

# Politics and Aesthetics of Suspension: Gazes on Migrant Borders

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## Titre / Título / Titolo

Politique et esthétique de la suspension: Regards sur les frontières migratoires  
Política y estética de la suspensión: miradas sobre las fronteras migratorias  
Politica ed estetica della sospensione: sguardi sulle frontiere migranti

## Abstract / Résumé / Resumen / Riassunto

New migratory movements are one of the processes of globalization aiming to transform the organization of socio-economic relations. When immigration from the global South to the North is forced on the more vulnerable social classes, both authorities and media talk about a “refugee crisis”. The global flow of refugees constitutes one of the greatest challenges of today inasmuch as it revives identity questions. This very ‘crisis’ translates a clash with the applicability of the postmodern discourse of the other. This paper addresses questions of (im)migration, in order to examine their ethical implications. Secondly, it explores the intersection of ethics and aesthetics on a global basis by examining a cinematic work that reveals unexpected encounters, hardships and hidden possibilities of the immigration experience. Theo Angelopoulos’ *Eternity and a day* (1998) discloses the beauty that emerges in hardships and it rearticulates ethical questions that appear life-threatening. Borders cannot be crossed when they are the only territory of migrants. If the “elsewhere” is a construction of the refugee fantasy, it is a myth: a story projected into the future unfolds the set of expectations of people who lost everything but the scars on their bodies

Les nouveaux mouvements migratoires font partie des processus de mondialisation qui visent à transformer les relations socio-économiques. Quand l’émigration du Sud au Nord global est imposée aux classes sociales les plus vulnérables, les autorités comme les médias parlent de “crise des réfugiés”. Le flux mondial des réfugiés constitue l’un des plus grands défis actuels dans la mesure où il ravive les questions identitaires. Cette “crise” elle-même traduit un conflit d’applicabilité avec le discours postmoderne de “l’autre”. Cet article traite de questions de migration/immigration dans le but d’examiner leurs implications éthiques. En deuxième lieu, il explore l’intersection de l’éthique et de l’esthétique sur une base mondiale en examinant une œuvre cinématographique qui révèle des rencontres inattendues, les privations et les possibilités cachées de l’expérience migratoire. *L’éternité et un jour* (1998) de Theo Angelopoulos expose la beauté qui émerge de ces souffrances et réarticule des questions éthiques qui sont affaire de vie ou de mort. Les frontières ne peuvent plus être franchies quand elles sont le seul territoire des migrants. Si “l’ailleurs” est construit par l’imaginaire du réfugié, c’est un mythe : une histoire projetée dans l’avenir déploie les attentes de gens qui ont tout perdu hormis les cicatrices que portent leur corps.

Los nuevos movimientos migratorios son parte del proceso de globalización dirigido a transformar las relaciones socioeconómicas. Cuando la migración de Sur al Norte Global se impone a las clases sociales más vul-

nerables, tanto las autoridades como los medios de comunicación hablan de “crisis de los refugiados”. El flujo total de refugiados es uno de los mayores retos, ya que revive problemas identitarios. Esta “crisis” en sí refleja un conflicto aplicable al discurso postmoderno del “otro”. Este artículo aborda los problemas de migración / inmigración con el fin de examinar sus implicaciones éticas. En segundo lugar, se explora la intersección de la ética y la estética a nivel mundial mediante el examen de una película que revela los encuentros inesperados, las privaciones y las posibilidades ocultas de la experiencia migratoria. *La eternidad y un día* (1998) de Theo Angelopoulos presenta la belleza que surge de este sufrimiento y rearticula cuestiones éticas que son también cuestiones de vida o muerte. Las fronteras se pueden cruzar cuando son el único territorio de los migrantes. Si el “otro lugar” es construido por el imaginario del refugiado, es un mito: una historia proyectada sobre el porvenir desarrolla expectativas de personas que lo han perdido todo, excepto las cicatrices que llevan sus cuerpos.

I nuovi movimenti migratori sono parte del processo di globalizzazione che mira a trasformare le relazioni socio-economiche. Quando la migrazione dal Sud al Nord globale è imposta alle classi sociali più vulnerabili, tanto le autorità quanto i media parlano di “crisi dei rifugiati”. Il flusso totale dei rifugiati è una delle più grandi sfide dell’attualità, perché riavviva il problema dell’identità. La “crisi” riflette un conflitto che riguarda l’applicabilità del discorso postmoderno dell’“altro”. L’articolo tratta i problemi della (im)migrazione per esaminarne le implicazioni etiche. In secondo luogo, esplora l’intersezione tra etica ed estetica a livello mondiale mediante l’analisi di un film che rivela gli incontri inaspettati, le privazioni e le possibilità nascoste dell’esperienza migratoria. *L’eternità e un giorno* (1998) di Theo Angelopoulos mostra la bellezza che emerge da questa sofferenza e riarticola questioni etiche che sono anche questioni di vita o di morte. I confini non possono essere attraversati quando sono l’unico territorio dei migranti. Se l’“altrove” è una costruzione dell’immaginario dei rifugiati, è un mito: una storia che si proietta verso il futuro narra le aspettative di persone che hanno perso tutto, tranne le cicatrici che marciano i loro corpi.

