

Wenders in Motion: A Study On The Way Of Characterization In Wim Wenders' Road Movies

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Volume 2.2 (2013) | ISSN 2158-8724 (online) | DOI 10.5195/cinej.2013.63 | <http://cinej.pitt.edu>

Abstract

Famous for his road movies, Wim Wenders, has a deeper understanding of the word; motion. More than often, Wenders tells the story of wanderers by putting them in a constant state of travel. These travels alter the wanderers' characters and play a key role in Wenders' storytelling. This paper studies Wim Wenders' way of characterization in three parts. The first part states out keywords to define Wim Wenders' wanderers: movement/motion, the journey, homesickness, spatial levels, the Ozu connection. And it mainly focuses on his road trilogy: *Im Lauf der Zeit* (1976), *Falsche Bewegung* (1975), and *Alice in den Städten* (1974), while explaining the stated keywords. The second part only focuses on *Paris, Texas* (1984) and its main character Travis, who might be seen as the ultimate wanderer whom all other Wenders' characters blend in to. The third and the final part takes *Der Himmel Über Berlin* (1987) as 'a vertical road movie' hoping for finding a cure for the worldwide homesickness that all the Wenders' wanderers suffer. Also there are a handful of music references hidden through the paper in homage to director's love for rock 'n' roll music.



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But the true voyagers are only those who leave
Just to be leaving; hearts light, like balloons,
They never turn aside from their fatality
And without knowing why they always say: "Let's go!"
Charles Baudelaire

MOTION/MOVEMENT:

The time itself consists of an ongoing motion. It is the movement in which each and every one of us takes a part and by which every individual's life is shaped. Basically, 'The movement is life.' (Carr 1914: 28) And just as the life it imitates, cinema is nothing but a series of moving images on the celluloid.

Putting *motion* in the very hearth of it, Wim Wenders uses movement as a key element for setting up the drama in his movies. Following Henri Bergson's footsteps even the director himself admits he has a deeper understanding for the word; 'Motion...Motion pictures. I always liked the close connection between the motion and emotion. Sometimes I feel the emotion in my films comes only from the motion: It's not created by the characters.' (Dawson 1976: 210)

In *Alice in den Städten* (1974), Alice (Yella Rottländer) watches New York from the top of the Empire State Building. She surveys the city without paying attention to anything in particular until a white bird passes by the Flatiron Building. As the bird flies, her looks slowly follow. This horizontal movement doesn't belong to the view that the vertical lines of skyscrapers create. The intersection of these two lines creates a visual contradiction. Framed in a binocular view a simple action becomes the center of attention, while the city scene turns into a peripheral background. Without any supporting dialogue, this simple motion conveys little Alice's urge to leave even without showing the character. Then the scene cuts to Alice and her compelled companion Philip Winter (Rüdiger Vogler), who is in no different condition in terms of alienation. However, sharing the role of *strangers in a strange land* is not the only trait they have in common.

Wim Wenders does not only use motion visually, but also he creates a semantic flow by using contradictions. The gathering of oppositions like child and adult is another way for Wenders to create emotion. Alice and Philip contribute director's effort by constantly shifting their roles. From their first encounter in the revolving door 'there's a sense of play, of teasing, that grows between them that is simply lovely to watch.' (Covino 1977-78: 12). Throughout the movie, Philip frequently finds himself involved in a child-like silliness, like stuffing Alice's sandwich in his mouth or razzing the kid by calling her a 'Bettnässer'. Ten years after shooting *Alice in den Städten*, Wim Wender's once again creates a similar connection between Travis (Henry Dean Stanton) and Hunter (Hunter Carson) in *Paris, Texas* (1984). As creating a/an (e)motional flow between semantic contradictions is a characteristic property of the director, a similar connection can as well be observed in *Der Himmel Über Berlin*. These oppositions play a key role in the movie; therefore more examples and a detailed explanation will be given under the third chapter.

Timothy Corrigan begins his article, 'Wenders' Kings of the Road: The Voyage

from Desire to Language', with a quote from Merleau-Ponty's *The Film and the New Psychology* (1981-82): Although it is true that, when either my train or the one next to it starts, first one, then the other may appear to be moving, one should note that the illusion is not arbitrary and that I cannot wilfully induce it by the completely intellectual choice of a point of reference. If I am playing cards in my compartment, the other train will start moving; If, on the other hand, I am looking for someone in the adjacent train, than mine will begin to roll. In each instance the one which seems stationary is the one we have chosen as our abode and which, for the time being is our environment... (94)

In *Falsche Bewegung* (1975), Wim Wenders starts Wilhelm's (Rüdiger Vogler) journey as if he is making a visual quote from the very same paragraph. A writer wannabe, Wilhelm finds himself in a train compartment during the search for the words he has lost. He stares at the empty station with equally empty looks. Which, no sooner than a second, a woman, on another train, will catch. As the train begins to move, Wilhelm realizes he is losing touch with this unexpected muse. *In the course of time*, It becomes impossible to understand whether he is the one leaving this moment behind. Or she is the one that should be followed. Though, Wilhelm doesn't show any despair or any other feelings. Just a stillness which only Mignon (Nastassia Kinski) shares. A mute young girl who keeps her eyes fixed on the writer. And because of which she is aware of the fact that, their train is still yet to move. Later Wim Wenders puts a visual footnote to this scene by showing the working clock right above a moving train. A footnote that leads to silent murmurs of a half asleep Wilhelm: *Im Lauf der Zeit*...

Hence its German title, which can be translated as "in the course of time", *Im Lauf der Zeit* (1976), might be the one movie where Wim Wenders' strong curiosity for motion / movement and his intellectual relation with Henri Bergson can be examined at its best. During the opening credits of the movie Wenders notes his interest in the flow of time in a Godardish fashion: 'Gedhert in 11 Wochen. zwischen dem 1. Juli und dem 31. Oktober 1975, zwischen Lünenburg und Hof, entlang der Grenze zur DDR.' Shot in 11 weeks from July 1st to October 31st, 1975, between Lunenberg and Hof, along the East German Border.

Two main characters of *Im Lauf der Zeit* (1976), Bruno Winter ((Rüdiger Vogler) and Robert Lander (Hans Zichler) begin to travel together after their accidental meeting by the Elbe River. Though, the only thing they share for a long period of time is some silent moments in a moving vehicle and a pair of dry trousers. In fact the first real conversation between two main characters of the movie comes twenty-six minutes and thirty seconds after the movie has started. Bruno tells Robert that his clothes were finally dry and Robert responds without really caring for what Bruno has said: 'What is the next big town?' Fourteen minutes later, Wim Wenders, takes a step further and tries avoiding conversation altogether while setting up the relationship between his two protagonists. He lets the actions speak louder than words by involving Bruno and Robert in a shadow play. Timothy Corrigan summarizes the scene as follows (1981-82):

...two men arrive at a theatre and discover that the sound equipment needs to be repaired. While they work behind the screen, their silhouettes are projected and amplified on the screen; and the soon get involved in a kind of gigantic, Chaplinesque shadow mime which Wenders depicts by cutting back and forth between the men behind the screen and the audience of children that watches them. They swing on ropes, juggle, and pretend to batter each other with clubs, and the game projected on the screen thus becomes a kind of intimacy, the first intimacy displayed by either of the two introverted men. (97)

One of these two introverted men, Robert, can be seen as a living embodiment of Wim Wenders' keen interest in motion. From the very first moment he is seen in a speeding Volkswagen, Robert portrays a man who is constantly on the move. No matter how frivolous the action itself may seem, he prefers to be involved in it. In one playful moment Robert keeps himself busy with spinning a hula hoop rather than staying still. Though not as unpredictable, nor as infantile, his frequent wanderings are just another consequence of this need for motion. Sometimes these travels are just for leaving a coin to the railroad to be flattened by a train. And sometimes they end with random encounters, such as kids sailing paper boats along the river. One of those travels brings an unexpected guest, who plays a much more significant role than others.

