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Personal Identity and Angelic Touch in Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*

Abstract

Wenders' *Wings of Desire* offers a rich tapestry for theorists of personal identity and its relationship to the Other. Set in a Berlin where angels walk among humans, it depicts those angels reorienting humans' lives with but a touch. Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze also theorize the Other's touch as central to any change in the self. Bringing Wenders' film into dialogue with their theories offers new insights into the film's central question, "Why am I me and not you?"

Author Notes

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Introduction

Marion the trapeze artist does not want to go back to her job as a waitress, but the Circus Alekan is out of money and shutting down. As the camera lingers on a black and white shot of her ramshackle trailer sitting alone in a muddy field, Marion observes in voiceover that “Things don't always turn out the way you'd like.”

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Abandoned by God at the end of the Second World War, the city of Berlin in Wim Wenders' classic film *Wings of Desire* is filled with people like Marion whose lives have not “turned out.” Divorced fathers alienated from their children, fatally wounded traffic accident victims, and the suicidally depressed all struggle to find a place for themselves in a “city that burned its culture to terrorize Europe.”¹ Yet the citizens of Wenders' Berlin have not been completely forsaken. Angels walk among them, angels who rebelled at God's abandonment of Man and so were themselves exiled from heaven and confined to a city without God. These angels continue their eternal task of Watching humanity, providing a constant yet invisible reminder of the now absent Other. Further, their touch can change a desolate Berliner's life, if only the angel can breach that human's sense of isolation. And ultimately mediating between Berliners and angels is Peter

Handke's poem and its repeated question "Why am I me and not you?" Or stated another way, what keeps *me* from being *Other* than I am now?

In this article, I seek an answer to this ontological question of the status of the self. Specifically, I explore the sense of touch as a means through which the Other can communicate with us. Over the last two decades, *Wings* has given rise to a rich commentary tradition on the nature and abilities of the film's angels. Wenders himself has spoken at length about the angels as beings who can see the entire history of Berlin at a glance.² Others have identified them as Grigori from the Book of Enoch,³ in addition to locating the film's two main angels, Daniel and Cassiel, within the angelic hierarchy itself.⁴ *Wings'* angels can only be seen by children, yet their gaze imparts a sense of calm both to the film's characters as well as to its audience.⁵ They hear a human's thoughts as if those thoughts were music,⁶ and by touching them they can hear beyond a human's surface thoughts.⁷ And their angelic touch "impart[s] a general salutary sense" to its recipients.⁸

I argue, however, that there is much more to be said about the role of tactile experience in *Wings of Desire*. To show this, I weave together elements of Wenders' film with theories of touch drawn from two key contemporary thinkers, Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze. On the one hand, I argue for angelic touch as inaugurating a *venture* in the Heideggerian sense. To my knowledge, there has been no analysis to date of *Wings* from a Heideggerian perspective, even though, like *Wings*, Heidegger himself draws on the poet Rilke to explicitly theorize a

world from which God has fled.⁹ I thus use Heidegger's theories to contrast the dejection of the musician's father with the optimism of the storyteller Homer's trek across Berlin in search of the Potsdamer Platz. On the other hand, I also argue for angelic touch as having the power to *crystallize* identity in the Deleuzian sense. Unlike the case with Heidegger, more has been said about the relationship between Deleuze and *Wings*. Some have analyzed the film's depiction of Berlin as a Deleuzian *any-space-whatever*,¹⁰ while others have linked the film's temporal bifurcations to Deleuze's writings on Leibniz.¹¹ More directly relevant to my own analysis are Deleuzian interpretations of the “useless and unsummonable time that haunts the [film's] characters,”¹² as well as previous work applying Deleuzian crystals to the film.¹³ Building on this prior work, I use Deleuze's theory of the self to explore the scene about the dying motorcyclist, as well as Marion the trapeze artist's own experience of loss.

Venture

A father sits alone in his living room, thinking “My God, what will become of that boy? [...] What more does he want? I already bought him a guitar. Now he wants drums, too? That would cost a fortune. [...] Is he ever gonna come to his senses? [...] I can't go along with this anymore.”

