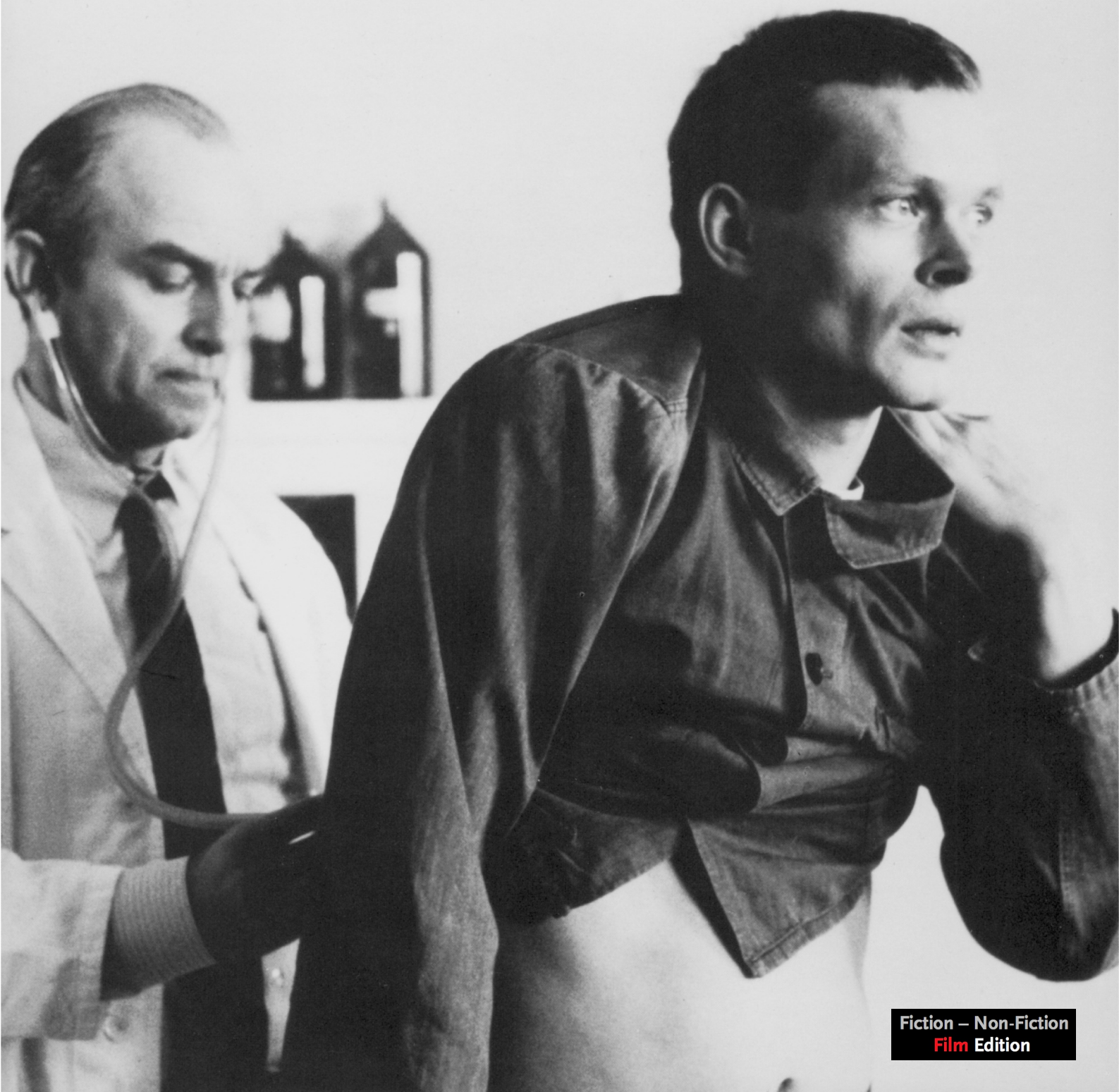


WODZECK

A film by Oliver Herbrich



Fiction – Non-Fiction
Film Edition

WODZECK

A film by Oliver Herbrich

Franz Woyzeck, the protagonist of Georg Büchner's unfinished drama is incorporated in this adaption of a classic. The contemporary Franz Wodzeck lives in Germany's Ruhr industrial region. Wodzeck meanders back and forth between the monotony of working each day in a car factory and returning each evening to the cheerless desolation of the factory dormitory. Once his girlfriend, Maleen, snubs him for his boss, Wodzeck's personal and social frustrations escalate into a vista of emotions: he runs amok and bloodily stubs Maleen to death. After he has killed his one sole love Wodzeck resigns himself to his fate. A hollow shell of a man is admitted to a psychiatric asylum. He feels no more anxiety, no more desire. He simply exists.

Nothing has really changed since 1830: Everyone works, many don't know what for; some go crazy. And Wodzeck is no exception. Sure, the story is familiar. But Herbrich has given it an excellent, in fact perfect, update. One feels sympathy, anger, grief. That comes very close to Büchner's intention. The acting performances are award-worthy, especially Detlef Kügow in the title role.

(Döll, Ruhrnachrichten)

Georg Büchner and “Woyzeck”

Karl Georg Büchner was born in 1813 on October 17th, son of a medical doctor in Goddelau in the Grand Duchy of Hessen-Darmstadt. In 1831 he started to study medicine at Strasbourg, in October he moved to the university of Giessen. Büchner was one of the promoters of the “Society of Human Rights”. In 1834 his political broadsheet “Der hessische Landbote” was edited. In 1835 he composed the drama “Dantons Tod”. Having been questioned several times in Hessen, Büchner escaped in the same year to Strasbourg. There he wrote the novella “Lenz” and the next year he composed the comedy “Leonce and Lena”.

