Migrant Children and the 'Space Between' in the Films of Angelopoulos

Stephanie Hemelryk Donald

Childhood is a category of difference within sameness, a form of being that is intrinsic to all human life, and yet which, simultaneously, is unavailable to adult humans. In the context of global migrations, childhood occupies an even more ethereal space of belonging and exclusion. This chapter advances earlier work on Angelopoulos,[1] and follows the example of many other scholars working on the great auteur.[2] His death in 2011 notwithstanding, Angelopoulos's work still resonates with ongoing twenty-first century historical conditions and it is that resonance I wish to explore here, particularly in relation to his achievements in representing the experience of migration and childhood. The child migrant's journey through actual and imaginary borders – of innocence and knowledge, security and alienation – epitomises the transience of childhood itself, within which there must always be accumulation of understanding and preparation for survival amongst adults. In this discussion, I argue that through Angelopoulos's use of what French cinematography terms *l'intervalle*, or 'space between', he visualises both the negative impact of migration on the collective (generally the family) and simultaneously the ways in which children attempt to reformulate mores of belonging to contingent units of identity and emotional comfort. I do not claim that the filmmaker was making (or indeed should have been making) a scientific argument about the damage of the dislocations of intimacy. I do, however, suggest that looking at his work with current and recent tragedies in mind allows insight into how children may act on their own behalf, and how filmmakers may imagine their contributions against the odds they face.

Exilic

As a great European filmmaker, Angelopoulos's oeuvre is known to cinephiles and world cinema experts for its grasp of Greek history, for its profound connections with south-east European (and specifically Balkan) trauma, and for its immense contributions to late modernist style on screen. His sensibility to the presence of childhood in adults nearing the end of life should also be acknowledged as a gift to cinema. The children in Angelopoulos films are always both young and eternal, incandescent, and spectral. I would go so far as to suggest that those dislocations between child and death prompt forms of auto-morality and progress of the human spirit.

Eternity and a Day (*Mia Aioniotita Kai Mia Mera*, 1998) and *The Weeping Meadow* (*To Livadi pou Dakrizei*, 2004) share the focus of this discussion. Both films concern children in conditions of migration and arrival, and both consider how their core relationships are sundered or forged in the processes and contingencies attached to such turmoil. Visually and in terms of narrative affect, the films deploy the *l'intervalle* (literally 'the space between') between protagonists, between stages of life, and between states of perception. This is achieved through cinematography and shot design as well as through narrative direction and emphases. *L'intervalle* is a French concept that speaks across the form and poesis of cinema, and has been both described by Alain Bergala in film analysis and used as a core principle of poetic narrative in his work with young people.[3] This notion of cinematic space is that which holds the revelatory capacity to reveal human motivations, and experience, and, especially perhaps, to both acknowledge and explore social and emotional relationships which are antagonistic, or surprising.

The first film meditates on an ageing man's preparation for death. The meditation engages ideas of exile, of language, and of love, and does so in no small measure through a

presentation of the immanence and luminosity of childhood, and a revelation of how its special and uncompromising energy and desire for human connectivity compels us to be more, better, differently in the world. Alexandre (Bruno Ganz), a poet, is the adult protagonist of the film. He is sick with cancer and preparing to go to hospital. He does not expect to recover. He drives around the wet streets of Thessaloniki, saying goodbye to family, to his dog and to his memories. He meets a child (Achilleus Skevis) washing car windscreens with a group of other boys, all Albanian refugees or trafficked labour, or both. The remainder of the film develops their friendship as Alexandre discovers that this small Albanian boy's demands on his time, care, and attention provoke in him the capacity to complete a sequence of responsibility and reciprocity with another being, something that he has failed to do with much closer relatives – his unresolved relationships with his mother, his wife, and his daughter are presented in the storyline and in flashback. The Albanian boy is, of course, especially vulnerable. It is the late 1990s, a period in which Albanian migration to Greece was intense after the fall of the Communism in 1992 and a time when migrant children were especially at risk of exploitation. The boy needs to be saved from the police, from deportation back to Albania where he has no family, from child traffickers, and from utter loneliness after the death by drowning of his great friend and fellow child migrant, Selim (uncredited). In all these aspects, his situation is far more perilous than that of Alexandre, who is facing death but has his work, his memories, and his privileged life behind him. Despite these inequities, the boy serves as a generous teacher and guide for the older man, thus problematizing the concept of vulnerability and highlighting the agency of the refugee child.

The first indication of the boy's moral power rests in his incandescent smile to Alexandre after their first meeting, a smile which lights up the screen. 'Lighting up the screen' is a casual phrase, but it refers a theoretical conception of the phenomenology of film. Sobchack's 'cinesthetic subject' is quoted in Saige Walton's excellent book on flesh and the

baroque on film as always returning to childhood, 'the open sensual condition of the child at birth'. Walton recognises that the 'inter-sensory-perception' of childhood and the 'sensuous density' of cinema make natural companions.[4] That insight allows me to better understand this luminosity of the migrant child's eruption into *Eternity and a Day*.