As Robert lies on his back watching the passing clouds through the sunroof, a clacking noise triggers his urge for a walkabout that leads him to an abandoned grain elevator. There he finds a man (Marquard Bohm) with nothing but a grieving heart and a blood stained jacket. After Robert's failed attempt for conversation the stranger comes to Bruno's van to spend the night and to tell the story behind the bloodstains. Unlike Robert, his wife had a successful suicide attempt with another speeding car. The mournful husband decides to wait until the car wreck to be towed away in the morning. When the workers come and start to wind the mechanical arm that lifts the crane, he keeps winding the cinematograph forward as if he is trying to make the time go faster. The flow of time is altered by the perception of two men. For Robert, the process happens in real time. Even Wim Wenders tries to underline Robert's awareness of time by making him to report every little action as it happens. But the man with the bloodstained jacket is stuck within a moment blocked by the wreck that killed his wife. No matter how fast he tries to wind the handle, his moment is on a film strip in a Bergson cinematograph.'... In which there are an infinite number of films, and in which there is never a next film because an infinite number come between any two...' (Carr 1914: 141)

'...To have the picture we must restore the movement, and this the cinematograph does.' (Carr 1914: 24) And that is exactly what Bruno Winter does. During

his journeys through Northern Germany, he reinstates the movement by repairing the cinematographs in old and neglected film theatres. Random images of circular movement surround his travels. Cinematographs, record players, even the fading image of a turning wheel that the director uses to show the passing time. This never ending travel take him to a town where he meets Pauline (Lisa Kreuzer), a woman who temporarily works at a film theatre. During their rendezvous at the cinema where Pauline works, Bruno splices together a film loop. It shows a burning house, a close up of a panting woman's breasts, and a rape scene. And a voice over that keeps repeating the words: 'Brutality, action, sex. A film TV won't show'. The film loop express the sexual attraction between Bruno and Pauline, shows his rootlessness and implies the impossibility of their relationship. 'To grasp the reality, it is necessary to restore the movement.' (Carr 1914: 28) And once more, that is exactly what Bruno Winter does. Understanding the most significant part of his reality, loneliness.

THE JOURNEY:

In Wenders' road movies, the ongoing state of travel might be the first thing someone can notice even without paying too much attention. The director's preference of showing his protagonists in travel is also stated by Kathe Geist (1988): '... in *Alice in den Städten* out of " 110 minutes total running time, approximately 24 minutes (21 percent) show the characters in or looking out of moving vehicles.'(42) In fact the movie opens with a shot of a plane passing by and it ends with a similar shot of a moving train. Even during the scenes when the vehicles are not in the picture, the sound of their travels and the lighting effects they cause frequently invade the screen. In a hotel room, where these noises are the only thing that can be heard through the window, Alice wants Philip to tell a bedtime story. He makes up a story about a never ending travel and as expected, he sometimes has to stop because of the sounds made by the passing trains. Without losing its slightly annoying repetitiveness, it can be summarized as; A boy comes to the seashore with a truck, that he sees while he was following the horseman, that he sees while he was following the fish, that he sees while he was following the hedgehog that, he sees in clearing in the woods on a sunny afternoon.

The story may seem a little blithe or not germane. It is one of those scenes, '... that perhaps Salinger might have brought to the screen had he become a filmmaker rather than a writer.' (Covino 1977-78: 11) But still, it deserves a closer look and Philip's friend in New York gives a clue to make sure it gets the attention; 'In this city when you come to an intersection, it is like a clearing in the woods.' Both the skittish boy in the story and the characters in Wenders' road films act like true Baudelairish voyagers and without knowing why, they leave just to be leaving. As Wenders' wanderers tend to be in an 'any way out of the world' condition, their journeys tend to start directionless. The routes of these travels are shaped by the encounters. In *Alice in den Städten*, Philip tries to go back to Germany because he is broke. While buying a plane ticket, the clerk in the travel office asks Philip which city he wants to go. 'Just any' is his answer. But with Alice, his journey gains a new route, the randomly selected town of Wuppertal. In *Im Lauf der Zeit*, '... the story of

Robert and Bruno itself begins not with the desire to be somewhere or the vision of a new direction, but with the desire not to be somewhere and the choice of no direction.' (Corrigan 1981-82: 95) And in *Falsche Bewegung*, Wilhelm starts to travel with a train ticket his mother (Marianne Hoppe) have bought and without knowing its destination. There is, however, an important difference. Philip's made up story lacks the potential of a possible change that can be found in all Wenders' road movies. As the director himself points out; 'That which interests me in the theme of voyage is: the potential of transformation, not only within the characters, but within each of us'. (Chali 1976: 46) This change is triggered while the physical journeys transform into an inside travel. As another frequently used theme in the directors filmography, each character 'comes to regard his travel in more than merely practical terms: the voyage through Germany becomes a voyage of self discovery" (Frisch 1979: 208)

In *Alice in den Städten*, first clues about Philip, are given the night before Philip leaves U.S.A, when he drops by a friend's where she claims the reason behind Philip's habit of taking photographs is his search for a proof of his existence. Then she adds: 'I don't know how to live, either. No one showed me how.' Even though this dialogue doesn't lift the mystery curtain over Philip's past completely, it gives an idea about how Alice's presence affects him. Sometimes, taking the role of an adult, the little girl has an inclination for unintentionally giving life lessons Philip. In a craftily proportioned scene, Alice enters the bathroom while Philip was still inside. With a series of innocent questions, she not only makes him to question his fear of fear itself but also gives advice on how to get rid of unpleasant smells. During the scene, Alice is shown from low angled shots. Though, Wim Wenders deliberately avoids the classic low angled shot - high angled shot contradiction. Lying naked in the bathtub, defenceless, Philip is the weaker side of the conversation.

During the movie, Philips' being out of touch with the world is symbolized through his Polaroid snapshots. Wim Wenders edits these scenes in a similar way. First the scenery to be photographed is shown in a picturesque style. Then the viewer sees what comes out of Philip's Polaroid camera. The very same editing style can be observed in the scene where Alice and Philip wait for the downtown bus in Amsterdam. A framed, photograph like scene shows a windmill and a road sign. Then it cuts to Philip looking to the same direction. Up to that point, the combination of these two shots results with Philip taking a snapshot of the same scene that has just been shown. But, with an unexpected move, Alice interrupts the process. She asks Philip to tell something about himself. 'I wouldn't know that' is the only answer the man can give. Not surprisingly, the scene ends with someone taking a photograph. But this time Alice is the one using the camera and Philip is the subject. As if seeing it for the first time, Philip studies his own face in the picture. Reflections of Alice's face falls on the Polaroid merging their images with each other in one frame.

