Haitian Zombie, Myth, and Modern Identity

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Abstract
In her article “Haitian Zombie, Myth, and Modern Identity" Kette Thomas analyzes texts by Zora Neale Hurston, Alfred Metraux, and Wade Davis. In these narratives we are re-introduced to the zombie not as a metaphor for lost consciousness, but, rather, as a common system that replaces personal subjectivity with an influence alien to our natural development. The discourse on subjectivity has become a central focus in the modern era but attention to fiction in "third world" cultures is neglected because they are studied almost exclusively through historical, political, sociological, or anthropological lenses or because their collective identities leads scholars to assume they had not developed consciousness of individual subjectivity. "Third world" cultures, however, are addressing the subject and Thomas discusses the zombie as one expression that focuses on the validity of subjectivity. Further, although zombies have been part of the Western imagination for nearly a century, scholars have not studied the zombie in terms of its mythological components. The myth of the zombie reveals a process that combines the dynamic power of a leader, the community, and the individual or victim. Thomas's analysis emphasizes how zombification challenges the notion that there exists an invulnerable, continuous, self-possessed subjectivity in humans.

Recommended Citation

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

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