The boy steps out of the car and turns to smile. It is an ordinary but also exceptional human gesture. His smile is toothy and disarming. It alters the mood from ordinary kindness to the possibility of intangible gifts, invoking an involuntary, smaller smile from the depressed older man. The film has already introduced us to childhood. In the opening sequence, a boy wakes in the same, very beautiful house. He gets out of bed, slips past his parents, and runs down to the beach to play with his friend. This is the young Alexandre. The interval in space, time, and fortune between the privileged boys in the graceful house next to the water, and the Albanian boy running through a street in the city decades later, a boy who we later see is living with other young refugees in a deserted factory, is bridged by the man's sudden impulse to extend help to the child, and broached by the child's open smile.

The boy's grace continues as he pays Alexandre the respect of attention as their friendship matures, listening carefully to the older man's stories of exile and return. Alexandre is working on the unfinished last work of another poet, Dionysius Solomos (1798–1857) (played in the film by Fabrizio Bentivoglio). Thus, his last work is entangled with another's and neither will be completed. Alexandre tells the boy that Solomos collected and paid for words of his native tongue when returning from exile to his mother's island. For Solomos, the words create a currency of reciprocation with a homeland, his mother and her people. Alexandre deals in words but is less skilled at making those words forge a contact with his place in the world of others. By contrast, the boy plays within the logic of the poet's story by collecting words and selling them to his new friend. This is a transaction that bestows the story with immediacy and mimetic urgency. His witty riposte fuels the fire of language that

Alexandre so desperately needs to understand the end of his own life and to articulate his own regrets.

Figure 10.1. Man and Boy, *Eternity and a Day* (Angelopoulos, Greece, 1998). Screenshot.

The traffic in words is a preoccupation of Alexandre and a revelation in the playful response of the boy, and it occurs across several sequences. The most extraordinary exchange comes in a long scene set at the harbour's edge. It is constructed thus: first, man and boy emerge from a dispersed crowd walking by the harbour. The tiny boy (his small size accentuated by his proximity to the bulky adult) looks up at the man with concern. The man bends over in pain, as they sit on a bench facing out to the sea. The boy says 'I see you're smiling but you're sad. [stands, smiles]. Shall I get you some words? They may even be expensive! [laughs. Walks to the water's edge]'. The boy walks away and stands between two small groups of men. [Is he listening to their conversation, collecting a word? Or is he looking out to sea, at the ships and boats moored on the far edge of the bay, remembering a word that has shaped his childhood so far?] He turns and walks back towards the camera, and towards Alexandre, his pace somewhere between a stride and run that indicates his untapped potential, his youthful energy, his boundlessness. He returns with a word that articulates his shared condition with the dying writer: 'Xenitis'. It translates as 'Exilic', 'An exile', 'A stranger everywhere'. As Alexandre bends with agony in his failing body, the boy stands next to him, close enough but also respectfully distant. He inhabits and exudes the exilic, absolutely hopeful and absolutely forlorn at once, boundless but also constrained by his childish size and the pressure of belonging to a place that has insufficient imagination to accept him. It is the role of the emigrant described by Vilèm Flusser, who must 'attempt to experience, identify, and assess [their expulsion] as a sort of stimulus. If they succeed in this, their unsettledness will be transformed

into resolve'.[5] At the end of the sequence, there is a disturbance by the water. The boy's friend, Selim, has drowned; we surmise later that this was at the hands of child traffickers. Selim's body is carried along the harbour walk by strangers, his tiny body sodden and limp.

The sequence is defined first by Angelopoulos' trademark long take, whereby the protagonists' movements toward and away from the camera define our attention even as the peripheral groups of bystanders remind us of a larger world of inference and connection. This is not quite the pan of his earlier work, whereby space, history, and the group are mutually engaged in action or intent at the invitation of the camera; as Murphet notes, 'the pan gathers anonymised, distributed agents into a circle, a knot, of political or ethical energy'.[6] The long take described by Murphet might also be co-interpreted as a collaboration with the affordance of the space between, *l'intervalle*, to open and close, creating a visual mnemonic of Flusser's paradox, expulsion as resolve. The camera draws on the momentary poesis of these two humans – one old and one young – to draw them close on screen, whilst yet their game of words require that they will walk from and into the group (not quite the crowd) in order to play. The man remains stationary on the bench and the boy walks away, but never beyond the *fort da* of connection and return. In a narrative of adults, this would be the string of desire, but here it is the thread of reciprocity that maintains the connection and the emotional density of *l'intervalle*. The crowd in the sequence has a role too in this revelation. They are small and casual in number and character, rather than large and energised by any obvious political intent, really just individuals-become-social taking the air. Yet, somehow the boy takes from this group the word for exile. And yet too, from these people comes a tragic collective purpose when the dead child is retrieved from the water and carried away from the sea towards the city morgue. The space between and amongst them now refers back to the boy as they retrieve his friend. Thus, the essential relationship between immediacy and potentiality, life, death, childhood, adult anxiety, and poetry is presented. The long take combined with the deployment of *l'intervalle* suggests

that time is present, unstoppable, and mutual, that this man and this boy, this sequence of events, this discovery of words, and these actual and intimated deaths, are precious to the protagonists but nevertheless sutured into a much larger human narrative. If there were only one scene in the film and this was that scene, we would still understand the narrative punctum.