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Why is this man isolated from his son? To answer this question, I suggest borrowing an idea from Martin Heidegger's reading of the poet Rilke. In Heidegger's language, this man views his son from the point of view of the *productive consciousness*, a sense of self that privileges utilitarian, goal-oriented strategies above other ways of Being in the World. Such a self immediately subsumes all of life's experiences under a calculation of their utility (in this case, drums would "cost a fortune") and so ignores any non-instrumental possibilities those experiences may hold in reserve. Thus, the father treats his son as merely "human material, which is [to be] disposed of with a view to proposed goals."¹⁴ The father thus sees his son as a problem to be solved in the most efficient way possible, by buying him a guitar. Yet the very "efficiency" of the father's response leaves him baffled by his son's desire for more musical instruments. This is because the father has framed his son's identity relative to a specific object that can be discarded once its use value is exhausted. Since "What is constant in things produced as objects merely for consumption is: the substitute -- *Ersatz*,"¹⁵ the father believes "musician" to be interchangeable with some other identity, and hence his son should now "come to his senses." He expected his son's identity of musician to be discarded once the stated goal was met (he now owns a guitar, time to move on). The father is thus fragmented from those around him (his son sits alone in his bedroom, his wife sits alone in the kitchen), since he can imagine no other ways besides production to forge connections between people. Or as

Heidegger himself puts it, “the uniformity of production [...] from the outset destroys the realm from which any [...interpersonal] recognition could possibly arise.”¹⁶ The father thus dwells suspended over an *abyss*, an interpersonal void without shared meaning between himself and others.

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With the angel Cassiel's hand on his shoulder, an old man who gets winded climbing stairs sets off on a brisk walk across Berlin. “I can't find Potsdamer Platz. Here? This can't be it. Potsdamer Platz is where the Café Josti used to be. In the afternoon I'd go there to chat and have a coffee. [...] It was a lively place [...] then suddenly the flags appeared. The whole square was covered with them. And people weren't friendly anymore [...But] I will not give up until I find the Potsdamer Platz.”

§

Where does the storyteller Homer find the physical strength for his search? Again turning to Heidegger, I suggest that it is quite literally from the touch of the Other. As Heidegger puts it:

When we are touched from out of the widest orbit, the touch goes to our very nature. To touch means to touch off, to set in motion. Our nature is set in motion. The will is shaken by the touch so that only now is the nature of willing made to appear and set in motion.¹⁷

I thus argue that the angel Cassiel's touch lends Homer the strength to embark on a *venture*, a second concept that Heidegger borrows from the poet Rilke in order

to stress how a subject always dares something in the process of extending herself. This is because taking part in a venture includes an element of *unprotectedness*, of danger for any subject who participates. By committing her own will to a force that is outside of herself, she may find herself to be someone *Other* than who she originally thought. Yet Heidegger argues further that it is precisely this “unprotected” nature of the venture that makes a subject more secure, more firmly grounded in Being than those around her. By abandoning the self’s personal will, “The unprotectedness of what is ventured [...] necessarily includes, its being secure in its ground.”¹⁸ In the case of Homer’s journey across Berlin, this means that Homer’s strength comes precisely from his ability to will *otherwise* than contemporary Berliners, such as the musician’s father. As I have shown, by living only as a productive consciousness the musician’s father artificially restricts his range of possible wills to only those concerned with material gain and satisfaction.¹⁹ He thus similarly restricts his possible subject positions within the world, as well. By contrast, Homer seeks something that is not there (the Potsdamer Platz). As such, he rejects production as life’s only goal and so can live *sine cura* in Heidegger’s terminology, literally without care for the things of the (present) world. Homer is thus free to define personal goals and identities differently than his fellow Berliners. Unlike them, Homer is “safe” in the Heideggerian sense²⁰ precisely because he can become *different* from himself.²¹

Yet how will Homer ever find the (now destroyed) Potsdamer Platz? In Heideggerian terms, he must seek for traces of the divine within a contemporary world which actively works to obscure them. Homer must thus fulfill the “function of the poet in a destitute time” by “reach[ing] into the abyss, [and] com[ing] to know the marks that the abyss remarks.”²² In other words, Homer will succeed only if he can mark the traces of a place of now imaginary being (like the Potsdamer Platz itself) for those whose vision is obscured by the realm of mere production.²³ Poets like Homer thus maintain proximity to Being as both presence *and* absence at the same time. Their ability to signify absence in presence allows them to call new realms of meaning into existence. And these new worlds (and hence the new subjects who inhabit them) can call the dominance of the present into question.²⁴

