

**Reshaping Contemporary Greek Cinema Through a Re-
evaluation of the Historical and Political Perspective of
Theo Angelopoulos's Work**

by

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Abstract

Theo Angelopoulos's unique gaze in cinema established him as one of the most significant figures in European cinema of the last fifty years. His dialectical approach to form and style and his connection to Greek history helped him to reawaken collective memories and remind people of certain historical events. After his tragic death in 2012, the Greek film industry made a huge shift to a more post-modern and non-political point of view. Something that is quite surprising since Greece has been in the midst of major political conflicts since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008. Many scholars have investigated various points in Theo Angelopoulos's work. This paper focuses on a detailed search of the historical and political perspective of Angelopoulos's films by creating a cross-disciplinary research in theory and practice. This research provides new insights regarding the way that Angelopoulos used Brechtian techniques in his first trilogy, and also the significance of the use of the Greek coffee shop (kafeneion) as an ideal location in his films. The theoretical findings are used as a key tool in the creation of three research films that will illustrate the ways we can use the techniques of Theo Angelopoulos's work to create a new kind of contemporary political cinema in Greece, and ultimately lead to the creation of the Manifesto for a new avant-garde contemporary Greek cinema.

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How to read the PhD thesis

Read up to chapter 4



Watch the research documentary:
"A quest for eternity(2017)"



Read up to chapter 5



Watch the midpoint short film:
"A still sunvnrise(2017)"



Read up to chapter 8



Watch the final short film:
"Flickering souls set alight(2019)"



Finish up reading the thesis

1.0 Introduction – introducing the research

Contemporary Greek cinema is marked by a significant shift away from a modernist and political point of view to a more post-modern and nihilistic approach. Directors such as Yorgos Lanthimos, Alexandros Avaranas, and Athina Rachel Tsangari have infused their work with a non-political and pessimistic approach to contemporary Greek reality. This change in Greek cinema is evident since the tragic loss of the most well-known Greek director, Theo Angelopoulos, one of the last political directors in Greece who made Greek cinema famous worldwide. During his lifetime up until the present day his films are a matter of debate and discussion among academics and filmmakers.

Many scholars and academics have written articles and books regarding Angelopoulos's unique 'gaze' in cinema. It is impossible to totally comprehend the whole magnificence of Theo Angelopoulos's universe without fully understanding Greek history, politics, culture, and the contemporary landscape of Greek cinema. The only way to do this is through a cross-disciplinary research of these subjects, as well as by approaching it via theory and practice. One key element to underpin both theoretical and practical aspects of this research is the ingenious use of Greek coffeeshops (kafeneion) as a cinematic location in Angelopoulos's films. Theo Angelopoulos systematically uses the kafeneion location in his films, from his first feature film *Reconstruction* (1970) until his final one *The Dust of Time* (2008) (Angelopoulos, 1970) (Angelopoulos, 2008). Many would consider that the use of this location is the best way to illustrate Greek reality, since it plays such a significant cultural role. I believe that the reason for this choice, especially to an auteur like Angelopoulos, goes far deeper. The understanding of the above techniques and choices will help us to create the tools for a new contemporary political cinema in Greece.

As noted above, this research combines both theoretical and practical methodologies in order to articulate the findings. The first stage of the study focused on an in-depth literature review of the current bibliography about Angelopoulos, Greek history and politics. During this review, I noticed a sizeable research gap in the connection

between Theo Angelopoulos and Bertolt Brecht's techniques. The existing research regarding this topic does not make an in-depth political analysis of this connection, but is just a superficial analysis of the Brechtian techniques used by Angelopoulos. In the first stage of the research I spent three months doing field work ([Appendix 11](#)), which was an opportunity that helped me to reshape this research and put it on the right path. I had the chance to test my hypothesis by presenting in multiple conferences and events in Greece, The United Kingdom, and Vienna (see [Appendix 1](#), [Appendix 2](#)).

During the second stage of the research, I created a mid-point fiction film *A Still Sunrise* (2017) that helped me understand in practice some of the above-mentioned theoretical techniques (Panagopoulos, 2017b). At the end of the second stage, I focused on the creation of a research documentary *A Quest for Eternity* (2017) (video-essay) that emphasises all the elements that this research concerns (Panagopoulos, 2017a). During the creation of the documentary I proved the originality of the research by interviewing the key academics and scholars who had worked with Theo Angelopoulos since the beginning of his career.

During the final stage of my research I created the last short film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019) which illustrates in practice all of the above theoretical elements, and is a fine example of the kind of contemporary political Greek cinema that we need in Greece today, and is illustrated in chapter [8.04 Towards a new Greek avant-garde political cinema. Presenting the "Manifesto"](#) (Panagopoulos, 2019). The reason I chose the word "*Manifesto*" for this chapter is because I believe that a basic element missing from contemporary avant-garde movements is that they no longer have a connection to a collective movement. I believe that this point is essential if we want to talk about political cinema.

At this point I would like to present some aspects of my background. Since 2005 I have been a politically active person with strong bonds to the left wing side of politics, with a dialectical way of interpreting history. I was a very dedicated activist throughout the troubled years of the financial crisis in Greece from 2008 to 2015 (Varoufakis, 2017). I was also the president of the student union during my undergraduate studies from 2011 to 2012 after creating my own political party inside the university. I found the

need to create this party since the government, from 2010 to 2015, forced radical changes to the Greek Universities because of the financial crisis and the consequent lack of funding (Papamatheou, 2011). This political journey made me very connected with politics and history. Greek history, as noted later in this research, is one of the darkest chapters in modern European history. Since my undergraduate studies, I was particularly fascinated by the way that Theo Angelopoulos was able to articulate these troubled historical years with his poetic gaze. The full understanding of this historical truth depicted by Angelopoulos and his perspective became a necessity for me in order to understand my political decisions and my past. When I started working in Greek cinema, I became quite sceptical about the way that Greek cinema made a swift change from a modernist political cinema to a postmodern and nihilistic point of view.

This research and the topics identified here are born of an inner need and passion: this 'something', that Knudsen describes in his book *Finding the Personal Voice in Filmmaking*, which makes us create and express ourselves through art (Knudsen, 2018, p. 23). The reason to reshape contemporary Greek cinema to express a more political point of view, by re-examining our past is not only a personal research project that will hopefully grant me with a Doctoral title, but is also an internal, political, and artistic need to make a significant contribution to Greek cinema and to feel complete, both as an artist and a politically engaged human being.

2.0 Research problem, Research questions

If we reshape our knowledge based on the way that Angelopoulos was using elements of Greek history and politics and the way he used the kafeneion as a location in his work, we will be able to re-introduce historical and political perspectives in the practice of contemporary Greek filmmaking. I articulated this hypothesis with the creation of a short fiction film *Flickering Souls Set Afloat* (2019), during the final stage of my research. This short film illustrates all the above findings regarding the historical and political aspects of Theo Angelopoulos's work, as typified in his kafeneion scenes, and re-introduces a new way of making political cinema in Greece.

1. Aims and Objectives

Aims:

1. *Reshaping the contemporary Greek cinema landscape by a re-evaluation of the historical and political aspects of Theo Angelopoulos work.*

Objectives:

1. *Reshape our knowledge about Theo Angelopoulos's historical and political aspects by understanding the use of kafeneion as an ideal location in his films.*
2. *Understand in full depth the connection of Theo Angelopoulos with Bertolt Brecht and the political aspects of this connection.*
3. *Create three research films that will articulate in practice this change in contemporary Greek cinema.*

This research explores how the systematic use of Greek coffee shops (kafeneion) as an “ideal location” in Theo Angelopoulos’s films brings a new understanding of the historical and political aspects of his work. Reviewing these aspects will help the research and filmmaking community to reshape their knowledge regarding his work and to analyse in depth his world view and techniques, in order to contribute not only to the current research in cinema but also to the contemporary landscape of the Greek filmmaking industry.

It is apparent that the existing literature on the subject of Theo Angelopoulos’s cinema does not focus on an in-depth analysis of the historical and political aspects of his films, even though they were a major breakthrough, not only in cinema studies but also in modern historiography. This fact is quite reasonable since the historical period that Angelopoulos is dealing with remains a taboo subject for Greece. After carefully reviewing his films, there is evidently a systematic use of the kafeneion as a location that played a really significant role in the narrative of his films, especially during the description of some officially sanctioned historical turning points. I fully understand the essential role that the kafeneion has in Greek history (because I was born and bred in Greece) and I believe that this systematic use cannot be a coincidence, especially for an auteur like Angelopoulos.

In the beginning of the literature review process, I came across a connection between Theo Angelopoulos's work with Bertolt Brecht's estrangement techniques. This connection can mostly be observed in the so-called first period of Angelopoulos's films, from *Reconstruction* (1970) until *Alexander the Great* (1980) (Angelopoulos, 1980). The current bibliography contains only a superficial analysis of Angelopoulos elective affinity with Brecht, sometimes without even emphasising the political aspects of this connection. I believe that by examining this relationship in detail we will be able to more fully perceive the political dimensions of Theo Angelopoulos's aesthetical choices in his films.

During my literature review I noticed a second significant research gap regarding the films of Theo Angelopoulos and Greek politics and history. I observed the appearance of Aris Velouchiotis used as a historical archetype during the first Trilogy and *Alexander the Great* (1980). Aris Velouchiotis, as explained in the [chapter 4.3 Civil War trauma and the "ghost of history". The case of Aris Velouhiotis in Theo Angelopoulos cinematic work](#) was a very important historical figure for the Greek resistance during WWII. Understanding this connection will make us fully aware of Theo Angelopoulos's political perspective at the time of his first Trilogy and his radical change during the second period.

This research will provide some original theoretical contributions regarding, for example, Theo Angelopoulos's connection with Brecht, and the way that Angelopoulos uses the kafeneion in his films, but the primary intention of this research is to provide new knowledge through utilising its practical aspects. As previously noted, there was a great change in Greek cinema after Angelopoulos's death. The contemporary Greek filmmakers approach cinema from a post-modern point of view with occasionally heavy nihilistic elements (Giorgos Lanthimos, Athina Rachel Tsangari etc.). The key aspect of this approach is that these directors do not concentrate on political matters and the end of the so-called socialist dream. This research intends to shed light upon all the above elements with the use of practical filmmaking by creating two shorts fiction films and one research documentary.

This research intends to answer the following research questions:

1. How can a re-evaluation of the historical and political aspects of Theo Angelopoulos's work be used as a means of re-shaping contemporary Greek cinematic practice?

1.1. In what ways does Theo Angelopoulos use the kafeneion as an ideal location in his films and how do they connect with the historical and political aspects of his films?

1.2. What aspects of Theo Angelopoulos's work demonstrates an elective affinity with the world view and ideas of Bertolt Brecht?

3.0 Methodology: describing how archive research and filmmaking practice are used in this research

This research is using a cross-disciplinary way to approach methodology utilising theoretical methodological tools (literature review, archive research) and also practice led research.

1. The first part of the research was literature review and archive research. I spent the first stage of the PhD researching literature about the director, Greek history, Greek politics and philosophy. I obtained a deep knowledge of the current research regarding this topic.
2. Then I was able to continue to the second step of this first stage, which was the archive research. From December 2016 to February 2017 I had unique access to Theo Angelopoulos production company archive (see [Appendix 11](#)). I was able to elaborate on these findings using the methodology mentioned above by participating in multiple conferences and by publishing my findings into conference proceedings (see [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#)). During the first stage, I was also invited to multiple events in Greece and UK universities and institutions in order to present my work on Theo Angelopoulos's films (see [Appendix 3](#)) and I was also interviewed multiple times by Greek journalists regarding my research findings (see [Appendix 8](#)).

3. The final methodological tool I used is practice-led research. I used this tool to create three research films:

3.1. The creation of a research documentary (video essay), with semi-structured interviews that will visually articulate all the theoretical elements that this research is dealing with. The documentary is divided into four main chapters:

- *Historical and political aspects of Theo Angelopoulos's first and second period.*
- *Theo Angelopoulos's affinity with Bertolt Brecht.*
- *The use of kafeneion in Theo Angelopoulos's films and the political importance of such a choice.*
- *His contribution to the contemporary Greek cinema.*

In order to create a research documentary that will produce new knowledge in this field of research, I had to interview key academics and scholars in the field, as well as filmmakers. I recorded interviews with academics who worked with Angelopoulos from the beginning of his career such as Prof. Stathi from the University of Aegean, Prof. Horton from the University of Oklahoma, Dan Georgakas from Queen's University etc. I also enriched this documentary by including interviews with sociologists (Dr. Gangas from Derree College), historians (Dr. Seferiadis from Panteios University) and Greek filmmakers (Petros Sevastikoglou and Margarita Manda who was also Angelopoulos's 1st A.D.). I analysed the data produced from the interviews and I edited a one-hour documentary. (**link of the documentary:** <https://vimeo.com/328188010> password: angelopoulos). I am planning to submit this research documentary to an online journal to test my findings (<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/intransition/>).

3.2. A short fiction film that I created in an experimental and vaguer point of view at the end of the first stage *A Still Sunrise* (2017). In this film, I tried to embed some elements of the findings into my own style and gaze. This film represents a midpoint for this research. In the film, one can observe some influence of Angelopoulos's style (long tracking shots, the use of visual poetics, yellow raincoat figure etc.) but I did not entirely succeed in

incorporating the full findings and elements of the research. (link of the film: <https://vimeo.com/328206848>, password: angelopoulos)

- 3.3. A creation of a final short fiction film that fully articulates the findings of the above research in order to practically change the landscape in contemporary Greek cinema. (Rutten, 2016) I used these findings and combined them with my own personal gaze in order to comment on contemporary issues in Greek society. (Smith & Dean, 2009) The topic of this final film is the Greek financial crisis which I depict by focusing the narrative on a Greek family in which the father suffers from ALS (*Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*). With this final film I created a manifesto for a new avant-garde political cinema in Greece that would be used as one of the outcomes of this research. This film represents a practical example for a new avant-garde political Greek cinema. (link of the film: password: angelopoulos). <https://vimeo.com/328218628> password: angelopoulos).
4. The last stage of the methodology is the critical and analytical reflection of all the findings in the creation of the final thesis in which it articulates all the theoretical and practical findings.

3.1 Archive research as a methodological tool

During the first year of my PhD research I had the opportunity to be in Theo Angelopoulos's production company's office which is called Reconstruction. I was able to spend three months in his office studying and researching his notes and all the books and papers that were gathered and stored in his office. Unfortunately, I didn't get permission to copy any of his personal notes, but this experience gave me the opportunity to transform my knowledge regarding his masterpieces, and enabled me to understand his intentions. Also, during the time I spent in his office I was able to access and study all the books, papers and archived articles that was part of the collections of the Museum of Cinematography in Athens (see [Appendix 11](#)). This period was crucial for my research because I was able to see the bigger picture, not only regarding the form and style of Theo Angelopoulos's work, but also the political perspective and consequences of his choices. Also, since the Museum of Cinematography has an enormous collection about Greek cinema in general, I was

able to study their archive about the Greek Weird Wave which gave me a substantial bibliographical support in order to justify my argument and to write the final manifesto (see [Chapter 8.4](#)). Furthermore, during my time there, I was able to search and copy some material from Mikes Karapiperis's (Angelopoulos's Production Designer) personal archive. I was able to copy recce photos, backstage photos, set design drawings, costume drawings etc. (see [Appendix 11](#)). This material gave me the tools to visually enrich my theoretical analysis and also gave me a better understanding of Angelopoulos's choices in the art department.

3.2 Practical filmmaking using the above tools

After the stage of the archive research and the majority of the literature review, I moved to the practical aspects of my research. For the completion of my PhD research I had to create one research documentary and two fiction short films. The first film I shot was the midpoint fiction film *A Still Sunrise* (2017). In this film I made a first attempt to approach the modernist form and style. The second film I shot was the research documentary *A Quest for eternity* (2017). This film helped me to enrich both my practical and theoretical research. I was able to gather new data from my interviews with academics that have worked in the field since the beginning of their careers. Making this documentary helped the originality of my research and also to enforce my arguments. The last film *Flickering Soul Set Alight* (2019) is the fundamental practical outcome of this research. It encompasses all the findings of this research and it stands as an example of a new avant-garde political cinema in Greece, as is stated in the 'Manifesto' section (see [Chapter 8.4](#)).

It is important for me to approach this research through practice and offer an original contribution in the practical aspects of my research. My background was really based in practice since my first degree in the Audio-Visual Arts department of Ionian University to my Masters in Cinematography for Film and Television in Bournemouth University. During my master's degree I met my future PhD supervisor Prof. Erik Knudsen who introduced me to a new universe, and made me understand the whole idea of research by practice. When I first read his book *Doctorate by Practice: A Case Study* I knew that this was exactly the path I had to take for my future (Knudsen, 2002).

During my studies in cinema I started to understand there was a vast difference of attitude between the practical filmmakers, who refused to incorporate theoretical elements in their work, and the academics of cinema that didn't have any connection with the industry and the actual film production. Knudsen's article *Research Glossary for Creative Practitioners* introduced me to the idea of bridging the gap between the attitudes of the two, and assisted me in comprehending the direction in which I had to take my own research and practice (Knudsen, 2016).

When I submitted my research proposal, I knew that it was really important for me not only to underline and articulate the elements that we can use from Theo Angelopoulos work in order to reshape contemporary Greek cinema, but also to prove that these elements can actually work in practice (Bell, 2006). Furthermore, I wanted to test these theoretical findings on myself and see how they can change my perspective and my gaze in filmmaking (Knudsen, 2018). This is why I decided to produce two short fiction films in order to explore the differences between them, as the first one was completed in the middle of my research trip and the second one was the final product of my research. So, this choice, to approach my research through practice, was an absolute necessity that would help to practically prove my hypothesis and also change my world view as a filmmaker. I also believe that this research approach will have a final better impact to the Greek filmmakers, since the ultimate goal for the film is for it to be screened in film festivals worldwide (Knudsen, 2016).

3.3 Mid-point short fiction film “A Still Sunrise” (2017)

The mid-point fiction short film *A Still Sunrise* (2017) came about from a kind of coincidence and really worked as a mid-point film for my PhD research. In the first year of my PhD, I was approached by a Master's student in Scriptwriting, Andy Chapman, in order to direct a short film that he had written. At the beginning, I was quite negative about the project because the budget was limited, and also considering that the genre, science fiction (zombie apocalypse), is one I am not particularly enthusiastic to work in. After my second reading of the script, I realised that the topic of the film was more about domestic violence, using the zombies as a kind of visual metaphor for the story. Following this realisation, I was able to proceed with the project

and work towards the creation of an ‘artistic zombie apocalypse film’. The scriptwriter agreed to some changes of the script to move closer towards my vision and we started working on the pre-production of the film. First of all, we deleted most of the dialogue in the film in order to focus on the mise-en-scene and the visual aspects of the narrative. When we managed to acquire the necessary budget by crowdfunding¹ we finished the pre-production. I wasn’t completely enthusiastic to work on a sci-fi film, but I thought that it was an amazing opportunity to test some of the techniques and methods I would like to use later on in my final film and in my career as a filmmaker in general.

The film is a very weird mixture of sci-fi with European cinema and modernist elements. I used many long steady and tracking shots paying attention to the production design and details. The edit of the film is a really slow procedure with lack of dialogue and much attention to details. Of course, the production value of the film is quite basic since the budget was around £3000. Nevertheless, the film was able to go on the festival circuit. It was accepted in [Cannes Short Film Corner](#) (the non-competition part of Cannes Film Festival) and also won the Best Drama award in [Oniros Film Awards for March 2018](#). This is also quite interesting since the film was accepted in Oniros Film Awards for the best thriller category, but won the best drama. This fact also illustrates how the film’s style veers more in the direction of an art-drama than a sci-fi thriller.

3.4 Research documentary “A Quest for eternity” (2017)

The production of the research documentary *A Quest for eternity* (2017) really assisted me to enrich my theoretical background and to complete my research. The documentary consists of four different chapters and provides new information using the data from the semi-structured interviews analysing the approach of Angelopoulos’s style. The first chapter focuses on the historical/political aspects of Theo Angelopoulos’s films, especially in his first period up until *Alexander the Great* (1980). The second chapter emphasises the connection between Theo Angelopoulos’s work with the estrangement techniques of Bertolt Brecht. This chapter reshapes our

¹ <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/a-still-sunrise#/>

knowledge regarding this connection and elaborates on the debate between the traditional Brechtian approach of Angelopoulos's work and the post-Brechtian approach. Also, this chapter played a crucial role in the further development of my personal gaze in cinema and the work around the manifesto chapter of the research. The third chapter stresses the importance of Greek coffee shops (kafeneion) as an ideal location in Theo Angelopoulos's films. This is the first time that there has been a specific research regarding this topic and the particular reasons behind this historical representation. So, this chapter also provides new knowledge about this topic. The last chapter talks about the birth of the Greek Weird Wave movement, contemporary Greek cinema, and how this new gaze could be influenced by Theo Angelopoulos's work.

For the creation of this research documentary I had the opportunity to interview some of the most important researchers that devoted their lives and their careers to the work of Theo Angelopoulos. I was able to obtain some really interesting insights from them and to combine them with different field researchers (history, sociology etc.), in order to have a fresh approach of the universe of Theo Angelopoulos. There are key people featured in this documentary, including Prof. Stathi, Dan Georgakas, Prof. Horton, and Prof. Seferiadis, who are offering a new perspective on the form and style of his films. This documentary played a crucial role in my own understanding of cinema and undoubtedly helped me to transform my own gaze, which is illustrated in the final outcome of my research, the short film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019). In particular, the chapter on Angelopoulos connection with Brecht and the chapter about the representation of the kafeneion location enhanced my understanding of his work, and expanded my own personal perspective in filmmaking, as evident in my final film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019) by the use of Brechtian alienation and in scene 15 in the kafeneion where Persefoni meets Giorgos (see [Appendix 14](#)).

All the above methodological tools (literature review, archive research and the creation of the research documentary) helped to enrich my theoretical framework that guided the creation of the manifesto and my final short film, *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019), which represents the final outcome and my original contribution to practice. The creation of the midpoint short film, *A Still Sunrise* (2018), helped me to test some of these techniques in practice.

3.5 Final short film “Flickering Souls Set Alight” (2019)

The production of the final short film of the research *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019) was one of the most essential parts of this research. This production had to illustrate all the theoretical findings of this research and to be able to stand as an example of a new kind of Greek political cinema as stated in the Manifesto (see [Chapter 8.4](#)) of the research. All the stages of the production of this short film are illustrated in detail in [Chapter 7.0 Final short film “Flickering Souls Set Alight” \(2019\)](#). The final outcome of the film was exactly how I imagined it, largely due to the fact that I managed to get strong support from many production companies in Athens that believed in the project and supported it to the end. Unfortunately, in order to achieve the form and style I imagined for the film, I had to have a sufficient budget to support it. The research behind the film and the originality of our cinematography gave us the opportunity to convince many producers to support our film and to make it a reality. Also, the actors in the film are some of the top names in the industry who were convinced to participate by the originality of the idea and by and because of the style we wanted to use.

The literature review will be articulated in the next three chapters, where the critical literature around Theo Angelopoulos's relationship with history and politics, the role of Greek kafeneion as an ideal location in his work, the connection of Aris Velouchiotis historical archetype with the political aspects of his first period and his connection with the world and ideas of Bertolt Brecht will be examined. Finally, chapter six is dedicated to the birth of Greek Weird Wave and the influence that Theo Angelopoulos may have had to that “movement”.

