

Leseproben

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Lesebeispiel: "A Beat of the Wings," by Wim Wenders, Seite 7-9:

Evil spirits definitely outnumber good ones in film history. What with all the goblins, ghosts, evil fairies, and headless horsemen flying around, from little devils to grown-up Satans and other monsters—the few angels that make it into film are a dwindling minority. Why is that?

I didn't ask myself that back in the mid-1980s when I started working on my film *Der Himmel über Berlin* [Engl.: *Wings of Desire*] with angels in the starring roles. I saw angels more as a metaphor for the lost childhood that everyone still carries with them in their heart or, actually, has more or less buried there. Only gradually did I realize that these beings were more able to love than we are; they had to be, by definition. And in order to see the world as they do, my camera would suddenly have to make an effort that surpassed the powers and skills of any cameraman: It would have to show the characters and this city in a more loving way than a purely human perspective could. If at all, angels must see in a totally different way than we do.

In this context I cannot resist telling an anecdote that happened during preparations for the film, when I still had no clear idea of where my angelic figures would lead me. I didn't want to leave any stone unturned in trying to get permission to extend the shooting to the eastern part of the still divided city. But that would not be easy for a director from the West like me. Still, I drove to the East German "Ministry of Film" to speak with Mr. Minister.

A year earlier, when my film *Paris, Texas* came to theaters there, he had expressly invited me to call on him sometime. He had said he would "open doors" for me, enabling me to film in East Germany.

And so with that in mind I found myself sitting across from him one day. I had the idea in my head that my angels would often hang out atop Brandenburg Gate. At the time, as you may recall, that was smack in the middle of the border zone. Anyway, I was sitting in the spacious office of the Minister of Film, who was looking at me expectantly to hear why I had come to see him. No, I did not have a film script with me, I had to admit from the outset. That already seemed somewhat suspicious to him. Where there was no script, there was nothing to either approve or reject. What kind of story did I want to tell? I want to tell the story of Berlin, I started to explain.

"Aha, a documentary film?"

"No, I have some main characters, too."





"What kind of characters?"

"Guardian angels," I said, "my film is about angels who live in our city."

He looked at me in disbelief. "Guardian angels?" I could see his brain working, clicking away and coming to the right conclusion: "Are they invisible?"

I nodded my head affirmatively, and a laugh chortled out of him.

"If they are invisible, then they can hang around all over the place?"

"That's right," I had to admit. He started snorting with laughter.

"So they can also go through walls?" I nodded again. "So they can also go through the Wall?" Before I could even open my mouth he started roaring so hard with laughter that his face turned red and I was worried he might choke right before my eyes. To be sure, he didn't laugh that hard very often during his entire career.

When he calmed down he got right to the point of the meeting. "It is absolutely out of the question for you to film anywhere near **the Wall**."

"Brandenburg Gate," I threw in quickly.

"Especially not there. You will not shoot anywhere in East Berlin with your invisible angels. I'll not have them crossing any border."

So that was that. We shot the entire film under half of Berlin's sky. The few shots along East Berlin streets were done in secret and the exposed film was smuggled over to West Berlin under the seat of an old VW.

Our angels were definitely "a threat to state security," at least from the East German point of view. You couldn't really deny that they were subversive in some way. It was true that with them nothing was really impossible. With them I had found the best possible tour guides, boy scouts, intermediaries, messengers—call them what you want—to help me not lose my way on this discovery voyage into the heart of Berlin.

Angels are more subversive than devils, demons, ghouls, and goblins. These creatures only scare you, but it's possible to shake off fear. Angels, on the other hand, show us the better people we could be. And that can indeed be terrifying, because it makes us feel our failures or our lost childhood all the more painfully.

When a sudden hush comes over a conversation people say an angel is passing over; it is an expression of the slight uneasiness we feel in the face of that which is unfulfilled, unsaid, inexplicable. Films, too, sometimes have such moments, when for an instant nothing appears to happen ... but that an angel flits across the screen with a beat of the wings. In such a moment, cinema is truly heaven on earth.