

*Breaking the Domestic Silence Through Representation*

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The (im)migrant worker has long occupied an ambiguous position in France. According to Mireille Rosello, the immigrant worker can be seen in terms of a guest, but only to a certain extent; the host country invites the worker for employment, but with no intention of assisting in the worker's integration into society. Rather, the host country perceives the worker as a threat to its national identity and security.

The role of the (im)migrant domestic has been particularly difficult to define, as she works and, in many cases, resides, in the private space of the home. Thus, she is hardly an outsider, yet she is not considered to be a part of the family. Though care for the family is bestowed upon the domestic and she must act on their behalf, colonial paradigms immediately set in, and the employing family reverts to treating the domestic caregiver as a slave; she becomes consumable. A comparative study of Françoise Ega's *Lettres à une noire*, Marie N'Diaye's *Hilda* (1999), and Ousmane Sembène's film *La noire de...* (1966) will reveal various aspects of this consumption of the domestic: physical mutilation, denial of family, emotional stifling, and political and social disenfranchisement. The cinematic, theatrical, and textual representation of the plight of the domestic in these works provides the exposure necessary for acknowledging and improving conditions for the intimate laborer. This study will posit Ega's text as the counternarrative which, through feminist authorship and activism, combats the voice of Madame in *Hilda* and makes audible the voice of Diouana in *La noire de...*