4.0 History, Politics and kafeneion representation as an ideal location in Theo Angelopoulos’s films

Theo Angelopoulos was born in Athens in 1935. He had memories of the Second World War and the Greek Civil War. During the battle of Athens (1946) Angelopoulos had memories of searching for his father’s body in a pile of bodies in Athens after the war because he thought that he had been executed (Kolovos, 1990). Angelopoulos

studied in the law school of Athens, but he abandoned his studies before he completed his degree. He then moved to Paris and studied in IDHEC (Institut des hautes études cinématographiques) where he also didn't complete his studies because of his obsession with his artistic choices. He returned to Greece in 1964 where he decided to stay and try to create something new in Greek Cinema. He started writing as a film critic in *Democratic Change* (a political newspaper of the centre left). In his articles there is a strong opposition to the so called 'Golden age of Greek cinema (1950-1960). Angelopoulos was searching for a new gaze, a new wave of political cinema. He was strongly influenced by the French New Wave (French: Nouvelle Vague) and slow-paced cinema with an obsessive use of single shots. His first short film *Broadcast* (1968) introduced a new approach in modern Greek cinema that was fully underlined with his first feature film *Reconstruction* (1970) (Angelopoulos, 1968). His first feature film really showed that Angelopoulos was completely unique compared to other filmmakers in Greece at that point.

Angelopoulos was the first Greek filmmaker that wanted to approach contemporary Greek reality from a historical point of view and by using memory and alternative historical narratives in order to achieve that. Since Angelopoulos is the last modernist and political director of Greece (Horton, 1997), understanding in depth his historical and political approach in his films and especially his so called first Trilogy [*Days of '36* (1972), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1977)] and *Alexander the Great* (1980) will give us the necessary tools in order to achieve the aim of this research, to reshape contemporary Greek cinema (Angelopoulos, 1975) (Angelopoulos, 1977, 1980). Angelopoulos reawakened collective memories by his use of landscape, colour, paintings and buildings. One location that plays an important part in Theo Angelopoulos's films is the Greek coffee shop (kafeneion).

The kafeneion has played a crucial role in the political life of Greece since the foundation of the Greek state after 1821. The systematic use of this location in Angelopoulos's films is not a coincidence. Understanding in full depth the representation and the importance of this location in this collective memory recall will give us the tools necessary to achieve the basic aim of this research. During my literature review of Theo Angelopoulos's films, I noticed a systematic use of Aris Velouchiotis as a historical archetype during Angelopoulos's first period. Many

academics like Dan Georgakas (Georgakas, 2000), Vasilis Rafailidis (Rafailidis, 2003) and Giorgos Ziakas (Ziakas, 1995) have noticed this element, but there is not an in-depth research of this choice. I believe that comprehending this point can help us to have a deeper knowledge of his historical and political choices.

This chapter will firstly focus on the historical and political perspectives of Angelopoulos's first Trilogy [*Days of '36* (1972), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1977)] and *Alexander the Great* (1980). Then it will examine the political importance of the representation of kafeneion in Angelopoulos's first and second period, and finally, it will examine the use of Aris Velouchiotis's historical archetype in his first Trilogy, and *Alexander the Great* (1980). This examination will provide us with a complete overview of Theo Angelopoulos's political choices and his use of collective memory recall through the depiction of the kafeneion as an ideal location and Aris Velouchiotis as a historical archetype. This new knowledge will give us the tools that will help us to reshape contemporary Greek cinema.

4.1 The historical perspectives of Theo Angelopoulos films

The creation of narratives for a historical/political film has to be focused on the actual historical events from the director's perspective of those events. Angelopoulos had a very critical point of view with a dialectic approach. So, in order to represent historical events, he needs not only to take in all the elements of this specific reality, but to modify them too. The creation of this 'new reality' is a journey from the real world to the director's perspective of it, and the combination of these two (Stathi, 1999).

German occupation and Greek Civil War were the main historical chapters that influenced his youth. After his studies in France, he returned in Greece in 1964, where the political status was very vague. Note that the dictatorship of the colonels started four years later. His first two feature films, *Reconstruction* (1970) and *Days of '36* (1972) as well as the biggest part of *The Travelling Players* (1975) were shot during the dictatorship which made it difficult for him and for the rest of the open-minded directors to produce films. Angelopoulos managed to use the contemporary political situation as an advantage not only to succeed with the style and aesthetics of his films, but also to politically criticise the dictatorship, by aiming at the root of its creation. He

felt that the events which brought that regime into life were rooted back in Greek history, during the period before the dictatorship of Metaxas in 1935. This is why the first film of The Trilogy of History [*Days of '36* (1972), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1977)] is about the period before the dictatorship of Metaxas.

Angelopoulos approached history not from well-known events, but from the stories and personal lives of humble people. Stathi states that:

Angelopoulos is dealing with the minor heroes, who are always the same, “poor” and nameless, and who, in different clothing, the same as themselves and yet different, inhabit the seasons as one turns into the other, weaving the net of that which we call popular memory. All the things that propel their fate can be found behind the stage of history, and they always lead, with ritualistic precision, to its usual tragic repetition (Stathi, 2012, p. 19).

That is the reason why Angelopoulos’s narration aims at the heart of the collective memory of the Greek nation. He presents events that actually happened to families and loved ones and are part of the Greek DNA. Understanding these events and their historical background means understanding a part of the collective Greek identity, which was hidden from them for half a century. This collective memory recall was introduced to its full extent especially in Angelopoulos’s first Trilogy History [*Days of '36* (1972), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1977)] where he is representing the historical events of 1935 to 1977.

4.1.1 The historical perspective of 1935-1977 in the first Trilogy of Theo Angelopoulos

The period from the freedom of Athens (1944) until the end of the Dictatorship of the Colonels (1967-1974) and the beginning of the so-called democratic period of Greece is an era with a lot of skeletons hidden in the closet. In particular, the period from 1944 to 1949 underlines one of the most difficult political and historical periods where the official narratives and the popular narratives are in direct contrast. Only after the end of the dictatorship of the Colonels and the rise of the social democrats (PASOK) into power (1981) does part of the historical truth begin to emerge into the light.

When Angelopoulos arrived in Greece from France in 1965 it was a troubled period for Greece and only two years until the Dictatorship of the Colonels. Angelopoulos made the decision to stay in Greece and try to understand these political upheavals and the gaps in historical knowledge that, if linked together, could lead to the root of the problem. As Stathi states in her documentary interview:

The greatest problem, I think, that interests Angelopoulos was the idea of how a country is constantly under the threat of a dictatorship. From Days of '36 the biggest concern is that. And this is a political thought. It is a position that takes a political-minded director. (Stathi, 2018)

This political thought is explicitly underlined in Angelopoulos's first film of the so-called Trilogy of History [*Days of '36* (1972), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1977)]. In *Days of '36* (1972) Theo Angelopoulos connects the dictatorship of Metaxas (1936-1941) with the dictatorship of the Colonels (1967-1974). In this way he creates the timeframe of his Trilogy and makes a strong political comment as well. One of the fundamental issues that Angelopoulos is dealing with in his first Trilogy, primarily in *The Travelling Players* (1975) and *The Hunters* (1977), is the strong connection of the Greek bourgeoisie with the far-right wing groups that worked together with the Nazis during the German Occupation (1941-1944). Greek far-right groups were not disarmed after the end of the German Occupation in order for the Greek and British ruling classes to be able to use them to destroy once and for all the communist danger. The basic political paradox was that the main power of resistance during the German Occupation was the left-wingers and the members of the Communist Party, under the name E.A.M. (National Liberation Front). Because of the Caserta Agreement in 1944 Greece was in the sphere of Western influence under the 'unofficial' commands of Britain. Vasilis Rafailidis illustrates quite interestingly in his book the way that the new state is treating the groups that supported the Nazis during the occupation:

After the battle in Meligalas, the groups that worked together with the Nazis during the occupation were transferred to prison so the British could find them unharmed after a while and use them in the war against E.A.M. (Rafailidis, 2006, p. 182)

Thus, the paradox mentioned above, in combination with the Communist Party which accepted fully the terms of the Caserta Agreement, led to the battle of Athens (1944) and the White Terror period (1945-1946) that led directly to the Civil War (1946-1949).

So, Angelopoulos deals with this timeframe extensively in order to wake up collective memories and reveal a hidden historical truth to the nation. Many important researches have been conducted regarding the above connection. My published paper *Theo Angelopoulos: A Voyage in history, time and space* deals precisely with this issue (Panagopoulos, 2017c)². One really important film, that is not examined to the degree that it should be, which illustrated Theo Angelopoulos's political viewpoint and forms a bridge to his first Trilogy, is *Alexander the Great* (1980). Comprehending in full the depth of this film will provide us with the knowledge and the tools to better understand Theo Angelopoulos's personal perspective in history and politics.

4.1.2 *Alexander the Great* (1980) and Theo Angelopoulos's political perspective of History

If there is a film that perfectly illustrates Theo Angelopoulos's personal perspective in history and politics it is *Alexander the Great* (1980). This film isn't part of any Trilogy and works as an arc from the first period of Theo Angelopoulos to the second. This film plays a significant role for this research since it is the last time that Theo Angelopoulos uses to a full extent his Brechtian techniques and shows a dialectical approach in his form. Also, as previously mentioned, this is a film in which the appearance of Aris Velouchiotis is clear. In *Alexander the Great* (1980), Theo Angelopoulos takes a different path in his political and historical representation of Greek society. He approaches history from the point of view of national mythology. Theo Angelopoulos sets this film at the dawn of the 20th century, and for the first time he presents his own political commentary of the events that were described in the previous films. The film is set in Dotsiko (see Figure 1), a village in the mountains of Epirus where the teacher of the village starts a commune. The focus of the story is the mythical figure of Megalexandros. He escapes from prison with his followers, kidnaps a group of British royals³ in order to bargain his freedom, and with a group of anarchists from Italy he arrives in the village where the locals respect him as a kind of god.

Megalexandros is actually not a mortal person. He represents the collective archetypes of Greek Civilisation. His identity reaches back from antiquity up until the

² For the full paper go the [Appendix 1](#)

³ This event has a reference to the Dilessi murders in 1870 when three English and one Italian aristocrat were kidnaped and murdered, by Greek thieves in Dilessi.

present day. Even his escape from prison and his preparations for a battle in the forest, do not have any human aspects to them. In the forest the audience can observe a metaphysical scene. The armour and horse of Megalexandros awaits him. The light from the sky is completely artificial and the use of music brings back memories from the Greek resistance during the Turkish Occupation (1453-1829). This scene is like a painting from the Byzantine period, where a saint like Saint George rides his horse. When Megalexandros arrives in the village, he doesn't approve of the commune that is already set up by the teacher, and he violently seizes back power, which he maintains up until his own death and the destruction of the socialist reality that was happening in the village (see Figure 2).

Focusing on the figure Megalexandros, the director deliberately adds elements of Greek national heroes from throughout the entire course of history. Megalexandros's figure has elements of Alexander the Great (ancient Greek emperor), Theodoros Kolokotronis (Greek general of the Greek war of independence (1821-1829)) and Aris Velouchiotis. The connection between Megalexandros and Aris Velouchiotis is explained at the end of this chapter. The costume and props of Megalexandros makes references to the above figures. His helmet connects him directly with Theodoros Kolokotronis, his obsession with his horse connects him with Alexander the Great and Aris Velouchiotis. Also, his black clothes, stocky body and long beard connects him once again with the Captain of E.L.A.S. (Ziakas, 1995, p. 28) Megalexandros also has a link with the paintings of Theofilos and the representations of Christian saints. His figure is also connected with Saint George which is illustrated in numerous parts of the film (Ziakas, 1995, p. 62).

Theo Angelopoulos shot *Alexander the Great* in 1980, six years after the end of the dictatorship of the Colonels, when democracy was officially restored, but Angelopoulos wanted to focus on the cruelties of the left (Georgakas, 2018). What the audience observes in this film is the representation of three types of socialism: the democratic socialism of the teacher, who respects the villagers and organises the commune under the auspices of the general assembly; the 'utopian' socialism of the anarchists who came to the village from Italy to attempt to manifest their vision; and the authoritarian socialism of Megalexandros and his partisans, who used force and guns to seize power (Terezis, 2018). He elaborates on all three of them, but criticises

only one. The means that Megalexandros uses to demonstrate his power to control the village destroys the collectivisation, poisons the water, and kills the animals: a clear critique of Stalinism and all the authoritarian regimes that were socialist or communist only in name. In this way, Angelopoulos takes the opportunity with this film to comment on the events that are going to happen in the next century of Megalexandros universe and uses this film as a transition to his so called second period.

This film can be interpreted with mixed feelings and emotions. There is quite clearly a sense of disappointment regarding the historical events that were described in his past trilogy. A disappointment that will characterise his next trilogy with the so-called 'end of history'. On the other hand, there are elements in this film that represent a more positive view of the future. When Megalexandros is eaten by the people of his village because he betrayed them, in a kind of theofagia⁴ (tran: Θεοφαγία) and, in place of his body, there is a sculpture of him bleeding. Thus, Angelopoulos shows that when history becomes a myth, history can never be forgotten. By the end of the film, when the young Alexander goes to the city with the full knowledge of the past mistakes and history, there is a clear point of hope for the future of humanity.

Understanding the use of this 'arc film' in respect of Angelopoulos's political perspective helps us to better understand his artistic choices. The great contrast of Angelopoulos's artistic style from his first to his second period is made explicit in this film and in his critique of and disappointment with the socialist dream. This melancholy is not only illustrated in the use of his Brechtian techniques, analysed in the next chapter, but also in the use of collective memory recall from 'ideal locations'. One 'ideal location' that plays a really significant role in Greek social life, and illustrates this contrast in Theo Angelopoulos's films, is the Greek kafeneion.

⁴ Theofagia is the eating of a god. Just like in the Greek orthodox church when we drink the blood and eat the body of Christ.



Figure 1- Drawing of Dotsiko village square (Karapiperis personal archive)



Figure 2- Archive photo from the group of Megalexandros fixing the clock (Karapiperis personal archive)

4.2 The use of coffee shops as an “ideal location” in Theo Angelopoulos’s work

As Gangas states in his documentary interview:

Jean-Luc Godard defines space as the time it takes someone to reach somebody else. At the same time, Angelopoulos uses space with a very unique point of view. Angelopoulos is very connected with the idea of reconciliation. One can think that this extension of time in Angelopoulos shots is linked with the notion of reconciling, meeting someone in space. (Gangas, 2018)

Angelopoulos’s use of his exterior and interior space works really closely with the idea of the representation of this space. Every location is unique, and it wakes collective memories of how this place used to be and how it is represented today. As Stathi mentions:

Angelopoulos’s architectural space is organized on the basis of this advanced conception for the representation’ function, a representation which leads to the understanding of the world as a result of a sensible reflection, which proves to be particularly useful in social terms. (Stathi, 2009, p. 3)

So, the space in Angelopoulos’s films becomes an ideal space that awakens collective memories and connects the audience with the history behind it. The architectural elements in Angelopoulos’s films transform themselves into crucial scene-design elements or into privileged representation areas, which are divided into various categories, each of which establishes equal relationships amongst the main characters within the world as they experience it. (Stathi, 2009)

In this way, the kafeneion is a very important location that becomes privileged through Theo Angelopoulos’s unique representation. Since kafeneion first appeared they have been of great significance in Greece’s history as a place of political socialisation. As Stathi mentions regarding congregational places in Angelopoulos work:

“Greek coffee shops (kafenias), ouzo restaurants, open-air markets, and squares are the main congregation places in Angelopoulos’s films. This is where social interaction is manifested

along with politics, where the foreigners merge with the locals, where the similarities and differences of a constantly evolving population are defined...In the congregation places, Angelopoulos is less interested about the personal identities of the goers, but focuses on the functions of the place, on the evolution of human relations.” (Stathi, 2009, p. 8)

To understand the kafeneion representation and its importance to Angelopoulos’s mise-en-scene we need firstly to fully comprehend the importance of the kafeneion to Greek civilization and cultural heritage.

4.2.1 The history of coffee shops in Greek history

As Skoumbourdi mentions in her book *Coffee Shops of Old Athens*:

The coffee shop in today’s large towns is what the Agora was in ancient Greek cities. Schools of poetry, aesthetics and art have been created in the kafeneion, masterpieces of thought and inspiration have been conceived in the coffee shops of the great cities. Economic issues have been solved there likewise, financial undertakings there have been developed and have worked wonders. What we call the life of the cosmopolitan city, from love to thought, has its pulse in the kafeneion. (Skoumbourdi, 2002, p. 17)

The first coffee shops appeared in Greece during the Ottoman occupation (though there is evidence of Greeks owning coffee shops abroad before that). After Greek independence and the end of the Ottoman occupation, Greek coffee shops struggled to find a balance between their Ottoman origins and their Greek characteristics. (Pittas, 2013, p. 18) Kafeneion started to open all over Greece, from the capital to the villages. Even the smallest village had a kafeneion where the residents could sit and relax between their working hours and to take part in the vibrant social life of the place. In order to participate in the local society you had to go to the kafeneion, only then would you be recognised as a fully-fledged adult. One of the common characteristics of Greek coffee shops was that they were exclusively patronised by men, due to the fact women were excluded from such social activities. That changed later, after 1970 when women began to participate in the political and social life of the city. Of course, some coffee shops were different than others, and women were allowed to frequent coffeeshop-patisseries in the cities. Giorgos Pittas, in his book *Coffee shops of Greece*, details different types of coffee shops with various characteristics. He says that there are three different types of coffee shops based upon the class background

of the owners and customers. This research focuses only on the working class/farmers coffee shops, but he also mentions two more. As he states:

Bourgeois cafes are lodged in buildings' ground floors; they are characterised by their ample size, high ceilings and majestic décor. Similar but less ambitious are those frequented by shopkeepers, petit bourgeois, banking employees. Although cafes, at least theoretically, are open for everybody, in practice each one hosts its own specific type of clientele, determined by the political, professional, and social affiliations of their habits. (Pittas, 2013, p. 22)

The Kafeneion was so integral to Greek political life that politicians used to say that the first vote had to be won in the kafeneion before the official elections. Politics was at the centre of discussions, and many kafeneion were linked with specific parties or specific party leaders. (Papakostas, 2001, p. 33) In troubled political times, if you walked into the wrong kafeneion that might have triggered a fight between the customers. This was portrayed perfectly in a comic way in the old film directed by Dukas and Santas *The 900 of Marina* (1960) where the kafeneion owner kicks out a customer from a different political party (Dukas, 1960).

Traces of this coffee shop tradition are evident even since Ancient Greece. These places of gathering were then called *thermopoleia* (a place to drink something hot). Later, when drinking coffee became part of the culture, they were called *kafenedes*, *kafeneia* and *kafeia*. Whatever we may call it, the establishment that was created in order to provide coffee ended up using coffee as a mere pretext. (Skoumbourdi, 2002, p. 131) These places were necessary for people to connect, talk and exchange opinions. People that shared the same fate, had similar problems, and sometimes shared the same vision. Some elements of that still exist today, but not with the same intensity as before.

It's best to examine the coffee shop representation in Theo Angelopoulos films by dividing them into two periods. The first one up until *Alexander the Great* (1980) and the second consisting of the films made afterwards.

4.2.2 The representation of coffee shops in the first period of Theo Angelopoulos (1970-1980)

Angelopoulos started discovering Greece with his first feature film *Reconstruction* (1970). This is when he started to learn more about the history of Greece, because, as he often said, he didn't previously have knowledge about the country. So, this new Greece becomes an ideal location for Angelopoulos because he sees it with his internal vision, with the vision of someone that wants to locate himself in the place (Stathi, 2018). Since his first film, the use of the kafeneion becomes quite systematic. We can spot this location during his first period in the *Reconstruction* (1970), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1980) and *Alexander the Great* (1980). In the first period the audience notices that this location is a place of conflict, a place where different political "ideal groups" clash with each other. There are several characteristic scenes that illustrate the idea above. In *the Travelling Players* (1975) the audience can observe the scene of the "music battle" during the New Year's Eve of 1946 between the communists and the royalists. Also, in the same location we observe the gang rape of Electra by five royalists, in order that she would give them information about her communist fiancé (See Figure 3). In *the Hunters* (1980) we can notice the same transference of power during the scene in the kafeneion where some hunters enter the location and kick out the regulars (See Figure 4). This can also be observed in *Alexander the Great* (1980) during the celebration when the Italian anarchists join the collective of the village (See Figure 5). Dan Georgakas describes this scene of conflict very accurately:

In the scene that follows, Angelopoulos brilliantly employs music to depict political conflict. The Greek villagers celebrate the arrival of their new Italian communards with a feast. The Italians respond by singing lively ballads. The colours of the clothes and the tone of the music evokes the sights and sounds of an anti-authoritarian society. This gala festive mood is shattered when Alexander's men enter the hall. Dressed in forbidding black robes and carrying rifles, they dance a menacing warrior dance, stomping their feet and raising their rifles defiantly. The bandits/rebels are not pleased with the new society established in their absence. They demand individual ownership of land and animals. They want to rule their wives as they have always ruled them, and they believe the Italians are little more than alien parasites, not unlike the British aristocrats still being held captive. Feeding their self-righteousness is the belief that they have earned the right to set the social agenda by having risked their lives in combat and having served prison terms. (Georgakas, 2000, p. 131)

In all of these films, including *Alexander the Great* (1980), which works as the central point of an arch connecting the first with the second period, the kafeneion was as a

vibrant location. A location where different political views were presented and often clashed with each other, and a place to transfer power. The kafeneion is an in-between space existing between the domestic sphere (the family table) and the public space. Though because Angelopoulos didn't extensively use dialogue, but works primarily with style and silence, these cafes can function as a place of repose. (Gangas, 2018) He uses these places as a way to wake up the collective memory of Greek people regarding the kafeneion, and to remind them of its past significance. This is the reason why his kafeneion scenes include elements of old Greek paintings, such as the painting *Café Neon* of Giannis Tsarouchis in the kafeneion in the *Travelling Players* (1975), where people are invited in to see the theatre play.

In the second period of Angelopoulos's films we can observe a different perspective regarding this location. The use of this "ideal location" changes its characteristics and expresses a different point of the director. This contrast will help us understand Angelopoulos's change in his political thought and artistic choices.



