

De Witte

("Whitey")

Belgium / Germany : 1934 : dir. Jan Vanderheyden

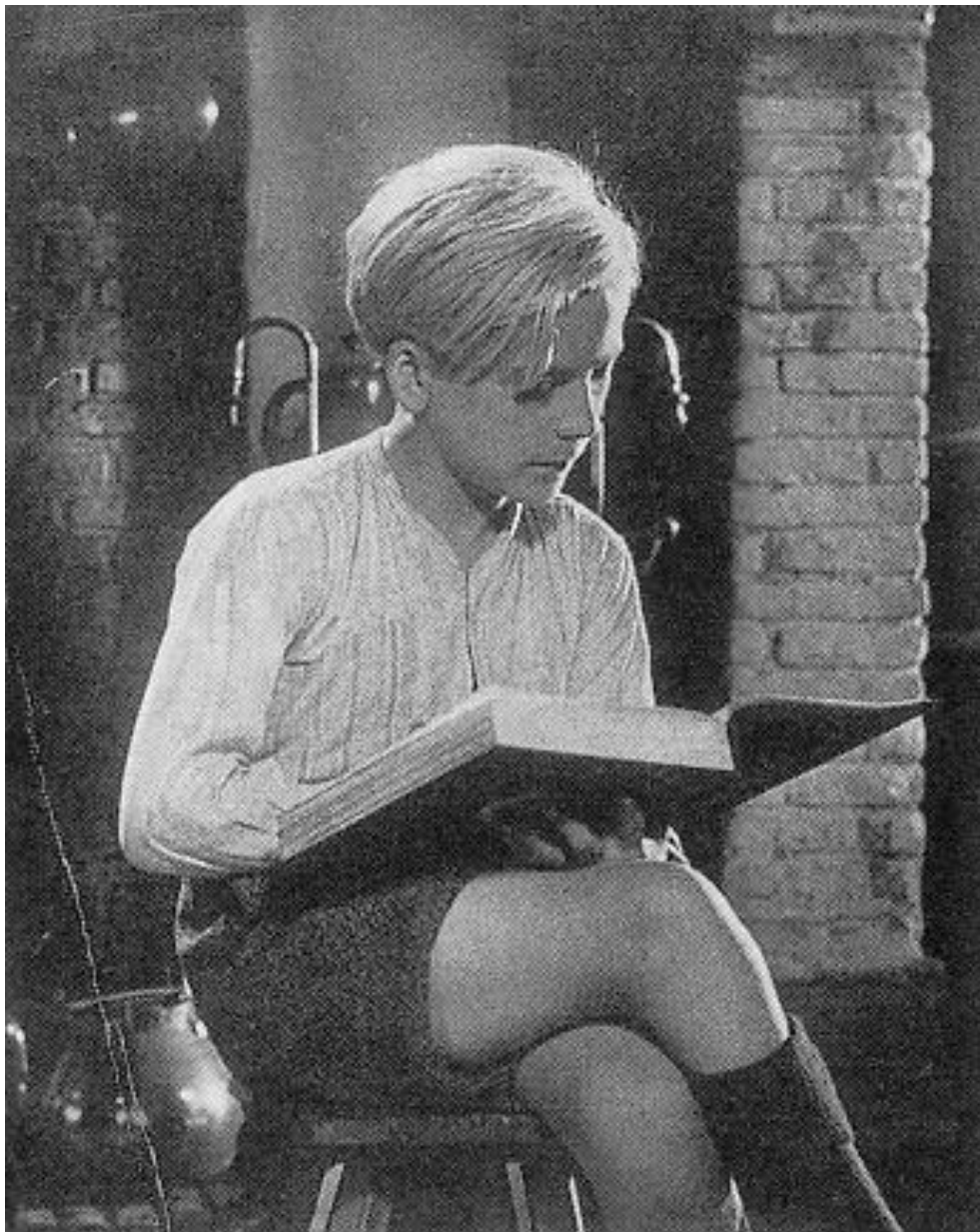
: 78 min

prod: : scr: Editha Kiel : dir.ph.:

[Jefke Bruyninckx](#); [Nand Buyl](#)

Magda Janssens; Jef Van Leemput Sr; Gaston Smet; Nora Oosterwijck; Willem Cauwenberg

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Kbytes	Ω □ ≠ Z ☼	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Jefke Bruyninckx - demurely engrossed in self-improvement

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"An adaptation of Ernest Claes' folk novel, for which the exteriors were shot in Zichem and the interiors at Berlin. Vanderheyden was assisted by renowned theatre comic Willem Benoy. The film's success left Vanderheyden in a position to make a whole series of Flemish folk films until 1943, some of them directed by Editha Kiel, screenwriter of this film. *** "

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Bruyninckx:

"Around his fourteenth year, in a country which has never made many films (its Flemish-speakers are catered for by Holland, French-speakers by France), Jozef Bruyninckx was plucked from obscurity - on account of his lean, rebellious looks, intelligence and blond hair - to play the lead in **"DE WITTE"**. This was one of the first Flemish talkies and certainly the most successful: it remained popular with generations of children till its remake 45 years later.

The original comedy of poor village life, which Ernest Claes based on his own childhood and the people of his own village of Zichem, had itself been a perennial best-seller and gone into 120 editions. "Whitey", the hero, is a sort of accident-prone Huck Finn. A 14-year old in pre-television Belgium wasn't going to have many more child roles come his way, and Jef Bruyninckx didn't. But he was to make a career

in show business all the same. Between 1941 and 1953 he graduated from film editor to assistant director; then he directed **"DE KLUCHT VAN DE BRAVE MOORD-ENAAR"** (55) and three years later **"VRIJ-GEZEL MET 40 KINDEREN"**. "

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Buyl:

"Fernand Buyl (more usually Nand or Nandje) was the younger Belgian contemporary of Jefke Bruyninckx, and worked with him in Flemish-language films of the Thirties. Buyl continued to act for some time, then turned to stage production. He finally became director of the Flemish Theatre in Brussels."

[no listing in "Classic Foreign Films", "Classics of the Foreign Film", "The International Encyclopaedia of Film", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Bruyninckx (give your tongue a workout) was born in 1919 and Nand Buyl in 1923. They played together twice more, in **"UILENSPIEGEL LEEFT NOG"** ("Owlglass is Still Alive", 36) and **"HAVENMUSIEK"** ("Harbour Music", 37). Buyl was also seen in **"ALLEEN VOOR U"** ("Just For You", 35) and **"DRIE FLINKE KERELS"** ("Three Strapping Fellows", 38).

As I recall from the remake, which took the full title **"DE WITTE VAN ZICHEM"**, political agitation by agricultural workers played a significant part in the background, and it's doubtful that such "communist" activities would be very sympathetically portrayed in a film shot at studios in Nazi Germany. Many Dutch and Belgian titles of this period were, I gather, shot in Germany in simultaneous German and Dutch-speaking versions, sometimes with alternate casts occupying the same sets but working from parallel scripts. See, for example, **"CISKE DE RAT"** (55) and its twin production **"CISKE - EIN KIND BRAUCHT LIEBE"**.

See the 1980 remake, starring Eric Clerckx (with the perpetual expression and demeanour of a whipped dog), and see subject index under **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TITLES, FARMS & FARMING** and **PASTORALS**. For a very similar Flemish "folk" melodrama, see **"MERIJNTJE GIJZENS JEUGD"** (also a 1936 film and 1980s TV serial).