Water

The Weeping Meadow is another film fascinated by the *longue durée* of exile, here envisaged through a mythological epic situated across watery 'weeping' borders: rivers, floods, and the ocean. Eleni (Alexandra Aidini), sequentially and cumulatively an orphan, a refugee, and a political prisoner, carries the film. Mini summarises Eleni's mythological role as sister (Antigone) and the grieving mother of tragically fratricidal twins,[7] as much as her heroic part-Greek twentieth-century history from refugee in the exodus from Odessa (1919–1923)[8] to a DAG (Democratic Army of Greece, Δημοκρατικός Στρατός Ελλάδας – ΔΣΕ) sympathiser and prisoner of conscience in the Civil War (1946–1949).[9]

The materiality of the film is drenched with the accumulation of sorrow across the span of this woman's life. Again, the film starts with a small child, here the young Eleni arriving from Odessa with adoptive parents and brother. Eleni, we are told in voiceover, was found as a child in Odessa weeping over the bodies of her parents, and subsequently brought with other refugees to Greece after the Turkish (Muslim)-Greek (Pontic-Orthodox) population swap in 1923. Alexis, her adoptive brother (Nikos Poursanidis), and Spyros (Vasilis Kolovos), her adoptive father, both fall in love with her as she grows up. Her twin children (the father is Alexis but the two are too young to marry) are born in secret and adopted out. The family – Eleni, Alexis, and the boys – are reunited for a few years, but separated again when Alexis

migrates to America and Eleni is subsequently imprisoned for assisting DAG fighters and fugitives during the Occupation. Alexis is killed in the Japanese war as an American GI, a war in which he enlists only to gain right of entry visas for his family. Her losses are complete when the two boys die on opposing sides in the civil war. As Mini describes the end of the film, 'Eleni's posture and cry over her son's corpse echo a mother's universal grief for her dead child, as represented in ancient theatre'.[10]

The life of Eleni as a series of parallels with the wider experience of Greek refugees and exiles, of historical and political alignments in the first half of the twentieth century, and of the disappearances and bereavements of Greek mythology are only too clear. I argue that so, too, are contemporary issues of border crossing, rights of abode, and the risks associated with migration. Eleni may be understood as everyone's child, everyone's mother, and every woman in a conflict zone, even though she is also clearly embedded in a specific and contingent temporality. She suffers what Greece and Greeks have suffered in a fractured nation-space with uncertain borders, but she also suffers the kinds of losses that anyone at war, particularly civil war, might endure. Her sorrow washes across the membrane of the film. In *The Weeping Meadow*, the protagonist is not so much luminous as porous, and it is that sensorial conceit and load that transports Eleni's story across the membrane of historical space, and into a European present of mobility and massed dispossession. As Marks argues, 'For intercultural artists it is most valuable to think of the skin of the film not as a screen, but as a membrane that brings its audience into contact with the material forms of memory'.[11] In another, and even more pertinent, articulation of skin and porosity, film theorist and German studies scholar Andrew Webber comments (speaking in response to Alexander Kluge's thoughts on human skin and film),

> To inhabit time as your 'own' is also to fulfil it in a subjective sense. But this, in turn, implies openness, responsiveness, to connection with the time of the other: the time of the subject and that of the other come into a form of reciprocity in order to maintain an ethically proper relation. According to this model, film and human skin, respectively, have a temporality – a life-time – that is their own, but that can also allow appropriate accommodation, or mutuality, between them.[12]

How does Angelopoulos create a film and a protagonist of such temporal porosity? In part, he does so through a literal response to material dissolution, in water. In many sequences of the film Eleni weeps. When we first hear her story, she is a refugee child weeping for her dead parents. She weeps for her lost twins, and later for her lost husband, and then again for her children. The relation of refugees to water as border defines both films. The Albanian boy is exiled from everyone he has known before by a tall fence enshrouded in mist, and he is separated from his friend Selim by the ravages of sea-water even as he discovers and sells the word 'exile'. The baby Eleni is named aloud over a reflection of the exiled Odessa Greeks as they wait for entry into Greek territory. They are standing on one side of a flooded plain, settlers are listening to them from the other shore.

In the parallel structure of the film's final sequence, Eleni sits in a collapsed house on a flooded river, weeping. Weeping, that extraordinary wetness of being, the collapse of flesh into water, the admission humans make to the fluidity of their composition when there is nothing left to say, takes her back into the river sinking into grief with her dead son. As Sohi and Khojastehpour have noticed, one of the few close-ups of the film, from a filmmaker known to avoid close-ups, is this final image of Eleni, weeping for her son.[13] The shot is indeed a close-up, but it is not an extreme close-up that probes her face for emotional clues to character. Rather, Angelopoulos 'gathers' Eleni into the 'molar trajectory' of bereavement, and post-

conflict despair.[14] Her head and shoulders are in profile to the water as her body lurches and her head casts back in grief, the camera continues past her, pans upwards and rests on the waves of the unaccountable river. The grammatical sense of this film's narrative peaks and the visual grammar of its theme of migration and loss operate in such observations of *l'intervalle* as a key symbolic choreographic gesture. It is not Eleni's grief that we should remember, but the precise distance between and relationality of, the expression of that grief and the waters of Europe.