Figure 3-Electra with her rapists (Karapiperis personal archive)



Figure 4- The kafeneion in the Hunters (1977) (karapiperis personal archive)

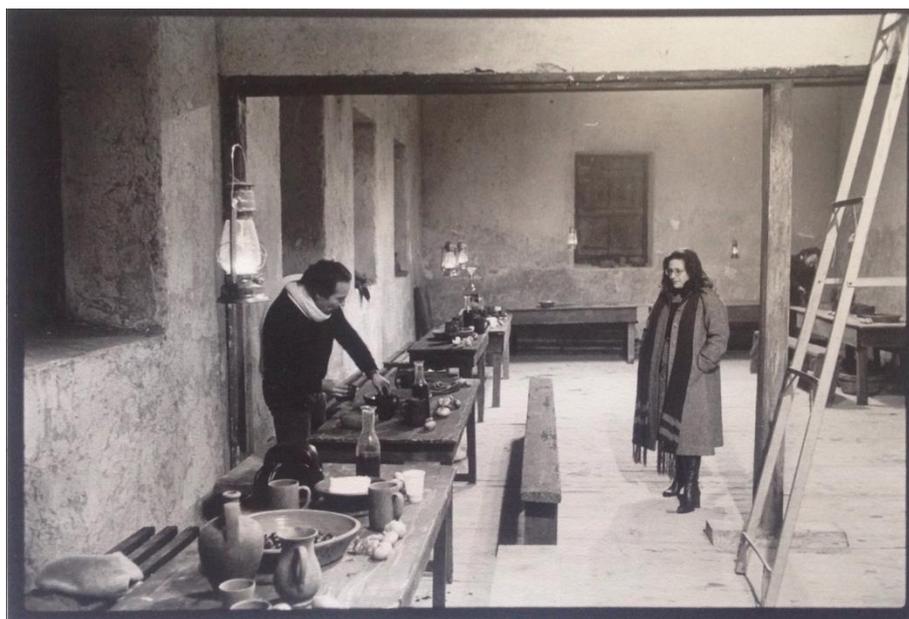


Figure 5- The kafeneion in Alexander the Great (1980) (karapiperis personal archive)

4.2.3 The representation of coffee shops in the second period of the films of Theo Angelopoulos (1980-2009)

During Angelopoulos's second period, where he distances himself from his Brechtian and political approach, there is a different point of view evident in his kafeneion scenes. These locations are no longer a place of political conflict, but are a place in

which a glorious past is represented. A place that used to be vibrant and now just remains there as if a ruin from the past. It still exists, but purely as a reminder of the past. This aesthetical turn can be observed in the first film of the second period *Voyage to Cythera* (1984). In the first kafeneion scene, the message of this new representation is quite clear. This kafeneion is a part of a television studio and is the place when Mr. Spiros's son thinks that he sees his exiled father. The place is almost empty, and it has no connection with the kafeneion of Angelopoulos's previous films. It is just a fake (television) representation of the past. In the same film, close to the end, the representation of the kafeneion is also really important and underlines this turn. When Mr. Spiros is on the raft waiting in the rain for a country to accept him, inside the kafeneion (see Figure 6) is a celebration from the union of workers celebrating an anniversary of resistance. This is completely ironic if we consider that their living history is outside standing on a raft between borders, but they are just singing revolutionary songs inside the kafeneion without understanding their political crime that is happening five meters away from them.

At the same time, in his later films we can observe a type of conflict in his kafeneion scenes, with the most characteristic being the car scene in *The Beekeeper* (1986) when Spyros crashes into a kafeneion in his car to get the attention of a young girl (Angelopoulos, 1986). The difference with this conflict is that it is personal: the characters involved do not represent any archetypal groups, rather they are ordinary people who carry the history within them. That is a complete change of approach. Also, the kafeneion in the above scene has western elements and is not depicted in a traditional style. The young people inside listen to foreign music and they drink foreign drinks. It is the locations that change together with Angelopoulos's style and approach. After *the Beekeeper* (1986) this location is also used as a similar space in *Eternity and a Day* (1998) for example when the young immigrant enters a kafeneion and he is scared away by patrol officers entering the place (Angelopoulos, 1998). There is not a conflict there, the young boy just leaves the place.

Only in two later films can we observe a type of conflict that has political roots. The first one is *The Suspended Step of the Stork* (1991) in a scene where some refugees (from Albania, Turkey and Kurdistan) have a fight with each other because one was accused of betrayal that led another refugee to cut his veins in order to prove his

innocence (Angelopoulos, 1991). That specific kafeneion was a place reserved only for refugees and was run by their laws. These refugees did not follow the western social conventions, as adopted by the Greeks, but were governed by more visceral instincts. The second example is in *Trilogy: The Weeping Meadow* (2004) where during a celebration one of the musicians who is a communist accuses a friend of a betrayal (Angelopoulos, 2004). The location is a kafeneion that is transformed into a music hall so they can dance. Angelopoulos's choice here is reminiscent of his first period. That is why his last trilogy is called *Trilogy of Modern History*. He places history back on centre stage and this is the reason why he makes a connection with his previous film *Travelling Players* (1975).

The kafeneion played a significant role in his films, and represented accurately the evolution of his style, form and narration, enabling the audience to connect with their memories, past and history. This research outcome contributed greatly to the use this location in my own style and form as illustrated in [Chapter 8](#). Comprehending his use of important cultural locations in order to recall collective memories can give us the necessary understanding that will help us to achieve the basic aim of this research. Another essential aspect in the work of Theo Angelopoulos is the use of historical archetypes. The use of Aris Velouchiotis as a historical figure is of great significance during Angelopoulos's first trilogy and analysing it will help us to have a complete overview of his political and aesthetic choices.



Figure 6-The kafeneion in *Voyage to Cythera* (karapiperis personal archive)

4.3 Civil War trauma and the “ghost of history”. The case of Aris Velouchiotis in Theo Angelopoulos cinematic work

During the first stage of this research I noticed elements of Aris Velouchiotis’s historical figure in the first Trilogy of Theo Angelopoulos, and also in *Alexander the Great* (1980). Many scholars, such as Vasilis Rafailidis, also mentioned this connection, but only in passing. But there has never been a comprehensive research regarding the reasons behind this choice. Angelopoulos’s decision to represent Velouchiotis is significant, since Aris Velouchiotis was a highly controversial historical figure. Thus, examining this matter will provide new knowledge that can help to re-evaluate the political perspective of Angelopoulos’s first period.

Aris Velouchiotis was without a doubt one of the most important historical figures of modern Greek History. Aris was one of the Captains of E.L.A.S. (the army section of E.A.M.⁵) in the mountains during the resistance against the German Occupation (1941-1944). One of the revealing facts about his personality was that he didn’t obey the Communist Party’s orders. Many historians, including Charitopoulos, give Aris the credit for organising the resistance during the occupation. Charitopoulos illustrates in his book *Aris the Leader of the Partisans* the way that Aris Velouchiotis attempted to convince the Party to give him the opportunity to start the resistance movement in the mountains (Charitopoulos, 2009). He states that Aris alone gathered his followers in order to pressure the Party to give him the final permission. He was the only Captain that didn’t surrender his weapons after the Agreement of Varkiza (1945). This led to his tragic death, after his expulsion from the Party. The name of Aris stills exists and lives in the collective memories, not only of the left-wing people, but of the Greek public in general. His unique personality, his way of approaching people, the fact that he did not support the party line, and his extreme actions made him a notoriously famous Captain, and a danger to the state, the far-right wing groups, and also to the Communist Party leadership.

⁵ (E.A.M.): National Liberation Front, was the main resistance organization, controlled by the Communist Party, during the German occupation.

The appearance of Aris in Theo Angelopoulos work, and to be more precise in his first Trilogy of History, can help the research community re-shape their understanding about the work of Theo Angelopoulos and can deliver some fresh data in order to re-evaluate his masterpieces from a new point of view. The films in which this appearance is most noticeable are *The Travelling Players* (1977), the *Hunters* (1977) and *Alexander the Great* (1980).

4.3.1 The Travelling Players (1977)

The Travelling Players (1977), is one of Angelopoulos's masterpieces that represented the dawn of a new political cinema in Greece. Most of this film was shot during the Dictatorship of the Colonels, and consequently the director had to invent many ways in order to shoot the film without getting arrested because of the strict censorship. Theo Angelopoulos created an epic film following, in reverse order, the historical events from 1952 to 1939 of a group of Travelling Players that performed in the mountains of Greece the famous folklore play *Golfo* by Spiridon Peresiadis. The members of the Travelling Players were facing the consequences of the historical events without having the power to change the course of history, because they represented the ordinary Greek people. So, Angelopoulos tries, for the first time, to revive Greek modern history and wake up collective memories that had been hidden for many years. As Stathi mentions:

The historical period recorded by the film belongs to the past; this page has been written, historians have assessed it, but its truth (if there is a single truth) lies elsewhere. This truth has many different aspects, and if he cannot find it, Angelopoulos, as an artist, is entitled to invent it through a structured reconstruction and reflection, recalling the hypnotised body of history from the popular memory and asking it to be repeated, to be realised, to be verified in the present of his film. (Stathi, 2012, p. 20)

So, what was the basic historical truth that Angelopoulos managed to recover from the collective memory and is connected with the scene when Aris Velouchiotis appears in the film? To describe it in two words: 'White Terror'. Angelopoulos emphasised the extreme violence perpetrated by the far-right wing groups that were armed by the official state after the end of the German Occupation. This violence was not only experienced by the official members of the Communist Party or E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. but

was also directed towards whoever was opposed to such practices. As the historian Giorgos Margaritis mentions in his book:

...during the spring and summer of 1946, when the armed terrorist extreme right organisations were in power, there are reports of 20.000 armed men organised in 150 to 200 armed groups that were based in almost all the country...'.(Margaritis, 2001, p. 241)

This extreme 'White Terror' period that led to the beginning of the Civil War was well hidden from the public in order to place the responsibilities of the historical consequences of the Civil War upon the left parties. Angelopoulos managed to emphasize these facts in this film. The appearance of Aris Velouchiotis in only one scene, opens one of the darkest doors of this historical period which was the decapitation and the public display of the corpses of Greek communist partisans by the extreme right groups, a horrid act committed so they could collect their reward, and to use it as a means of intimidation to control the rest of the partisans. In the film, we can observe people marching next to the old castle in Ioannina city, where an army vehicle full of soldiers is being driven slowly down the middle of the road, with other soldiers nearby. In front of the vehicle, leading the march, are musicians playing a celebratory tune. In the background we can hear people cheering and the bells of the church joyfully ringing. In the middle of the vehicle is a soldier holding the decapitated heads of Aris Velouchiotis and Giannis Tzavelas (see Figure 7). The reminder of these events and the way that they were accepted by the public, the church, and the official state brings back memories and poses questions. As an illustration of the climate of the period, the newspaper *Acropolis* writes in its cover page:

The display of the heads of Velouchiotis and Tzavelas follows a fest with music and dance until the next morning. (Virus, 1996)

The above practice was quite usual for these groups and created an international issue when *The Daily Mirror* published on the 10th of November 1947 a photo of British soldiers engaged in similar practices. (Lazou, 2015) Angelopoulos reinvigorates these events by presenting them to the audience. This climate of 'White Terror' is illustrated throughout the whole film. Two really significant scenes are the gang rape of Electra by the extreme right group, perpetrated in order to force her to reveal the location of her communist fiancé, and the estrangement monologue of Piladis while describing

the tortures he suffered. Angelopoulos decides in one of the most troubled periods of the Greek state, to raise the issue of a historical truth and to reveal the similarities of all authoritarian regimes. This film was well received by the Greek audience after the end of the Dictatorship of the Colonels and raised the question of the political responsibilities of the right that were never attributed during the course of history. This is a topic that Angelopoulos focused on in his next film.



Figure 7-Newspaper (Acropolis) cover for the exposition of Aris's and Tzavelas's head (Theodoridis personal archive)

4.3.2 *The Hunters* (1977)

The film starts with a group of hunters (symbolically representing the bourgeoisie) finding the dead body of a communist partisan, still bleeding in the mountains in 1977. 'This story ended in 1949. What the hell. I do not understand.' (Angelopoulos, 1977)

With this line of dialogue, the director introduces the audience to the “political sickness” that he is dealing with in this film. The hunters transfer the body of the partisan to the hotel ‘Aigli’ where they were planning to spend the New Year’s Eve with their wives and start a surrealist tribe where they illustrate all their terrible decisions and crimes during the German Occupation, the Civil War and the Post-Civil War state. This film was not welcomed by the Greek state because it depicts the ruling class as being directly responsible for all the troubles that the Greek people had experienced during the previous decades (see Figure 8). Vasilis Rafailidis states in his book:

As for the Greek state that didn't support this film financially, they were quite right. You do not fund the bullets for the gun of your enemy. (Rafailidis, 2003, p. 16)

With the beginning of the surrealist tribe all the events of the past troubled period are reaching the light for the first time and the audience is re-living them in a theatrical style flashback. As Mikelidis mentions:

Every flashback is connecting the personal memories and the fears of these "hunters" and their wives: The Marshal plan and the financial help that had been given to the "nationalists" and the traitors who they created a fortune during the wars (hotelier), the compromising of certain left wings and their entrance to the bourgeoisie (contractor), the creation of an anti-Communist crusade when the left wing movement gained some power (Mayor, factory owner and army general)... (Mikelidis, 1981, p. 65)

What was the element that made the appearance of Aris Velouchiotis in the film so important and why did the director choose this Captain of the popular army to appear in the film and didn't just make a general reference to E.A.M.-E.L.A.S.? The answer is simple, and it only takes some historical research to understand it. He was not just a leader, but rather he was a symbol of freedom that no one could restrain or command. Charitopoulos, in his book, states that the majority of the people didn't believe he was dead, not even when they displayed his severed head on a stick. His personage and his loyal followers were constantly the main fear of the nationalists and the parastatal organisations even after his death. Charitopoulos also writes about the way that the villagers and the ordinary people created a mythical sphere around Aris's figure:

The villagers have given to the Captain some supernatural elements. The rumours say that he is everywhere all the time, watching and ready to defend and retaliate. (Charitopoulos, 2009, p. 175)

His appearance in this film reawakens collective memories, of those on either side of the political spectrum, and exposes the concerns that as long as memories of Aris remain alive the crimes of the right cannot be forgotten. At the same time, Aris's historical figure in the film is a strong critique of the leadership of the communist army.

After the end of the surrealist tribe the hunters celebrate New Year's Eve and immediately after, a group of Communist Partisans with guns enters the hall. Then,

the dead body of the partisan that was hidden behind the curtain (official history) comes back to life and ready to take actions. The Communists execute the hunters and following that, the hunters wake up from the dream and decide to bury the body again back under the snow. There is a clear allusion made here to Aris Velouchiotis conveyed by the costume and appearance of the partisan leader. Vasilis Rafailidis has also pointed out this connection in his book:

As long as the myth of Velouchiotis exists (the costumes make a clear reference to that), the left will always terrorise (without the left's will) the right wing, because it will be impossible to execute the living myth of Aris'. (Rafailidis, 2003, p. 21)

The reference is also clearly indicated the costumes of the followers. All of them wear black caps, which was the characteristic element and name (Blackheads) of Velouchiotis's group (see Figure 9).

The second time that there is a reference to Aris in this film is when a hunter's wife is performing an estrangement monologue inside her car while she is having sexual intercourse with someone. In this monologue she is telling a story of the communist partisans going to her town in 1947 and about a bearded Communist who was visiting her in her dreams every once in a while, and every time he was taking her virginity. The description of the partisans reminds us of Aris (even though Aris had been dead since 1945). This surrealist and metaphysical sexual intercourse connects with the above, highlighting the absolute and unconscious terror felt by the political right caused by the mythical archetype of the political left, as represented by Aris.

Throughout the film there is this element of retaliation and a kind of melancholy that the course of history could have been different if other people in the resistance were in power, people like Aris Velouchiotis. The characteristic shot of the boats with red flags floating on the river give a very positive message for the upcoming struggles. As Dan Georgakas said in his documentary interview:

They are not defeated; the vision is there and continuing... Yes the left was defeated if you are going to be historically correct. But you don't accept it, you just don't accept it. Hopefully there is always going to be that village in the mountains that goes anarchist. (Georgakas, 2018)



Figure 8- Hunters surrealist tribe (Karapiperis personal archive)



Figure 9- Aris partisan group (Sofikitis personal archive)

4.3.3 Alexander the Great (1980)

The connection of Megalexandros with Aris Velouchiotis is also highlighted in this research. But where are the specific elements that point out a strong connection with Aris Velouchiotis and what this connection represents in the timeframe that Theo Angelopoulos created in this film?

One of the main elements that points out a remarkable connection of these two characters is the way that Megalexandros was treated by the villagers. In the first forty minutes of the film when Megalexandros enters the village, everyone celebrates his return. The bells of the church ring in a celebratory tone and everyone shouts his name. After that, Megalexandros baptises the young boys in the village and gives them his name and the villagers host a “last supper” for him. In addition, the villagers composed songs to honour his achievements. In his book, Charitopoulos also illustrates a similar behaviour of the villagers in Roumeli when Aris was entering their village, without the excesses of course. Aris wanted the villagers to create their own courts during the German Occupation which would not have any connection with the official state. The actual execution of their decisions was left to E.L.A.S. So, the villagers found justice via the actions of Aris’s group because his was the only power that could stop the thieves in Roumeli.(Charitopoulos, 2009, p. 104) Another very important connection is the way that Megalexandros behaved with his own followers, and more specifically with someone that would rape or harass a local woman. In the beginning of the film, we observe that when Megalexandros finds one of his followers harassing a woman, he hangs him without the involvement of the court. This element is also pointed out by Kolovos:

When the thief tried to rape a hostile woman, he will be hanged publicly. The same practice was noticed in Aris Velouchiotis partisan groups. Megalexandros is a leader of a “partisan” group and fights for freedom of the mountains. He is either the ancestor or the children of Aris Velouchiotis and the Captains of E.L.A.S and D.S.E. (Democratic Army of Greece)⁶ (Kolovos, 1990, p. 118)

⁶ Democratic Army of Greece was founded by the Communist Party during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949)

These same practices used by Aris's group are really interestingly illustrated in Charitopoulos book:

...Aris was really strict in the relationship between his followers with women. He said that: when you are entering the house of a local you will bow your head and you will never look the women in their eyes... In this way Aris wanted to make the locals feel safe and trust the partisan groups...' (Charitopoulos, 2009, p. 107)

The main question here is the reason why this connection is important for Angelopoulos? Because this film is Angelopoulos's personal comment on history, he tries to depict the different aspects of socialism that existed in the village. Angelopoulos shows three approaches of socialism, but he criticises only one of them (see Figure 10). As Dan Georgakas points out:

Thus, at the very moment when the Greek people had finally won the right to honour the resistance fighters of World War II, Angelopoulos seemed to be resurrecting charges of leftist cruelty. That his Alexander bore a striking physical resemblance to Aris Velouchiotis, the most famous guerrilla leader...Megalexandros, rather than simply being abstractly anti-authoritarian or anti-Stalinist, affirms a non-coercive pathway, to the socialist future... (Georgakas, 2000)

This film acts as a hallway to the second period of Theo Angelopoulos's films where a sense of melancholy is illustrated, and he takes a step back from his positive-Marxist/Brechtian approach to filmmaking. Angelopoulos believed that it was time for the end of cruelty and a period to move forward as a human race and nation. That doesn't mean that he stopped believing in socialism, but he just got tired of the continuous expressions of violence and authoritarian behaviours, and he believed that it was time to stop waiting for saviours that will arrive on horseback and save humanity from their suffering. The above approach is used extensively in his next film *The Voyage to Cythera* (1984).

An important element that needs to be underlined is that this film has a positive outcome. Despite the fact Megalexandros betrayed his beliefs and became as authoritarian as his enemies, his ideas and vision will always live in the collective memories of the people. When the villagers eat their god in a theofagia⁷ (θεοφαγία),

in place of his body is the head of a statue, because when history becomes a myth (as long as this myth still exists) history will never be forgotten. In the last scene of the film when the young Alexandros visits the cities established with socialist principles by the teacher, he has learnt from the mistakes of the past, which is an extremely positive message for the future.

This chapter has focused on three important elements: Theo Angelopoulos's historical and political perspectives focusing on his first period; Theo Angelopoulos's use of the kafeneion as an ideal location in order to recall collective memories; and in the use of Aris Velouchiotis as a historical archetype in order to make a connection with the collective memories of his audience. This chapter helped us to understand Theo Angelopoulos's political perspective and aesthetical choices in his films, even regarding the appearance in Angelopoulos's films of Aris Velouchiotis that have not yet been investigated by the research community. This chapter also provides us with the knowledge and the techniques of the so-called memory recall in order to use it practically to achieve the main aim of this research which is to reshape contemporary Greek cinema. One important element that we need to focus on after this full overview of Theo Angelopoulos's political perspective in cinema is his aesthetical choices and his connection with Bertolt Brecht estrangement techniques.



Figure 10- Alexander's partisans dance in the village fest (Sofikitis personal archive)

⁷ Theofagia: the act of eating a god.

4.4 Watch the research Documentary *A Quest for Eternity* (2017)

The research documentary *A Quest for Eternity* (2017) is a one-hour documentary with recorded semi-structured interviews dealing with the basic theoretical elements of this research. In this documentary I interviewed some of the key researchers dealing with Theo Angelopoulos's form and style since the beginning of his artistic journey. Making this documentary helped me to apply the theoretical elements of my research. Because I was interviewing these top researchers regarding Theo Angelopoulos's work, I was able to get all the information I needed, and incorporated it in the film in order to transform my theoretical points into practice (like Angelopoulos). Interviewing these researchers also enabled me to help achieve the final aim of this research which is to reshape contemporary Greek cinema. It is really useful for the reader to see this documentary before reading the rest of this thesis, since they will get a very important overview of all the chapters that will follow. The chapters of this documentary, as noted earlier in this research are:

- *Historical and political aspects of Theo Angelopoulos's first and second period.*
- *Theo Angelopoulos's affinity with Bertolt Brecht.*
- *The use of the kafeneion in Theo Angelopoulos's films and the political importance of such a choice.*
- *His contribution to the contemporary Greek cinema.*

Link: <https://vimeo.com/328188010> password: angelopoulos

5.0 Theo Angelopoulos's elective affinity with Bertolt Brecht

In this chapter I aim to understand the extremely significant connection between Theo Angelopoulos and Bertolt Brecht. This understanding will equip us with the knowledge to inspire the final Manifesto that will ultimately lead to my proposed practical reshaping of contemporary Greek cinematic practice. At the beginning of my research I discovered that perceiving this connection is essential to fully comprehend Angelopoulos's historical and political approach. There are quite a few papers regarding this link, but I found that they were only dealing with it superficially, without identifying it with its deeper political roots.

Angelopoulos, since he studied in France, was connected with the Nouvelle Vague and the really interesting changes that were taking place in that period of French modern cinema (Palmer, 2017). As Neupert states:

France's cinematic revival came at first from a handful of young directors who found novel ways to fund and shoot their movies, often in direct defiance of commercial and narrative norms. Influenced as much by Jean Renoir of the 1930s, Italian neorealism of the 1940s, and selected Hollywood directors of the 1950s, young directors like Louis Malle, Claude Chabrol, and François Truffaut began to make movies that avoided some of the dominant constraints...The rule of thumb was to shoot as quickly as possible with portable equipment, sacrificing the control and glamour of mainstream productions for a lively, modern look and sound that owed more to documentary and television shooting methods than to mainstream, commercial cinema..." (Neupert, 2007, p. 17)

Having been influenced by Alexandre Astruc's "du stylo à la caméra et de la caméra au stylo" manifesto, Angelopoulos created an art that wasn't attached to big production companies, that was concerned with history and politics, and in which the directors/auteurs would have to the final artistic outcome of the film (Astruc, 1948). Angelopoulos felt really connected with the ideas and world view of the French New Wave and wanted to use these techniques in the Greek modern cinema industry. His connection with Brecht inspired him develop his own personal gaze as an auteur director and to create his magnificent first period.

Theo Angelopoulos reflected the work and spirit of Bertolt Brecht, especially in his early films, and shared Brecht's opinion of the need for a new kind of narration-art. This connection can be observed especially in his first films, the so-called 'Brechtian period of Angelopoulos'. (Horton, 1997) One of Brecht's goals of his epic theatre was to change the dominant *Weltanschauung* (world view), which was the bourgeois theatre of the traditional narrative, with an ultimate goal to change the dominant *Weltanschauung* of society as a whole. Brecht's notion of the working class *Weltanschauung* is similar to Gramsci's idea of 'common sense' as stated in his prison notebooks.