Wenders' Homer can thus access what Heidegger, again borrowing from Rilke, calls *the Open*. Heidegger's Open is a realm that:

lets the beings ventured into the pure draft draw as they are drawn, so that they variously draw on one another and draw together without encountering any bounds. Drawing as so drawn, they fuse with the boundless, the infinite.²⁵

Heidegger's Open is thus not what exists before us as presence (in this case, the historical Potsdamer Platz has indeed been destroyed). Instead, the Open is that which what is present actively works to exclude. As such, any subject drawn into the Heideggerian draft of Being is immediately drawn into larger connections than

she existed in before. She finds herself in a network of new relationships, a network that Heidegger also refers to as the *space of the heart*. This time taking a concept from Pascal, Heidegger argues that this space exists “Beyond the arithmetic of calculation.” It can thus “overflow into the unbounded whole of the Open,”²⁶ no longer confined to the utilitarian world of the productive consciousness.²⁷ By venturing into the Open, subjects like Homer free themselves from the limitations of the present, such as Homer's own bodily frailty. They gain instead a freedom that is “almost unfathomable.”²⁸ Or as Homer himself puts it, for poets there are always “other suns [...] up in the sky.”²⁹

Crystal

A motorcycle accident victim sits propped against a curb thinking “I stink of gasoline [...] How they all stand there, staring at me [...] I should have told her yesterday that I was sorry [...] I can't just sit – I've still got so much to do!”

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To discuss the motorcycle accident victim's experiences in *Wings of Desire*, I would like to leave behind Heideggerian theory and turn now to the work of Gilles Deleuze. As Deleuze observes:

in Europe, the post-war period has greatly increased the situations which we no longer know how to react to, in spaces which we no longer know

how to describe. These were ‘any spaces whatever’, deserted but inhabited, disused warehouses, waste ground, cities in the course of demolition or reconstruction.³⁰

And indeed, the Second World War is the major “absent, yet extreme, situation” central to *Wings* as a whole.³¹ Yet Wenders also depicts smaller scale extreme situations as well, situations whose “cause” is equally absent from the camera. And it is from this point of view that I propose to explore the situation of the dying motorcyclist. As a contrast to Wenders' own practice, I would like to first reference Deleuze's interpretation of the method of classical Hollywood cinema. Such a cinema constructs its characters' identities within “a field of forces, [and] oppositions and tensions between these forces, [that leads to] resolutions of these tensions according to the distributions of goals, obstacles, means, detours.”³² Unlike this classical approach to narrative, however, Wenders' motorcyclist has crashed well before the camera “reaches” him. Thus, the motorcyclist has no “sufficient reaction” to his circumstances in the film. Wenders' camera does not offer him a “most appropriate detour”³³ whereby he could avoid the accident in the first place, and so Wenders denies him the opportunity to somehow “master” his situation. Yet even so, the motorcyclist continues to think “as if” such a detour had been possible. He continues to order his past experiences relative to his determinate present, relying on now irrelevant “causal and logical connections”³⁴ to construct an identity. As Deleuze would suggest, this “classical” mode of thinking ties the motorcyclist to “a *system of* [negative] *judgment*: even when

acquittal takes place.”³⁵ And indeed, self-condemnation looks to be his last action on earth (“I should have told her yesterday that I was sorry”). By following this logic, the motorcyclist reduces his entire lifetime of experiences to one negative judgment, regret.³⁶

§

The angel Damiel kneels behind the dying motorcyclist, touches the man's head, and begins to speak: “As I came up the mountain out of the misty valley and into the sun... the fire on the range...” As Damiel continues to speak, the motorcyclist's litany of regrets gradually quiets, and soon he and the angel begin to speak together: “The Far East. [...] Great Bear Lake.” Eventually the motorcyclist himself takes over, and Damiel rises to walk away. Rather than regret, the man now thinks of: “Tristan da Cunha Island. [...] The old houses of Charlottenburg. [...] The spots from the first drops of rain.”