According to Philip's friend in New York, these photos are Philip's desperate attempts of proving his existence. So it may be argued that by taking the man's picture, Alice proves Philip's presence in that bus stop at that time. The picture raises an awareness of being. It is the moment when Philip regains his touch with the world. Towards the end of the movie, Alice realizes this and says he hadn't been taking any

pictures since Amsterdam. Despite his failure in finding Alice's grandmother's house, during their travel Philip finds his identity that he has lost a long time ago.

In *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Robert claims that, it is not really a life if one cannot experience change or at least wants it. During his travel, he succeeds to confront his father whom he has not seen for over ten years. Bruno, on the other hand, fails to overcome his loneliness. During his date with Pauline when he realizes this failure, Bruno opens an umbrella and says; 'And now I am in the dark, too.' This is a reference he makes to the night when Robert tells his dream. It is about the ink that enables to erase old writing while writing a new one. 'With the new ink, I could suddenly think of new things, see and write new things' he says, 'the problem was solved.' Not approving the idea Bruno replies; 'I don't think so. You are still in the dark.' But Robert stands by his idea until the end of the movie. Before going his own way, he leaves a note to his fellow companion, that says; 'Everything must change.'

Wilhelm goes through a similar experience in *Falsche Bewegung*. His travel starts at the highest point of his alienation from people. Trapped within his impotence as a writer, he even refuses talking with others yet alone establishing any other means of intimacy. Wilhelm leaves home with a question in his head. He writes to his diary; 'I want to become a writer. But how without liking people?' This dilemma acts as a catalyst in Wilhelm's transformation.

As he meets new people, he finds himself in love with a woman, Therese Farmer (Hanna Schygulla), caring about a young girl's future, Mignon (Nastassia Kinski), and hating an old man, Laertes (Hans Christian Blech), because of his past. Soon he realizes what distances him from the people is writing itself. So, he leaves all the people he has met and all the feelings he has discovered behind and goes to the Zugspitze Mountain to look for the words he longs for.

The meeting moments in Wim Wenders' road movies plays a similar role in each story, yet forming just another common motive for the director. The main story line starts with the meeting of two characters and ends with their departure. Also these meeting moments somehow give important clues about the upcoming journey. When Philip and Alice meet for the first time in *Alice in den Städten*, they share the first of the many playful moments they have during the journey. Philip's acting as a child, the motion they are involved in the revolving doors, and the serious look Alice has at the end are all examples of frequently used elements that are used in the movie. In *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Robert -the Kamikaze- Lander, comes in to Bruno's life driving at full speed, off the road and right in to the Elbe River. Like an unexpected guest, he comes out of the water with a suitcase in his hand and a pair of squeaking shoes on his feet. During their travel, Robert continues to take little trips many of which intersects with Bruno's journey. But none will cause a meeting moment as spectacular or as weird as the first one. And as it is stated in the previous chapter, the first look Wilhelm and Therese exchange, is a perfect example of the directors' curiosity for motion.

Also, Characters' past failures before the meeting moment is another similarity that is to be noticed. In *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Bruno meets Robert right after an unsuccessful suicide attempt and a failed marriage. Wilhelm is suffering from his

impotence as a writer in the beginning of *Falsche Bewegung* and he breaks up with his so called girlfriend Janine (Lisa Kreuzer) before the start of his journey. In *Alice in den Städten* after the opening scene where he softly sings the Rolling Stones hit *Under the Boardwalk*, Philip's failure as a journalist is one of the first things to be introduced about the character. The same rule applies for the third party encounters as well. Both Alice's mother (*Alice in de Städten*), Philip's father (*Im Lauf der Zeit*), the host with suicidal tendencies (*Falsche Bewegung*) and the man with the blood stained jacket (*Im Lauf der Zeit*) have been suffering from their failed relationships when they join the story.

With the exception of *Alice in den Städten*, which may be the one film in which the director doesn't completely avoid building a dramatic structure, there hardly is a conventional storyline in Wim Wenders' road trilogy. Events appear to happen without a reason and random encounters join and leave the story with only a little if not any effect. 'But Wenders shapes his trivial stories into something far more affecting than what they are ostensibly about.' (Covino 1977-78: 9) According to Kathe Geist (1983), 'Kings of the road refers metaphorically to the life cycle. It begins with a birth image: Robert, soaking wet, climbing out of the narrow opening atop of his womblike Volkswagen, which floats temporarily in the waters of Elbe.' (237) The birth metaphor is completed when Robert sits in the car wrapped under a blanket and the life cycle is completed when two men comes to the border, a dead end. " ... the birth and death images refer, of course, to the birth and death of the men's friendship.' (Geist 1983: 237) And Timothy Corrigan states there is a second journey the movie tells (1981-82); 'the voyage through the film itself which involves both the spectator's experience of the film and an analysis of the film mechanism as means of communication.' (94) Starting from the first scene Wim Wenders continues to play with the viewer's expectations, as Michael Covino states: (1977-78)

The film is teeming with vignettes alive with fruitful possibilities that are always allowed to fade out. Bruno meets a woman who works at a local movie house outside a bumper-car ride, and we expect a prototypical amusement park scene like the one we got in *400 Blows* ... But then, with the scene hardly under the way, it's over; we see that our own expectations were artificial, founded upon previous films rather than any real experience. (13)

It is true both the life cycle metaphor and the director's stand against mainstream storytelling can be observed in sublevels of the physical journey in *Im Lauf der Zeit*. But finding what might be the most important part of this travel can be hard without looking through the historical context of the German Cinema. Wenders is considered to be the youngest/latest big director in Neuer Deutsche Film (New German Cinema). The seeds of New German Cinema were sown in 1962 Oberhausen Film Festival. With the gathering of leading writers and filmmakers (including the two pioneers of the movement; Alexander Kluge and Völkler Schlöndorff) the Kuratorium Junger Film (Young German Film Committee) was

formed with the signature; Papas Kino ist tot; papa's cinema is dead. Even though the committee had been able to sponsor more than fifteen features between 1965 and 68, with the start of 70s the situation had changed drastically when the commercial studios and distributors gained the economic power. As a result of which the quality of films fell and many theatres began to close one after another. And this is what we see during Bruno's encounters with the managers of closed down theatres. A strong sense of yearning for the old days of cinema marks both the beginning and the end of the movie.

Falsche Bewegung is another Wim Wenders' movie that is in close connection with German History. It is a loose adaptation of J.W. Goethe's famous *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and tells a story enriched with arguments, confessions, criticism and a handful of intellectual references including Jean Marie Straub's *Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach* (1968). The relationship between Mignon and Laertes is an analysis of the second generation Germans after the World War II. The sequence where Wilhelm tells his dream he saw the night before plays a key role in understanding the allegorical meaning hidden behind. Wilhelm talks about having a dream in which Laertes had to die and a child who has to keep him company until the old man is dead. 'I dreamt of absolute darkness in which the child stood next to you till you died.' says Wilhelm, 'It was my child.'

Mignon has distinctive characteristics that make her unique among the group. She is mute and doesn't use any kind of sign language to communicate thus she is incapable of making demands. She follows her companion, Laertes, who is an ex-Nazi officer yet refuses to hear his stories about the war, often shows some awkward gymnastic talents that put her in a state of anomie and likes to fall asleep in front of the television. As Laertes point out, she also finds dreams ridiculous. Mignon is a representation of the younger generation raised in an Americanised consumerist society. Robbed of their past by the infamy of Nazism and of their future by American cultural imperialism they are in a state of psychological and cultural dislocation. Towards the end of the movie, Wilhelm and Therese free Mignon from Laertes giving the young girl a chance to make her own decisions for the future.