Europe Now

> As European cinemas have collapsed, Angelopoulos has continued to cultivate a national identity that is neither isolating nor insulating. Angelopoulos persists in the view that Greek national culture can be a lens though which to observe all human concerns, much as Joyce used Irish culture.[15]

Georgakas's observation, made after the Balkan wars of the 1990s but before the 2011 debacle in Syria (still happening, at the time of writing), is prescient. In the films of Angelopoulos one sees not just a cultural sensibility at work that speaks to European malaise and nostalgia, but also a vision that captures the crises of the present day, most particularly the plight of refugees, the agony of ageing in exile, and a profound recognition that we are failing our children even as we call them into emotional service to remediate that failure. I don't have an answer to the proposition that European cinema has collapsed; I am not sure what that might mean. It is possibly fair to say that European cinema is not offering or achieving a complete global language through which to share the true traumas of today's world – from climate change to the continuing violence against women and children to the re-invention of cultural borders and

the exclusion of refugees. But the understanding that Angelopoulos was an artist whose work resists final categorisation as the world unfolds beyond his own historical references is well taken. It is also notable that, in Frederic Jameson's essay a quarter of a century later, the differences between Joyce and Angelopoulos are also noted (re: *The Travelling Players*) when he argues that the use of paratactic historical episodes 'do not at all suggest some eternal return, some Viconian or Joycean cycle of history, but rather simply ask us to review the events. To gather them together in one unique memory. […] They construct a past'.[16] This paratactical narrative is an outcome of *l'intervalle*. Stories and protagonists occupy the conditions of humankind and of history, and as such there will necessarily be passages of juncture and recognition between one sequence of separations and losses, and another, somewhere else and in result of a different war.

The Weeping Meadow and *Eternity and a Day* observe the endlessly replicated tragedies of two generations of migrants, the Pontic Greeks displaced from the East, and the Albanians displaced by economic collapse.[17] In *The Weeping Meadow*, angry and judgemental villagers ('those peasants from the East', as Eleni's foster aunt describes them) take vengeance on the young couple returning with their illegitimate children to the house after the funeral of their father, Spyros. The villagers have strung up a flock of sheep, a living part of Eleni and Alexis's inheritance, on the tree outside the family home. They hang like pathetic festive baubles, blood dripping to the ground below. The following day floods arrive. The sheep carcasses now float in the water as the boats of escaping villagers nudge through them. I found myself comparing that image in a temporal parataxis to the efforts of filmmakers in the past few years to draw our visceral attention to the 5,000 souls who drowned in the Mediterranean in 2016, and the thousands in the years before that. In Marc Wilkin's short film, *Bon Voyage* (2016), a Swiss couple sailing their luxury yacht to Egypt encounter a boat crammed with refugees. Frightened of being overwhelmed by the numbers of people jumping into the water,

they sail away, calling out that they will seek assistance. Overnight, the refugees' boat founders and in the morning the hapless holiday couple sail through a sea of drowned people; men, women, and children become corpses bobbing against the yacht's hull. They find a small group of survivors and bring them on board, but these too they deceive, and eventually deliver to the Libyan coastguard, whence they will returned to Libyan camps to be beaten, enslaved, or imprisoned.[18] The European couple's betrayal is lodged in their incapacity to understand the difference between blind adherence to the idea of law as the ultimate arbiter, which they interpret as meaning they should deliver the refugees back to the nearest shore, and the underpinning reciprocity of the international law of the sea – which they have already broken by sailing away from those in trouble but which they nonetheless cite to themselves as a reason to call the coastguard. Wilkins's story of this individual failure of responsibility ends with the one child survivor coming out of the hiding place (where her mother stowed her in the few frantic moments available to save someone, if not herself). Her parents lost, the girl stands enraged at the cabin hatch. Her stare at the Swiss couple is an unabashed denunciation of failed reciprocity between nations and peoples. We might recall, in contrast, the brilliant smile delivered to Alexandre in recognition of his first, dying, step towards mature kindness.

Daphne Matziaraki's documentary, *4.1miles* (Greece, 2016), offers an account of a more positive account of humanity.[19] Matziaraki follows the work of a coastguard and his crew in Lesbos, who tirelessly respond to emergency calls and sightings of refugee boats in trouble. The short film explores how a man finds himself at a juncture in history and follows through on his humanity, taking risks, giving leadership to his crew, plucking people from the water, administering first aid, taking them to shore, and refusing to give up on anyone, dead or alive. His only fear is that 'someone has been left behind'. His absolute and practical commitment to the international law of the sea, the utter porosity of legal mutual responsibility, is a timely and potent recuperation of hope.

It seems, at the time of writing, that Angelopoulos's contribution to 'human concerns' (as Georgakas has it) deepens as time passes.[20] The films do not only teach us about Greece's civil scars and wounds, nor about the trembling borders of Asia Minor in the twentieth century, nor even about the intense poeticism and gestural strength of Greek story-telling and theatre. His films also instruct us on how we think about our predicament, our shared 'human concerns', now. Paula Rabinowitz's description of Walter Benjamin's (and Paul Klee's) Angel of History, 'whose face turns towards the past as she is blown towards the wreckage of the future', aims at the relationship between historical memory and the work of the documentarist.[21] And the Angel's turning head is surely echoed both in the ethical searching of the Greek lifeguard, and the profoundly unethical departure of the fictional Swiss sailors (fictional, but of course performative metaphors for most of Europe). Benjamin's vivid and confused Angel shows us so clearly what this might feel like, both being in exile and observing the family receding in our wake.