§

I read the dying motorcyclist's encounter with the angel Damiel as a demonstration that no subject is ever simply a helpless victim of her historical circumstances, no matter how dire they seem. From a Deleuzian point of view, the very lack of a “best” remaining outcome in the visual depiction of the motorcyclist's situation allows the sense of *touch* to take on a new role in identity construction.³⁷ Specifically, when the hand no longer exercises a prehensile function (i.e., when there is no longer a “best” remaining outcome), the hand can

instead be used to chain together previously disparate spaces of experience. It can order them in a way *other than* traditional causality or logic.³⁸ I thus read Daniel's touch as striving "to make perceptible, to make visible, relationships of time which cannot be seen [directly] in the represented object and [so] do not allow themselves to be reduced to the [narrative] present."³⁹ Daniel's angelic touch⁴⁰ reveals that "a single event can belong to several levels: the sheets of past [or duration can] coexist in a non-chronological order."⁴¹ As such, Daniel's touch *crystallizes* the motorcyclist's identity, re-composing it as a set of experiences that are relationally but not causally connected.⁴² And Wenders' camera itself reinforces this re-composition of identity, repeatedly tracking from side to side and reversing course with each new development in the scene. The motorcyclist is not only a dying man, but also one who has experienced Great Bear Lake, etc.⁴³ Daniel's angelic touch thus stages representation, transformation, and identity as simultaneous events, while Wenders' camera echoes this staging as its motion "stands for its object, replaces it, both creates and erases it [...] and constantly gives way to other descriptions which contradict, displace, or modify the preceding ones".⁴⁴ The dying motorcyclist can thus experience his life as more than just regret, since Daniel's touch makes room for connections via proximity and parallel rather than through "organic" cause-and-effect series. He experiences multiple, possible identities instead of a single, necessary one, and those multiple

centers (like crystals themselves have) imply multiple truths isomorphic on the space of the self's representations.⁴⁵

§

After learning that her circus is closing, Marion sits on the hood of a car in the circus yard and observes in voiceover that “It always stops just when it's starting. It was too good to be true.” Daniel touches her shoulder, leaning in to listen. After his touch, Marion's thoughts change course. “I look up [...] and the world emerges before my eyes and fills my heart.” She sees an elephant standing on its trunk across the yard, and she smiles.

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Daniel's angelic touch can thus also reorient human perception as well as human memory. Stated in Deleuzian terms, Daniel's touch here reveals that any act of perception is itself always a motivated selection. Perception only occurs when other possible images are subordinated to one specific image as their point of variation. The self's current sense of identity is then simply its designation of a now as the “beginning” of its own movements. This implies that any “center of perception” is inherently changeable, that there is no reason *a priori* to choose one image rather than another as the self's focus. In other words, there is no reason for Marion to be hopeless *later* simply because she is hopeless *now*. Daniel's touch allows her to vary which perception she takes to “ground” her current self – an elephant standing on its trunk, rather than a circus shutting down. She takes

control of her own story by designating a new subjective “beginning” to her self. Or as Deleuze might say, Damiel's angelic touch allows Marion to combine possible images so creatively that her identity “goes beyond the human limits of the sensory-motor schema towards a non-human [perception of the] world.”⁴⁶ Or put more simply, Damiel's angelic touch helps Marion to see her life as the angels do, as something always *other than* her current predicament.

Flight

A man sits on a ledge atop the Mercedes building. “This time I'm actually doing it. Funny I'm so calm.” The angel Cassiel walks up behind him and reaches out to touch his shoulder, but the man moves away from the angel's hand. “I'd like to fly sometime. The plane circles over Berlin... until it crashes.” Wearing headphones and listening to music, the man cannot hear other people on the roof calling for him to come down from the ledge. Cassiel moves to him quickly and leans against his shoulder. “All these thoughts... I'd rather not think anymore,” and the man jumps from the roof.

§

The angel Cassiel touches the man on the roof, yet the man remains unchanged. He focuses only on mourning a relationship that has ended, and as he watches a plane fly over Berlin, he can only imagine it crashing to the ground. As

both Heidegger and Deleuze would agree, the Other's touch is not always enough. In Heidegger's language, even "With the heightening of consciousness [...] man [...] is not [directly] admitted into the Open,"⁴⁷ and Deleuze warns that "It is not possible to predict" what will crystallize the subject.⁴⁸ So while the Other can attempt to offer the self something different, the self alone must ultimately accept that offering. *Wings* itself, though, offers an alternative interpretation of a self's flight, an alternative that the suicidal man is unable to experience.