Wim Wenders who was born in 1945 has a firsthand experience of this change. With a certain level of self-reflexivity this sense of dislocation plays a significant part in the director's filmography and is among the most important things that make his road films unique. To find a place that they can belong to is the incognizance aim that is shared by all Wenders' wanderers. As Michael Covino says it is '*a worldwide homesickness*' they are trying to be freed. (Covino 1997-78: 1)

HOMESICKNESS:

The most characteristic property, which all Wenders' characters share, is the homesickness they have. It is more like a motion sickness, an offspring of their never ending travels. Forming a vicious cycle of perpetual tripping, homesickness is a sequence of reciprocal cause and effect, just to create another circular movement for

Wenders.

Wenders' wanderers start their travels with a rejection of a past home. In the beginning of *Falsche Bewegung*, Wilhelm's mother decides to sell their house to a supermarket. In *Alice in den Städten*, Alice and her mother leave their new apartment and head for Europe because the mother doesn't want to stay in New York. On his way to the bottom of the river, Robert of *Im Lauf der Zeit* tears a picture of his middle-class house and throws it away from the window. Despite the fact that the story doesn't give any further information about the picture, it is probably the house in Genoa where he left his wife. As he travels with the nomadic repairman Bruno, Robert frequently tries to make a phone call to his wife. The rejection that starts his journey transforms into a desire, a longing for the home he has left. At one point during his journey with Bruno, two wanderers talk about whether to go to Genoa or Rhine, which plays a similar role in Bruno's life who has been on the road for over two years. When they arrive at the summerhouse where Bruno spent most of his time during his childhood, there is only darkness left to welcome them. A darkness imbued with shadows of memories, silence of abandonment and smell of unused furniture. Devastated by the reality of the passing time, Bruno refuses to spend the night inside. He realizes he can never go back to the same home he has left. There is nothing left he can do except to move on. Robert goes through a similar experience. He can't confront with his wife and therefore he can't go back, so he continues to travel until the roads become his home. Just like Bruno who says his van is registered to Munich when asked where his home is.

Another shared property of Wenders' wanderers is the photographs they have. They either show the home they have left or the one they are destined for. Framed within one static second, the places shown in the pictures are preserved, protected from the changes the time brings. As mentioned before, Robert tears a picture of his home in the beginning of *Im Lauf der Zeit*. The shredded photograph marks his travels' starting point. And by destroying it, Robert shows an acceptance of the reality that he can't ever go back to the same moment he has left. Towards the end of *Falsche Bewegung*, Wilhelm talks about seeing a picture of Zugspitze Mountain in the paper and it is where his journey ends. And in *Alice in den Städten*, the little girl has a picture of her grandmother's house. As they drive through the streets, searching through the old houses, the photograph stays on the windshield, just like a dramatic GPRS device.

As Wim Wenders tells stories of travelling people in search for a home, his road movie trilogy can be seen as a long journey. Wenders himself makes a travel from America to Europe with Alice and Philip, he continues to wander around Germany with Robert and Bruno and finally with Wilhelm, he joins an exploration deep into German society. Just as his characters, Wenders himself is in motion even when filming. Therefore his road films also have a self-reflexive role. However the quest for finding the way home is not the only self-reflexive aspect these three films have in common. There is a love / hate relationship with popular culture that can be observed in Wenders' films. What's more, the wanderers sometimes act scenes taken directly from their creator's life. In one interview made by Michael Coles, the director

gives enough clues to make the pieces fit. In *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Bruno finds his old comic strip collection hidden under the stairs;



Figure 1: *Alice in the Cities*



Figure 2: *Falsche Bewegung*

In *Falsche Bewegung*, while filling a registration form in the hotel, Wilhelm writes his profession as writer; It wasn't until the fourth one, *Alice in the cities* (1974), that I actually acknowledged myself as a film director. Until then I had always identified myself as a writer. I remember the moment exactly. When shooting the film in New York, we registered at a hotel, on Eighty-first Street, and I wrote down my profession as "Film director". It seemed preposterous, but ever since that's what I am. (Coles 2001 : 22)

At the 2008 Cannes Film Festival, during the press conference he gave for his latest movie up to date *The Palermo Shooting* (2008), Wenders says, "Rock 'n' roll dares things which films have given up daring to" and his appreciation for rock 'n' roll music can be observed many times during his road movie trilogy through such scenes as, the Chuck Berry concert Philip goes to (*Alice in den Städten*), Wilhelm playing the Kinks and the Troggs records (*Falsche Bewegung*) or Bruno and Robert singing Heinz's solo hit *Just like Eddie* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*). Also in *Alice in den Städten*, Wenders expresses his dislike for commercial media through Philip Winter who thinks American TV is inhuman. Not just because it is all hacked up with advertisements but every programme eventually turns in to an advertisement. After seeing John Ford's, who is one of Wenders' favourite directors, *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) meet the same end by the very same commercials he writes about, Philip shows feelings by breaking down the television set. Two years later Wenders once again shares his opinions on television in *Falsche Bewegung* with a more simple and direct approach, by using an axe.

Last, but not least, Wim Wenders is a Dusseldorfer which explains why the Rhine River is one three regulars that is seen all the films in his road trilogy together with Rüdiger Vogler and Lisa Kreuzer.

SPATIAL LEVELS:

Regarding the importance of movement and motion for Wim Wenders, the places his characters cease their travels should have a similar notice. Wenders draw spatial lines between the physical travels. As these travels co-exist with the enlightening journey that characters have experienced throughout, same lines are drawn within wanderers' lives as well. The places where Wenders' protagonists stop their travels act as spatial levels that divide characters' lives into episodes.

In *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Robert's travel has three main episodes. His first travel begins before the movie has started. In this first episode of his travel Robert, literally, is a man driving at full speed with eyes closed. After his running away episode comes to a close in Elbe River, he begins a new travel with Bruno. This becomes an episode of acceptance, he realizes he can't stay alone and starts to make frequent phone calls none of which he can succeed. Then Robert realizes he can't continue like this. This moment is visualized when he walks up to a grain gangway. There he stands staring to emptiness with a newspaper in his hand. With a moment of enlightenment Robert decides to face with another troubled marriage in his past; his parents'. When he goes to his father's printing house and confronts with his past, his acceptance episode ends. From that moment Robert's travel starts

to change its course. During this last part of his journey, an intention for a new confrontation becomes visible. He starts to think of going back and even succeeds to make a phone call to his wife without hanging up before it is connected. But this time, she hangs up. During this confrontation episode, there is a dominant sense of happiness and freedom. Apart from Robert's making more silly jokes or swinging a hula-hoop, this state of joyfulness marks the scene where the two men sing along with the record player. Like every other journey in the movie, this episode ends in the G.I. bunker at the border. As Robert leaves Bruno, he heads for a new travel. It is not possible to know what happens next, though there is still a possibility that his wanderings may take him home sometime.