In November 1836, Büchner gave a lecture in trial at the University of Zurich about “The cranial nerves” and thereupon he was admitted as a Private lecturer on the medical faculty. During autumn and wintertime he was working on the drama “Woyzeck”. 1837 Georg Büchner got sick of typhoid fever and died in Zurich at the age of 23 years on February 9th.

“Woyzeck” stayed unfinished and so it is quite problematical in what kind and what succession Büchner would have composed the drama with the existing fragments. Just 100 years after Büchner's birthday, the 8th November 1913 his “Woyzeck” had his first premiere in the Munich Residenz Theatre.

[> Website](#)

[> Trailer](#)

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Wodzeck

Cast & Crew

Detlef Kügow	Franz Wodzeck *
Ariane Erdelt	Maleen
Johannes Habla	Andres
Charles Brauer	company doctor
Leo Bardischewsky	medical professor
Hans Berhenke	divorced man
Franz A. Huber	division manager
Regula Siegfried	colleague
Geor Griewe	facility manager
Christian Me.....	taxi driver
Georg Wedemeyer	street vendor
Uwe Franke	drunkard
Mike Fluhme	washer of corpses
Peter Just	cash desk supervisor
Georg Baumberger	ironmonger

Oliver Herbrich	screenplay and director
Ludolph Weyer	cinematograohy
Romy Schumann	editing
Andreas Hofner	music
Tobias Siemsen, Josef Sanktjohanser	set design
Ana Mazur	costume & make up
Max Müller	sound recording
Petra Vonhausen	assistant director
Jan Betke.....	assistant camera
Heribert Kansy, Werner Schüßler.....	light & grip
Gerda Gensberger, Uwe Franke	location manager
Gabriele Kröber	asisstant editor
Peter Rosenwanger	title design
Manfred Arbter	re-recording mixer

Oliver Herbrich	
Filmproduktion	production company
Gerhard Metz	production manager
Harald Kißling	production accountant
Isolde Herbrich, Katja Naumann	production assistant
FFA Federal Film Board & Filmbüro NRW	funding

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Film Edition digital remastering

* awared “**Best Male Actor**” at 14th Moskau International Filmfestival, 1985

WODZECK

Synopsis

A city in the industrial Ruhr area, Germany. Christmas 1984.