§

A camera moves down the aisle of an airplane, out its window, then across the skies above Berlin, through an apartment window, through a wall, out a window again and into an ambulance, past several cars on the road and finally into an auto dealership, with little connection between people and locations other than their depiction, other than the moving camera itself.

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From a Deleuzian point of view, Wenders well-known "angelic camera" is an instance of a *haptic eye*. Such an eye knows that seeking only one solution in a multi-centered system is a vain pursuit, and so it only attempts to see its situation more clearly rather than immediately acting. Such perception seeks to become aware of options rather than of solutions in a traditional sense.⁴⁹ It is thus paradoxically "immobile" despite the images that change before it. There is no "motion" from cause to consequence within its images, and so its "motion in

place” shatters the necessity of any particular center of identity. Stated another way, because there is no dramatic tension within a situation constructed by a haptic eye, there is no ultimate “resolution” to be found. In a system with many centers, there is no one goal that is always more important than any other, no one obstacle (such as a failed relationship) that must be overcome through a linear solution. Instead, the haptic eye's “self” takes part in a multi-relational field of interactions. Her movement is thus “abnormal” (like Wenders' use of the camera itself), since it does not try to accomplish any of the goals to which movement is traditionally subordinated in a referentially-oriented reality.⁵⁰ *Wings* thus challenges both its characters and its audiences to learn to “read” their lives anew.⁵¹ It presents to both characters and audiences a series of images that its camera assembles through seemingly “irrational” cuts. And so Wenders' images, like our lives themselves, are intended to be *deciphered* as well as simply seen, “readable as well as seeable,” in Deleuze's terms.⁵² Both *Wings* itself and the identities that it predicates are never static. Both are always in a state of genesis or development, of de-centering and re-centering, if only we can learn to read them anew.

¹ Gary McMahon, “Nostalgia Over Berlin,” *film international* 7, 3 (Fall 1988), 2.

² Wim Wenders, “An attempted description of an indescribable film,” in *On Film: Essays and Conversations* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001), 232-243.

³ Carrol Fry, “Angels in the Metroplex: Hegel, The Apocrypha, and Intertextuality in *Der Himmel Uber Berlin* (Wings of Desire),” *Journal of Religion and Film* 15, 2, Article 2, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol15/iss2/2/>.

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- ⁴ Mark Luprecht, "Opaque Skies: 'Wings of Desire' – Angelic Text, Context, and Subtext," *Post Script* XVII, 3 (Summer 1998), 47-54.
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- ⁶ Annette Davison, "Music to desire by: the soundtrack to Wim Wenders's *Der Himmel Uber Berlin*," in *Hollywood Theory, Non-Hollywood Practice: Cinema Soundtracks in the 1980s and 1990s* (London: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2004), 149-163.
- ⁷ Richard Raskin, "Camera Movement in the Dying Man Scene in *Wings of Desire*," *p.o.v.* 8 (Dec 1999), 157-170.
- ⁸ Linda Ehrlich, "Meditations on Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 19, 4 (1991), 242.
- ⁹ Roberts Avens, *The New Gnosis: Heidegger, Hillman, and Angels* (Putman, Conn: Spring Publications, Inc., 2003), 2.
- ¹⁰ Katrina Sark, "City Spaces and National Identity," *Cineaction* 80 (Spring 2010), 56-59.
- ¹¹ Morten Kyndrop, "Like a Film, Like a Child. Knowledge and Being in *Wings of Desire*," *p.o.v.* 8 (Dec 1999), 79-90.
- ¹² Ruth Perlmutter, "Wenders Returns Home on *Wings of Desire*," *Studies in the Humanities* 20 (1993), 35-48.
- ¹³ Bodil Marie Thomsen, "The Interim Sense," *p.o.v.* 8 (Dec 1999), 65-78.
- ¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 111.
- ¹⁵ Heidegger, "Poets," 130.
- ¹⁶ Heidegger, "Poets," 117.
- ¹⁷ Heidegger, "Poets," 125.
- ¹⁸ Heidegger, "Poets," 104.
- ¹⁹ For more on the question of "How can Germany *live with* that past?," see Cook, "Angels."
- ²⁰ Heidegger, "Poets," 120.
- ²¹ On the importance of Homer's memory having failed "for the years 1933-45," see David Caldwell and Paul W. Rea, "Handke's and Wenders's *Wings of Desire*: Transcending

