

Calendar of Events

February 2023

- Sat. Feb. 18 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
Sat. Feb. 18 Library Treasure Tour: "Gesangvereine: German-language Singing Societies and Their Place in Philadelphia History," 2:00pm
Sat. Feb. 18 Love Parade: A FastnachtsTanzParty, 8:00pm
Sun. Feb. 19 Wister & More Presents: EStrella Piano Duo, 3:00pm
Sat. Feb. 25 10th Annual PhillyBierfest, 2:00pm

March 2023

- Sun. Mar. 5 Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
Sat. Mar. 11 Buchclub: *Der geteilte Himmel* by Christa Wolf, 1:30pm
Thu. Mar. 16 Germany and the U.S. in the Face of Multiple Crises – Legal and Consular Observations; A Conversation with German Consul General Niels von Redecker (German Embassy, Washington D.C.), 6:00pm
Fri. Mar. 17 Friday Film Fest: *Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull*, 6:30pm
Sat. Mar. 18 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
Sun. Mar. 19 Classical Guitar Meets Classic Wine: A Journey through Spain & South America, 3:00pm
Thu. Mar. 23 Lecture by Jocelyn McDaniel – Science and Survival: Translating and Curating the Papers of Georg and Max Bredig, 6:30pm

April 2023

- Sun. Apr. 2 Gentle Yoga, 11:00am
Sun. Apr. 2 Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival Concert, 3:00pm
Sat. Apr. 8 Buchclub: *Der Kurze Brief zum langen Abscheid* by Peter Handke, 1:30pm
Sat. Apr. 10 Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am
Fri. Apr. 21 Friday Film Fest: *Und der Zukunft zugewandt*, 6:30pm

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA Friday Film Fest Series



Narziss und Goldmund

Directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky

February 17, 2022

● 6:30 PM ●

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania
611 Spring Garden St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Support provided in part by the
Philadelphia Cultural Fund.



Narziss und Goldmund (2020)

Director: Stefan Ruzowitzky
Screenplay: Stefan Ruzowitzky
Production: Helge Sasse, Christoph Müller, Thomas Pridnig, Peter Wirthensohn
Music: Henning Fuchs
Camera: Benedict Neuenfels
Length: 118 minutes
Cast: Sabin Tambrea—Mönch Narziss
Jannis Niewöhner —Goldmund
Emilia Schüle—Lydia
Uwe Ochsenknecht—Meister Niklaus
Henriette Confurius—Lene
Oskar von Schönfels—young Narziss
Jeremy Miliker—young Goldmund



Commentary by Karl Moehlmann

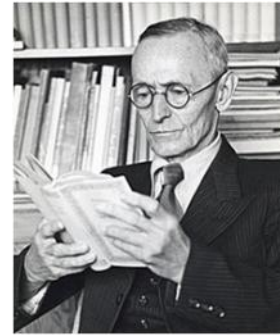
First Edition

This movie is based on the novel by Hermann Hesse (1877 – 1962) published in 1930. Here is the first edition and the text by the publisher, the Fischer Verlag/Berlin.



“ Die Spaltung unseres Wesens, das sich nach Hoheit und Ruhe, nach Vernunft und Nüchternheit des Wissens sehnt und zugleich nach gottlosem Rausch und sinnfreudiger Hingebung an die Welt, wird in den beiden Hauptgestalten dieses Buches anschaulich: Narziss, der klar und streng um den letzten Sinn Bemühte, der geborene Lehrer und Weise, der Mönch und Abt , - Goldmund, der ewig umgetriebene Lebensschüler, der selige Abenteurer des leiblichen Daseins, der Liebende, der Träumer und Bildner, der Todfeind der Besitzenden und Sesshaften. Wie die beiden Freundschaft schließen, in langer Trennung vorbestimmte Wege gehen und sich zum Abschied auf immer wiederfinden, das ist hier bezaubernd rein und im Tonfall schwermütigen Glücks erzählt.”