Figure 10.2. Eleni's grief. *The Weeping Meadow* (Angelopoulos, Greece, 2004). Screenshot.

Ghosts

Storytellers who use ghosts, spectres, and visual and aural interventions to reveal the degree to which we walk in company with the figures of our past are crucial to an era, ours, when lies have accrued such threatening substance. There is a sequence in *Eternity and a Day* when, like purchased words for a poet's unfinished masterpiece, diegetic sound is both of the present and past such that the flesh of the film is pregnant with ghosts of its own devising. The older

Alexandre hears singing on the quay, and the sky turns to the blue of a holiday in 1967. The slippage continues to the dénouement of the film; his long-dead wife dances with him on the beach where he played as a boy, and then she laughs, walks backwards, and leaves him finally alone. The final shot zooms backwards slowly and slightly, echoing front on her stage-left departure moments earlier. Alexandre's face and three quarters body remain in medium shot with the grey sea behind him. He stands, still asking questions of the past, caught between an eternity of memories, and his imminent disappearance into black. I am precisely not suggesting that Angelopoulos' films are 'about' a present moment of which he could not have been fully aware at the time of the films' making, but rather than about the subjects he explicitly espouses and represents. Nonetheless, given his capacity to recognise that memory and being are saturated with the past to the extent that one hears in different registers and sees in different colours the closer one comes to death, I do suggest that the imagery, pathos, and human reciprocity that Angelopoulos creates in his work afford us a lens through which to bear a kind of witness to the persistence of present human suffering in our midst and on our doorstep. The present cannot tell us how to view the past, but the membranes of film can afford a distanciation and a lens through which to engage with the overwhelming propinquity of the present.

This raises the question however, of whether the works of Angelopoulos might also address children themselves. My glib, or rather, my pragmatic answer would be, it depends on the child. When designing a VR version of the migrant journey to Europe, advisors who had made similar journeys as child refugees themselves commented on the dreamlike quality of the experience, on the size and intractability of the adult form, and on the realisation that no-one treated you like a child when you were deemed illegal or a supplicant. No-one, for instance, crouched down to your level to ask a question. Their comments recall Chiko Kinoshita's assessment of Mizoguchi's use of space within the frame, *l'intervalle*, to explore power relations between protagonists as a process of internal montage. The movement between poles

of the axis of the shot combines with the relative scale of figures in the image, to denote power as a class relation within the shot.[22] I note that Angelopoulos understands also that innocence is evacuated from childhood once that childhood is mobile and bordering, and that children must literally 'look up' to adults.[23] That is why the reciprocity when the boy smiles at Alexandre on the boy's plane of sight is so revelatory, and might indeed be of interest to a child spectator. It also depends on whether a child spectator were required to watch the whole film or only the sections where a child is present on screen. In my general observations over many decades, young audiences respond with intellectual and emotional acuity to stories and protagonists where a child's agency is the subject of the scene, sequence, or entire film. It doesn't really pertain whether that film is 'meant' for them or not. I have not screened either of the films under discussion here to young audiences. I have however, screened many clips from art cinema to younger viewers, eight to sixteen years in age, in China, Australia, and the UK. Without exception, the responses have been sensitive to the perception of the child on screen. The adult characters, meanwhile, blur, or are stock figures – good / bad – nice / nasty – in the subsequent account of the action.[24]

In claiming that the films made a few years before we guessed how bad things would get this century, having already been so terrible in the last, I follow up on Jameson's point that Angelopoulos' later films – Jameson refers to *Voyage to Cythera (Taxidi sta Kythira*, 1984) – carried 'a spatiality which would not have been fully perceptible to anyone before the 1980s and the final triumph of the transnationals'.[25] The 'transnationals' may refer to the filmmakers and film-goers who moved past national and Hollywood cinema towards the transnational moment that characterised film analysis in the 1990s.[26] Helpfully, Higbee and Lim have, more recently, revisited the concept and argued for the blurring of identity borders internal to the nation as well as across post-national and post-colonial spaces of identity and belonging.[27] Perhaps today we have taken up their advice and think more along the lines of transculturality,

regional cinemas, world cinema (the multi-sited, poly-centric cinema described by Nagib),[28] as well as the functional, globally-distributed national film industries producing narratives and compromises to underscore the politics of soft power they are funded to support.

Jameson's reference to the transnationals' 'triumph' is insightful – he acknowledges the extended cinematic imaginary of late-twentieth century culture, where the many border crossings of the century's fraught history come into view as a summation of three generations of exile, and he infers the psycho-social, inter-generational borders of contemporary transnational visualisation and experience. It is not just that Angelopoulos pays attention to people returning home, nor that he understands how profoundly they will find it altered, but that the multiple returns and exiles of individuals, families, communities, and peoples results in the de-centring of home itself. It is a world in which exile is the only certainty. There is so much water. So many walks to and along the beach, the seafront, the headlands. Ships come in carrying an old man (*Voyage to Cythera*) and leave carrying a young musician who will end up on the battlefields of Japan (*The Weeping Meadow*) or a tiny boy (*Eternity and a Day*) off to make his fortune. When the sea is out of sight, the rivers rise and fall; the rain sheets down. New boats veer into view, with new generations of exiles on board. A century of displacement, expulsion, and return renders place itself uncertain, and space stretches to encompass time past, time lost, and time regained. Space stretching to embrace time has always been a tactic in Angelopoulos' films, because he has always made room for migrants.