The theory of common sense is something that many philosophers, such as Aristotle (Aristotle & Lawson-Tancred, 1986), Immanuel Kant (Kant & Walker, 2007), Giambattista Vico (Vico, 1990), Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci, 1999) etc., have dealt with. Some concluded that there is a dominant norm of social behaviours and everyday life routines that exist in our societies. Gramsci, in his prison notebooks, emphasised that these norms exist to maintain the sovereign of the dominant class (Gramsci, 1999). Bertolt Brecht was in agreement with Gramsci and hoped to express that common sense through his epic theatre. Brecht believed that the dominant theatre style, based on Aristotelian poetics, was a bourgeois theatre supporting the dominant class and helping them to maintain their power. By changing the dominant *Weltanschauung* of theatre he believed that could change the dominant *Weltanschauung* of society, and that could ultimately lead to a class struggle and human emancipation. This approach has strong bonds with Marxian ideology and dialectical materialism (Engels, 1940). The same understanding can be found in Theo Angelopoulos's work, especially in his so-called Trilogy of History. The historical period between 1922 and 1977 is for Greece one full of conflict, hate and intolerance, which marked the recent times of the country. The people who were oppressed and betrayed are finally given a voice through Angelopoulos's movies, where the 'voice' of the defeated, rather than the dominant, prevails.

5.1 Brecht's notion of dominant *Weltanschauung*

Bertolt Brecht was a Marxist art revolutionary whose work led to significant changes in the way the audience perceived theatre and art in general. Brecht stated that the Aristotelian model of the theatre did not engage the audience and enable them to understand the messages of the narration. He suggested that by connecting with the protagonists and feeling empathy for them, and because of the linear narrative and cathartic ending, the audience was leaving the theatre without questioning anything, and with a feeling of fulfilment. Brecht described the bourgeois theatre as '*hypnosis [and] sordid intoxication*' (Squiers, 2014, p. 44). Brecht believed that this model of narration was helping the bourgeoisie to maintain their sovereignty over the working-class people. The ruling class created a world view (*Weltanschauung*), a "common

sense” in theatre and society, so no one could challenge and overthrow their power. As Squiers stated:

What Brecht was saying is that people develop an uncritical and unconscious way of perceiving, interpreting and understanding their environment. They internalise the common, accepted manner of truth production and the truths produced through that manner without considering the possibility an alternate manner of truth production could exist. In other words, they uncritically accept the dominant *Weltanschauung* and all their understandings of their environment (i.e. all the truths they perceive) are created within the limits of that *Weltanschauung*. Bourgeois theatre, then reinforces this uncritical *Weltanschauung*. (Squiers, 2014, p. 44)

Brecht wanted to take the audience out of this platonic cave of illusions and introduce them to the world of reality. He wanted to use the theory of dialectical materialism in theatre to show the audience that things can change and that nothing is unalterable by nature. He believed that by changing the dominant *Weltanschauung* in theatre he could change the dominant *Weltanschauung* in society (Squiers, 2019, p. 64). Brecht believed that this step could lead to the social emancipation of working-class people and a socialist society.

Epic theatre was Brecht’s experiment towards this direction. He wanted to create theatre that the audience could no longer lose itself in via catharsis and empathy. His goal was the de-familiarisation of the audience with the narration of the play (Brecht, 1978). This de-familiarisation had a goal to make the bourgeois *Weltanschauung* seem unnatural and allow for the material dialectical *Weltanschauung* to seem natural. Brecht tried to achieve this ‘de-familiarisation’ through his much discussed ‘estrangement effects’ (*Verfremdungseffekt*) (Squiers, 2014, p. 49). Brecht used different kinds of techniques to induce this de-familiarisation of the audience. He used time fluidity with a nonlinear narrative; non-cathartic endings with a circular narrative; alienation monologues where the actor was talking directly to the audience explaining History; visual effects on stage to confuse the audience etc.

The ‘de-familiarisation’ techniques were used in Theo Angelopoulos’s work mostly in his first Trilogy and *Alexander the Great* (1980). The next subchapters are going to reveal this influence in Angelopoulos’s work and explain the importance of their use in

those particular moments. Angelopoulos managed to distance the audience from feeling empathy for the protagonists and enabled them to connect with their collective memories in order to change the dominant “common sense”. Some of Bertolt’s Brecht’s plays that he based these world views and techniques on are *Life of Galileo* (1938-1939), *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944-1945), *The Good Person of Szechwan* (1939).

5.2 When Angelopoulos meets Brecht...

This section is going to focus on revealing the affinity of Bertolt Brecht and Theo Angelopoulos in the latter’s films. It will analyse how that connection influenced Angelopoulos to create his own style and aesthetics in his films.

Bertolt Brecht wanted to ‘distance’ (or to estrange) the audience from the narrative of his plays. He was constantly, and with different methods, reminding them that they are attending a theatrical performance and not watching real life. In this way, Brecht gave the audience a chance to reflect upon what is happening in the play without feeling attached to the characters or experiencing empathy for them. He achieved this by using different types of effects on stage that he called v-effects (from the German *Verfremdungseffekt*, translation: estrangement effects). According to Sartre:

What Brecht wanted and what our classical dramatists tried for, was to cause, as Plato called “the source of all philosophy”, to surprise; to make the familiar unfamiliar. (Squiers, 2014, p. 95)

These effects helped to distance the audience from the narration, and also prevented them from connecting with the characters and feeling empathy towards them. In this way the director would make the familiar unfamiliar, and the audience would understand that the narrative of the play is actually relevant to their own lives and reality. By achieving that, the creator is a step closer to changing the dominant view (common sense) of the narrative, and reality itself.

One example of this effect is his alienation-monologues. On many occasions in Brecht’s plays the actors will start talking, singing, or using the theatre’s scenery, in a manner that makes it obvious to the audience that they are performing a play. The

audience can observe these types of alienation monologues in Angelopoulos's films as well. In the *Traveling Players* (1975) there are three alienation monologues. The first one is delivered by Electra's father who is narrating some incidents from the Catastrophe of Smyrna of 1922. The second is Electra's monologue when she explains the start of the Civil War (1946-1949) in Greece, the battle of Athens (1944) and the conflict of the government with the communists. The third one is Piladis narrating the story of his imprisonment during the civil war, the tortures he was subjected to, and his final decision to sign the form declaring his political beliefs⁸. All these characters are representing history (historical truth) through these estrangement monologues and they are looking straight to camera (directly at the audience) trying to "shake them up" and wake up their collective memories. The same type of monologue can be observed in *The Hunters* (1977) where a hunter's wife is describing, whilst looking straight into the camera, a personal experience from the Civil War. The director is showing the historical guilt, the fear of the bourgeoisie and their nightmares that their crimes are not forgotten. In *Alexander the Great* (1980) the audience can observe the same effect in the beginning of the film where the narrator is talking in front of the camera about the story of Alexander the Great (ancient Greek emperor-conqueror).

In the first films of Theo Angelopoulos the use of time is quite abstract and fluid. This again has a straight connection with Brecht's aesthetics and the whole notion of de-familiarisation of the audience. Angelopoulos used this fluidity of time in *The Traveling Players* (1975) and *The Hunters* (1977). In both of these films, there are a few examples when this effect is used. In *The Traveling Players* (1975), in shot 106, where the far-right wing group, after the New Year's Eve of 1946, are walking on the street and shouting a hate-slogan the action transfers from 1946 to 1952, during the elections of General Papagos (Stathi, 1999). In the *Hunters* (1977) there are quite a few examples of this technique. For example, at the beginning of the surrealist tribe where the "businessman" was making a deposition regarding the elections of '58. The action

⁸ This form was started existing from the dictatorship of Metaxa's until 1981. The imprisoned communists were forced after exhausting tortures and threats about the lives of their loved ones to sign a piece of paper that stated that they believe in the national state of Greece and they have nothing to do with Marxist ideologies. Without these forms, the person was forced to imprisonment and tortures and wasn't able to study or to have any exchange with the official state. These forms were one of the darkest inventions in modern Greek history. They were stopped in 1964 but they returned back in the beginning of the dictatorship of the Colonels.

transfers again from 1977 to 1958 and the scene becomes a theatrical scene where history represents itself during the whole sequence. The same effect can be observed in the other parts of the tribe in the film but also in different sequences like the entrance of the American buyer.

Almost the entire film can be considered as a dream-like narration in which time is fluid, but the space remains unchanged for historical events to be presented in this theatrical scene. This fluidity of time works perfectly with the film's nightmare-narrative and conveys the message of the historical guilt of the bourgeoisie in the most theatrical and Brechtian way possible. Present and past historical events are mixed with nightmares and fears for the most part of this film. One really significant example is the scene on New Year's Eve where the communist partisans come back from the dead and execute the hunters. The audience observes these imaginary events mixed with historical truths, such as the rape of history (rape of Kotamanidou) by the invisible King Konstantinos (see Figure 11). All these time shifts are presented by a single shot sequence, without any cuts during the whole scene. This technique helps the audience to construct the idea of space when time is fluid and gives a theatrical aesthetic to the film. As Lino Micciché wrote:

The shot-sequence is the subjective recording of an "experience" of the camera that does not try to depict it as real, but as clear mise-en-scene of a narration, as the ideological moment of the representation. (Micciché, 2000, p. 4)

It is really essential to notice that even in his later films from *Voyage to Cythera* (1984) to *The Dust of Time* (2009) the audience can observe this fluidity of time in some cases. A significant example is from *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995), where the action of the film transfers back to the New Year's Eve of 1945 and travels by a single shot sequence to the New Year's Eve of 1950.

Another Brechtian influence that is really essential to connect these two creators is the non-cathartic ending and circular narrative. This, of course, shows again the fluidity of time in Angelopoulos's and Brecht's creations. Brecht believed the Catharsis (*Κάθαρσις*) was not helping the audience connect the narration of the story with the

issues of society. In a cathartic play, the audience was left with a feeling of fulfilment and relaxation. In contrast to this, Brecht wanted the audience to feel anxiety and stress at the end of his plays (Brecht, 1965). The first film that this effect is noticeable is in *The Travelling Players* (1975). The second scene of the film starts with the members of the travelling players in front of the train station in 1952 and the film ends with the same shot but with different members in 1939. The actors switch between watching the events of history taking place before their eyes, and then appearing to go back in history, to witness something that took place in their absence (Stathi, 2012). The actors revisiting historical events create for themselves the opportunity to narrate the story for the audience from their point of view. This effect helped Angelopoulos to give a certain sense of tragedy to the narration, as it shows that the events in the film have already happened and nothing can change them now.

The same effect can be noticed in *The Hunters* (1977). In the first scene of the film, the audience can observe the hunters finding the dead body of the communist partisan, covered in snow. In the final scene of the film, the hunters are burying the body with their bare hands, back under the snow. This circular narrative leaves the whole story wide open, as if the events in the film never happened, like it was just a bad dream. This effect is also used in *Alexander the Great* (1980). At the end of the film, when Alexander is eaten by his followers in a kind of “theophagia” (θεοφαγία), in place of Alexander’s body there is a broken statue. With this, the director wants to state that the figure of Alexander became myth, and when history becomes a myth, history can never be forgotten. This event also leaves the narration of the film open-ended once again, and it creates a feeling of anxiety and stress because it reveals the collective memories of the historical truth that is hidden from the Greek audience.



Figure 11- Rape of "history" by the king (Sofikitis personal archive)

5.3 Angelopoulos's notion of Weltanschauung

Theo Angelopoulos's spiritual meeting with Brecht's aesthetics was a process that wasn't intentional, but it helped him to deliver his message through the troubled period of the dictatorship of the colonels. His first so-called Trilogy of history [*Days of '36* (1972), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1977)] was Angelopoulos's way to reveal details about the dictatorship of the colonels and associate it with what Angelopoulos believed to be the reasons that led to this regime, which was the period before the dictatorship of Metaxas (1936-1941). In the *Travelling Players* (1975), he tried to wake up the collective memories of the Greek nation and remind them of their history. He visually explained all the historical truths that had been hidden from the Greek people, from the beginning of the dictatorship of Metaxas, through German occupation (1941-1944) and the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) until the election of General Papagos as Prime Minister (1952) who succeeded in winning by supporting the lives of the common people. In the last film of the trilogy, *The Hunters* (1977) Theo Angelopoulos attempted to remind the public the historical guilt of the bourgeoisie who collaborated with the Nazis during the German occupation and the terrible crimes they executed during the Civil war (1946-1949).

Alexander the Great (1980) is Angelopoulos's own personal gaze on the historical events he underlined in his previous films. He commented on those events by creating the ultimate mythical figure of Megalexandros and by locating the story in the mountains of Epirus in the beginning of the century. Angelopoulos criticised historical events like the rise of Stalin in USSR, the myth of the hero-saviour that will save humanity, archetypical figures that run through the collective memories and are reminiscent of history and socialism as a political weapon in the fight against bourgeois sovereignty.

Angelopoulos's slow-paced shots, the lack of dialogue, and his Brechtian influence were not only a personal creative decision, but also a way that helped him to deliver his message despite the strict censorship of the dictatorship of the colonels. The audience can observe the climate of the dictatorship in the *Days of '36* (1972), not in the dialogue of the film but through meaningful glances and closed doors. Angelopoulos said that:

The important aspects of this film [...] I tried to place behind the doors, away from telephones, with just whispers of truth. The dictatorship is in the structure of this film. It was because of the circumstances; I was working under. It's a film about the unspoken about the things we are not allowed to tell. I couldn't express my own opinion. In this way I created a censorship for the aesthetics of my own film. (Angelopoulos, 1981, p. 101)

In *the Travelling Players* (1975), Angelopoulos had to be creative and think of many tricks to circumvent censorship and overcome the challenges of the difficult climate that was prevailing during the dictatorship of the colonels. His first films were not welcomed by the Greek government and ruling class, even after the end of the dictatorship. A really notable example was that the government didn't allow Angelopoulos to submit *The Hunters* (1977) in Cannes festival (Rafailidis, 2003).

Theo Angelopoulos managed to create his own personal gaze in cinema that helped him to deliver his message. In his first films, the so-called "epic films" as Angelopoulos refers to them, the Brechtian connection helped him to achieve precisely the outcome that Brecht himself was hoping to achieve, to change the dominant *Weltanschauung* in cinema and society (who are represented by his audience) (Horton, 1997, p. 109).

These techniques were a powerful weapon for Angelopoulos to achieve his personal style and aesthetics and to remind people of the historical events. A reason why the director used these techniques, mostly in his first period until *The Voyage to Cythera* (1984), was exactly for that political reason, in the hope that society could change, and one of the weapons that has the ability to change society is art.

Angelopoulos's first films have a strong dialectical approach that can be observed in the way that the director is approaching historical events and by the way he is building his scenes together. The audience can observe the entire *thesis-antithesis-synthesis* dialectical model in his films (Norman, 1980). In Angelopoulos's early films the *thesis-antithesis* model exists and is active visually in the whole narration of the film (Arthur, 2004). Where the *thesis* is the established regime (bourgeoisie, dictatorship, fascists etc.) and the *antithesis* is the exploited (working class, ordinary people, partisans etc.). The *synthesis*, which for Marx, as Cornforth mentions, was the *class struggle*, is happening in the place opposite the screen; aimed at the audience, and the way that this type of filmmaking changes their *Weltanschauung* (Cornforth, 1962). A really fine example is the New Year's Eve scene from *The Travelling Players* (1975) where we see an oncoming clash between two contradictory groups, where the *thesis* is symbolically represented by the fascists, the *antithesis* by the communists and the *synthesis* is the change of *Weltanschauung*, when the audience realise the concept of the 'White terror' period (1945-1946), the consequences of the Treaty of Varkiza (1945) and the true historical reasons for the beginning of the Civil War (1946-1949).

Another significant example that illustrates the same dialectical approach to history and to the setting of the scene is from the *Hunters* (1977). The 'hotelier' who worked together with the Nazis, during the German occupation and helped the far-right wingers and the government to destroy the communists is entering the hotel "Aigli", which has been given to him for his services, after the end of the civil war. After the execution of the partisan which he observes from the window, the director transfers the action to the present where the same hotelier is the respectable "businessman" of the current "democratic system". The whole *thesis-antithesis* model is again extremely active in this sequence and the *synthesis* again is taking place in the audience. Similar examples can be found in many sequences of Angelopoulos's films, especially from his first period. As Lino Micciché states:

The synthesis of *The Traveling Players* (1975) represents a small reflection of society with a political materialism, where the Left (is “making history”) that the Right is going against. We also have a small, silent portion of the people that sway from one side to the other (even that small portion of people have to live also with the consequences of history). The aesthetical materialism of Angelopoulos is the new, organic and steady application that goes close the Brechtian gaze of “epic theatre” as an alternative to dramatic theatre (Miccichè, 2000, p. 10).

5.4 Angelopoulos Marxist dialectics and the Post-Brechtian point of view

There is a big discussion among academics about the search for “a new Brecht” or the so called post-modern/post-Brechtian era. Most of the discussion of the so-called “new Brecht” is about dividing his aesthetic choices from his political purpose and point of view. Katsourakis, in particular, focuses his work on this post-Brechtian approach to the work of Theo Angelopoulos (Katsourakis, 2015). As he states:

Angelopoulos deploys the *Historisierung* so as to think about history in terms of Benjaminian fragments that do not share Brecht’s understanding of history as the route to human emancipation and progress. These fragments offer a dialectical portrayal of history, showing how history infiltrates human relationships, but the general feeling is that history is nothing but the farcical repetition of oppression. (Katsourakis, 2012, p. 177)

He follows Benjamin’s view regarding the so called “state of emergency” that follows the dialectical approach of history but it doesn’t agree with the notion of the historical progress (Benjamin, 2007). Historical progress and the road to an equal society are linked in the world view and techniques of Brecht. It cannot be divided because that was the reason for their original creation. As Brecht said: “*progress exists in socialism, and without progress socialism is not possible*” (Brecht, 2003, p. 103). Katsourakis supports his argument on Kluge’s idea that when someone makes a film they are merely offering a comment on history not leading to a counter-reality (Katsourakis, 2011). As Katsourakis states:

Kluge’s argument provides the ground upon which to investigate a post-Brechtian cinema that does not attain its political function by way of ‘messages’ and concrete moral polarizations, but through the presentation of contradictions and historical processes that do not reach to a conclusive end point. (Katsourakis, 2012, p. 178)

This idea of a “new Brecht” is also supported since the inception of post-modernity as a way of adapting his ideas to their own point of view. As Silberman states:

Brecht's *Weltanschauung* is of less interest now than his relation to reality than the specific quality of his ability to see and to resist. With our distance from the person Brecht and from his political reference system, it ought to be possible to read his texts-dramas, poems, prose and theory in a concrete way, without his ideological blinders, in order to discover not his politics or philosophy but rather the material out of which he constructed representations of reality and a theoretical apparatus of social transformation. (Silberman, 1993, p. 3)

These kind of writings are a superficial examination of Brecht's relationship with the GDR (German Democratic Republic) and his opposition to socialist realism. They use these excuses to remove the political ideological background behind Brecht's creations. The above chapter has focused on the connection of Brechtian techniques with a strong ideological background and Marxist materialist philosophy. This dialectical approach of history, politics, and art is tied together with the attempt to change the capitalist system, in which a small percentage of the population is taking advantage of and exploiting the vast majority of the people. This change is aiming towards the human emancipation and to the Socialist society. (Cornforth, 1962)

Angelopoulos never took a direct political path and never supported a political party, but he used Marxist dialectics, especially in his first films, and was hoping for human emancipation. He succeeded in approaching that not only by reminding the people about history, but also by connecting all the oppressive years of Greek history on an imaginary line and showing the true colours of all the democratic (in theory) or authoritarian regimes in Greece. The basic arguments that show how Angelopoulos was clearly a traditional Brechtian creator stem from the fact that he stepped away from his Brechtian style at the beginning of his second period where a touch of disappointment around politics and the socialist ideals is evident. The second period of Angelopoulos from the *Voyage to Cythera* (1984) and after, is tainted by a deep sense of melancholy that the socialistic dream will never come true. Because of this it's noticeably a step back from his Brechtian connection. The attempt to change the dominant *Weltanschauung* in art and society works together with the dialectical materialist approach. By stripping Bertolt Brecht or Theo Angelopoulos of their political

and ideological backgrounds is simultaneously stripping away the historical importance of their work and the legacy they left for future artists and researchers by making them 'politically correct' for the current neo-liberal state.

5.5 The second period of Theo Angelopoulos's films. From *Voyage to Cythera* (1984) to the *Dust of Time* (2009)

After *Alexander the Great* (1980) we can notice a change in Theo Angelopoulos style and form from his first Trilogy [*Days of '36* (1972), *The Travelling Players* (1975), *The Hunters* (1977)]. After the end of the dictatorship of the colonels (1967-1974) Angelopoulos believed that there would be a radical change in society with a more democratic structure. Unfortunately, that never materialised, and like many activists and citizens in Greece Angelopoulos was completely disappointed by the situation, an emotional response that also affected his approach to filmmaking. There is a step back from his Brechtian approach. His films are still slow with long tracking shots and his topics are quite close to what he used to make in his first period. To an un-educated eye there is not much difference, but actually there is a profound change.

His films no longer work as "ideal groups". Since in *Voyage to Cythera* (1984) we have a protagonist with a name that carries the weight of history and we can feel connected with his personal story. This element represents an enormous change in his form and his political approach to cinema. His films are still political, but they are just another portrayal of the so called "end of history". In the *Trilogy of Silence* [*Voyage to Cythera* (1984), *The Beekeeper* (1986), *Landscape in the Mist* (1988)] there is a sense of political melancholy emerging from each frame of the films. As Stathi mentioned in her documentary interview about the second period of Angelopoulos's films:

Here we have a change of direction. He has the need to try to see these people who devoured their leaders. These people that have nothing to be supported only in their own powers, in their own ideas, in their own thoughts. From that moment starts one new period, which is adapted to each separately of them who continue to believe that the leaders don't exist anymore, that the history betrayed them, that the politics betrayed them. That whatever they did and as many revolutions they dreamed in the end everything was gone. (Stathi, 2018)

His step back from his Brechtian approach is not only apparent in the lack of a protagonist but also in the lack of his alienation techniques. At the beginning of his second period we cannot notice any alienation monologues, any fluidity of time, and the narration is not circular any more. The first occasion when we can notice some elements of the above techniques returning to his work is in *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995) with his magnificent shot of many different New Year's Eves. Another example of a fluidity of time is in *Eternity and a day* (1998) where the historical period of Dionisios Solomos is poetically mixed with the present in a more surrealist and dreamlike way than in his first period. These two films represent a final change of direction towards his last unfinished Trilogy [*Trilogy: The Weeping Meadow* (2004), *The Dust of Time* (2009), *The Other Sea* (-)] where he is trying to place history back on stage. In that last trilogy we can notice an attempt by Angelopoulos to close that historical chapter for Greece and for Greek society to move on. In *Trilogy: The Weeping Meadow* (2004) there is a scene featuring two brothers during the Civil War, meeting at the top of a mountain and embracing each other. One of them is fighting for the National Army and the other for the Communist Party. This scene of 'national friendship' is not something that someone would expect from Theo Angelopoulos. But what he was trying to do is to bring the past to a conclusion and to try to move on. Greece is still traumatised by the choices of the past and there are still huge divisions in the Greek Nation. Angelopoulos wanted to end those divisions through his work. His political approach is evolving at the same time as his artistic point of view. That is why he cannot be placed in any political category. He was not affiliated with a particular organisation; he was simply a highly educated politically conscious artist.

To fully grasp the connection of Bertolt Brecht with Theo Angelopoulos not only gives us a clear insight into the techniques and world view of the latter, but it also arms us with the tools necessary to help future filmmakers reshape contemporary Greek cinema. These Brechtian tools will help future filmmakers to connect their creations with a political approach and detach themselves from the dominant norms in cinema. Gaining comprehensive insights into these de-familiarisation techniques and their political aspects can be a powerful tool for a new political avant-garde cinema in Greece. This whole idea of de-familiarisation and transformation of the dominant world view in art and society can be one of the key elements that will lead to the manifesto for a new avant-garde Greek cinema (See [Chapter 8.4](#)).