Franz Wodzeck is worker on a factory production line. He lives in a workmen's dwelling on the factory area. To Andres, his roommate, he reports about his fixed ideas, but even Andres cannot help him. His only relief is running out of doors to stroll about one of these decayed areas between civilization and nature. He seems to become a little quiet here.

Usually, his life is going on without any emotion. Leaving off working in the factory he meets Maleen, cashier in the stores. On an evening when she had no time for him he tries to participate on the pleasure seeking of the people.

The hard work and the despair make Wodzeck suffering. He entrusts himself to the staff-doctor but that one just wants to preserve Wodzeck's working power. During a porno film show, some of his fellow-workmen call Wodzeck's attention on Maleen's new relations with the boss who had invited her for a dance on the workshop Christmas party. Wodzeck can't believe that. Nevertheless he goes to to meet her. But Maleen isn't aware of breaking down his life when she tells him to want to enjoy her life.

Suddenly Wodzeck feels lonely and forsaken. In a taxi he rides the streets in the city, aimless and desperate. At night, he feels tormented by horrible dreams recalling his time in the mortuary. In great haste he puts on his clothes and runs out of the door. Without success he tries again to meet Maleen. Anxious, he is listening to imaginary voices. "What? - Even the wind is whispering that?" Wodzeck is horrified.

In the evening he watches again Maleen dancing with her new friend. In the discotheque the stroboscope flashes seem to shatter all their motions. He feels every picture burned again in his brain.

Next morning, he has finished his outlook on life, he is hopeless. He bequests all his effects to Andres who cannot help him. After all he buys in an iron-monger's shop the knife.

Without looking anywhere he stabs Maleen to death. After that, he seems to recover his senses. When he realizes that he had killed what has been the most beloved being in his life, madness is overwhelming him.

He is apprehended walking round the street. On several psychological expert reports he is declared insane. After his installation in a psychiatric asylum, he further feels neither anxiety nor desire. He simply exists.

WODZECK

Film reviews

Young Oliver Herbrich's impressive adaptation of the play *Woyzeck* has clearly tragic dimensions. Herbrich transposes Büchner's drama of the poor soldier to the modern day Ruhr region. His *Wodzeck* works in a metal factory; his Maleen is a saleswoman in a department store. With exceptional images and a sophisticated color design, he successfully creates a convincing connection between the classical text and his modern jealousy drama. Rarely has one seen a literary film adaptation this convincing.

(Peter Paul Huth, Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung)

Wodzeck lives on the fringe of prosperity, right on the verge of misery. We see those who have already hit bottom: At dawn, figures staggering through town, screaming their loneliness into anonymity. *Wodzeck* kills Maleen; it is the end of jealousy. Afterwards, his feeling of fear, his desire is gone. He freezes up. The medical specialist reads his evaluation to his students like a verdict. According to his medical finding, *Wodzeck* confuses the subjective with the objective. In the film, the subjective and the objective are identical. *Wodzeck* is part of a world that is slowly disintegrating. Accordingly, his horrific visions are frighteningly real. When he knocks on the floor, it actually does sound hollow. His words are like a prophecy.

(Anette Ascher, Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung)

Herbrich's *Wodzeck* is a very personal and – despite its pessimistic basic attitude – beautiful, intense study of a man who sees no way of escaping his dependencies and influences. Whereas, the classic drama shows *Woyzeck* still largely influenced and oppressed by people around him, Herbrich justifies the fate of his protagonist with images of the confining and oppressive landscape. These semi-documentary scenes seek to challenge the audience to make comparisons with their own environment. To experience what *Wodzeck* himself experiences: normal, everyday madness. The result is distressing and makes Herbrich's adaptation an impressive film, most definitely worth seeing.