Jameson continues in a semi-critical mode, in so far as he regrets the individual protagonist at the centre of later films. Notwithstanding his later re-thinking of this so-called humanist turn,[29] I would hold him to that description on the 'individual protagonist' and suggest that he somewhat misreads the status of these men and women, and their actor-interpreters. I argue that the performances of, especially, Ganz and Aidini, do not 'substitute an old-fashioned individual pathos' into the films.[30] Rather, they subsume cumulative human

experience into unknowable but emotionally demanding personae who present pathos and despair on screen but who neither siphon performance into small bottles of individual realism, nor let it flood out as an amorphous, free-for-all humanism. Rather, they present time in perpetuity, but with the caveat that this is not a presentist cinema in the philosophical sense of the hierarchy of the present in the revisioning of the past.[31] Rather, the past is constantly intervening as spatial and spectral incursions[32] and the future is visible through the lens of the protagonists' horizontal scan of their time on earth.

These performances as brought to us through Angelopoulos's filmmaking present age, despair, and exile, but with childhood kept in sight. Whether heard in the massive cry of the grieving mother, or caught in the downwards look of the bereaved lover who is bereft of a future and knows it (I am thinking of Bruno Ganz's penultimate decisive look downwards in *The Dust of Time* [2008] before he climbs the steps on the barge in preparation for suicide), or ineffable hope relayed in smiles between a young child and an older man, we are *not* perhaps observing *all* human concerns, but we are privy to the presentation of sublime moments of the human condition, always subject to specific and grounded crises – impending death, an inescapable understanding of one's own exile, a recognition of another human actor in suffering and thankfulness.

Psychopathology indicates an incapacity to distinguish the past from the present. Those suffering from this psychopathology may endure nightmares, or they may find themselves acting out certain passages of their past or re-incarnating their own actions upon other people. Lúcia Nagib's essay on *The Act of Killing* beautifully explores this in the context of that singular documentary, wherein a serial murderer produces a presentist, somatic response – choking and coughing – to his own re-enactment of a mode of killing, garrotting, he has inflicted on hundreds of victims.[33]

Angelopoulos' protagonists are also affected with presentism, although never as garishly repulsive as the murderers in *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012).[34] Angelopoulos' child migrants and indeed adults returning – as if children embarked on a new world on the way to death – are, however, not only engaged with the past but re-live it across the course of the film, criss-crossing a membrane between pathological naivety and mature self-knowledge. *Voyage to Cythera*'s Spyros, perhaps the most revenant in the films, is not naïve. He begins his traffic of the film disembarking the ship and uttering the words 'It's me'. He knows who 'me' is, and what 'me' means as a historical returnee. Subsequently, he resists the way things have become, he dances belatedly for his fallen comrades, and he finally crosses the border over to a different consciousness, again on water. He is a spectre in his own return, although his haunting is not so much pathological but a choice to remain as 'me', an exile, and as such, true to a version of time that others can no longer countenance.

The relation between and across the child refugees of Angelopoulos and more recent and pointed takes on refugee-ism in Europe is a cinematic phenomenon of reciprocity and recognition. It indicates current situations that produce mutual cross-border responsibilities towards the causes, outcomes and probable impacts of how we act on our own and others' behalf. The relation is materialised in the membrane between cinematic knowing, political responsibility, and audience empathy. It operates across temporal and spatial borders, it fords streams, bridges rivers, and ploughs through oceans. It rings in the opening sequence of *The Weeping Meadow*: a voice calling across a river and asking people for their story, just as refugees today are asked, over and over again, for a story. A man, a woman, and two children – the three-year-old girl reaching out to grasp the hand of the older boy – have, of course, barely begun their story. The older boy will live with her, love her, escape with her, and finally die for her in a foreign battle. The little girl will grow alongside him, will carry their children, defend their political homeland, and weep for him and their children when they fall in battle.

All this tragedy is before them when they arrive at the water's edge. This reminds us that, while asking for a story and offering sanctuary is the beginning of reciprocity, it does not stem the tides and floods of history. The refugees cross the river but their exile continues. Stories do not stop at the border.

Nowness

I conclude, though, with some thoughts on how the images that stick from the films, the *nowness* of their address, achieve that intense meaning, that immanence. To do so I return to the idea of the *l'intervalle*. Daniel Colucciello Butler argues that Theodor Adorno's philosophical method, and subsequently Steve Reich's music (in particular, the piece 'Different Trains' [1988]), might help us understand how immanence is paractactically created – how it is 'mobile' – 'a consistent disequilibrium', 'a force-field and all things at once'. His explication of Reich's music, where melodies follow the tonal patterns of voices (alongside and in contrapuntal play with other materially produced sounds and soundscapes), is that *mimicry*, however exact and confounding, 'does not preclude our continuing awareness of the distinction between the sound of the voices and the sound of the strings'. 'The piece thus provides a differential immanence of sound, where sound is too immanent to be divided up and yet too differential to escape the sense of disequilibrium'.[35] Butler reminds us that Reich's objective is to address 'the immanence of these trains' – the train which Reich catches as a child travelling between his parents' separate houses in New York and LA, and the trains carrying other, less geographically fortunate Jews of that period to their deaths.[36] The music creates immanence through its chiasmic deployment of difference, and Reich's motivation, or possibly intimation, is served.