It seems that the difference in the representation of kafeneion and the step back from his Brechtian aesthetic is connected with his second period melancholy and the lack of hope for a socialist change in society. Now that we have an overview of Theo Angelopoulos's historical and political aspects of his kafeneion scenes (See [Chapter 4](#)) and we have explored his connection with the world and ideas of Bertolt Brecht, we need to underline the basic issues of contemporary Greek cinema in order to try to change them.

5.6 Watch the midpoint short film *A Still Sunrise* (2017)

The fiction short film *A Still Sunrise* (2017) is my midpoint short film where I got to test some of the techniques and tools before I was able to move on to my final project. I had the opportunity to have a first test of long shots, detail use of my mise-en-scene, test out the notion of time and space in cinema, and work closely with my actors in order to perform without the use of dialogue. As I explained earlier in the thesis, towards the end of my first PhD year I had the opportunity to direct a short film in Bournemouth. I thought it was an amazing opportunity for me to practically test some of the techniques I was examining through my research. In this film I tested the whole concept of single shots and their effect on cinematic time. This film has many issues and of course it cannot be considered as a final outcome, but it helped me to experiment with many tools that are used effectively in my final film. It is quite significant for the reader to watch this film before continuing to read the rest of the thesis since it will function better as a transition for the last film of this research.

<https://vimeo.com/328206848>, password: Angelopoulos

6.0 Contemporary Greek cinema landscape and Angelopoulos's influence. The birth of Greek Weird Wave.

This chapter will focus on the birth of Greek Weird Wave cinema and the positive and negative aspects of it. Mapping this "wave" will enhance our understanding of

Contemporary Greek cinema landscape, since the Greek Weird Wave is the biggest change in contemporary Greek cinema in the last decade. Understanding the positive and negative aspects of this movement will help us to find the elements that need changing in order to achieve the final aim of this research which is to reshape contemporary Greek cinema.

Contemporary Greek cinema, since the dawn of the Greek Weird Wave (Rose, 2011) with the film *Dogtooth* (2009) by Yorgos Lanthimos, opened a new chapter in the landscape of global cinema (Lanthimos, 2009). The Greek Weird Wave was initially influenced by the Greek financial crisis (2009-present), not only regarding themes and narratives but also their methods of production.

The Greek financial crisis started in 2009. However, we did not see the full impact of this until Greece's entrance into the bailout agreement with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) that was necessary in order to pay back the debt to the European Union. In order for the IMF to proceed with supporting Greece, the Greek government had to agree to a series of memorandums and financial packages to ensure that they would be able to fulfil their financial obligations (Papaconstantinou, 2016). These memorandums and packages created a climate of austerity in Greece, shrinking the middle class, and destroying the rights of working-class people. The wages were drastically lowered and the collective labour agreements were cancelled. Additionally, they tried to privatise public universities, the cost of living went up, and the Greeks started to migrate to different countries in search of employment. This situation led to a series of demonstrations and movements beginning in 2011 (indignados movement) until 2015, which ultimately led to the Syriza government in 2015. During that period mass movements of people were constantly demonstrating, squatting and occupying public buildings. Everyone believed that this mass movement would force a radical change. The vehicle for that change was Syriza, a semi-socialist party of the left that included a variety of small parties ranging from the revolutionary left to social democrats and greens.

Syriza had achieved a very low percentage of votes during the national elections before 2015, usually around four percent. Due to its radical ideas and its opposition to the memorandums, the Greeks supported the party to lead the fight against the

European Union and the IMF. In 2015, Syriza announced a referendum that asked the Greek citizens if they would agree with the new memorandum agreement from the Eurogroup. The results were spectacular with a 61,31% in favour of “No” and 38,69% in favor of “Yes” (Varoufakis, 2017). To act upon this result would have meant a direct conflict with the Eurogroup and unilateral debt write-off by Greece. This did not happen, and eventually the Syriza government agreed, with some minor changes, to the Eurogroup package. That decision led to a huge change of the political map and to new elections in September of 2015 after which Syriza was still governing, but with a completely different agenda and policies. This chaotic political situation resulted in a profound sense of disappointment as the Greeks had lost their hope of change.

This disappointment so deeply felt by the Greek people was also illustrated in art, especially in cinema and the Greek Weird Wave. Despite the fact that it was never an official avant garde movement with common characteristics and manifesto (like dogma 95) (Simons, 2007), Greek Weird Wave directors shared a similar aesthetic in form and style combining absurdity and raw realism. The Greek Weird Wave maps a contemporary reality in Greece during the roughest years of the financial crisis. Bradshaw states regarding *Dogtooth* that it:

Could be read as a superlative example of absurdist cinema, or possibly something entirely the reverse—a clinically, unsparingly intimate piece of psychological realism. (Bradshaw, 2010)

Examining the films of the Greek Weird Wave directors one can notice many differences in form and style, especially if we compare directors such as Athina Rachel Tsangari and Yannis Economides. However, there are some very crucial similarities that run throughout most of the work of the Greek Weird Wave directors. Metzidakis in his paper *No Bones to Pick with Lanthimos's Film Dogtooth* talks extensively about four points in *Dogtooth* (curious language, evocation of cinematic and literary works, confusion of genre, and confusion of species) (Metzidakis, 2014). At the same time, it is also very noticeable in combination with the above four points, the extensive use of theatrical form. This theatrical form is noticeable in two ways. The first one is through the approach of acting. This choice gives the creators the opportunity to underline this absurdity in their style. The second way is the use of long shots and cinematic space

in their films. This is noticeable in the work of most of the directors of the Greek Weird Wave from Yorgos Lanthimos to Alexandros Avranas and Argyris Papadimitropoulos. This theatrical approach to acting is used as a tool in the fourth point of Metzidakis, the confusion of species. As Metzidakis says:

This ultimately postmodern mixing of theatrical genres leads us to consider a fourth and final category of traits important to this film: those which problematise conventional scientific distinctions between human and animal species. (Metzidakis, 2014, p. 383)

6.1 A Post-modern approach to contemporary Greek politics

The Greek Weird Wave was born, as noted earlier in the research, with the enormous success of *Dogtooth* (2009) underlining some specific elements of the contemporary Greek reality. Many scholars, including Marios Psaras, link the Greek Weird Wave's existence with the political uprising in Greece of 2008 during which a police officer killed a young student which led to long lasting riots all over Greece. These riots were characterised by many as a crisis of identity. Kornetis says:

...many analysts called December “a crisis of meaning,” others an identity crisis, a nihilist outburst, or a collective psychodrama, and juxtaposed it to the euphoric utopianism of 1968 (Kornetis, 2010)

This notion also got enriched by *The Guardian* journalist Steve Rose in his article *Attenberg, Dogtooth and the Weird Wave of Greek Cinema* saying:

Is it just coincidence that the world's most messed-up country is making the world's most messed-up cinema. (Rose, 2011)

However, when film critics and theorists attempt to claim that the Greek Weird Wave directors are influenced by politics, and that their works highlight contemporary Greek reality, the most prominent figures of the movement strongly deny this. Also, here there is a paradox that many filmmakers that use the same conventions in cinema as the movement, and consequently are labelled as Greek Weird Wave artists, yet these filmmakers reject this association. I believe that here is the first difference with all the previous so-called avant-garde movements. This “wave” does not act as a movement.

It just happened to exist from this particular period because the first film was a success, and the markets desired a new product that was conveniently coming from Greece, since Greece was receiving worldwide attention because of the political events. When Lanthimos worked for the first time in an unconventional way on the topic of the Greek family it started raising questions because it was hitting below the belt one of a central and sacred element of Greek society. As Psaras mentions:

Weird as in idiosyncratic or merely incomprehensible, Lanthimos's film is definitely a distinctive dramatisation of the quotidian time and space of a Greek family. However, its uniqueness lies not so much in the film's representation of an unconventional Greek family but in its relentless interrogation of the familiar familial and national narratives and, most importantly, in its unconventional mode of dismantling them. (Psaras, 2016, p. 65)

After that success many films with the same form, norms and topic came to the surface, including *Miss Violence* (2013) by Alexandros Avrafas, *Strella* (2009) by Kostas Koutras and many more. Another common characteristic of these films is that the directors didn't care to create a denouement in order to answer the questions that they had raised in their films. In all of Lanthimos's films the stories remain unfinished, and the same pattern applies in the work of Koutras, and also Athina Rachel Tsangari. This characteristic connects with the nihilistic and postmodern nature of these films, and was also shown in the film *Hardcore* (2004) which for many worked as a bridge linking Greek modern cinema to the Greek Weird Wave. As Psaras mentions:

Through its postmodern aesthetics the film attempts a formal and thematic deconstruction of, and experimentation with the nation's favourite narratives as well as with Greekness itself. In this way, *Hardcore* in many ways anticipates the so-called 'Greek Weird Wave', suggesting the prior existence of alternative voices that sought to express the 'weird' encounter with the 'crisis of meaning' through the core inscription of a clearly queer content." (Psaras, 2016, p. 22)

In the films of the Greek Weird Wave there is a lack of hope for society's future. In the *Lobster* (2015) we observe a society existing with certain rules that are reminiscent of our own society (Lanthimos, 2015). When the protagonist escapes from the hotel and goes to live with a group of radicals known as "loners", who had also escaped from the same situation, we see that this group is more authoritarian than the others. A really interesting point that will help us to observe the contrast between Theo

Angelopoulos's modernist cinema with the Greek Weird Wave is the observation of certain elements of theatrical techniques used by Greek Weird Wave artists, and the findings that we already have from the previous chapters for the use of Theo Angelopoulos's theatrical space with his Brechtian techniques.

6.2 Theatrical form in Greek Weird Wave

We will focus on the theatrical elements and their importance in the work of three Greek Weird Wave directors Yorgos Lanthimos, Athina Rachel Tsangari, and Alexandros Avranas in his film *Miss Violence* (Avranas, 2013). All the above directors are characterised as Greek Weird Wave artists since they share some similar aesthetical characteristics in their form and style. One element that stands out is their use of theatrical form in their mise-en-scene. When Yorgos Lanthimos first introduced the audience with this new approach to filmmaking with *Dogtooth* (2009) the first shock was the way that his actors were performing. The narration of the film focuses on the everyday routine of three youngsters confined to their luxurious house by their family who are giving them false information about the outside world. Consequently, in the beginning, the audience believe that this weird behaviour exists because these youngsters are isolated from the society outside and they act as adult-children. When the narration of the film continues, we can observe that the characters outside this house are behaving in the same way. We are starting to understand that the motive for their behaviour goes far deeper than just a representation of the effects of isolation in three young people, but actually aims to be a representation of contemporary Greek society during the first years of the financial crisis.

This theatrical effect, as noted earlier, is apparent in two elements: the performing of the actors and the use of cinematic space. This "weird" theatrical performance style of the actors can be observed in the films of all the above three directors. The way that the actors perform seems like a recorded rehearsal that never intended to be screened. These aesthetical choices, in addition to the actors' use of repetition, underlines a really specific reality of contemporary Greek society. The mechanical repetition of actions and words and the social automations of the characters underlines a specific comment on contemporary Greek society: that our acts, relationships and actions are just a part of a performance, merely mechanical repetitions that are

attached to our everyday life by the social contracts that pervade society. If we use Freud's point of view expressed in his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), where he states that humans are struggling between two opposing drives: **Eros** (*The life instinct*) which produces creativity, harmony, sexual connection, reproduction, and self-preservation; and **Thanatos** (*the death instinct*), which brings destruction, repetition, aggression, compulsion, and self-destruction. As Freud states "compulsive repetition":

...is something that the individual is not conscious of, that the compulsive element in this concept is something which is not neurotic at all, or not necessarily, and that it is just as or no more compulsive than breathing or the changing of the seasons. (Freud, 1961, p. 14)

This element is especially noticeable in the approach of Yorgos Lanthimos and Alexandros Avranas. Lanthimos, in *ALPS* (2011), illustrates precisely that. He articulates that our existence as a human species, our social repetitions and our use of certain expressions and behaviors and nothing more. Avranas also shows that in the way that the family reacts to the death of their young daughter in *Miss Violence* (2013). They just use their socially acceptable expressions and norms in the world outside and inside the home and just continue their lives without the same expression of grief and behaviours. This is also perfectly illustrated in the same film when the family eats the sandwiches from their young daughters' birthday after her death. This idea of the social contract or of the 'common sense' of society is a topic that seems to trouble these directors. The characters of their films seem to fully accept this 'common sense' and only rebel somewhere towards the end, but not successfully. In Yorgos Lanthimos's *The Lobster* (2015) the directors illustrate the acceptance of these 'unreasonable' rules of this dystopian society by all of its members. The difference here between the so-called dystopian films made in Hollywood (such as *Divergent* (2014)) is that even the groups that rebel against this status quo become tyrants and worse rulers than the ones they had fought against, as do the group of "loners" in *The Lobster* (2015) (Burger, 2014). This is also clearly a post-modern effect that underlines their critique of modernity and modernity's political connection with the socialist dream.

Another element that illustrates this theatrical approach to acting is the distance the characters take when they perform an illicit and taboo action. It is like a de-

familiarisation effect when they succumb to hubris. Such as when the father in *Miss Violence* (2013) is raping his daughter after she was gang-raped by people that paid her father to have sex with her. Whilst the father is having sex with his daughter his facial expressions seem to distance himself from the scene, and the crime he is committing is a combination of Freud's Life and Death instincts in the most raw and animalistic representation. This approach to filming sex scenes is also illustrated by Giorgos in *Dogtooth* (2009). As Psaras mentions:

Sex is presented as being as mechanical as driving the car to the family's house, and the scene itself is as boring and annoying as the squeaks of the bed that dominate the soundtrack (Psaras, 2016, p. 67)

Commenting on this animalistic representation in acting performances these elements can be found in many films of the chosen three directors. From Yorgos Lanthimos's *Dogtooth* (2009) to Athina Rachel Tsangari's *Chevalier* (2015) featuring men on a yacht playing a game to see who is going to prevail as the alpha male (Tsangari). This game is only for the passengers of the ship and not the crew. Of course, this narration has a clear feminist overtone, and at the same time demonstrates the class difference between the crew and the passenger. The players are so eager to win this meaningless game that their behaviour becomes completely animalistic until the end. Tsangari underlines that also with the dialogue just before the beginning of the game regarding what kind of animal each member of the party looks like.

In regards to cinematic space in the works of the above directors, their use is really interesting in addition to the acting and narration. The above directors, especially Alexandros Avranas in *Miss Violence* (2013) and Yorgos Lanthimos in during his Greek language films, prefer the use of slow steady single shots from unconventional angles in order to visually create this new reality, this new space. But what is this new space? It contains elements of our own reality, but at the same time has many differences. It is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. They are familiar because the characters are using the social norms that we use, but at the same time they are unfamiliar because they don't filter these norms, they don't abide by the same social contracts as we do and they are all driven by their instincts. It is a different universe,

a different reality, a *Heterotopia*. Let's see how Foucault explained the difference between Utopia and Heterotopia in the preface of his book *The Order of Things*:

Utopias afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. **Heterotopias** are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things to "hold together". (Foucault, 1994, p. 18)

Foucault's later lecture regarding heterotopias divided them into two different types: the heterotopias of crisis and the heterotopias of deviation. As he states about deviation heterotopias:

...those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons, and one should perhaps add retirement homes that are, as it were, on the borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation. (Foucault, 1984, p. 5)

This notion of counter-universes within our own universe totally articulates the visual universe of the above Weird Wave directors and the way they comment on contemporary Greek society through representing these counter-universes. They use these deviations to subvert the archetypical notions of family, such as the family table with a theatrical rituality. For example, the family table in Alexandros Avranas's *Miss Violence* (2013) has a sacrificial, ritualistic deviation. The family table is not a place of protection and love any more. Every bite of food they eat has been bought by money gained by the sexual sacrifice of the daughters. The archetypical essence of family tables is broken and stained. The family table or the children dance in Yorgos Lanthimos's *Dogtooth* (2009) works in the same way. These children exist in a bubble-universe that is created by their parents to protect them from the outside world. This universe breaks once more the archetypical use of family, with the incestuous relationship of the children being supported by their parents. In addition, the use of time and space in these *Heretopias* is quite interesting. As Foucault states:

Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time — which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time. (Foucault, 1984, p. 6)

The use of time in these cinematic spaces is really vague. The time frame cannot be determined precisely since it has elements from different periods. The costume design in the films of Yorgos Lanthimos and Alexandros Avranas make reference to previous decades and have an obsession with conservative choices of clothing. The set design also comes from an earlier period (VHS, vinyl records etc.). These choices map a completely unique use of time and space that highlights certain aspects of contemporary Greek reality, the contemporary Greek citizens of the modern western free world. A sort of a “human disease”, using Roy Anderson’s expression (Larson, 2010).

We can observe that the use of theatrical form is completely different when comparing Theo Angelopoulos’s modernist political cinema to the Greek Weird Wave postmodernist approach. Theo Angelopoulos used theatrical techniques in order to alter the “dominant ideology” in theatre and society. He wanted to critically evaluate the past, but at the same time offer an alternative: a better and more equal society. Angelopoulos deals with reality, from a poetic point of view, but he is dealing with real events that he is aiming to change. Greek Weird Wave artists, through their theatrical form, create a counter-reality, an alternative universe, a *Heterotopy*, but they are merely commenting on the issues of society without actually dealing with the real subjects of the everyday people and are actually not aiming towards any kind of change to the system.

6.3 The last Modernist: Theo Angelopoulos and his influence on contemporary Greek cinema.

Theo Angelopoulos was of paramount significance for Greek cinema until his tragic death in 2012. He was a great inspiration to others, and his filmography was something that no one in Greece before him was able to achieve. Also, he managed to do something more. He managed to inspire people and unite them with his vision which,

during his first films, was really close to the political vision of the democratisation of society. Many filmmakers tried to imitate his style and form, during his later period, but that inevitably wasn't successful because they couldn't compare their creations to his. Also, when his films became more successful and it was easier for him to obtain any funding necessary, Theo Angelopoulos wasn't exactly a part of the Greek film industry, as usual regulations were not applied to him.

I believe that Greek filmmakers were searching for a way to distance themselves from the work of Theo Angelopoulos in order to start something fresh and vibrant that was not connected with his work. I believe that the Greek Weird Wave is an example of this notion. The Greek Weird Wave represents the exact opposite disciplines of the modernist cinema of Theo Angelopoulos and the New Wave. One of the basic examples that justifies this notion is that Angelopoulos's films were, profoundly, Greek films. They were shot in Greece (except for the *Dust of Time* (2008) and were dealing with exclusively Greek events (Angelopoulos, 2008). Greek Weird Wave topics are addressing a world audience and they have nothing to do with the Greek phenomenon and Greek history and identity.

In my point of view, there is no similarity between these two movements, apart from the idea that the Greek Weird Wave may have drifted away from modernism and political cinema, due to mass political changes and the prevailing political melancholy in contemporary Greek society. The majority of people no longer believe in the possibility of radical change and a more equal society. They don't feel hope for a better everyday life. Especially after 2015, even this glimpse of hope had been shattered in Greece, and has had a profound influence on Greek filmmakers. The need to produce high quality films but with a limited budget, yet be able to compete in the free market during the Greek financial crisis, is a situation that can naturally lead to a pessimistic point of view about the future. Also, the mass indifference of Greeks to politics after the rise of PASOK to power is something that drove away Greek filmmakers and Greek adults today from their past and history and of course for a political change in society. Of course, I am not suggesting that the above are not a reasonable outcome in the aftermath of these politically and financially troubled years, but I believe that a fundamental element that constitutes the work of an artist is to scrutinise the issues of

their contemporary reality, offer their perspective and suggest changes (via their work) towards a more equal society.

The above chapter provides us with a map of the contemporary Greek landscape in art cinema by focusing on the birth of Greek Weird Wave. Understanding the positive and negative aspects of this movement equips us with the knowledge to locate the elements that have issues, such as the non-political and nihilistic postmodern aspects of Greek Weird Wave films. This will help us with the aim of this research which is to reshape contemporary Greek cinema, and for me to create an example of this new avant-garde political cinema in Greece in the form of a short film.

7.0 Final short film “Flickering Souls Set Alight” (2019)

The production of the short film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019) was one of the greatest challenges I have had to face so far in my career. The subject of the film is the contemporary landscape of Greece during the toughest years of the financial crisis, as told through the life of a family, the father who suffers from ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). In the first stage of my research (2016-2017) I spend many days in the homes of patients suffering from this disease and I tried to communicate with them and get a full understanding of their situation. The first idea was to shoot the film with a low budget in my home town (Corfu, Greece) and try to use amateur actors and not professional standard equipment. I considered this idea because of the difficulties of finding support and funding in such a short period of time, since I had to deliver the film as a final product of my PhD.

Fortunately, before the beginning of the script development I met Petros Andoniadis, the Director of Photography of the film, who really believed in the project and wanted to support it in any way possible. After we agreed to work together on the film and try to find funding from production companies in Athens, I began the script development in order to be able to pitch it to producers and professional actors. When the script was fully developed, we started to pitch it to producers and actors. It was amazing how much support we got and how many people believed in the project. I believe that the originality of the film, the stability in form and style and the research behind the topic

convinced the producers and actors to support the film and to make it a reality. Also, this idea of constructing a new avant-garde political cinema through my research made everyone really interested in the topic, in my artistic choices, and in the final goal of my research.

7.1 Pre-production/Research

During the research period of the film I approached a medical doctor in Corfu Island in order to give me an initial understanding of the disease and advise me about the difficulties of the representation of an ALS sufferer in cinema. We agreed to visit some patients at their homes in Corfu. The families of the patients were very welcoming, since the doctor was offering his services for free. When I visited their homes, I started to understand the patients' issues and also became aware of the limited ability of the patients to communicate, despite the fact that their cognitive abilities remain intact. I kept notes about everything, and used special communication boards in order to have some minimal communication with the patients. I was really surprised when they told me that they were really happy that I was there because people rarely take the time to try to communicate with them. One of the elements that was really striking in their homes was a 'wall of memories'. Generally, the wall was facing opposite of the patient's bed, where it was constantly visible, and was full of pictures, posters, personal items etc. This 'wall of memories' was almost always arranged in the form of a perfect square. This finding was the key element that helped me to actually make this film a reality. When I first met my DoP Petros Andoniadis I described him this square-shaped wall of memories and that was actually the main point that attracted him to the project, since he wanted to try a square (1:1) aspect ratio in a film. Following our agreement to collaborate, I started the script development which took me seven months in order to be able to pitch the film to producers and actors (for the full script [see Appendix 14](#)).

When I began working on the script, I tried to find a premise that could really work throughout the narrative. I wanted to use a premise strongly connected with the issues of contemporary Greek society. I began writing the script in October 2017 when a new regulation from the government had been introduced stating that any house that owes

a certain amount of money to the electricity company would have their power cut. This new regulation inspired a movement against it, but after a while the movement died out. I realised that this event could function well as a premise for a family that has a patient with ALS. At the same time, I wanted to underline, from the script development stage onwards, the Brechtian connection and techniques that I wanted to use in this film.

When the script development finished it was time to pitch the film to production companies and actors. It was really important for us to get established actors in order to convince producers to support the film. Initially I was very concerned since it is quite difficult to find funding in Greece due to the financial crisis, especially for young filmmakers. I was amazed by the positive reaction and the acceptance we received from everyone. We managed to get on board some of the most respected crew in the Greek industry, and very famous actors. Of particular note is that our lead actress Ioanna Tsirigouli won the Greek academy award in 2011.

