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Domestic horizons: subliminal/sublimated realities of black women employed as domestic workers in text

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Abstract

This study is a narrative inquiry into the lives of back women employed as domestic workers. The study explores pre-existing narratives by Black women employed as domestic workers about their realities as domestic workers. Using the Fanonion notion of ontological resistance in relation to a consideration of the implication of phenomena and appearance in ontology, particularly in the forms of the virtual and the Symbolic, narratives were engaged in relation to (political) ontology. Lacanian discourse analysis was utilised in conversation with the aforementioned discussion. The aim of this research was to engage the narratives of black women employed as domestic worker on their own accounts, that is, narratives that were not responses to projects initiated by other entities and thus relatively unencumbered by other research aims and interests. These were scarce. Two books by Magona, *Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night* (1991) and *To My Children's children* (1990) were explored. In response to the scarcity of these narratives on their own account, a meta-analysis of papers that concerned themselves with the experiences/phenomenology of domestic workers post-democracy were explored. It was contended that it should be taken as fundamental the fact that black women employed as domestic workers feel trapped by domestic work and coerced into it by their need to provide for themselves and/or their family and thus consider the way domestic work is predicated on violence.

Keywords: Domestic work; Narrative; Ontological resistance; Master signifiers; Political ontology