

# MT VOID 01/06/23 -- Vol. 41, No. 28, Whole Number 2257



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[http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back\\_issues.htm](http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm).

**Mini Reviews, Part 9** (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

This is the ninth batch of mini-reviews, all documentaries.

WOODLANDS DARK AND DAYS BEWITCHED--A HISTORY OF FOLK HORROR: WOODLANDS DARK AND DAYS BEWITCHED--A HISTORY OF FOLK HORROR is a 194-minute documentary on "folk horror" in cinema. It is long, but is divided into six chapters to make viewing easier. It begins on a very strong note with the "unholy trinity" of folk horror: WITCHFINDER GENERAL, BLOOD ON SATAN'S CLAW, and THE WICKER MAN (the original, of course). Then we have a look at the many other British films in the genre, paganism and witchcraft in cinema, American folk horror cinema, worldwide folk horror cinema, and the current "folk horror revival". It is an amazing in-depth study that every folk horror fan should see.

And Clair Curtis has compiled a list of all 214 (!) films covered in this documentary, <https://letterboxd.com/clairacurtis/list/folk-horror-a-study/> with posters for each film, or <https://letterboxd.com/clairacurtis/list/folk-horror-a-study/detail/> if you want a text list of the films.

Released at festivals in 2021; available at <https://vimeo.com/750846683/afa7f2ceb9>. Rating: +3 (-4 to +4) or 9/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13938338/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/woodlands\\_dark\\_and\\_days\\_bewitched\\_a\\_history\\_of\\_folk\\_horror](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/woodlands_dark_and_days_bewitched_a_history_of_folk_horror)

LOVING HIGHSMITH: LOVING HIGHSMITH is a biography of the author Patricia Highsmith, with particular emphasis on her lesbianism. Highsmith is best known for the novels she wrote, including STRANGERS ON A TRAIN, which was adapted by Alfred Hitchcock, and THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY and its sequels, where were adapted several times.

More recently, her lesbian novel CAROL was filmed starring Cate Blanchett. Highsmith herself was a lesbian and in her diaries tells a remarkable story of her mother's attempts to convert her to a heterosexual orientation. The three main interviewees are former lovers: Marijane Meaker, Monique Buffet, and Tabea Blumenschein.

The film is mostly told in photographs from her childhood and entries from her diaries., revealing some of her writing output and its relationship to her childhood. Through all this, we come to see how her signature character of Ripley was conceived, as a man who

constantly has to hide his true self. The film ends with Highsmith going through a long period of self-examination. Unfortunately, this does not make for good cinema, and the film does lag at the end.

Released theatrically 2 September 2022. Rating: low +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15239466/reference>

What others are saying: <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/53177328-017e-4c66-ad16-35a323c2b088>

BRAINWASHED: SEX-CAMERA-POWER: BRAINWASHED--SEX-CAMERA-POWER begins with a quote by James Baldwin: "Not everything can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

It then proceeds to the notion of the "male gaze", a term first used in film criticism by Laura Mulvey, and demonstrated with scenes from METROPOLIS. what follows is a description of the various aspects of showing a woman on the screen as it is in the visual language of women in films: subject/object, framing, camera movement, and lighting.

Interestingly, the musical score sounds much like Bernard Herrmann's scores for Alfred Hitchcock which, given how much Hitchcock's films exemplify the male gaze, is ironic--or perhaps intentional.

Released theatrically 21 October 2022. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4) or 6/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10410506/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/brainwashed\\_sex\\_camera\\_power](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/brainwashed_sex_camera_power)

[-mrl/ecl]

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**This Week's Reading** (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

I mentioned the podcast "Literature and History" by Doug Metzger a few weeks ago. I have gotten as far as THE ILIAD by Homer (Episodes 9-11) and was once again drawn into re-reading the work.

But my first comment is more on Metzger's choice of words than on THE ILIAD itself. Metzger keeps referring to Briseis as Achilles's "bride" while to me it seems a more accurate term might be "slave", or even "rape victim". Achilles tries to make this sound like something deep:

"Are the sons of Atreus alone among mortal men the ones who love their wives? Since any who is a good man, and careful, loves her who is his own and cares for her, even as I now loved this one from my heart, though it was my spear that won her."

[Book 9, Lines 340-343]

But then practically the next minute he is showing how that is a lie:

"But Achilleus lay in the inward corner of the strong-built shelter, and a woman lay beside him,, one he had taken from Lesbos, ..."

[Book 9, Lines 663-664]

And the attitude of the time (or at least of Nestor, or at least of Homer) was not exactly one that saw women as romantic partners:

"Therefore let no man be urgent to take the way homeward until after he has lain in bed with the wife of a Trojan to avenge Helen's longing to escape and her lamentations."

[Book 2, Lines 354-356]

And these are the good guys?

My theory (for what it's worth) is that Achilles is trying to make his motives in protesting Agamemnon's seizure of Briseis as noble as possible and not just a dispute over property. The fact that in Book 19 Briseis says that Patroclus had promised her to convince Hercules to marry her indicates that Hercules was not as devoted to her as he claims. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

They told me how Mr Gladstone read Homer for fun,  
which I thought served him right.

--Winston Churchill