will be collected through the use of face to face interviews.

**Participation Involvement:** Participants agreeing to take part in the study will be asked to:

- Attend a 1 hour open-ended interview with the researcher, whereby the interview will be tape-recorded for transcription. Interviews will either be at the office of the researcher in the School of Nursing, Midwifery & Indigenous Health, Charles Sturt University, an office in the Health Service, or in the office of one of the supervisors in the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health, Orange.

**Use of Data:** Any data collected during the study will be coded and analysed using the appropriate methodology. Results and interpretations will not be used outside the boundaries of the research.

**Risks, Discomforts and Inconveniences:** While there is no discomfort or risk intended, it is possible that you may feel some discomfort while or after discussing your feelings and experiences during the interview. The researcher will endeavour to make you feel as comfortable as possible during the interview and will remind you that your participation and contributions are voluntary and that all discussions are confidential. If you do feel distressed after the interview please call Lifeline on 131114 or the Mental Health Helpline on 1800 011 511, or alternately contact Access EAP on 1800 818 728 to arrange a consultation with a health care professional.

**Confidentiality:** All interview recordings, notes and transcripts are confidential. Your identity will remain confidential and no identifying information will be recorded. A pseudonym will be assigned you by the Principal researcher to protect your identity.
**Your Rights:** You participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. You may end your participation at any time up to the point of completion of data analysis where the data is then non-identifiable to particular participants. Should you decide not to participate or end your participation, you may do so without penalty or discriminatory treatment, and your data will be destroyed. You may also, if it becomes necessary, contact the Executive Officer of the CSU HREC to make a complaint about the conduct of the study (address below).

**Contact Details:** If you have questions or concerns regarding the study you may contact the researcher on:

Annabel Matheson

Phone: 02 6338 4086

Email: amatheson@csu.edu.au

Prof. Louise O’Brien (Supervisor)  
Phone: 02 6363 8430

Email: Louise.OBrien@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Prof. Jo-Anne Reid (Supervisor)  
Phone: 02 6338 6150

Email: joreid@csu.edu.au

Charles Sturt University’s Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this study. I understand that if I have any complaints or concerns about this research I can contact: Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Academic Governance Charles Sturt University, Panorama Avenue, Bathurst NSW 2795, Phone: (02) 6338 4628. Email: ethics@csu.edu.au.
Appendix Three – Consent Form
Consent Form

Project Title: Women’s Experience of working shiftwork while caring for children: A Phenomenological Study of Nurses

Researcher: Annabel Matheson
Phone: 02 6338 4086
Email: amatheson@csu.edu.au

Prof. Louise O’Brien (Supervisor)  Prof. Jo-Anne Reid (Supervisor)
Phone: 02 6363 8430  Phone: 02 6338 6150
Email: Louise.OBrien@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au  Email: joreid@csu.edu.au

This is to certify that I, __________________________________________________, hereby agree to participate in the research project titled “Women’s Experience of working shiftwork while caring for children: A Phenomenological Study of Nurses in Central West NSW” and:

- The purpose of the research has been explained to me, including the potential risks and discomforts associated with the research and I have read and understood the written information given to me.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation in the research up to the point of data analysis at which time the data will be de-identified to protect my identity and that if I choose to withdraw from the study I will not be subjected to any penalty or discriminatory treatment.
- I permit the researcher to tape record my interview as part of the research.
- I understand that any information or personal details gathered in the course of this research about me are confidential and that neither my name nor any other identifying information will be used or published without my written permission.
- I understand that the data collected from me may be published as part of an academic paper in appropriate academic and nursing journals, and that no identifying information about me will be published.

Signature:__________________________________________________________

Date:__________________________________________

Charles Sturt University’s Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this study. I understand that if I have any complaints or concerns about this research I can contact: Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Academic Governance Charles Sturt University, Panorama Avenue, Bathurst NSW 2795, Phone: (02) 6338 4628. Email: ethics@csu.edu.au.
Interview Guide

Project Title: Women’s Experience of working shiftwork while caring for children: A Phenomenological Study of Nurses

Researchers:
Annabel Matheson
Phone: 02 6338 4086
Email: amatheson@csu.edu.au

Prof. Louise O’Brien (Supervisor)  Prof. Jo-Anne Reid (Supervisor)
Phone: 02 6363 8430  Phone: 02 6338 6150
Email: Louise.Obrien@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au  Email: joreid@csu.edu.au

Interview Questions will include:

- Tell me what it is like to be a woman and to work shiftwork
- How has this affected you in terms of family life?
- How has this affected you in terms of social life?
- How has this affected you in terms of relationships?
- How has this affected you in terms of financial impacts?
- How has this affected you in terms of health?
Appendix Five – Further Acknowledgements

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