This explanation – and the use of Reich as an example – although not specifically addressing either cinema or Angelopoulos, nevertheless elucidates for me the filmmaker's methods of using the space between protagonists on screen in weaving history, memory, and growing old into and through historical event, agonies of exile, child life, and overpowering grief. When Alexandre takes the boy to the Albanian frontier, they see bodies hanging off the other side of the border fence. The bodies are at once Christlike, sheeplike, spectral, and threatening. They look as though they are dead. But when the pair turn and run away from a border official, the hanging bodies just climb down, the show over. The exact spatial relation between the travellers and those hanging on the fence is ruptured. The suspension of the latter is no longer meaningful. But why not? Are they ghosts of those who never made it over the border alive when it was their turns to run, and as such are they visible only to fellow refugees? Are they a kind of morbid scarecrow *chora*, warning the boy not to return, captives and soothsayers in the paratactic space of no-man's land? Do they constitute the interstitiality of Angelopoulos' visual thought (interstitiality being the crack where thought is produced)?[37] And indeed, to return to the question of a child spectatorship, is this an indication of childhood perceptions of external reality as a circus, wherein the acrobats and clowns penetrate the consciousness of childhoods as manifestations of primal fear? And, while this is not a paper on the address of a grinning clown or swooping trapeze artist, what childhood entertainment is not premised on the terrifying uncertainty of a world run by unreliable adults, whether or not that child is also a refugee?

Figure 10.3. Approaching the border. *Eternity and a Day* (Angelopoulos, Greece, 1998). Screenshot.

Figure 10.4. Approaching the border, Odessa refugees. *The Weeping Meadow* (Angelopoulos, Greece, 2004). Screenshot.

The paratactic approach to the internal indexicality in Angelopoulos's cinema (and, of course, prompted by the idea of the crack) made me think again of Doris Salcedo's 2007 installation 'Shibboleth', promptly nicknamed the Crack, in the Tate Modern Turbine Hall.[38] Salcedo's intention was to recognise the cracks, the shibboleths in and between European societies and populations, between those that belong and those who do not, between those who know all the words and those who must purchase them one by one, or worse, those who are silenced by the very sound of their own voices. The Crack was just that, a long crack of varying widths stretching down the concrete Turbine floor. The most emblematic image from the period of its installation was of visiting children jumping from one side to the other and laughing, blissfully and naively broaching the border with their bodies and their voices.[39] Angelopoulos's method is on a continuum with those of Reich and Salcedo (and vice versa). By leaving cracks in time and in space he allows other stories to come through the work and into the frame. For an auteur with so much control over the detail and choreography of his narratives, he is also utterly, profoundly generous with the opening of time to history, and to childhood.

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Notes

[1] *Child life* is a term coined in association with Agamben's ideas on *bare life*. However, while bare life indicates the least of living, the reduction of the human spirit and the destruction of sociality and hope, child life refers to 'the transient and crucial being-in-the-world that is childhood, an ontology that grounds us all'. Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, *There's No Place Like Home: The Child Migrant in World Cinema* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018), p. x.

[2] Panayiota Mini, 'The Historical Panorama in Post-1974 Greek Cinema: *The Travelling Players*, *Stone Years*, *Crystal Nights*, *The Weeping Meadow*', *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*, 2:2 (2016), pp. 133–153; Julian Murphet, 'The Cinematography of the Group:

Angelopoulos and the Collective Subject of Cinema' in Angelos Koutsourakis and Mark Steven (eds), *The Cinema of Theo Angelopoulos* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 159–174; Les Roberts, 'Non-places in the Mist: mapping the Spatial Turn in Theo Angelopoulos' Peripatetic Modernism' in Wendy Everett and Axel Goodbody (eds), *Revisiting Space: Space and Place in European Cinema* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 325–344.

[3] Alain Bergala, 'De *l'intervalle* chez Mizoguchi', *Cinémathèque*, 14 (1998), pp. 28–43;

[4] Saige Walton, *Cinema's Baroque Flesh: Film, Phenomenology and the Art of Entanglement* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), p. 98.

[5] Vilèm Flusser, *The Freedom of the Migrant Objections to Nationalism* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 26.

[6] Murphet, 'The Cinematography of the Group', pp. 162–166.

[7] Mini, 'The Historical Panorama in Post-1974 Greek Cinema', pp. 146–147.

[8] Emilia Salvanou, 'From Imperial Dreams to the Refugee Problem: Population Movements During Greece's Decade of War 1912–22' in Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhvanko (eds), *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 284–303 (pp. 294–298).

[9] Alan James, 'The Civil War in Greece (1947–1954)' in *Peacekeeping in International Politics: Studies in International Security* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990); Nikos Marantzidis, 'The Greek Civil War (1944–1949) and the International Communist System', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 15 (2013), pp. 25–54.

[10] Mini, 'The Historical Panorama in Post-1974 Greek Cinema', p. 147.