(Albert Baer, Bremer Blatt)

Herbrich creates grimly realistic images of the coal-mining district, of a dismal environment. Its inhabitants' socio-economic pessimism corresponds to Büchner's classic novel, on which Herbrich's *Wodzeck* is based. Nothing has really changed since 1830: Everyone works, many don't know what for; some go crazy. And *Wodzeck* is no exception. Sure, the story is familiar. But Herbrich has given it an excellent, in fact perfect, update. Local color is captured, from the outside (factory chimney) and inside (company festivity), without comment. One feels sympathy, anger, grief. That comes very close to Büchner's intention. The acting performances are award-worthy, especially Detlef Kügow in the title role. *Wodzeck* reveals that the Ruhr area is the Bronx of Germany and thus an ideal shooting location – proof given by a 23-year-old Munich filmmaker.

(Döll, Ruhr Nachrichten)

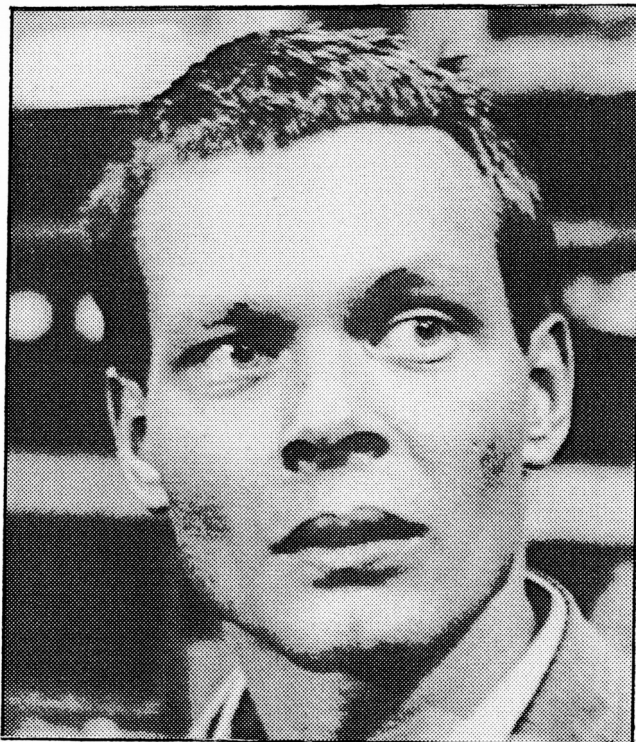
Endlich das Urteil!

Frauenmörder Wodzeck kommt lebenslänglich hinter Gitter

Erhebliches Aufsehen hatte in den vergangenen Monaten der Fall des 25jährigen Franz Wodzeck erregt, der im Juni dieses Jahres auf offener Straße seine zwei Jahre jüngere Geliebte Maleen F. mit sieben Messerstichen getötet hatte (wir berichteten). Wodzeck war voll geständig. Gestern sprach die Erste Kammer des Schwurgerichts das Urteil: lebenslange Haft wegen Mordes. Das Gericht hielt den Angeklagten trotz des Gutachtens des Psychiaters Karl Friedmann (Köln) für voll verantwortlich für seine Bluttat.

beim Bau, dem städtischen Bestattungsamt und in einer Maschinenfabrik.

Als seine Geliebte Maleen F. bei einer Betriebsfeier den leitenden Angestellten Josef H. kennenlernte und ihren langjährigen Geliebten Wodzeck verließ, geriet dieser völlig aus der Bahn. Als Maleen F. auf seine Annäherungsversuche nicht mehr reagiert, kauft er „wie in Trance“ die Tatwaffe. Die Verkäuferin schöpfte keinerlei Verdacht: „Er wirkte völlig ruhig. Ich dachte, er sei Metzger oder so etwas ähnliches.“



Franz Wodzeck (25): Voll verantwortlich für die Tat?