After we confirmed the actors and locations, it was essential for me to start rehearsing with the actors in order to get the type of performances I needed. Since, based on my theoretical research, I made the choice not to base the film on dialogue but on the use of my *mise-en-scene*, I had to make sure that each actor was absolutely involved with their character. After communicating with them and directors they had previously worked with, I decided to rehearse with my entire cast before the shooting, except for the actor playing my protagonist, Ioanna Tsirigouli. Ioanna tends to burn out during rehearsals and she wouldn't have been able to perform on the actual shooting day. Nevertheless, I had regular contact with Ioanna for almost two hours every day in order to discuss her part and be certain that she totally understood her part in the film and all the aesthetic choices. I decided to work especially with the Stanislavski method with the rest of the actors because it was meaningless to rehearse based on the script, considering its lack of dialogue. Based on *An Actor Prepares* by Konstantin Stanislavski, I created very detailed psychological profiles for my characters (Stanislavsky, 2008). I spent many days discussing with the actors regarding the backgrounds of their characters. Consequently, we created many improvisations based on their backstories (for rehearsing videos with my crew see [Appendix 5](#)). Gradually, I realised that the use of Stanislavski's method was the only way to

approach performance and acting in my film. Because my form was quite strict (long single shots, minimal dialogue, theatrical aesthetics etc.) I had to approach it through my characters past, and looking now at the end product I believe that it was the right choice.

7.2 Production/Post Production

The principal production days of the film were really challenging since the funding was the bare minimum required, so we had to complete all the shooting in a constricted schedule of just three days. On the first day of shooting alone we had to finish ten scenes (bedroom scenes) (for the production files of the film see [Appendix 5](#)). The mid-August heat meant it was really difficult conditions for the cast and crew since the main location didn't have an air-conditioning system. Nevertheless, the crew and cast were experienced and established professionals of the Greek film industry and we managed to finish shooting without incident. One of the things that surprised me during the production days was the attitude of the crew. At the beginning of my research period I was reading Theo Angelopoulos's interviews and he mentioned quite often that the crew felt very connected to his projects and therefore they were not greatly concerned about payment and the duration of the shoot. In my experience, having worked previously on film sets as a cameraman or camera assistant, this is an extremely rare attitude on film sets these days. Angelopoulos expressed that the whole set was 'breathing' together through the magic of the single shot. This was something that I noticed too during the shooting of my film. Most of the crew normally worked on commercials, so at the beginning they were very strict about payments and their shifts. After the first five hours on set I noticed that the crew, partly due to their realisation of the significance of single shots, started to get a better understanding of the narration, the premise and the actual message of the film. Because of the use of the single shots the crew could understand the premise and the narration of the film. During the last days of filming the crew were not concerned about the hours they had to work and many of them told the production manager that they would accept a lower wage if necessary for the production. It was one of the most magical moments of my life and made me understand once again the importance of my use of form in the film.

The post-production period of the film was essential to underline all the crucial elements of the narration. The sound design was vitally important as some narration elements needed to stand out from the frame. Regarding the music score, I wanted to experiment with Brecht's idea of estrangement. I asked the music collective (Deadfile) who wrote the score to create a theme for all three of the theatrical flashbacks so that the audience to comprehend the connection between them. At the beginning of the flashbacks, the band used a tone that does not match with the rest of the score, so as to establish the whole idea of estrangement. Initially I was very sceptical, but I think that the final outcome is totally concrete and works exactly as I intended. The film is already accepted in the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival⁹ and world premiere screening will be there in June. Also because of our technological achievements in this film, that are described in detail by Petros Antoniadis in [Appendix 13](#), Cooke optics wanted to advertise our film through their official website (see [Appendix 9](#) for the article)

7.3 Technological Achievements

With the final short film *Flickering Souls Set Afloat* (2019) we had the opportunity to experiment not only in form and style, but also to be able to achieve some originality regarding our technological achievements. As mentioned above, during my research conducted at the patients' homes my attention was drawn to a "wall of memories". My director of photography Petros Andoniadis was able to adapt this idea of the wall to his own personal canvas and used a quite unusual aspect ratio. For this film we decided not to proceed with a wide aspect ratio (such as 2.35 or even 1.85). We made the choice to move to a 1:1 perfect square aspect ratio. In order to achieve that we would need to crop (left and right) a lot of information if we went to a square aspect ratio. Then Petros thought of using anamorphic lenses (see [Appendix 13](#) for the full article). As he mentions:

What would happen if, p.e. on a Full HD (16:9) sensor we used anamorphic (2x) lenses vertically? It would create an image 1920 x (1080×2) which – after the respectively vertical desqueeze – would give us a usable 1920 x 2160 frame which is very close to the perfect square we are aiming for (1920 x 1920). Yes, it would need to be cropped (top and bottom) but

⁹ <http://lagff.org>

it would offer us the maximum use of the sensor (without losing any horizontal pixel. (Andoniadis, 2019, p. 2)

After many tests, we decided that this was the best way to shoot our film. But before we moved to the actual filming, we had to solve a very big issue. Because the way that Petros was using the lens on the camera is quite original, the monitors were not programmed to show a correct image of the live action whilst shooting our film. That issue troubled us a great deal, since we wouldn't be able to see what we were shooting, which would have been disastrous. Just a week before the actual shooting we managed to find a programmer, Dimitris Makrigiannis, who was able to create a code in processing that would provide us with the correct live video to our monitors (see [Appendix 10](#) for the full code). So, our camera sent a live video image to Dimitris's laptop, he transcoded the video image via his software, and sent to us the correct aspect ratio, live to our monitors.

As Petros mentions in his article (see [Appendix 13](#) for the full article) this technological achievement has happened before in commercials and video clips, but never before on a scale like this. That level of originality drew us to the attention of Cooke Optics who wanted to publish an article about our work on their official website *Shot On Cooke* (See [Appendix 9](#) for the full article).

8.0 Presenting the findings of the research

This chapter presents all the theoretical findings of this research. Theo Angelopoulos's historical and political aspects, his use of the kafeneion as an ideal location in his films, and his use of Brechtian estrangement techniques and the political aspects of these choices. This chapter connects the above theoretical findings with the practical aspects of this research, which is the creation of a final short fiction film that will be used as an example of a new avant-garde political cinema in Greece. Also, this chapter includes the "Manifesto" section that includes all my suggestions that will help future Greek filmmakers to create a new Greek avant-garde political cinema.

8.1 Using Theo Angelopoulos modernist approach to contemporary Greek cinema

During my theoretical research regarding the form and style of Theo Angelopoulos's work, I completely changed my perspective and my approach to filmmaking. In the beginning I was trying to imitate his style and his point of view in cinema, but I arrived at a point where I considered that this choice would be disastrous. Theo Angelopoulos's modernist approach was a methodology developed by a movement (Nouvele Vague) with the special characteristics of that particular time period. In order to approach contemporary Greek cinema today I had to manipulate these elements and establish my own personal gaze in order to create this film (*Flickering Souls Set Alight*) that would work as an example of a new Greek political cinema. First of all, as mentioned previously, we will need to divide Theo Angelopoulos's work into two periods. The first period is up until *Alexander the Great* (1980) and the second starts from the *Voyage to Cythera* (1984). These two periods naturally share some common ground, but we can notice a very crucial shift in Angelopoulos's approach during the second period. The most crucial retreat was from his connection with Bertolt Brecht's techniques, something that will return again as an influence in *Ulysses' Gaze* (1995). This retreat almost completely transformed his gaze, even though to the untrained eye it may not be quite so noticeable.

At the same time, some elements remain the same. His obsessive use of long tracking shots, his limited use of dialogue, his attention to detail, and his poetic narration moves his films forward. Also, after the *Voyage to Cythera* (1984) his focus on Greek politics comes in a more indirect way, based this time on personal stories of people that carry the weight of history. One essential component that does not change in his approach is the use of collective memory as a powerful tool that brings history to the fore. This collective memory may not involve ideal groups of people and situations, as occurs in his first period, but rather is reawakens through the use of ideal locations (such as the kafeneion) and drives the myth forward.

The articulation of the above findings will help us to create the basic elements that will be used in the manifesto chapter in order to develop this new approach in contemporary political Greece cinema.

8.2 Using kafeneion representation as an ideal location

During my research regarding the representation of the kafeneion as an ideal location in Theo Angelopoulos's films I understood the important part that some locations play in order to wake up collective memories, especially places that connect quite strongly with the history of the nation. As is also highlighted in [Chapter 4.2](#), Theo Angelopoulos's political perspective and his use of form is different from the first period to the second. This difference in the representation is articulated in the same time in the shift of Angelopoulos's political perspective and the use of his form.

Nevertheless, the concept of the kafeneion as an ideal location that represents Greece's history really helped me to use it in my work. During the Kafeneion scene in my final film of this research *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019) I was keen to utilise all my findings and try to approach it through my own gaze. I wanted to represent the kafeneion as a place that had a glorious past, just like Greece, but is now falling apart. It was really difficult to find the perfect location for this and it took me a while, but when I walked into 'Tiniako' I knew that this was the perfect location for film (see [Appendix 5](#) for location photos). It was quite untouched, so I didn't have to make a lot of changes to the furniture and walls, but I wanted to add specific items in a few places. In order to show elements of the past I added paintings, pictures, sculptures and flags. I didn't want to overdo it, so I based these choices on an original old local kafeneion. The kafeneion had to be completely empty in order to articulate this radical shift from its glorious past and also the lack of solidarity and community spirit. In my first visit to the location I noticed that it had large mirrors hung on each wall in the room. I decided that these four mirrors could really help me to create the 'time jump' required for the phone call. The creation of this shot-sequence was really difficult, but the final outcome was precisely what I was aiming for.

When the actor Eirikos Litsis walked into the kafeneion he looked around and told me that it felt like a temple of old Greece, like a ruin that had survived through the centuries. I believe that this worked perfectly with the actual action of the film and the notion that if Persefoni could not find the money the state would cut off their electricity. This lack of solidarity is represented by the emptiness of the kafeneion. When the time travel occurs and the camera starts traveling, we can notice elements of the glorious past of Greek history. We can notice a painting that represents “Society of Friends”¹⁰, a portrait of Eleftherios Venizelos (Greek prime minister), a painting of the Acropolis in Athens and a painting of Venizelos ‘Great Idea’ (nationalist view of a bigger and greater imperialist Greek state). So, through this ‘time jump’ of Giorgos’s flashback we see glimpse of Greece’s glorious past. These fragments of the past are not presented because they were always the correct choices, but rather due to the fact they actually represent a more prestigious and commanding state than crisis-hit contemporary Greece. Ultimately, we managed to bring to the surface this uniqueness of the kafeneion and make it an “ideal location”, a place to transfer memory and history to the present.

8.3 The use of single shots and Brechtian alienation techniques in Greek cinema today

The primary significance of this research is that helped inspire me to develop my own personal style and gaze in filmmaking. Reshaping the theory around the form and techniques of Theo Angelopoulos’s work enabled me to gain a better understanding of my own vision as a filmmaker. I did incorporate some of his techniques, but from a different point of view and as a means to truly find my gaze in the final product of this PhD research, the short film *Flickering Souls Set Afloat* (2019). The first remarkable feature that really drew my attention to Angelopoulos’s work were the silent long tracking shots. These shots were the feature of his work that initiated my fascination with his films, and ultimately to decide to focus my PhD research on him. When I first started to experiment with the notion of long tracking shots, I started to better understand the concept of time. I began to perceive how time works perfectly in a

¹⁰ Society of Friends was founded in 1814 and their main purpose was to overthrow the Ottoman occupation in Greece.

single short sequence, how it gives you the opportunity to focus on the details of the frame and the character. To understand a character's past and background just by observing the elements of the space. As Andrey Tarkovsky says in his book *Sculpting in Time*:

The distinctive time running through the shots makes the rhythm of the picture; and rhythm is determined not by the length of the edited pieces, but by the pressure of the time that runs through them. Editing cannot determine rhythm (in this respect it can only be a feature of style); indeed, time courses through the picture despite editing rather than because of it. The course of time, recorded in the frame, is what the director has to catch in the pieces laid out on the editing table. (Tarkovsky, 1987, p. 117)

So, having this aesthetic choice in mind, I decided to work only with a single shot for each sequence, a creative decision which I continue to use today (for my storyboard sketches see [Appendix 15](#)). That decision gave me the freedom to cut out a large amount of dialogue and work really carefully with the mise-en-scene. I added additional elements to the design and props of the film that would have not have been possible without using single shots. Ultimately, I was able to approach this theatrical form in the style of the film. One element that I wanted to miss from the theatrical approach was the lack of overacting in the performance of the actors. I tried to make them play as minimal as possible and to use all their acting skills in all the shots of the play. Using Stanislavski's method of acting in rehearsals really helped me to achieve this final outcome.

Another element that played a determinant role in the development of my style is the use of Theo Angelopoulos's Brechtian techniques as demonstrated in the first period of work, from *Days of '36* (1972) up until *Alexander the Great* (1980). Since I was always very politically active with a dialectical point of view concerning history and politics, the whole notion of changing the dominant *Weltanschauung* really worked for me as a tool to underline my own personal style and my political aims as an artist. In order to use these Verfremdungseffekte I decided to work with the idea of time fluidity and the breaking of the fourth wall. I wanted to use this breaking of the fourth wall with the notion of political change, as Brecht intended in the first place, and not to create a sense of intimacy with the viewer (Knudsen, 2014, p. 9)

In my final film *Flickering Souls Set Aight* (2019) I have three estrangement flashbacks. They all work in a theatrical form and I use long tracking shots in order to create this “time jump”. Also, I have the same musical theme in all three of them that starts right before the actual “time jump” so the audience would associate the musical theme with moving to a flashback. The final element I wanted to use as an estrangement technique was the breaking of the fourth wall using an estrangement monologue. In the end of the second stage of the narration the protagonist is breaking the fourth wall and she is describing the events that led her to that position. In the second scene of the film we can also notice Persefoni looking straight to the camera breaking the fourth wall for the first time in the film without addressing the audience. That was a way to set up the mood and connect it with the final estrangement monologue of the film. The final monologue of Persefoni really boost up the film and arcs the second stage to the third stage of the film.

My approach differs from Angelopoulos’s form and use of Brechtian techniques as I prefer to use personal stories and to connect with the characters of the narration. Angelopoulos, rather than having a protagonist, preferred to focus on a group so that, as Brecht said, the audience would not be able to feel empathy for the individual characters. In this manner, in my view, personal stories and characters have the capacity to convey memories and history to the audience. Additionally, I chose to use a cathartic ending for this particular film. Angelopoulos, in his first period, used a more circular form of narrative, as he agreed with Brecht’s notion regarding non-cathartic endings. I believe that this particular film needed a clear denouement, not so much of a cathartic nature, as a circular narrative wouldn’t function well for this film. Due to the extremely heart-breaking subject of the film, and the harsh images, the audience needs a final touch of positivity, even if by positivity we mean the death of Aris and his journey to a “better place”.

8.4 Towards a new Greek avant-garde political cinema. Presenting the “Manifesto”

Greek cinema today has reached a point of repetition, of non-existing plots and post-modern norms that cannot connect with contemporary reality. Greek cinema is divided

into mainstream cinema that moves through the official distribution channel, and art cinema that most of the time is only presented at festival screenings. The mainstream cinema primarily consists of melodramas and cheap comedies, which are closely connected, in both content and style, with the so called “golden age” of Greek cinema. These films are funded by large production companies, as well as smaller companies that need these films to establish their reputation.

Regarding art cinema, the situation is different. The funding is acquired from funding bodies or smaller production companies that also want to invest in art films. Since the beginning of the Greek Weird Wave, many filmmakers are presenting films with the same conventions and style. This movement is no longer active and consequently, the attention of European film festivals is not currently focused upon Greece. This also shows the opportunistic roots of this movement, as without the interest of the film festivals, it has lost its momentum.

Avant-garde cinema, since *Cinéma pur*, attempted to find a way to approach the moving image differently than the mainstream media and to have the freedom to express themselves more freely. All the avant-garde movements (*Cinéma pur*, *Nouvelle Vague*, *Dogma 95*) had many differences, but they had one thing in common. They wanted to sever the ties of cinema from the large production companies in order to give the necessary freedom to the creator to work with their own vision. In my view, some movements had a greater impact than others, but all of them supported the same vision: an art movement completely freed from the chains of the production companies. Even though I believe that *Nouvelle Vague* was the greatest avant-garde movement, if a film in that style was realized today, it would be considered absurd. However, I believe that the main principles of these avant-garde movements, in combination with a fresh approach towards contemporary reality, can really succeed in creating a new gaze in Greek cinema today. But before creating an avant-garde movement, we need a movement to start with. This is the reason why the Greek Weird Wave was not successful. It wasn't a coherent movement, but rather became so due to its success at festivals. Even Greek Weird Wave artists did not accept the brand for themselves. Art has created a distance between itself and society and the political movements. That is why the filmmakers don't speak today about the troubles of society, because they are not connected with them. It does not come as a surprise

that the Greek Weird Wave is nihilistic and post-modern, not because the creators were pessimists or due to the fact that they didn't want to give an answer, but because they are unable to give an answer.

Greek art cinema today has to re-examine its position and for that I want to make the following suggestions. The following ideas and notes are addressed to avant garde filmmakers who are wishing and fighting for a change in cinema and society and to art film enthusiasts who are fighting for the same thing. This manifesto is a concept for a new complete point of view for a new political cinema movement. I am not suggesting that it's the only method to create such a movement, but it is the only complete concept for new political filmmakers who will agree with the following steps:

1. Greek filmmakers have to deal with history via a dialectical point of view. Marxist dialectics is the only way to understand and interpret historical truth.
2. The new Greek Filmmakers are auteurs. They decide on all the creative choices in their films. Even if we are talking about a more collective approach to cinema, in every avant garde film we need to follow the gaze of one artist who makes all the creative decisions without following the orders of production companies.
3. Greek filmmakers must create their films with small teams and low budgets independent of the main cinema institutions.
4. Shooting needs to be on location and not on film sets.
5. Greek filmmakers have to connect with contemporary reality and with the issues of the society today from a materialistic point of view.
6. Greek filmmakers have to get connected with their history and the collective memories of their society.
7. Greek filmmakers will consciously and actively engage with the relationship between theory and practice.
8. Greek filmmakers need to confront the dominant techniques of the mainstream industry (three acts structure, catharsis, invisible cut etc.) and introduce new forms of expression.
9. Filmmakers need to engage in the process of educating people about cinema.
10. Filmmakers have the obligation to create films with a possibility for hope. Even if that hope is unclear.

The word *Cinema* in Greek is *Κινηματογράφος* (kinimatografos). The word *Kinima* means movement. Movement in order to exist needs a vision. If our vision is clear and our goals are clear, we have the capacity and the power to reshape once and for all contemporary Greek cinema. As Brecht said: 'Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it'. Cinema has that capacity and new filmmakers have to be aware of that, and reconnect again with the main purpose for creating art, which is to convey emotions and to create a better and an equal society.

8.5 Watch the final short film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019):

The short film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019), as mentioned earlier in the thesis, represents the final outcome of my PhD. This production illustrates the way I believe that Greek cinema must be connected with reality, history and politics. In this film, I utilised all the tools, I discovered throughout my research combining them to construct my own personal gaze. It is really significant for the reader to watch the film before moving to the conclusion, since it will give them the complete picture of the research outcomes of this research.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/328218628> password: angelopoulos

9.0 Conclusion

This long journey completely changed my life and my world view as a researcher and filmmaker and helped me to find my own approach in form and style. Before the beginning of this research, I felt that Greek cinema had lost its way, and we needed to search for a new kind of political cinema in Greece. I knew that the answer lay in modernism and in the connection of history with politics and collective memory. In order to do that, I began to examine the last Greek political director Theo Angelopoulos and I noticed a gap in the research concerning his work. There was no real connection of Angelopoulos with contemporary Greek reality, and additionally the examination of his methodology and techniques was only on a theoretical and postmodern basis, and did not focus on using these techniques to reshape contemporary Greek cinema. I wanted this research to be practice-based, since I didn't only want to elaborate on

these theoretical points, but I wanted to practically change the Greek contemporary cinema and create a final film that can work as an example of this change.

At the beginning of my literature review, I noticed a close connection of Theo Angelopoulos with Bertolt Brecht. The academic research regarding this connection wasn't thorough, as it mostly detailed these connections without politically associating them with the work of Theo Angelopoulos (with the exception of Dan Georgakas and Irini Stathi). I felt that the roots of this connection go far deeper, so I started reading about Brecht and trying to understand the reason that Theo Angelopoulos was using his techniques. I noticed that Angelopoulos was only using Brechtian techniques during his first period, when he was approaching his films from a more politically radical point of view. In that period Angelopoulos, and most of the liberally-minded people, were hoping for a change after the end of the dictatorship of the Colonels, and they were creating their films to inspire such a change. After the end of the dictatorship and the rise of the conservative party (New Democracy) into power, Angelopoulos was disappointed and no longer had hope of this change. This disappointment was expressed by a retreat from his Brechtian approach. Angelopoulos stopped using these techniques and tools after he began his second period. Therefore, these techniques played a really significant role in conveying his political message. We only see fragments of these techniques later on when he attempted to bring historical events to the fore.

Comprehending this led me to understand the impact of the political aspects of his films and their importance to the narration. I now understood that Angelopoulos used collective memory as a means to connect with his audience. These collective memories were reminded to the audience through the use of the landscape, colours, paintings and buildings. One particular building that was systematically used in his work and has a really strong link with Greek political culture is the kafeneion. I decided to elaborate on this idea as a means to unlock doors regarding the concept of memory and its political connection to the audience. I also discovered that there was a difference in the way they were used between the first period and second period of Theo Angelopoulos's work, which in combination with his retreat from using Brechtian techniques, enabled me to understand all these elements.

In search of Angelopoulos's political connection with history I found the systematic use of a historical archetype in the work of his first period, Aris Velouchiotis. Since I am a politically active person and considering that during my childhood I was aware of Aris Velouchiotis of being something like a national hero, I knew that this connection was not a coincidence. I decided to focus on that, since there had been no research conducted regarding that connection, and to attempt to understand how this archetype works as a historical reminder of the past. This realisation revealed the roots of Angelopoulos's political ideology and clarified the reasoning behind his decision to portray Aris Velouchiotis in the films of his first period.

All the above elements were discovered and analysed and, ultimately, articulated through my Manifesto for a new Greek avant-garde cinema. I knew, however, that it was essential to transform theory into a practical example. I wanted to apply these changes in a final film that would work as an example of this new movement in Greek cinema. I also had made the midpoint short film *A Still Sunrise* (2017) that helped me to test some of these techniques. The film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019) is precisely what I wanted to present as an example of this new political cinema. This film puts into practice all the above theoretical findings. I have used long tracking single shots, with each scene consisting of one shot. I am not attempting to capitalise on my work by emphasising the use of dialogue. I used theatrical forms to connect with the estrangement techniques of Bertolt Brecht. In this film, I shot three Brechtian-style flashbacks and one estrangement monologue. I have also used all my theoretical outcomes in the use of Angelopoulos's kafeneion as an ideal location in my own film. The kafeneion scene articulates precisely that notion of memory recall through ideal spaces.