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- Postmodernism,” *German Quarterly* 64, 1 (Winter 1991), 46-54.
- ²² Heidegger, “Poets,” 93.
- ²³ On the importance of Homer knowing where it *was*, but not where it is *now*, see Caldwell and Rea, “Transcending Postmodernism.”
- ²⁴ On art [Homer's epic of peace] as a countermodel to trauma, see Christian Rogowski, “‘To Be Continued.’ History in Wim Wenders's ‘Wings of Desire’ and Thomas Bresch's ‘Domino,’” *German Studies Review* 15, 3 (Oct 1992), 547-563.
- ²⁵ Heidegger, “Poets,” 106.
- ²⁶ Heidegger, “Poets,” 128.
- ²⁷ On the angels' temporal endurance spatializing time, see Michael Trussler, “Spectral Witnesses: The Doubled Voice in Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire*,” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 14, 1 (2003), 28-50.
- ²⁸ Heidegger, “Poets”, 128.
- ²⁹ For the importance of Homer ending the movie by walking directly at the Berlin Wall, see Edward M. V. Platter, “The Storyteller in Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire*,” *Post Script* XII, 1 (Fall 1992), 13-25.
- ³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1989), xi.
- ³¹ For more on World War II leading to the impossibility of narrative closure in *Wings*, see Xavier Vila and Alice Kuzniar, “Witnessing Narration in *Wings of Desire*,” *Film Criticism* 16, 3 (Spring 1992), 53-65. For more on the gaps in historical Berlin leading to the angels ability to “see through time,” see Wim Wenders, “The urban landscape from the point of view of images,” in *On Film: Essays and Conversations* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001), 375-384. For more on cinema depicting Berlin as a Deleuzian any-space-whatever, see Sark, “City Spaces,” 56-59.
- ³² Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 128.
- ³³ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 128.
- ³⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 126-127.
- ³⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 133.
- ³⁶ For more on the “useless and unsummonable time that haunts the characters,” see Perlmutter, “Wenders Returns Home,” 35-48.
- ³⁷ For the filmmakers' intention for Damiel to always be there at the “right time,” see Agnes Godard, “Bringing Images to Life,” interview and trans. Richard Raskin, *p.o.v.* 8 (Dec 1999),

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- 38-46. For Damiel's place in angelology as a rescuing angel, see Luprecht, "Opaque Skies," 47-54.
- ³⁸ For an alternative reading of *Wings'* temporal bifurcations from the point of view of Deleuze's *Fold*, see Kyndrop, "Like a Film," 79-90.
- ³⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, xii.
- ⁴⁰ For more on angelic touch leading to deeper memories, see Raskin, "Camera Movement," 157-170.
- ⁴¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, xii.
- ⁴² For a somewhat different discussion of Deleuzian crystals in *Wings*, see Perlmutter, "Wenders Returns Home," 35-48 and Thomsen, "Interim Sense," 65-78.
- ⁴³ For more on the importance of the tracking camera in this scene, see Raskin, "Camera Movement," 157-170.
- ⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 126.
- ⁴⁵ For the importance of Cassiel telling Damiel that his experiences as a human won't be True, see Luprecht, "Opaque Skies," 47-54.
- ⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 40.
- ⁴⁷ Heidegger, "Poets," 108.
- ⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 90.
- ⁴⁹ On the floating camera creating a sense of ease in the spectator, see Cook, "Angels, Fiction, and History," 163-190.
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- ⁵¹ For more on *Wings* as a film to be read as well as watched, see Warren Buckland, "Narration and Focalisation in Wings of Desire," *Cineaction* 56 (2001), 26-33.
- ⁵² Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 22. On Wenders' own preference for "movies that ask me to see," see Ira Paneth, "Wim and His Wings," *Film Quarterly* 42, 1 (Fall 1988), 2-8.

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