Ausführlich kam vor Gericht die traurige Lebensgeschichte des Täters zur Sprache. Stockend, sich häufig verhaspelnd und oft kaum hörbar berichtete der schmale, dunkelhaarige Angeklagte von seinem Lebensweg. Er wuchs in zerrütteten sozialen Verhältnissen auf. Seine Mutter, die heute 46jährige Elfriede Wodzeck, verlor das Sorgerecht, als er vierjährig war. Franz Wodzecks Vater ist unbekannt.

Unter Tränen beteuerte Elfriede Wodzeck, die heute einen Stehausschank in Berlin-Schöneberg betreibt, immer wieder: „Ich habe dem Jungen doch alles gegeben.“ Doch das war nicht eben viel. Nach dem Waisenhaus wuchs Wodzeck in einem Erziehungsheim heran. 1977 begann er die Lehre als Elektriker, die er aber ohne Abschluß beendete. In der Folgezeit verdiente er seinen Lebensunterhalt als Hilfskraft

Allein der Zeuge Andres W., der mit dem Angeklagten zeitweilig das Zimmer im Wohnheim der Fabrik teilte, berichtete von „merkwürdigen Ideen“ des Täters. Er habe fremde Stimmen gehört und überall Ratten herumlaufen sehen. „Er war verschlossen, ein Eigenbrötler“, sagte W. am letzten Verhandlungstag, „und manchmal wirkte er wie ein Spinner. Aber einen Mord hätte ich ihm niemals zugeutraut.“

Auf seine Aussage sowie das Gutachten des Psychiaters hatte Anwalt Dr. Peter Bernd gesetzt, der den Täter aufgrund dessen Persönlichkeitsveränderung für nicht voll verantwortlich hielt. Er kündigte noch im Gerichtssaal aufgrund neuer Zeugen und Sachverständiger eine Revision an.

HANS FEUERBERG

With a cinematography that over long stretches is impressive, Herbrich does not simply use the Ruhr region as a new background for his Büchner-based tragedy. Rather, he strives to convincingly illuminate the factors stemming from Ruhr-region conditions that inevitably bring about the fate of his Wodzeck. The dreariness of the landscape, workplace, and home is recorded conclusively as a breeding ground for existential pessimism and fantasies of happiness. Thus, this *Wodzeck* paints a coherent portrait of the modern working human, unable to articulate his frustration and fatalism in his own life and sphere of activity, let alone cope with it.

(Günther Bastian, film-dienst)

Herzog's film adaptation was largely true to the original novel. So Herbrich had to go a step further, transferring the story to the present day. Franz Wodzeck – an unskilled worker born in 1956 into a broken family, people-shy but haunted by inner voices – meets Maleen. His dream of a shared future fails, the woman has a better match in mind. The doctors are unable to identify the causes of Wodzeck's growing psychosis – almost inevitably, he murders the woman.

Herbrich's Ruhr "rustbelt" Wodzeck fails due both to the coldness of the work-ethic society and to his own mental condition. The factory world appears as a place of inescapable emotional destruction, for which his fragile utopias, revolving around bourgeois idylls, are no match.

(Hans Günther Pflaum, Süddeutsche Zeitung)

< Yellow press article (fake serving as film prop)

WODZECK

Lyrics

Georg Büchner incorporated lyrics from folk songs in his tragedy Woyzeck. Therefore we arranged trivial pop songs with German lyrics.

SUN AND MOON

*Life had always passed me by,
dull and empty, void of meaning.
Now I know it was a lie
to say I didn't need a thing.*

*But looking in your eyes I knew,
I knew the time had come.
I never thought that dreams come true
until the day I met you.*

Refrain:

*You are my sun and moon,
you make it all worth living for,
sun and moon, life's elixir.
Sun and moon will never part,
for love is in your heart.
Sun and moon, by day and night.
At last my dreams are coming true,
I've discovered love with you....*

Composition and recording by Andreas Hofner, Artman Studio, Munich.



WODZECK



WODZECK · A film by OLIVER HERBRICH · Based on motifs by GEORG BÜCHNER
DETLEF KÜGOW as Wodzeck · Camera LUDOLPH WEYER · Editing ROMY SCHUMANN

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