[11] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 243.

[12] Andrew Webber, 'The Seen and the Un-seen: Digital Life-time in Christian Petzold's *Etwas Besseres als den Tod* (2011)', *Oxford German Studies*, 46 (2017), pp. 345–459.

[13] Behzad Ghaderi Sohi and Adineh Khojastehpour, 'Beginning in the End: Poetry of Greek Tragedy in Theo Angelopoulos's *Ulysses' Gaze* and *The Weeping Meadow*', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 38:1 (2010), pp. 59–72 (p. 68).

[14] Murphet, 'The Cinematography of the Group', p. 164.

[15]Dan Georgakas, 'Angelopoulos, Greek History and *The Travelling Players*' in Andrew Horton (ed.), *The Last Modernist: The Films of Angelopoulos* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 1997), pp. 27–42 (p. 40).

[16] Frederic Jameson, 'Angelopoulos and Collective Narrative', in Angelos Koutsourakis and Mark Steven (eds), *The Cinema of Theo Angelopoulos* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 99–113 (p. 109).

[17] See Martin Baldwin-Edwards, 'Albanian Emigration and the Greek Labour Market: Economic Symbiosis and Social Ambiguity', *South East Europe Review*, 7:1 (2004), pp. 51–65. A general overview is given in a section on Albanian migration to Greece, pp. 235–236, in Martin Baldwin-Edwards and Katarina Apostolatou, 'Greece' in Heinz Fassmann, Ursula Reeger, and Wiebke Sievers (eds), *Statistics and Reality: Concepts and Measurements of Migration in Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 233–267.

[18] The deals struck between Italy (with the support of the EU) and Libya are now well documented. UNHCR account as of 11 August 2019: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/libya.html>. A more critical perspective is supplied by Jeff Crisp, who has been unremitting in casting a light on the conditions experienced by returned migrants: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/news/leaving-libya-by-boat-what-happens-after-interception-jeff-crisp> [accessed 20 September 2019].

[19] Available for Freeview through *The New York Times* website archive: <https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000004674545/41-miles.html> [accessed 18 October 2019].
[20] Georgakas, 'Angelopoulos, Greek History and *The Travelling Players*', p. 40.
[21] Paula Rabinowitz, 'Wreckage upon Wreckage: History, Documentary and the Ruins of Memory', *History and Theory*, 32:2 (1993), pp. 119–137.
[22] Chika Kinoshita, 'Choreography of Desire: Analysing Kinuyo Tanaka's Acting in Mizoguchi's Films', *Screening the Past*, 2001, unpaginated. <http://www.screeningthepast.com/2014/12/choreography-of-desire-analysing-kinuyo-tanakas-acting-in-mizoguchis-films/accessed> [accessed 11 October 2019].
[23] The observations about dreams and the attitudes of strange were made in consultations in 2019. Currently I do not have permission to publish the names associated with the consultation. Discussion of the inappropriate language of innocence in Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, 'Landscape in the Mist: Thinking Beyond the Perimeter Fence' in Angelos Koutsourakis and Mark Steven (eds), *The Cinema of Theo Angelopoulos* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 206–218.
[24] Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, '"Follow the Yellow Brick Road": The *Passeur*, the Gatekeeper, and the Young Migrant Film-maker', *Film Education Journal*, 2:1 (2019), pp. 48–61.
[25] Frederic Jameson, 'The Past as History, the Future as Form' in Andrew Horton (ed.), *The Last Modernist: The Films of Angelopoulos* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 1997), pp. 78–95 (p. 78).
[26] Sheldon Hsiao-Peng Lu (ed.), *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).
[27] Will Higbee and Song Hui Lim, 'Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies', *Transnational Cinemas*, 7 (2010), p. 21.
[28] Lúcia Nagib, *World Cinema and the Ethics of Realism* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011).
[29] Jameson, 'Angelopoulos and Collective Narrative'.
[30] Jameson, 'The Past as History, the Future as Form', n. 25.
[31] Eleftheria Thanouli, *History and Film: A Tale of Two Disciplines* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018).
[32] Webber, 'The Seen and the Un-seen: Digital Life-time in Christian Petzold's *Etwas Besseres als den Tod* (2011)'.
[33] Lúcia Nagib, 'Non-Cinema, or The Location of Politics in Film', *Film-Philosophy*, 20:1 (2016), pp. 131–148.
[34] Oppenheimer co-directed the film with Christine Cynn and an anonymous Indonesian.
[35] Daniel Colucciello Butler, *Deleuze and the Naming of God: Post-Secularism and the Future of Immanence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 193.
[36] Ibid.
[37]Ibid.
[38] Doris Salcedo, *Shibboleth* (2007). Details of the installation at the Tate Modern, available here: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/global-contemporary/a/doris-salcedo-shibboleth> [accessed 22 October 2019].
[39] Mention of the entanglement between the Crack/Shiboleth and the visiting public is canvassed in relation to refugee studies in the following (downloadable) publication: Dionysios Gouvias, Chryssanthi Petropoulou, and Charalampos Tsavdaroglou, *Contested Borderscapes. Transnational Geographies vis-à-vis Fortress Europe*, Cultural Commons.com. <http://aoratespoleis.wordpress.com> [accessed 22 October 2019].