Autobiographische Elemente



Narziss und Goldmund was Hesse's most successful work during his lifetime and was translated into 30 languages. Facets of Hesse's own biography are interwoven into the novel. He was born July 2, 1877 in Calw/Württemberg, the son of a missionary from Estonia and a mother who was born in India to German missionaries. From 1890 until 1891, Hesse was a student at the Latin school in Göppingen. In

September 1891 he entered the “evangelische Klosterseminar Maulbronn”, submitting to familial expectations that he would become a theologian. But Maulbronn, located northwest of Stuttgart near Pforzheim, was the beginning of a serious personal crisis. In 1892, after less than a year Hesse fled the seminary and started a journey through various institutions and schools. In the novel, Maulbronn becomes Mariabronn, from which Goldmund sallies forth in search of a free and full life.



Bildungsroman – der Weg zur Mutter

Hesse's novel stands in the great tradition of *Bildungsroman*, a genre in which the protagonist leaves home and embarks on a journey (both literal and spiritual) that eventually leads to self-knowledge and fulfillment. The point of departure for the story is the medieval monastery of Mariabronn, where young Goldmund is sent by his father to become a monk. The son is supposed to repent for his mother who, in the father's view, brought shame to the family, being a gypsy and a whore.

There Goldmund meets the young Narziss, who is one of the most gifted students in the seminary, and the two develop a deep friendship. Narziss sees his calling in the ascetic and strict life of the cloister and the role of a wise scholar. When Goldmund joins three other students for a forbidden nightly visit to a nearby village and the house of a maid and her daughter, the young woman whispers

to him upon leaving, *"Komm wieder! und 'ihr Mund berührte den seinen in einem kindlichen Kuss."* Goldmund is struck and torn at the same time. *"Niemals mehr!"* sagte befehlend sein Wille. *"Morgen wieder!"* flehte schluchzend sein Herz.

When Narziss finds out what has happened and sees how Goldmund struggles with his awakening desire for carnal pleasures despite being committed to the celibate life of a monk, he uses his psychological acuity (some readers might infer psychoanalytic probing) to show Goldmund that his destiny does not lie in the monastic life. *"Du bist kein Gelehrter, du bist kein Mönch. Ich wünsche mir nichts anderes, als dass du ganz und gar Goldmund würdest."*

But in order to become himself, Goldmund has to be enlightened about the secrets of his nature. Narziss sees *"diese Natur von einer harten Schale umpanzert, von Einbildungen, Erziehungsfehlern, Vaterworten und ahnte längst das ganze, nicht komplizierte Geheimnis dieses jungen Lebens. Seine (Narziss') Aufgabe war ihm klar: dies Geheimnis seinem Träger zu enthüllen, ihn von der Schale zu befreien, ihm seine eigentliche Natur zurückzugeben.* And when Narziss tells Goldmund that this secret was connected to forgetting his childhood and the real image of his mother, *"jenes andere, ganz andere Bild, das nicht aus den Erzählungen des Vaters und der Dienerboten und aus dunklen, wilden Gerüchten bestand, seine eigene, wirkliche, erlebte Erinnerung an die Mutter"*, Goldmund twitches as if he is struck by an arrow. He is overcome by great pain and collapses into unconsciousness. When he awakens, he has an intense epiphany: the memory of his early childhood and his mother return, and he seems like a different person, having been healed and ready to follow his rediscovered soul.

"Die Mutter war wieder zu ihm gekommen, die lange Verlorene; das war ein hohes Glück. Aber wohin führte ihr lockender Ruf? Ins Ungeheure, in Verstrickung, in Not, vielleicht in den Tod. Ins Stille, Sanfte, Gesicherte, in Mönchszelle und lebenslängliche Klostergemeinschaft führte sie nicht."