Finally, I used a subject that troubles contemporary Greek society and approached it from a dialectical point of view. The film deals with an issue that is prevalent in Greek society today, which is the financial crisis. By focusing on a specific group of people who suffer greatly, ALS patients and their families, the film shows the complete lack of care of the state regarding the predicament of these people, as illustrated by the fact that there is no concern for the repercussions of the family having their electricity cut. This manifestation of the cruelty of the contemporary Greek society helps the

audience to observe and empathise with the story. The use of the mise-en-scene and the design choices of the film can encourage the recall of memories to the Greeks, especially in the kafeneion scene. The use of single shots and the Brechtian estrangement techniques helps the audience not only to empathise with the protagonist, but also to understand that the problem described is part of their personal reality or part of the wider society in which they live in. The impact of this film is already evident since we have already won a couple of small awards and we have been accepted for our world premiere in the Los Angeles Greek film festival. This is really significant if we take into account that we have just finished the post production of our film.

Flickering Souls Set Alight (2019), puts into practice all the above theoretical findings and the key points of the Manifesto for a new Greek avant-garde cinema. I am confident that I have used all the points made in the manifesto section and that this film can function as a perfect example for a new Greek avant-garde political cinema. I believe that an impact has already been made as this film has been accepted in Greek film festivals within Greece and abroad. One element that I would like to experiment more with in later projects, is the use of a freer form of filming, such as suggested by *caméra stylo*. In this way, I would not have to adhere to such a tight schedule, which would enable me to experiment more, and to have full creative control, being freed from the demands of production companies since the budget of the film would be much lower. I believe that I have accomplished my aim to create new theoretical knowledge about Theo Angelopoulos's historical and political work and the use of the kafeneion as an ideal location in his films, and then it used this knowledge in order to reshape contemporary Greek cinema in practice through the creation of a final film example and the Manifesto for a new avant-garde political Greek cinema.

The combination of different research methodologies in this thesis helped me to approach my subject from a different point of view and helped me not only to underline the research outcomes and the originality of this research in theory, but also to complete the practical aim of this research which was to reshape contemporary Greek cinema. I believe that with this theoretical paper and my final short film a milestone of

this change is already achieved, and in the next few years we may see a bigger change in the landscape of contemporary Greek cinema.

10.0 Further research/Research for a new feature film

The above research really transformed my perspective in cinema and helped me to develop my own gaze. Since the end of the post production of *Flickering Souls Set Afloat* (2019) I have already written and submitted two new short films in film competitions. The name of the films are *Alimono* and *Nostimon Imar* (for the full scripts see [Appendix 7](#)). Both of them deal with the idea of collective memory and the representation of the past in the present. I have already talked with the decision makers of the funding organisations and they appreciated the ideas and approach of the films. I also started writing my first feature film dealing again with historical memory. The topic of the film is the mental disease of the partisans during the final year of the Greek Civil War. It is a subject that has not yet been academically researched in great detail, nor has it been explored in filmmaking, and one that I would be keen to investigate in depth.

Also, I would like to start a post-doctoral research regarding the use of memory in the medium of cinema. A practice-based research that can prove in theory and in practice the capacity of film as a medium to transfer and recall historical memories. This research can also work with focus groups of people and with the use of ethnomethodology as a methodological tool in order to prove my findings (Knudsen, 2003).

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Appendix

Appendix 1- List of publications arising by this work

Conference proceedings:

- International Academic Forum, Brighton, United Kingdom. Title: *Theo Angelopoulos: " A voyage in history, time and space* ([Link](#)), 2017. ISSN: 2188-9643.
- Interdisciplinary Conference TABOO - TRANSGRESSION - TRANSCENDENCE in Art & Science, Ionian University, Greece. Title: *The issue of the post-gender and transgressive identities in contemporary Greek reality in the cinematic work of Panos Koutras* ([Link](#)), 2017. ISBN: 978-960-7260-60-4.
- Interdisciplinary Conference TABOO - TRANSGRESSION - TRANSCENDENCE in Art & Science, Ionian University, Greece. Title: *The use of fear as structural feature in visual arts and cinema art* ([Link](#)), 2017. ISBN: 978-960-7260-60-4.

Appendix 2- List of conference presentation arising by this work

- International Scientific Conference: For a School of Visual Arts in the 21st Century Florina, Greece. Title: *Digital visual inter-departmental studies* ([Link](#)), 2017.
- CfP: 3rd Conference on Contemporary Greek Film Cultures: Strategies of the Documentart, Vienna. Title: *Documentary modes in feature fiction films. The case of Petros Sevastikoglou and his film Electra (2014)* ([Link](#)), 2018
- The Society for Modern Greek Studies, Exploring Crises in the Modern Greek World: Cultural Narratives, Identity Politics, Social Life, Birmingham. Title: *Civil War trauma and the "ghost of history". The case of Aris Velouhiotis in Theo Angelopoulos cinematic work.* ([Link](#)), 2018

- Digital Culture & AudioVisual Challenges, Ionian University, Greece. Title: *Approaching “Weird Wave”. The use of theatrical form in contemporary Greek cinema and the use of these findings at “teaching for new technologies” in Ionian University* ([Link](#)), 2019

Appendix 3- List of guest lectures and events arising by this work

- Guest Lecture, Ionian University, Greece. Title: *Space and Ideal Topoi (locations) in the cinema of Theo Angelopoulos* ([Link](#)), 2017
- Guest Lecture, University of Western Macedonia. Title: *Space and Ideal Topoi (locations) in the cinema of Theo Angelopoulos* ([Link](#)), 2017
- Guest Lecture, Bournemouth University, U.K. Title: *Introduction to Theo Angelopoulos work* ([Link](#)), 2017
- Guest Lecture, Bournemouth University, U.K. Title: *Introduction “Traveling Players”* ([Link](#)), 2017
- Open presentation, Meliteion residency, Greece. Title: *The Use of Landscape in Theo Angelopoulos Films* ([Link](#)), 2017
- Open Presentation, Youth Against Racism in Europe, Greece. Title: *Panos Koutras Cinema* ([Link](#)), 2017
- Private presentation, Andrew Horton’s “Greek Odyssey”, Title: *A private discussion with Adrew Horton’s (academic, scriptwriter and Theo Angelopoulos colleague) group about Theo Angelopoulos work* ([Link](#)), 2017
- Workshop, Limnophobia, Greece, Five days workshops from different art Universities in Greece regarding “Trauma” ([Link](#)), 2017
- Open presentation, Institution of Revolutionary Theory, Greece. Title: *Theo Angelopoulos “A Voyage through history time and space”* ([Link](#)), 2018
- Open presentation, The Attic Art Gallery, Greece, Title: *Theo Angelopoulos “A Voyage through myth, history and memory”* ([Link](#)), 2019
- Guest Lecture, Panteios University, Greece, Title: *Collective action and historical memory: The films of Theo Angelopoulos* ([Link](#)), 2019

Appendix 4- List of publications for future submission to peer review journal arising by this work

- FilmIcon peer review Journal, Title: *The overthrow of “common sense” in film and society from the cinematic work of Theo Angelopoulos* ([Link with the full paper](#))
- FilmIcon peer review Journal, Title: *Civil War trauma and the "ghost of history". The case of Aris Velouhiotis in Theo Angelopoulos cinematic work* ([Link with the full paper](#))
- FilmIcon peer review Journal, Title: Documentary modes in feature fiction films. The case of Petros Sevastikoglou and his film *Electra* 2014 ([Link with the full paper](#))

Appendix 5- List of production files for *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019)

*some of the files are in Greek and only for reference

- Video Rehearsals with the actors
- Breakdowns and schedules ([Link](#))
- Characters Briefs ([Link](#))
- Cinematography ([Link](#))
 - Shotlist ([Link](#))
 - Storyboard ([Link](#))
- Locations ([Link](#))
- Cast and Crew list ([Link](#))
- Set Design ([Link](#))

Appendix 6- List of scripts for films produced for this research

- *A Still Sunrise* (2017), Written by Andy Chapman and produced as the midpoint of this research, ([Link](#))
- *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019), Written by Iakovos Panagopoulos and produced as the final product of this research, ([Link](#))

Appendix 7- List of scripts produced for further research

- *Alimono* ([Link for the full script in English](#)), Written by Iakovos Panagopoulos and Konstantinos Karakostas for submission in CIAK project: "[Memory Greece Italy](#)" - [Proposals for the production of 10 short movies](#)
- *Nostimon Imar* ([Link for the full script in Greek](#)), Written by Konstantinos Karakostas and Iakovos Panagopoulos for submission in [Greek National Television funding program for sort film](#)

Appendix 8- List of Television and radio interviews I gave arising by this work

*the interviews are in Greek and just for referencing

- Corfu T.V., Greece. A discussion regarding the political perspective of Theo Angelopoulos Work ([Link](#)). 2017
- Portokali Radio, Greece. A discussion regarding the *The Hunters* (1977) ([Link after 46.30](#)). 2017
- Portokali Radio, Greece. A discussion regarding the Brechtian approach of Theo Angelopoulos Work ([Link after 31.41'](#)). 2018
- Corfu T.V., Greece. A discussion regarding "Trauma" of Theo Angelopoulos Work ([Link](#)). 2018
- Portokali Radio, Greece. A discussion regarding "Alexander the Great" of Theo Angelopoulos ([Link after 40.15'](#)). 2018
- Start T.V., Greece. A discussion regarding contemporary Greek cinema and Theo Angelopoulos modernist approach ([Link](#)). 2019
- Corfu T.V., Greece. Discussion regarding historical narratives in Theo Angelopoulos work and regarding my latest short film *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019) ([Link](#)). 2019

Appendix 9- List of articles arising by this work

- Cooke optics regarding our use of 1:1 anamorphic lenses ([Link](#))

- Los Angeles Cinematographers Facebook page regarding our use of 1:1 anamorphic lenses ([Link](#))

Appendix 10- Processing code from Dimitris Makrigiannis for our monitor fixing

The following code is written by Dimitris Makrigiannis in Processing software in order to have a 1:1 live feed to our monitor during the shooting of *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019).

```
/**  
  
 * Reading and displaying an image from an attached Capture device.  
 */  
  
import processing.video.*; //import library  
  
Capture cam;  
  
void setup() {  
  
  fullScreen(); //size of window  
  
  String[] cameras = Capture.list(); // display available cameras  
  
  if (cameras == null) {  
    println("Failed to retrieve the list of available cameras, will try the default...");  
    //cam = new Capture(this, 640, 480);  
  } if (cameras.length == 0) {  
    println("There are no cameras available for capture.");  
    exit();  
  } else {  
    println("Available cameras:");  
    println(width);  
    printArray(cameras);  
  }  
}
```

```

// The camera can be initialized directly using an element
// from the array returned by list():
//cam = new Capture(this);
// Or, the settings can be defined based on the text in the list
cam = new Capture(this, 960, 1080, "Blackmagic UltraStudio SDI", 24);

// Start capturing the images from the camera
cam.start();
}
}

void draw() {
  background(0);
  if (cam.available() == true) {
    cam.read();
  }
  imageMode(CENTER);
  image(cam,width/2, height/2, 960, 1080);//display cam

  //create square for portrait
  noFill();
  stroke(255);
  strokeWeight(5);
  rectMode(CENTER);
  rect(width/2,height/2,841,841);
  noCursor();
}

```

Appendix 11- List of documents from archive research

- Museum of Cinematography in Athens Archive ([Link](#))
- Sofikitis Archive ([Link](#))
- Karapiperis Archive ([Link](#))

Appendix 12- Screen Shots of personal blog showing the progress of my research

- Screen shots ([Link](#))

Appendix 13 - Flickering Souls Set Alight 1:1 Aspect Ratio & Camera Work (article by Petros Andoniadis)

FLICKETING SOULS SET ALIGHT

1:1 Aspect Ratio & Camera Work

Cinematographer: Petros Antoniadis

**“Atmospheric photography is one of my criteria
when I decide which projects to accept”**

Walter Lassally, Cinematographer

When director Iakovos Panagopoulos and I had our first conversation about the film, about this breathtaking story, I was amazed by his 2-years research on ALS and the amount of the details he was able to bring on the table. Right from the beginning I felt the need to understand how these people feel, trying to get a glance into a world which is so hard for us “normal” people to even imagine. A fully functional brain in a non-functional body. Being trapped in your own flesh. As Bill Loveless, an actual patient suffering from ALS mentioned “I guess I never really knew the meaning of strength. Now I do.” ¹

One of the details that Iakovos mentioned, a similarity found in most houses he visited, was a “wall of memories”. As the patient cannot even turn his head right and left, the family uses the wall across his / her sight to place photos, pictures, generally visual content from the past or things that he or she liked in order to have something interesting to look at, and as Iakovos commented, this usually creates a “square of memories” as it’s almost shaped into a square. I was blown away by it. In my mind this may serve as a window for these trapped souls to fly free. As free as they can be inside a square.

“Everything within a frame tells a story...even the frame itself.” ²

V Renée, Writer / Director (NoFilmSchool)

One of the first things that comes in my mind when I am getting in a project is the aspect ratio. The canvas that will be used to display the story. And in the recent years there has been a wider option, a freedom in the frame, letting filmmakers express the story within their own “limits”. A playful approach to aspect ratios by contemporary filmmakers ³.

In our case, I immediately felt that going with a wide aspect ratio (such as 2.35 or even 1.85) would not be the right choice for the film. We needed to bring Aris’ perspective in our visual world and, unfortunately, his horizons are not open wide. They have been shrunk inside his “square”.

The film also needed to feel claustrophobic because, not only Aris but the rest of the characters as well are trapped in a world ready to collapse. A ticking bomb in a contracted universe.

We needed to focus on the character and bring their perspectives to life.

With those notes and the needs of the film in mind, I proposed to Iakovos the use of a different aspect ratio. A canvas which, in my opinion, would help us bring all these elements to life and give as much reality as I could think in the film. As it’s commonly known 1:1 is a “portrait” format that helps you focus on the character, the people ⁴. And *“Flickering Souls Set Alight”* is as character focused as a film can be. With references such as the 1:1 Xavier Dolan’s *“Mommy”* (dop: André Turpin) ⁴, the music video Indochine – College Boy ⁵ and even the 4:3 *“Ida”* (dir. Pawel Pawlikowski / dop: Ryszard Lenczewski, Lukasz Zal) ⁶ which may be wider but the framing matched our vision for the film, I presented Iakovos with the idea of the perfect square ratio (1:1). He was skeptical in the beginning as of how well the unconventional aspect ratio would be delivering our story, so we proceed to the first test.

But how would we get to 1:1? ⁷

Even the Super 35mm (3-Perf) source footage of the *“Mommy”* had to get its left and right edges cropped to end up on 1:1. But in our case cropping was not an option. I felt the need to include as much information as possible in each frame, yet preserving the square aspect ratio.

As each scene was a single take, we needed to capture nothing less than what the story required so cropping (left and right) would have been far from the ideal scenario, especially on a tight location. We had to get to 1:1 without losing any horizontal pixel of the sensor. The only solution seemed to be “adding” information to the sensor vertically.

And that’s where the idea of using the anamorphic format crossed my mind.

THEORY / IDEA: What would happen if, p.e. on a Full HD (16:9) sensor we used anamorphic (2x) lenses vertically? It would create an image 1920 x (1080×2) which – after the respectively vertical desqueeze – would give us a usable 1920 x 2160 frame which is very close to the perfect square we are aiming for (1920 x 1920). Yes, it would need to be cropped (top and bottom) but it would offer us the maximum use of the sensor (without loosing any horizontal pixel)!

Additionally, romantically wise, someone could say that as Aris’ life, his entire world came upside down, fall on the side, so did his vision / perspective thus our lenses (the “eyes” of the camera and therefore the audience).

An online research came not with many results. A great finding was the video “*Hilos (Vertical Anamorphic does 1:1 ratio)*” (2013) ⁸ on which Sebastien Farges showcases the test results coming from a very similar technique (with the only difference being the 1,75x squeeze) proved that indeed the theory could be turned into reality. But would it work for our film? We had to tried it ourselves under, similar to the film circumstances.

When we saw the first results on October, 2017 (using an Arri Amira camera with Cooke Anamorphic/i lenses) we immediately realized how powerful this technique could be. Indeed, it was working. And better than our expectations as some elements of the anamorphic look being flipped sideways (90° to the sensor) were giving a unique touch to the picture.

Two more steps were left to lock and secure our aesthetic choices and procedure. Which set of lenses and how would we have live monitoring on set.

The process of choosing the right anamorphic set was not as long though. The film is full of characters, whether is the people, the set or even the camera. As far as the people, the faces needed to be rendered with great detail, acute but not too harsh giving space to the emotions while enhancing the performance. The set had to look dark, as a never-ending shadow is casting over it, and all these details in the shadows were crucial to keep. The camera needed to be able to move in the tight space of the location, sometimes going from a medium to a close up, to an extreme wide and back to medium again, where as its single-shots, every frame needed to look perfect. Overall the film needed contrast, dynamic depth, great warm color rendering and anamorphic lenses with the ability of capturing perfectly every frame while moving and focusing from 35 inch to infinity in a single shot.

In short terms, the film needed the Cooke Look ⁹ paired with the remarkable craftsmanship of the Anamorphic/i series.

The majority of the film was shot on the 32mm with the exception being the scene at the coffee shop and one at the balcony which were shot on the 50mm. The lens gave a unique out-of-focus vignette at the sides, something that can be seen throughout the scenes (especially on the coffee shop) and works perfectly for the moment.

During the next sessions at Arctos Films S.A. with the great help of focus puller Vagelis Tzifakis and programmer Dimitris Makrygiannis, we were trying our best to overcome technical challenges, the biggest of which being live monitoring on set (as there is no ordinary camera or monitor function for vertical desqueeze). The camera was sending video signal (via Teradek) to Dimitris' workstation, the signal was getting desqueezed vertically through the software which was then exporting the corrected (desqueezed and with the 1:1 framelines) signal back to the camera's on board monitor and video village. In the beginning this complicated process was not coming without any malefactions such as delays and signal drops. Just a few days prior to the beginning of the principal photography Dimitris managed to finish up our final software by keeping the delay to it's minimum allowing us a great shoot.

"If the camera moves it's got to be for a reason" ¹⁰

Roger Deakins, Cinematographer

With Iakovos we both agree that the camera has to move when there is a reason. And it was his (Iakovos') vision to have each scene as a single shot. So, the way that the camera would be moving in each scene, the moments that we needed a close up, when it would be wide and how would we get from one composition to the next was designed from the beginning and only finalized when we locked the location. And indeed, the location gave a new breath to our shot list. Many changes were made (to the pre-existing shotlist) but, as far as I am concerned, for the best.

At the end of the day I believe that the camera is a character in the film. A unique perspective of the events that lead to catharsis.

“The language of film is further and further away from the language of theater and is closer to music. It’s abstract but still narrative. Everything feels less rehearsed. It’s more experimental than classical.” ??

Emmanuel Lubezki (“Chivo”), Cinematographer

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Appendix 14- Flickering Souls Set Alight full script

Flickering Souls Set Alight

Written by

Iakovos Panagopoulos

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1 INT. KITCHEN. DAY

1

FADE IN:

Persephone, a fifty-five year old woman, gets in the room from a door on the right and moves towards the pot where something is boiling. Georgia, her twenty-year old daughter, opens the front door and gets in. After looking each other without talking, Georgia sits in the dining table and plays with her cell phone. Persephone brings two plates with lentil soup and puts them on the table. She sits and casts a critical look at her daughter who is still playing with the cell phone. While they are eating, they hear a sound from the room on the right. It sounds like a danger sound coming from a machine. Persephone looks at her daughter.

CUT TO BLACK

(film title
appearance)

"FLICKERING
SOULS SET
ALIGHT"

2 INT. KITCHEN. DAY

2

Persephone puts meat, eggs and potatoes in a blender and grinds them. She pours the puree on a plate, opens the cupboard, takes a large syringe and fills it with the puree. Persephone takes the syringe and the plate and starts moving towards the room on the right.

CUT TO:

3 INT. ARIS' ROOM. DAY

3

Persephone enters the room and pulls Aris' blanket moving abruptly her arms. Aris, who is her sixty-five-year-old husband, suffers from Amyotrophic Lateral Paralysis over the last ten years. She injects the food into a tube that comes out of his nose and, after completing the procedure, she covers him up.

CUT TO BLACK

4 INT. ARIS' ROOM. EVENING

4

Persephone gets in the room and takes off her clothes abruptly. She falls into the bed and takes a pill from the bedside table next to her. Persephone doesn't have enough space on the bed, as Aris' mechanical support takes too much space. Persephone has lied on her back looking at the ceiling. Suddenly, a muffled sound comes from Aris, something between roar and crying. Persephone turns to his side, passes her hands through the cables and embraces him.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. FRONT DOOR DAY

5

Persephone opens the front door holding a wooden broom. As she puts the broom aside, she observes a paper stuck on the electricity box. She looks at the paper and then takes it into her hands. Georgia comes out from the front door and Persephone rumples the paper.

GEORGIA

What's the
matter?

Persephone kisses her daughter on the forehead.

PERSEPHONE

Go! You'll be late...

Georgia moves towards the stairs putting her headphones on, while Persephone turns her look back at the electricity box.

PERSEPHONE

Did you say hello to your father?

CUT TO BLACK

6 INT. ARIS'S ROOM. DAY

6

Persephone is lying on the floor in front of the door. She is huddled up and tries to make no noise in order Aris not to understand her. She stares at him and listens to the sound of the machines as he breathes.

CUT TO:

7 INT. LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON

7

Persephone calls the electricity company. The line is busy and she is placed on hold.

CUT TO:

8 INT. ARIS' ROOM. EVENING

8

Persephone gets in the room with a bucket and a sponge. She takes the sponge and cleans Aris' wounds. She stands up leaving the sponge in the bucket and puts Aris' bedsheet very close to his body.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. YARD. MORNING

9

Persephone slings the sheets. Georgia comes out of the house.

GEORGIA

Bye...

PERSEPHONE

Did you say hello to your father?

Georgia doesn't answer and comes out of the gate. Persephone continues slinging the sheets.

CUT TO:

10 INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

10

Persephone calls the electricity company, but she is placed on hold once again. She closes the phone abruptly. Her look aims at the photos on the phone table. One of them pictures Georgia when she was younger holding a teddy bear. Another pictures the couple along with a friend of theirs in a coffeehouse. She gets the last picture into her hands and looks at it. After a while, she picks up the phone and starts dialing a number.

PERSEPHONE

Giorgos...

CUT TO:

11 INT. KITCHEN. AFTERNOON

11

Georgia comes into the house. Persephone hears her from the bath.

PERSEPHONE

Georgia, is that you? Go and spend some time with your father, please. And then, we'll eat.

Georgia is clearly annoyed and walks towards the door of Aris' room.

CUT TO:

12 INT. ARIS' ROOM. AFTERNOON

12

Georgia goes towards the bed where her father is. She looks at the door, turns her look to her father and looks for his pills. Once she finds the box she is looking for, she takes some pills and puts them in her pocket. She stands and looks him in the eyes.

GEORGIA

Thanks, dad.

From the kitchen, someone can hear steps and dishes getting out of the cupboard.

(CONTINUED)

Georgia stands up and gets out of the room. Persephone opens the door and sits next to Aris. She caresses his cheek with gentle movements.

PERSEPHONE

Aris, we have a problem. In two days, they will shut down the electricity power. And the only one who can help us is Giorgos.

Aris makes the same muffled sound again. Persephone kisses him on the forehead and comes out of the room, leaving the door half-closed. Suddenly, Aris starts moving under the covers. He gets up slowly and pulls the tubes out of his body. He sits on the bed for a while and then moves towards a wooden chair next to a closet, where some of his clothes are folded. He starts getting dressed moving slowly. When he has put on his pajamas, he sits on his bed. The door opens and Persephone gets in. She sits next to him, grabs his hand and Aris looks at her.