Figure 3a/b : *Kings of the Road*



Bruno, on the other hand, has different episodes. He continues to wander around old movie houses without any other reason than repairing the broken projector up to the point he meets with Pauline. Although his attempt to cure his loneliness fails, Bruno's journey goes through a complete change. In this second episode, his travel gains a new destination. The nomadic repairman, who is always on the move, decides to go back to the house by the Rhine where he used to live as a child. He even leaves behind his MAN van and borrows a BMW R-25 motorbike. And Robert helps his companion's efforts for a new journey by saying Bruno is Mike Hailwood's cousin. Who is no one other than the British motorcycle legend, Mike the Bike. This new episode in Bruno's life only lasts for a short time. It ends when he finds out the summerhouse is no more the same place in his memories. As he moves on, the third episode begins. Even though Bruno continues with his never ending quest for repairs, this time he is in a state of freedom and joyfulness just like Robert's. Bruno, himself explains this experience: 'I suddenly see myself as someone who has lived through a time and that time is my history. It's a comforting thought.' He has seen there is nothing left to go back and accepted what he has at the moment as a whole; the loneliness and the homelessness. He has travelled long enough to the point where the roads have become his home. During the morning in the bunker, Bruno makes himself sure of his loneliness. He shouts, but doesn't get any answers, not even an echo.

In *Alice in den Städten*, Philip's travel simply has two episodes. America and Germany. And Amsterdam is the line that divides them. In America episode, being unfamiliar (which is a good adjective to describe any of Wenders' protagonist) to everything around him, Philip is a stranger in everywhere. In New York, as a yellow cab driver says, people even lost their sense of time. With a twist of fate the first conversation Philip and Alice have in Amsterdam is about the change of time. As if he is afraid of a possible change that moving on with Alice may bring, Philip stays at the hotel nearest to the airport and refuses to go out. But when Alice's mother doesn't show up, avoiding the inevitable becomes useless and he becomes obliged to travel to Germany with Alice. Wim Wenders underlines the moment where this second episode begins. Up to this moment, all the shots from moving vehicles that shows outside have one thing in common: They are full framed shots with the camera positioned in the front, behind the windshield and are more like a first person view of the vehicle itself. But in the one for the monorail in Germany, the director places the camera in the back, behind the rear window. In a sense, during all the travels before this one, Philip is simply *going to* somewhere. But he is *coming back* to Germany, leaving the previous episode behind. Once he begins to travel through his homeland, Philip gains his touch with the world around him again and leaves the stranger episode of his life back in America.

Because of its allegorical substructure, the episodes of the journey in *Falsche Bewegung* seem more vague than others. But still, the hosue with the suicidal host and Therese's apartment are two places that changes the course of travel. The first episode of the group's journey is more like a gathering process where they try to know each other. On account of the metaphoric meaning the characters

represent, it becomes an exploration of Germany's past and present. After they leave the house owing to the host's death, the journey loses its cause, as Wilhelm points out; it turns into an idiotic panic. The group begins to fall apart. For Wilhelm, Therese's apartment is the place where the lines are drawn. Up to that point Wilhelm finds himself in a process of getting connected with other people and a discovery of these new feelings. But he realizes he is not able to write while he intimately accompanied. This becomes clearer for him when he refuses to listen Therese showing his writing as a justification. From this moment on Wilhelm once again tries to distance himself from the people but not before he deals with the feelings that bothers him. First he gets rid of his hate for Laertes and his worries about Mignon by breaking the connection between them. Then he leaves Therese behind to free himself from the love that prevents him from writing. His story's second episode ends when he finds absolute desolation at the Zugspitze Mountain. At the end of the movie Wilhelm, once again, finds himself all alone.

THE OZU CONNECTION:

Wenders is well known for his admiration of Yasujiro Ozu who '... has always been considered as the most Japanese of Japanese filmmakers'. (Geist 1983: 234)

...Wenders kinship with Ozu rests on several levels. First, they share an interest in representation instead of plot and in achieving realism and characterization through such devices as real time, non-narrative use of objects, and gesture. Second, they both struggle to create a personal cinema out of an essentially, American film language. Finally Wenders' sensitivity to aesthetic principles is very close to the Zen-derived principles that inform Ozu's art. (Geist 1983: 237)

One of the most significant elements of Ozu's narrative style is the way he focuses on the Zen principle *mu*, which doesn't have a direct equivalent in English. 'Mu is sometimes translates as "the void". This is misleading. Mu refers to the realm of pure potentiality beyond space and time...' (Young, Hong, Simmons 2005: 65) In order to fully understand the usage of *mu* in cinema it should be examined together with another term *ma*, which defends 'time and space is defined only by the movement and events that takes place within.' (Geist 1983: 235) In terms of art these terms can be explained as 'the emptiness that gives heightened meaning to form, the silence that heightens the meaning of sound.' (Geist 1983: 234) Ozu uses this void within the narrative process like a '... Japanese flower arranger is interested in the spaces between his branches' (Geist 1983: 234) As Kathe Geist quotes from Herman Schreiber: 'Ozu directs silences and voids' (Geist 1983: 234)

In keeping with tradition, Ozu's art is informed by *ma* in its various aspects, particularly those of *sabi*, an awareness of the ephemeral, thus the importance of living from moment to moment; *michiyuki*, the regulation of

movement from one place to another; *hasi*, the bridging of the void *susabi*, the empty place where phenomena appear, pass by, and disappear. (Geist 1983: 235)

Even though *ma* doesn't have a direct equivalent in Western culture, it is impossible to overlook the parallelism it has with Henri Bergson's ideas on motion, since they both defend the time is altered by the movement and its measurement is artificial. Regarding the fact that Bergson's intellectual influence on Wenders, which have been explained in the previous chapters, it becomes inevitable not to notice the similarities between two directors' narrative styles.

Ozu uses *sabi* by showing his characters involved in actions or dialogues that don't make any contributions to the story. And most of the dialogues between two main characters of *Im Lauf der Zeit* are off the cut. But there is one particular scene that stands out as the most interesting and noteworthy, in which Bruno answers nature's call and fulfils his physiological needs. As unexpected as it is, this action seems somehow well fit within the movie. Without causing any disturbance or with any intention of shocking the audience, Wim Wenders simply shows a moment from Bruno's life just like any other.

'Both Ozu and Wenders make creative use of gesture to bring out their characters personalities and feelings' (Geist 1983: 236) All the characters played by Rüdiger Vogler, especially, Bruno Winter (*Im Lauf der Zeit*) and Philip Winter (*Alice in den Städten*) shows plenty of unique mimics and gestures since the actor has a distinguishing talent for mannerism. Not to mention Mignon whose only way to communicate is through her gestures.

In Ozu's filmography, the recurring shots trains, waves, bridges, corridors are all examples of spatial principles such as *michyuki*, *hasi* and *susabi*. Even though there are very few indoor shots in Wenders' road trilogy, there are so many shots of passing trains, roads, moving vehicles and any other means of movement from one place to other, it becomes hard to tell whether these are influenced by Ozu or are indeed unique properties of Wenders' own storytelling. Since Wenders' first feature film *Summer in the City* (1970), which mainly consists of road scenes, was shot before the director has had any encounter with Yasujiro Ozu films. But in terms of using spatial emptiness, Wenders' bleak landscapes are among the directors' visual signatures. They create an uneasy sense of dislocation. Especially in *Im Lauf der Zeit*, despite the fact that its plot is heavily bounded by Germany, there are some scenes so empty that they can take place pretty much anywhere in the world. 'In *Kings Of The Road* Wenders has simply cleared the frame and allowed the screen to breathe" (Covino 1977-78: 15). Visualized through Roby Müller's 16 mm camera, *Alice* (*Alice in den Städten*) defines this type of framing: "That is a lovely picture. It is so empty."

no ship for you exists, no road exists.
Just as you've ruined your life here, in this small corner of earth,
you've wrecked it now the whole world through.

