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White Zombie as Captivity Narrative and the Death of Certainty

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Abstract

Horror films such as *White Zombie* (1932) reveal viewers to themselves by narrating in the currency of audience anxiety. Such movies evoke fright because they recapitulate fear and trauma that audiences have already internalized or continue to experience, even if they are not aware of it. *White Zombie*'s particular tack conjures up an updated captivity narrative wherein a virginal white damsel is abducted by a savage other.

The shell of the captivity story is as old as America and relates closely to the Western and to the frontier myth, from which the Western emerged. What inexorably links the Western and all zombie films is the notion of containment. Whereas the Western sought to contain the American Other, all zombie films ask, instead, what happens if the other breaks through the proverbial gates. In other words, what if containment fails?

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Table of Contents. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Introduction. The First Remove. and that I may the better declare what happened to me during that grievous captivity, I shall particularly speak of the several removes we had up and down the wilderness. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. The First Remove. Now away we must go with those barbarous creatures, with our bodies wounded and bleeding, and our hearts no less than our bodies. the picture of death in my lap. About two hours in the night, my sweet babe like a lamb departed this life on Feb. 18, 1675. After Beaumont uses Legendre's zombie potion on Madeleine, he is dissatisfied with her emotionless being and wants her to be changed back. Legendre has no intention of doing this and he drugs Beaumont as well to add to his zombie collection. Meanwhile, grieving 'widower' Neil is convinced by a local priest that Madeleine may still be alive and he seeks her out. Written by Gary Jackson . A twenty-one-year-old white female wakes up in a hospital with zero recollection of how she came to be there. Confronted by a nurse with a serious attitude problem, the girl has the impression she was involved in a car accident, but is notified she suffered a near-fatal drug overdose and was found by cops on the side of a road. Naked. Her interrogation begins with the nurse asking her if she even knows her name. Romero's zombie trilogy is an explicit commentary on the dead ends of the American family, post-Fordist consumerism, and the barbarism of the military-scientific complex. And as Shaviro's confession makes clear, we spectators would rather identify with the zombie and its savage, unthinking cannibalism than avow our resemblance to the violent but rational humans and the institutions they represent. As redemptive and democratic entities, these zombies represent a version of liberal politics in which revived death conveniently

observes racial, class, and gender differences. In Romero's 1944 narrative of captivity, we ate with a relish known only to those who, like us, scented the pure air, and lived as nature demanded. At night, when our camp had been arranged by Andy and Franklin, our colored men, it was always in the same relative position, Mr. Kelly riding a few miles ahead as evening drew near to select the camping ground. Another gleam and another crash followed, and the dense blackness lowered threateningly over us, almost shutting out the heights beyond, and seeming to encircle us like prisoners in the valley that lay at our feet.