

BACKGROUND

German journalist Philip Winter has a case of writer's block when trying to write an article about the United States. He decides to return to Germany, and while trying to book a flight, encounters a German woman and her nine year old daughter Alice doing the same. The three become friends (almost out of necessity) and while the mother asks Winter to mind Alice temporarily, it quickly becomes apparent that Alice will be his responsibility for longer than he expected. After returning to Europe, the innocent friendship between Winter and Alice grows as they travel together through various European cities on a quest for Alice's grandmother.

**WHAT THE CRITICS SAY**

'In Wim Wenders's 1974 drama, Rüdiger Vogler plays the director's alter ego, Philip Winter, a thirtysomething German journalist on the road in the United States. Taking Polaroids instead of writing a story, Philip loses his job and must go home. But first, in New York, he's thrown together with Alice van Damm (Yella Rottländer), a nine-year-old German girl abandoned by her mother (Lisa Kreuzer), whom he then takes on an odyssey throughout West Germany in search of her grandmother. With this film, Wenders crystallized his style of existential sentimentality. His cool eye for urbanism and design blends a love of kitsch with a hatred for commercialism, historicism with a fear of history's ghosts. Wenders's New York chapter is a loving time capsule featuring the Rockaway Beach boardwalk and the organist at Shea Stadium; his German towns blend grim industry and grubby necessity. The movie runs on American dreams; a jukebox playing Canned Heat, a Chuck Berry concert, and even John Ford's obituary lend a touch of life to Wenders's gray continent.'

Richard Brody

'Philip and Alice drift through Germany on an unlikely quest to find Alice's grandmother. Philip doesn't obviously get into trouble; neither one learns life lessons in the modern Hollywood style; they don't appear to learn much about each other or themselves, and they don't go on much of a "journey" in the reality-TV-contestant style. All that happens is that the psychological weather progressively lightens; Philips finds himself writing again and the film concludes with a thrilling scene of elation: a feeling of exhilaration and freedom on board a train. It is an intriguing movie that lives in the mind for hours after the lights have come up.'

Peter Bradshaw

BLOGS, PODCASTS, VIDEOS & ARTICLES

VIDEOS

- **The Museum of Modern Art: Wim Wenders on his vision for "Alice in the Cities"**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCQXfAWI3jk>

BLOGS/ARTICLES

- **The End is a Transition: Wim Wenders' Alice in den Städten (David Heslin)**
<http://sensesofcinema.com/2014/cteq/the-end-is-a-transition-wim-wenders-alice-in-den-stadten/>
- **Alice in the Cities: A Girl's Story (Allison Anders)**
<https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/4085-alice-in-the-cities-a-girl-s-story>
- **TCM Film Articles: Alice in the Cities (David Kalat)**

<http://www.tcm.com/this-month/article/719889%7C0/Alice-in-the-Cities.html>

- **Alice In The Cities: The Uses Of Disorientation (Brenda Austin-Smith)**

<http://cinophile.ca/archives/volume-5-no-2-the-scene/alice-in-the-cities-the-uses-of-disorientation/>

RECOMMENDED FURTHER WATCHING

The Wrong Move, Wim Wenders

The second instalment in Wenders' *Road Trilogy*, *The Wrong Move* follows aspiring writer Wilhelm on a journey from his family home in Glückstadt to Bonn via Hamburg. He meets a small handful of people who end up traveling together, but tensions soon arise.

Kings of the Road, Wim Wenders

Kings of the Road is the final part of *The Road Trilogy* and follows Bruno, a cinema projection repair-person, and Robert, a recently divorced man in a state of depression. They travel around the country for Bruno's job and encounter numerous people in varying degrees of despair. Like the other two films in the trilogy, *Kings of the Road* is a quietly contemplative film about a journey, and the impact it has on the film's characters.