Konstantinos Kavafis

Paris, Texas opens with a scene just Alice might have liked. Walking straightly to nowhere, Travis enters another empty frame looking completely lost in the yellowish texture. The emptiness of this scene can as well be an example of the void, which Wim Wenders takes granted from Yasujiro Ozu. In the middle of this nothingness, Travis finds a bar. Overwhelmed with dehydration, Travis collapses under a sign that says; 'the dust has come to stay, you may stay on or pass continue or whatever.' And without any intention of doing so, Travis stops travelling in this ghost town, Terlingua. Later, he wakes up in a medical clinic and finds himself examined by a doctor with a heavy German accent, played by Bernhard Wicki, who is also a famous German director, best known for his work in *The Visit* (1964) and *Das Spinnennetz* (1984). Travis' brother Walt (Dean Stockwell) makes his first appearance in the movie when the doctor makes him a call about his brother situation. Recalling the old memories from *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Wenders shows his character standing before a billboard, framed within the picture. When two brothers meet, Travis starts a new journey, from Texas to California.

The town of Terlingua draws the first line, ending the wandering episode of Travis life. Just like Robert from *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Travis is first seen in the movie moments before his previous journey ends. Even though there isn't much information about what happened in the past, there are enough clues to predict it has been a hard four years of travel for Travis since he, as his brother says, " looks like forty miles of rough road." When two brothers' ride from desert to L.A., the adaptation episode for Travis begins during which he will say his first lines giving the clue for his destination; Paris... Paris, Texas.

Just as Alice (*Alice in den Städten*), Travis has a photograph of his destination. An empty land where Travis believes his story began. As the mystery behind the story of Travis' past slowly begins to clear, the emptiness gains a utopian meaning. It is a place, which Travis can call his and a 'place to belong' where he can rebuild the home he lost. The state of emptiness in which Travis finds himself during the past four years the viewer has missed, is well represented with the emptiness of the picture. Among all the other imaginary destinations in Wim Wenders' filmography, Paris/Texas happens to be the most abstract one. It sure is a representation of Travis' lost home but at the same time it is the hope, an emptiness to be shaped each and every time as Travis dreams of a future with Jane and Hunter.

Walt takes Travis to his "new house" where he looks after Travis' son Hunter, together with his wife, Anne. Recently bought houses are frequently used subjects in Wim

Wenders' road films. Just like Therese's apartment in Taurus (*Falsche Bewegung*) or the one in New York where Alice and her mother used to live (*Alice in den Städten*), Walt says it has been only three months since they moved. Wenders deliberately prevents his characters from adjusting the places they live in. Apart from this fact, it is difficult to see Walt's house as a home for anybody living in. His wife is an European whose relatives live in France. Anne reminds Walt, she has been wanting to take a trip and see her parents for sometime. This desire of hers is a lighter version of homesickness that other characters have. Hunter, on the other hand doesn't even have a real family, the boy and his father belong to a home, which is long lost but forgotten.

Walt's house is shown with the accompanying sounds of the travelling vehicles. The sounds, which are heard by Travis more than anyone else. With his each moment spent within the building the voice of travel calls him out like the luring songs of a siren. With his eyes fixed to the main road and the airport, Travis polishes the shoes, which have been longing to stray. Like father, like son, Hunter sits in a car in the garage and pretends to be driving. When Walt asks where he was driving to, the boy gives an answer worthy of a true Baudelairean voyager: 'Just driving.'

After some time Travis fails to exceed the invisible limits that passing time puts between him and his son, the times, which had passed comes in to action and heal the crusted wounds of a relationship that had been dead for years. As family altogether watches a home video featuring Travis, Hunter and Jane happy together viewer also feels welcomed to this gathering by a few full-framed shots of the projection. Once again, Wenders uses the movement of a cinematograph to restore the reality. The reality of Travis' love for Jane. While the ice between father and son begins to melt, the coming of a new journey is secretly being announced.

Walt's house is the place where the new Travis faces with his past. He accepts his loss and decides to take a step for re-uniting his family. As for Hunter the house plays a similar role. His life will take a new turn right after leaving the building. Similar things can be said for Walt and Anne. Wenders places this building right on the point where these four people's pasts and future is separated completely. One of the deleted scenes of *Paris Texas* makes it clearer how Travis' arrival affects the 'other' family. Wenders summarizes the scene as follows;

She (Anne) senses from the moment Travis comes in the door that he is endangering the little world she has built upon her. She's accepted Hunter as her son, with all schizophrenia involved, but four years is a long time to live with a little boy. So Travis is an opponent from the beginning. And she thinks she's found a way out by giving Travis the only clue she has about Jane. Her thought is he'll go and leave everything as it was. The scene we didn't shoot was Anne and Walt following Travis and Hunter and catching up with them in the middle of Arizona. Anne really fights Travis over Hunter, and it is finally stopped by Walt, who realizes it is Hunter's decision to go look for his mother, and accepts it. (Dieckmann 1984-85: 3)

Together with Hunter, Travis begins a new journey towards Houston, in search for

Jane. In terms of style and content this journey is the complete opposite of Travis' first travel that lasts for four years. The skyscrapers of Houston replace the empty landscape of the desert. The loneliness of Travis turns in to a companionship with Hunter. And Travis escape transforms into a confrontation. The scene featuring Jane's first appearance in the movie is hosted by the peep show. The place consists of several peep show booths each decorated to represent a different theme. Travis first tries to get in contact with Jane in an imitated poolside, but instead of Jane, there he finds Nurse Bibs (Sally Norvell) to welcome him. The poolside fails to be the place where the reunion may occur. So, Travis and Jane first meet in an imitated hotel room and their last meeting takes place in a coffee shop alike, both are proper places to stop before an upcoming journey to home.

Another recurring moment of Wenders road films can also be examined in the peepshow building. Wim Wenders shows his appreciation for rock music by showing Mydollz, a Houston based pop punk band, rehearsing on the stage. Also, The Lounge Lizards frontman and one of Jim Jarmusch's favourite actors, John Lurie makes an appearance as the procurer.

The peep show and the hotel room are other important places that play significant roles in characters' lives. The hotel room is the nearest thing to a house for Travis and Hunter. And Travis sees this temporary gathering point as an image of the home he has lost and decides to move to a fancier one for Jane's possible arrival. Also it is the peep show house where Travis and Jane will meet for the last time through the one-way looking glass. Ten years after shooting *Alice in den Städten* Robby Müller, the director of photography, once again merges the visages of two characters in one truly memorable scene. As Travis leaves Jane alone with John Lurie's harmonica alone, the peep - show building becomes the place where another episode of Travis' life ends whereas the hotel room stands as a starting point for a new episode in both Jane's and Hunter's lives. Travis's Baudelairish travel meets a Kavafis ending. He understands that he can't go back to the same family he has destroyed and decides to leave for Paris Texas. Once more, Wim Wenders chooses to end a story, Travis', where it began.