ARIS

Giorgos talked with my supervisor. Today they fired me in order not to give me a higher compensation. Giorgos took over my position.

PERSEPHONE

Don't worry. We will make it...

ARIS

Mind your own business! This is my business. Go and prepare the meal! And tell Georgia that I want to talk to her! She is grown now! She cannot act as she wishes.

Persephone stands and gets out of the room, leaving the door half-closed.

CUT TO BLACK

Persephone opens the front door and comes out of the house. She looks in and tells her daughter.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

PERSEPHONE

Keep an eye on your father...

She gets off the stairs and leaves the house.

CUT TO:

14 INT. ARIS' ROOM. MORNING

14

Georgia gets in the room. She sits right across her father and looks at him. She switches the radio on and listens to a station playing rock music. Aris' pulses rise. She immediately changes to a radio station that plays intense electronic music. Aris' pulses rise higher. Georgia observes the ventilator. She turns off the radio and gets up.

GEORGIA

Well, I can admit that now we have
the best relationship
we've ever had.

Georgia moves away from the bed and turns off the lights.

CUT TO:

15 INT. COFFEESHOP. DAY

15

Persephone sits in a traditional coffee shop. The door opens and Giorgos, a well-dressed 55-60 year old man comes in. He walks towards Persephone. When he reaches the table, he takes his cell phone and his car keys out of his pocket and sits down.

GIORGOS

I haven't been here for a long time...

Giorgos stops talking for a while and looks Persephone directly in the eyes.

PERSEPHONE

I'm sure, you don't remember it like this.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

Giorgos nods positively and talks to the owner.

GIORGOS

A double Greek coffee without sugar.

Giorgos looks at the place and observes every corner.

GIORGOS (cont'd)

How are you doing? I was
worried when you called. Is
there a problem?

PERSEPHONE

Giorgos, tommorow they will
shut down the electricity power.
And we don't have a functioning generator...

Persephone cannot finish her last word. Giorgos, without thinking, opens his wallet and takes an envelope out. He leaves it on the table. As the owner brings the coffee, Persephone takes the envelope and puts it in her bag. She wipes the tears out of her eyes and looks at Giorgos in the eyes.

GIORGOS

I thought that you would need some money.

PERSEPHONE

It's too much...

Giorgos takes a sip of his coffee.

GIORGOS

If you need anything, call me. I don't have any family, Persephone. You... The three of you are my family.

PERSEPHONE

Giorgos, Aris told me what happened between you and him. I don't forget that.

George opens his cigarette case and pulls out a cigarette. He lights it and starts smoking.

(CONTINUED)

GIORGOS

I don't know what Aris told you.
Aris didn't admit that he was ill.
I had talked to him many times.
He wasn't listening to me. What
happened had to be done. I had
told him that I'm here for
whatever you need. I had been
calling him every day. It was him
that never answered. But, one day
he called me.

ΠΕΡΣΕΦΟΝΗ

When;

GIORGOS

Don't bother! Don't dig up the
past.

PERSEPHONE

Tell me! Please!

Giorgos puffs on his cigarette and takes his time before
he starts speaking.

GIORGOS

He called me a day before
he underwent tracheostomy.
He couldn't breathe.
He was hardly taking a breath.
He was confusing his speech. His words.

At that moment Giorgos leaves his cigarette in the
ashtray and stands up. He goes to the coffeeshop's bar
where the owner waits with the phone handset in his
hand. Giorgos puts his ear on it.

GIORGOS (cont'd)

Aris. Is that you? I can't hear you
well. Yes! Whatever you want. That
wasn't what happened. Alright! Yes.
Tell me what you want me to do.

George stands still for a while and then he puts the
handset down. He goes back to his seat, sits down and
lights up a cigarette. Persephone starts
crying but stays calm.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

GIORGOS (cont'd)

It's been haunting me ever since
and I can't sleep at night.
I didn't come. And I left him live this way
until he reached this situation.

Persephone stays still for a while, wipes away her
tears and stands up. He kisses Giorgos' cheek and
comes out of the coffee shop.

CUT TO:

16 INT. ARIS' ROOM. AFTERNOON

16

Persephone get in Aris' room. She goes towards him and
sits across him. She switches the radio off, which was on
a radio station playing electronic music. He looks into
his eyes and caresses his face. Suddenly, a loud sound
is heard from the heart rate monitor. Persephone observes
Aris' pulse going up and him choking. She is terrified
and runs into the closet to take the suction pipe. She
starts throwing everything out of the closet in order to
find it. Then, she goes to Aris and cleans his tube by
putting the suction pipe deep down. Aris seems to get
better and his pulses return to normal. Persephone is
relieved and begins to gather the things from the floor.
While she is gathering them, she catches a teddy bear
that was in the closet. At that moment, Aris makes the
same sound and his pulses go up again. Persephone looks
at him holding the teddy bear. Aris stops and his pulses
fall again. Persephone stares the teddy bear. She takes
it with her and comes out of the room leaving the door
half-closed.

CUT TO:

17 INT. KITCHEN. AFTERNOON

17

Persephone sits alone and smokes. The teddy bear that
she found in the closet is on the table. Georgia comes
into the kitchen and sees the teddy bear on the table.
She grabs it abruptly and looks at her mother with
anger.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGIA

Where did you find this?

Persephone looks her daughter in the eyes and answers calmly.

PERSEPHONE

Where have you been? Your father...

GIORGIA

My father what? Fat chance that he spoke to you! You are completely out of your mind!

Georgia grabs the teddy bear, goes towards the garbage bin and throws it in. Right after, she goes to her room. Persephone stubs her cigarette out. She goes to the garbage bin, takes the teddy bear and puts it in a drawer of the kitchen counter. Right after, she grabs her chair. She puts it in the center of the frame, takes another cigarette and looks at the camera.

PERSEPHONE

The moment we heard that Aris is ill, I didn't understand in the beginning how serious it is. But things got worse day after day. Day after day, I noticed that not only his body was changing, but also himself. The day he fell to bed and stopped talking, I felt that my whole life had changed. I knew that he understands me. I felt it. He was there, hidden within that body. Right after, things got worse for us, too. How can you maintain all this equipment without money? And without any help. And, there isn't only the equipment. Food supplements, medical tubes, doctors... You see, the state doesn't care for us. They say that only three out of 100,000 people are diagnosed with this illness. Practically, we make ends meet with the half pension of Aris. The allowance is ridiculous.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

PERSEPHONE (cont'd)

It is hardly ever paid. And I don't have any job skills. You see, both my father and Aris didn't want me to work. They considered it disgraceful. Even I forgot the sound of my voice. I have never told anything. I've never disagreed when others were taking decisions for me. I just left from my father's house in Crete and went to my husband's house in Athens. Just like a piece of furniture moved from one place to another. I don't say that I didn't have a nice life. On the contrary. On the contrary. The only thing that helps me survive every day is my daughter. And the moments I feel that Aris is there. That he exists. I remember that when I left Crete, I didn't want to go to Athens because I didn't consider it my home. After all, I think that I have never felt like home. How many years does it really take to finally reach home?

Persephone stubs her cigarette out, gets up and puts the chair back. She gets her hair done and goes to the bathroom. When the bathroom door closes and the water starts running, Georgia opens the door of her room and goes to the kitchen. She opens the fridge and takes a cold dish with lamb and potatoes out of the oven. She starts eating. At that moment, Aris opens the door of her parents' room. He wears the suit that he usually wears at work. Aris goes towards Georgia limping and he cannot control his movements very well. Georgia looks at him and then continues to eat. Aris goes to the kitchen counter and takes a big diary. He opens the drawer and hangs a calendar of the year 2009. Right after, Aris goes close to Georgia, who looks at him. He pulls a chair and sits next to her.

ARIS

Georgia! I know what happened at school. My child cannot fight like a scum.

Georgia looks at her dish while Aris is speaking. When he stops, she looks at him.

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

Aris gets up and goes next to the sink. He opens the drawer and takes the teddy bear. He takes it with him and puts it on the table. Georgia looks at it.

ARIS (cont'd)

Look! I know that you are introvert
and you don't open up. Like me. And I got you this.
If you ever want to talk to me, talk to this. And
wherever I might be, I will hear you.

Georgia is surprised. Aris gets up and makes a move to kiss Georgia on the forehead but, in the end, he does not kiss her. He turns and goes to his room. Georgia takes the teddy bear in her hands. After a while, she gets up and goes to the kitchen counter with the teddy bear in her hands. She puts the calendar of the year 2018 back to its place and goes towards her parents' room.

CUT TO:

18 INT.ARIS' ROOM. AFTERNOON

18

Georgia gets in the room. She approaches him and sits in front of him. She is hugging the teddy bear. She weeps and leans over her father. She gives him a prolonged kiss on the forehead. And whispers:

GIORGIA
I'm sorry!

She gets up wiping her tears and puts the pills she had taken back in their place. Right after, she puts the teddy bear under the covers next to her father's face.

CUT TO:

19 INT. ARIS' ROOM. EVENING

19

Persephone opens the door. She goes to Aris, sees the teddy bear next to him and smiles. She takes the teddy bear and leaves it on the bedside table. She lies on the bed and begins to caress Aris' head.

She slowly goes down and begins to caress his neck and body while, at the same time, she begins to caress her body with her other hand. As the breath of Persephone becomes more intense, we move to Georgia's room, where she dances clumsily on her bed. We return to the bed of Aris and Persephone, where Persephone reaches a climax. She turns to her husband's side, gives him a kiss on the throat and embraces him to sleep together.

CUT TO BLACK

Persephone gathers the sheets from the clothes rope.
Georgia comes out of the house.

GIORGIA

I'm leaving. Do you want anything?

PERSEPHONE

Take this and and pay the electricity bill.
But now, alright?

GIORGIA

Did you wait for the deadline to expire?

Her mother looks at her with tenderness without talking. Georgia leaves.

PERSEPHONE

Georgia!

Georgia stops her and smiles.

GIORGIA

I said hello to dad.

Persephone smiles and continues to gather the sheets.

CUT TO:

21 INT. ARIS' ROOM. MORNING

21

Persephone gets in Aris' room. She goes towards Aris and caresses his cheek. She takes the teddy bear from the bedside table and puts it next to him. She covers him up and gets out of the room closing the door behind her.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. YARD. MORNING

22

Persephone comes out of the house and approaches the electricity box. She stares at it for a while. Suddenly, she opens the box and turns off the switch. Then, she collapses on the stair.

"THE END"

Appendix 15- Storyboards from *Flickering Souls Set Alight* (2019)

Storyboards are created by Eva Gogou

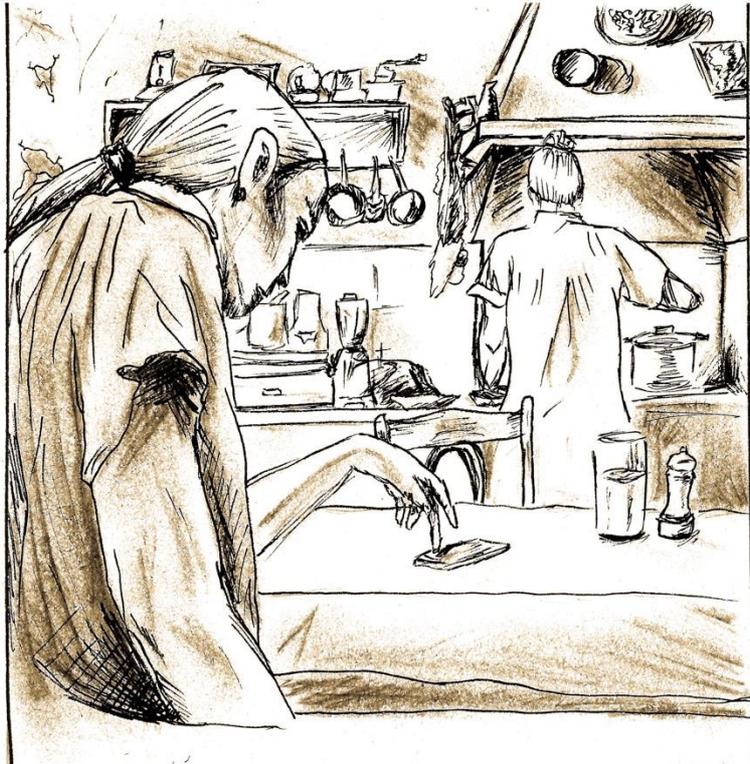
Flickering souls set alight

Storyboard

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.1 | 01

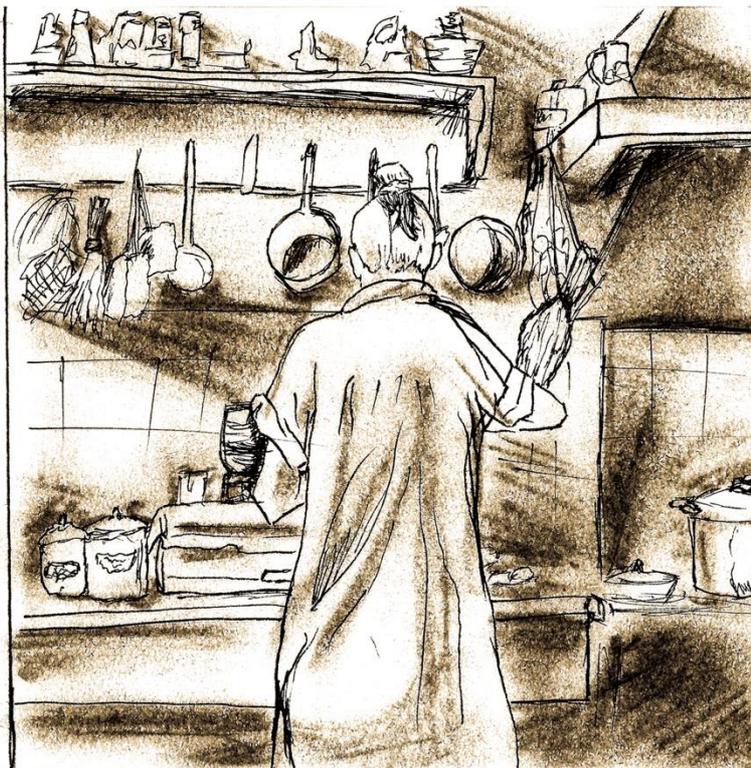


Aris' distant muffled sound

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.2 | 01a



90° Track
to the right

Persephone prepares Aris' food

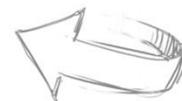
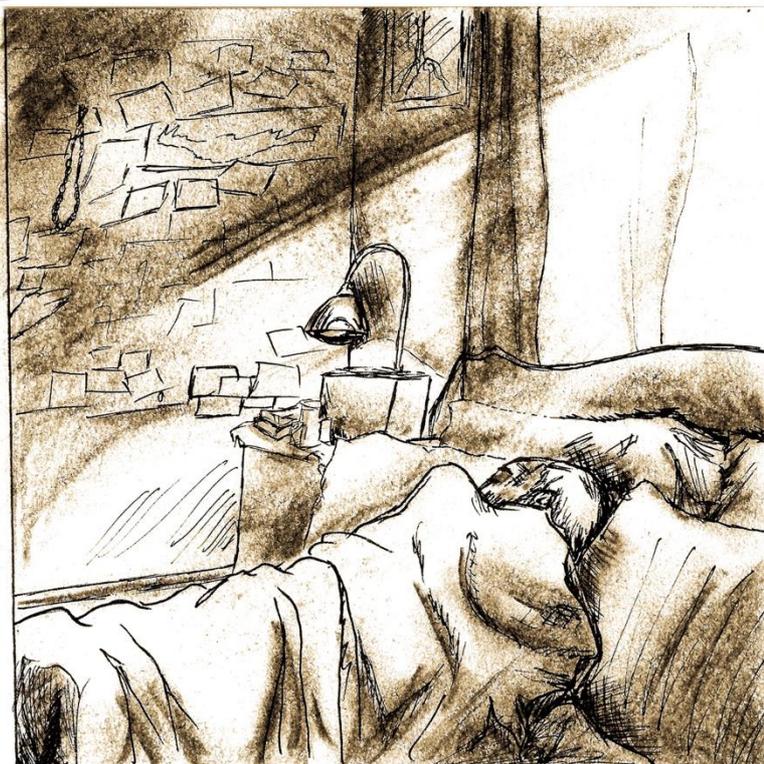
Sc.2 | 01b



Scene|Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.3|01a



180°

3a

Persephone enters the room with food and syringe

Sc.3|01b



3b

Feeds Aris through nose tube.

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc. 4 | 01

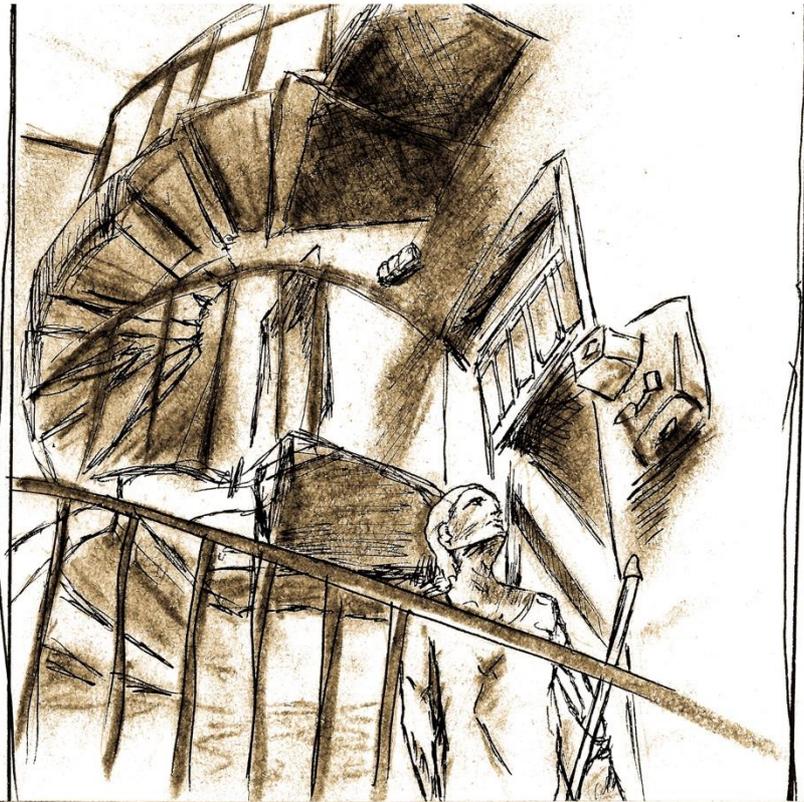


Aris moans
Persephone turns and hugs him

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.5 | 01



P. picks notice from electricity meter box.

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc. 6 | 01



Persephone struggling with emotions

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

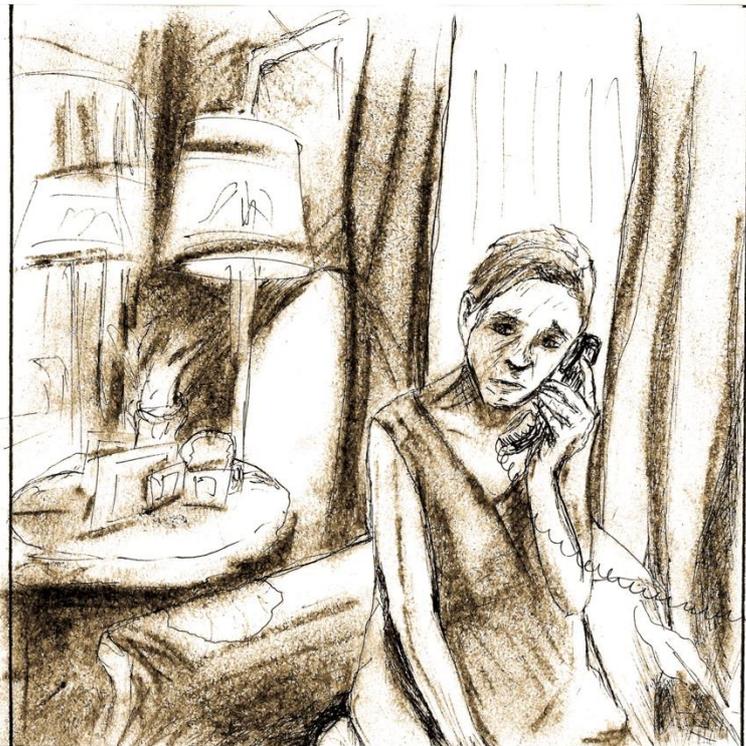
Sc. 7 | 01a



Track In

Persephone calls electricity company.

Sc. 7 | 01b



No response.

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc. 8 | 01



8

Persephone cleaning Aris up

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.9|01



Georgia Persephone's daughter leaves the house

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.10|01a



Pan right

10a

P. calling electricity company. No response still.

Sc.10|01b



10b

Hangs up. Calls George's phone number.

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.11|01



Georgia walks in the house.
Heads towards Aris' bedroom.

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.12|01a



(Georgia takes pills from Aris)

Track In

Sc.12|01b



(P. tells A. about
their economical
problems)

Track Out

Sc.12|01c



(A. stands up, answers to P.)

Track

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.13|01



JB

Persephone leaves the house.

Sc.14|01a



Track Back

G. plays with the radio seeking a reaction from her dad

Sc.14|01b



Faster heart rate beep.

248

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.15|01a



(Persephone asking for George's financial help)

Track 180° left

George stands up,
picks up the ringing
phone.

15a

Sc.15|01b



(Has a conversation
with Aris from the
past.)

Track 180° left

15b

Sc.15|01c



(P.holds his hand and leaves)

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.16|01



16

Machines beeping urgently

Persephone pumping air into Aris' lungs

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.17|01a



(Persephone smoking,
waiting)

Pan left

Sc.17|01b



(Georgia enters the
house)

Pan right

(Having a disagreement
she leaves the room)

Sc.17|01c



(P. sits in
front of
camera,
monologue)

Track Out

(shot
continues)

Scene | Shot

continues
Sc.17|01d



Camera
Movement

from the past

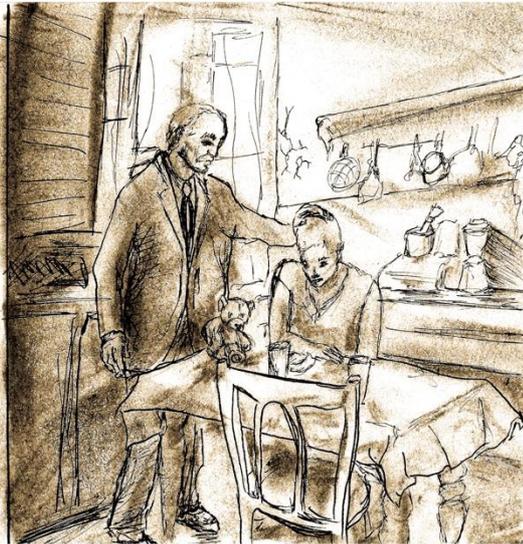
(Persephone gets up and enters
the bathroom to the right)

Track Out

(Georgia leaves her room,
heads for the kitchen)

Track In

Sc.17|01e



(Aris exits his bed-
room also)

Track stops

(Aris gives Georgia
the teddy bear
to talk to)

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.18 | 01



18

G. returns the teddy bear, apologising.

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.20|01



P. gives G. the money for the electricity bill
to pay it.

Scene | Shot

Camera
Movement

Sc.21|01a



Track left

Persephone heads towards Aris.

Sc.21|01b



Whispers in his ear

21b.

Sc.22 | 01a



Track Out

Persephone shuts down the power.

Sc.22 | 01b



END