In every *Bildungsroman*, the recognition of an error, the knowledge of a negative certainty is the precondition for the decision to leave and pursue a different path, wherever that may lead. (*"Der Irrtum kann nur durch das Irren geheilt werden"*. Goethe: *Wilhelm Meisters*

Lehrjahre). His first real sexual encounter happens when he is collecting herbs in the countryside, simply hastening the timing of his inevitable departure.

As Goldmund leaves the monastery, he embarks on a restless vagabond life. He enchants and seduces many women and is seduced in turn by them. After several daring and dangerous amorous escapades, he discovers his true calling. In his case it is an artistic calling, *"eine künstlerische Sendung."* Fascinated by a *Marienbild* in a church, he sets out to look for the artist who created it. He finds "Meister Nikolaus", asks to become his apprentice, and starts learning the art of sculpting, *das Bildhauerhandwerk*. Soon he creates a figure of Johannes that has the image of Narziss, thus completing a second major element of a *Bildungsroman*, to find the *"Beruf, zu dem man berufen ist."*



Polarität

From the outset of their relationship, Narziss has a clear picture and understanding of the polarity between himself and Goldmund:

"Die Naturen von deiner Art, die mit den starken und zarten Sinnen, die Beseelten, die Träumer, Dichter, Liebenden, sind uns andern, uns Geistmenschen, beinahe immer überlegen. Eure Herkunft ist eine mütterliche. Ihr lebt im Vollen, euch ist die Kraft der Liebe und des Erlebenkönnens gegeben. Wir Geistigen, obwohl wir euch andere häufig zu leiten und zu regieren scheinen, leben nicht im Vollen, wir leben in der Dürre. Euch gehört die Fülle des Lebens, euch der Saft der Früchte, euch der Garten der Liebe, das schöne Land der Kunst. Eure Heimat ist die Erde, unsere die Idee. Eure Gefahr ist das Ertrinken in der Sinnenwelt, unsere das Ersticken im luftleeren Raum. Du bist Künstler, ich bin Denker. Du schläfst an der Brust der Mutter, ich wache in der Wüste."

The polarity of *Geist und Leben*, of logos and eros, of ascetic, monastic restrictions (*"Armut, Gehorsam, Keuschheit"*) and art are symbolized in Narziss and Goldmund. No other sequence in the movie illustrates this antithesis better than the scenes when Narziss castigates himself in isolation while Goldmund is seen making

love to the woman he had encountered previously (*"Ich zeige dir, wo das Himmelreich wirklich ist."*). Even though at the end Narziss saves his friend from execution and Goldmund returns to the monastery to work as a sculptor, Hesse never offers any kind of synthesis of these opposite worlds.



The deep friendship between Narziss and Goldmund remains, but the vagabond life and the monastery are isolated from each other and cannot relate to each other productively. Hesse seems non-committal, if not skeptical, about any kind of harmonization of the polarity exhibited by his character types and provokes us to ponder many imponderables: Has Goldmund found a *Königreich* like Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* or any kind of happiness at all after he has lost his true love, Lene, due to the ravages of the plague? Is there any kind of resonance or relevance to us in a story so distant in time and dire in disposition due to the plague? Is it possible to conceive of a synthesis of these two antithetical archetypes of the soul? A great work of art like *Narziss and Goldmund* evokes such questions, then leaves us alone to navigate the ocean of possible answers.

Upcoming Friday Film Fests



March 17 — Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull (2021)

English Subtitles

This 2021 remake of the famous 1957 (Horst Buchholz) literary adaptation of Thomas Mann's 1954 novel features Jannis Niewöhner in the starring role.



April 21 — Und der Zukunft zugewandt (2018)

English Subtitles

This film tells the story of Antonia, who returns to socialist East-Germany after World War II and is forced to keep her horrible experience in the Stalinist Russian Gulag a secret.



May 19 — Schachnovelle (2022)

German with German Subtitles

This film is an adaptation of Austrian author Stefan Zweig's 1941 novel that tells the story of lawyer Josef Bartok, who tries to escape Austria in 1938 after the invasion/Anschluss of the Nazis.