Travis and Hunter's journey bears similarities with Philip and Alice's. In both stories a hopeless man takes a trip with a child during which the free spirit of the children breaks the alienated modern men's vicious circles. The companionship of these two opposites creates a semantic contradiction. '... sometimes you find Travis in the position of the child and his son as the adult' (Dieckmann, 1984-85: 3) As physical journey goes on between places the men's inside journey gets in motion starting with these oppositions. This tension between paired opposites is what forms the kinetic energy in Wenders' *Der Himmel Über Berlin*.



Figure 4: Travis travelling alone in *Paris, Texas*



Figure 5: The iconic journey's end *Paris, Texas*

Time present and time past are
both perhaps present in time future and time
future contained in the past

if all time is eternally present
all time is unredeemable
T.S. Eliot

After staying in the United States for eight years, shooting four films in English and travelling the world for more than once while working on *Bis ans Ende der Welt* (1991), Wim Wenders once again turns his eyes to the skies over Berlin seventeen years after shooting *Summer in the City*. Berlin is the city where Wenders' long journey comes to an end. In her interview with Wim Wenders, Ira Paneth quotes from the director (1988):

Wenders said that the movie "could take place nowhere else," continuing, "It is only in Berlin that I could recognize what it means to be German . . . for history is both physically and emotionally present . . . No other city is to such an extent a symbol, a place of survival. It is a site, more than a city (2)

As for being a city of walls and wars Berlin doesn't hide the effects of the battles it had been through. During the shooting of *Der Himmel Über Berlin* (1984) the city still carries the biggest scar of the war on its face; the Berlin Wall, even more than forty years after the end of WWII. On his homecoming Wenders' pays his due by monitoring the history of the city. "After a series of itinerant films engaging with America, its roads, and spatial movement, in *Wings of Desire* Wenders returns to the European stage by dealing with a single location and with temporal movement. (Berlin and its history)." (Casarino 1990: 167)

Since most of the city was destroyed by air raids during WWII, Berlin finds itself in a never ending rebuilding process. As the city keeps changing so does its citizens. After the end of the war in Europe, Berlin received a large number of refugees from Eastern provinces. And it continues to be an ideal destination for the immigrant workers mainly coming from Eastern European and Balkan countries such as Turkey, Poland and Serbia. Hardly recognizable for Germans and hardly adjustable for foreigners Berlin becomes a homeland of strangers. As a city's profile is well determined by the people living in it, Berlin with a population of Travises is a suitable character for Wenders to choose as a subject.

... Wenders returns to a historically and politically divided city, Walled in and contained, vibrant and bustling with energy but also bleak and depressed, shadowed by a past that has left it traces all over, not only in the bombed-out and fenced-in buildings. These buildings are the visible gaps and interruptions in a

relentless and glossy reconstruction. Berlin's face is still disfigured and concretely marked by a German history which will not go away, burdening its dreams of a future *and* of a present. (Birringer 1988: 132)

Wim Wenders comes back to Berlin with a suitcase full of memories from his road movie trilogy. In *Der Himmel Über Berlin*, Wenders continues to use same elements that forms his narrative style. While the camera moves through windows, goes in to tunnels and hallways, Wenders' shows a full awareness of Yasujiro Ozu's *hashi*, the bridging of the void. Not to mention, the presence of angels may be the best example among all the films in Wenders' filmography to *susabi*, the empty place where phenomena appears, pass by and disappears. Also Wenders brings a new approach to his curiosity for creating emotion by using motion. During one of the first scenes with an actual dialogue, the camera slowly approaches to a car in which Daniel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander), the two angels of the movie, sits together in a car and talks about the notes they have been taking. As the camera slowly moves across the vehicle the lights that reflect from the windshield starts to move to the opposite direction, creating an illusion of a moving car. Wenders tries this technique for a second time during the movie, this time he also adds a deeper meaning to the scene. During the scene where Marion (Solveig Dommartin) and Bruno goes to a Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds concert Cassiel who is overwhelmed with the reality of Bruno's decision of becoming mortal, leans against a wall and tries to overcome his own desire of losing his wings. Even though the angel doesn't move, his shadow that is cast on the wall by the moving lights from the concert starts to move upwards gradually. The shadow becomes the image of a man who is desperately trying to free himself. This stationary movement reminds the paintings of Post - Impressionist French painter, Paul Cézanne in whose paintings there are different simultaneous visual perceptions presented at the same time. Unfortunately, the meaning behind the scene can only be understood by watching the deleted scenes. These are the final moments of Cassiel as angel. His moving shadow is a representation of his struggle of his decision of becoming a mortal. This deleted scene also explains the clearly visible black and white circle around Cassiel during the final scene where Daniel holds the rope as Marion doing her trapeze show, which was shot in colour.

The concert is also one of the many examples in director's filmography where Wenders shows his love for rock 'n' roll music. There is another concert scene in the movie featuring Crime and the City Solution, which is a band formed by former The Birthday Party members just like Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. There is one other important song that can be heard in *Der Himmel Über Berlin; Karlı Kayın Ormanında*. The song is performed by Wim Wender's friend Ömer Zülfü Livaneli, who is a famous Turkish musician, film director and an unsuccessful social democrat politician. The lyrics of the song are taken from Nazım Hikmet Ran's poem with the same title; *In the Snowy Night Woods*. What makes this poem important is the iconic personality Nazım Hikmet Ran has in Turkish literature. He is the exiled poet who has never given the chance to return to his hometown. Thus, most of his poems are requiems of homesickness and loneliness.

As it is stated out the chapters before Wenders draws spatial lines between the

episodes of his characters lives. So the same kind of narrative well may as well be expected for Berlin, the leading character of *Der Himmel Über Berlin*. But there is not a chronological outline in the movie as the past and the present of the city is being shown at the same time. On the foreground the movie basically tells the story of an angel, Damiel, who is trying to become mortal since he wants to experience love and other feelings that the celestial cannot. While the angel continues his quest the story of the Berlin is also being told. As the angel travels around the city to witness the life that takes place within, Berlin becomes the leading actress and the story becomes more about the city itself. This may lead to a dilemma since it may turn out to an unnecessary trial of drawing spatial lines to form episodes to narrate the story of another place. But, Wenders comes with his own solution and plants a journey deep inside the movie itself. Although it is not possible to accept *Der Himmel Über Berlin* as a conventional road movie in any aspect, Wenders creates a journey from the very first frame. A journey that takes its energy from the motion that is created by the flow between semantic contradictions. In Wim Wenders' road films the contradiction between verbal and visual elements is represented several times. In *Im Lauf der Zeit*, Robert tries to speak with his father about his parents' troubled marriage but fails to find the right words he needs. So he prints a special edition newspaper. Robert intentionally avoids using a question mark and titles this paper as; *Wie Eine Frau Achten Koennen*. How to respect a woman. In *Alice in den Städten*, the same connection can be found in the story, which Philip tries to write about the American scene. Instead of writing his observations, Philip takes photographs. And in *Falsche Bewegung* Wilhelm goes through a period where he stops talking with people in order to be able to write.

On the other hand, *Der Himmel Über Berlin* can be seen as a continuous flow between Wim Wenders' imagery and Peter Handkes' writing. The movie opens with a close-up shot of a hand writing Peter Handke's poem; *Lied Vom Kindsein - The Song Of The Childhood*. The image is followed by hand written credits. Then it cuts to the empty sky, which dissolves into a close up shot of the angel's eye. And the movie ends with a similar set of shots but this time the hand writes the end of the same poem it has stared at the beginning. Throughout the movie this type of movement between oppositions can be observed in several examples:

... [movie] moves beyond paired opposites; earth and sky, metaphysical and physical, child and adult, angelic and human, black-and-white and color, male/male and male/female relationships, past and present, war and peace, word and image... (Caldwell,Rea 1991: 46)

As the camera lowers from celestial skies to earth, it travels between the people and interacts with random moments of their lives. Moments of joy, sorrow, moments they speak in German and moments they speak in foreign. Just as the angels do among humans, this makes it possible for the viewer to experience random seconds from the daily life of Berlin.

The stories they [angels] have collected belong to the realm of those (minor yet pivotal) epiphanies which are usually washed away unnoticed in the daily flow of urban simultaneous multiplicities: a woman who stops walking in the pouring rain, closes her umbrella, and lets herself get drenched; a man pasting his rare

stamps on letters to be sent away; an old blind woman groping for her watch...
(Casarino 1990: 171)

Just as Ozu said 'because all the moments constituting the continuum of a human life are equally worth of notice' (Geist 1983: 235) Wenders also does his full share of work by casting people from his life for these roles instead of using extras. Such as the old blind lady who happens to be Wenders' own aunt.

These vertical actions can be observed many times during the movie both visually and metaphorically. After all, the movie tells the story of angel's decision to go down to the earth. With many lowering camera movements and the images of people moving downwards such as '...Peter Falk landing at Tegel, a suicidal man leaping from a building, stuntmen falling through the floor of a movie set...' (Caldwell, Rea 1991: 34), the movie itself becomes a vertical road movie.

Henri Alekan's camera makes a vertical movement very similar to the opening scene when it first encountered the library. With no mouth to speak for itself, the mute camera communicates through sign language and creates a connection between the city and the library. After this visual introduction of the building, Wim Wenders continues to enjoy just another contradiction between word and image by showing a place that preserves words.

As they bear an infinite knowledge, angels only enjoy listening multi-layered flow of thoughts from people who will never experience such joy. With its implied multicultural profile that fails to hear the music of each other and literally being a place for preserving the history, the city library, is the missing memories of a distant past. As war brutally disfigures Berlin's visage, once beloved home of many can only be found in pages of history. It is the place where Cassiel spends time with his beloved Homer.

Cassiel listens to an old writer (played by Curt Boris, an actor who worked with Max Reinhardt and Bertolt Brecht and fled Nazi German in 1933) whose memory is enmeshed with Nazi Germany, who wonders why no one sings an epic of peace, announces that his heroes are no longer kings and warriors, ponders the connections between the storyteller and his listeners, and worries about humankind losing its childhood. (Paneth 1988: 2)

It is the place where Homer tries to be severed from the present and saved from the troubles which future may bring with by examining photo albums only to the backwards. Homer is the library. And he is the face of the city that is lost within its past. Standing in the middle of the emptiness, on which once the glorious Potsdamer Platz has risen, Homer fears a possible disappearance of the past that the place represents. As Johannes Birringer quotes from Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*: 'For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.'
(Birringer 1988: 134)

'Using words and images, *Wings of Desire* presents a dialogue between past and present, the library; the war monument, the shots of bombed buildings...' (Caldwell, Rea 1991: 49) Like the time travelling cab ride, which takes Cassiel to the film set shows the images of a painful change. The scenes are taken from original footage, which was shot during the end of WWII. They are not remakes. Thus, the moments they show are preserved within the bitter reality of the past. However, with actors playing Jewish people and Nazis smoking leaning against a wall the film set is more like a conjoint historical therapy barely having an intention for screening the past. Although the film set is fragmented with floors, the separation of levels disappears when Wim Wenders pictures them all in one frame. But the building was used as a bomb shelter during the war. Therefore the big hole which penetrates the levels, makes it hard to break the connection between past and present even though the film set has the advantage of an ignorance which gives its present existence a supporting chance to be freed from the chronological dependence. The multilayered film set is not the only thing that caricaturises the war, Peter Falk, who used to be a guardian angel, personally does it as well. Not just by doing literally but with a sleight of hand and a different hat, he changes from Bogart to a Jewish Rabbi. There is one small detail about name Falk, which might just be a coincidence. Der Falke means *hawk* in German, which almost universally stands for a person who advocates an aggressive and warlike policy in international affairs whereas Colombo means *dove* in Italian. Which almost universally stands for a person who advocates peaceful policies in international affairs. Also, the dove is a representation of the Holy Spirit according to the *New Testament*. Although he shows his insouciance state against the past with humour, bearing the name the hawk, the veteran actor is often remembered by his known past the dove, by Berliners. Peter Falk has abandoned his celestial background with his own desire but the fictional character he is known for is unintentional. Peter Falk wears the face of the city that makes peace with his past but still tries to have a present of its own.

Named after the famous French cinematographer Henri Alekan who is also the man behind the camera in *Der Himmel Über Berlin*, the Alekan Circus is another place that plays an important role in the movie. Surprisingly enough, the circus tents are an important part of post-war Berlin:

Wenders explains how "In Berlin there's always a circus because there are all these empty spaces. At any given time you can be sure there will be a travelling circus". These empty spaces mark the places where houses, buildings and railway stations used to stand before the last war; they are gaps which have been imposed (literally) from above onto physiognomy of the city. The continuous presence of circuses in Berlin is due to this violently transfigured physiognomy; they inhabit spaces which have been opened up by history. (Casarino 1990: 169)

In its very first appearance, the Alekan Circus is seen through a framed tunnel, a centre of attraction placed right in the middle of the angel's point of view creating a perfect Ozu like usage of *hasi*. It is also a preparation for the moment where the angel, Daniel first sees his real center of attraction Marion, the angel of the circus.

As multicultural as the library and the film set, the Alekan Circus appears to be more foreign than the others because of its nomadic nature. Although it is searching for one, even with its own angel, the circus hardly has any desires for a past home. The people of Alekan Circus seem to be the only ones with hope, a hope for somewhere else to call home. Trying to free itself from its roots and leaving an empty spot behind the circus begins a journey towards future. Taking into account the fact that their angel Marion stays in Berlin with the intention of finding a place to belong (and apparently having it at the end), the circus people's hopes may turn out to be an outcome of their rejection of the Kavafis truth. They are the wanderers looking for a better city on another land, across another sea.

In *Der Himmel Über Berlin*, there are three levels representing three different eras of Berlin; the library is the past, the film set is the present and the circus is the possible future. As they are all present at the same time of existence (in the movie), it is implied that one era contains the other, and the other cannot exist without accepting another. Consenting the sins of the past will free present from its recurring nightmares, making room for the upcoming future.

Regarding the fact that "Der Himmel" also means heavens in German, the celestial sky may be seen as the hope for the city. But taking in to consideration of four angels (including Marion and Cassiel as it is shown in one of the deleted scenes) landing to this earthly city, Berlin is Wim Wenders' symbolic prescription for curing the worldwide homesickness all his wanderers suffer. As Marion sits in the recently opened emptiness, she speaks for all others still wandering: 'Now. In this place. A feeling of happiness that I could have forever.'



Figure 6: Wandering souls in *Wings of Desire*

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Figure 7 : Journey's end in *Wings of Desire*

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