## Keywords / mots-clés / palabras clave / parole chiave

Migration/Inmigration, North-South, humanitarian crisis, refugees, *Eternity and a day*, Theo Angelopoulos

Migration/Inmigration, Nord-Sud, crise humanitaire, réfugiés, *L’etyernité et un jour*, Theo Angelopoulos

Migración/Inmigración, Norte-Sur, crisis humanitaria, refugiados, *La eternidad y un día*, Theo Angelopoulos

Migrazione/Immigrazione, Nord-Sud, crisi umanitaria, rifugiati, *L’eternità e un giorno*, Theo Angelopoulos

In December 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, praised around the world for her refugee politics, claimed that «Multiculturalism leads to parallel societies and therefore remains a 'lie'».<sup>1</sup> It is more than obvious that the German opening of borders was primarily geared toward an influx of qualified workers who should, like everyone in Germany, be required to speak German “in public and in private with their families,” according to Merkel’s party, the Christian Democratic Union. Similarly, the French Prime Minister, Emmanuel Valls, addressed the need to “build a French, European, Occidentalised Islam, with our traditions and values.”<sup>2</sup> These statements emphasize a political and moral ambiguity, central to current political discourses: multiculturalism failed, so it would only be possible for different populations to live together within European borders as long as they adhere to the superior European values. A more thorough analysis of these statements would reveal not only the Western cultural arrogance, but also and more significantly the lack of distinction, as we will see, between the private and the public lives of the accepted refugees. The consequences of such a lack of separation between private and public spheres touch directly upon the question of basic human rights.

If multiculturalism failed, its failure is independent from the refugee question. Intolerance is the interior resistance necessary to every culture’s self-assertion. European culture —if there is such a thing and only one—, is not without interior antagonisms or exclusions: the ongoing gender, religious or class struggles testify to the impossibility of a stable cultural identity and the necessity of a continuous cultural redefinition. From this point of view, the *other* culture functions as a reminder of interior struggles or as a possibility of one culture’s unification against another. This other that is not wholly other, inasmuch as it reminds us of our

common humanity, is threatening as far as it represents, as we will see, a negative mirror image of ourselves.

No matter how provocative it may seem, the chancellor’s claim reflects a certain reality and invites us to question the powers and limits of our own cosmopolitan consciousness. To what extent can our abstract multiculturalism, once put to test, belie the chancellor’s claim? The worldwide turn towards far-right parties demonstrates that a so-called national identity, no matter how artificial or outdated it may be, is preferred to the disquieting vicinity of the other. Whatever identity can be defined is defined *against an other*.<sup>3</sup> Modern massive migrations, as the consequence of colonial expansions are about to draw a new map of the world. Following Žižek, I argue that beyond any Western taboo, we have no choice but to accept the universal validity of certain European values – when critically rethought – such as egalitarianism and fundamental human rights.

The new waves of massive transnational migration reawaken for Merkel, as much as for any other European leader, the dilemma between “sovereign self-determination claims” and “adherence to universal human rights principles.”<sup>4</sup> From this point of view, Merkel’s statement, which accompanied her decision to control the borders and to monitor the quality and number of accepted refugees, translates her aim to reassert German sovereignty before her upset electorate to the detriment of universal human rights. It is useful here to follow Hannah Arendt and recall the very name of the Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen, in order to understand that human and civil rights, though interrelated, are separate. Human rights derive from universal treaties or declarations and rely on humanitarian interventions, while civil rights depend on the legal programs of specific sovereign states. Civil rights are given by specific democracies, which as such,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/14/angela-merkel-multiculturalism-is-a-sham/> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nouvelordremondial.cc/2016/08/23/manuel-valls-nous-devons-batir-un-islam-francais-europeen-occidentalise-avec-nos-traditions-et-nos-valeurs/> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> See, among others: Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1996, particularly Ch. 9, “The Production of Locality,” 178-199; Maurice Godelier, *Communauté, société, culture : Trois clefs pour comprendre les identités en conflits*. Paris : Éditions du CNRS, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others. Aliens, Residents and Citizens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 16.

require territorial and civic borders.<sup>5</sup> It is by now evident that globalization is severely eroding nation-state sovereignty in the economic, technological and military fields; borders, however, continue to separate the included from the excluded, as if territoriality was the ultimate guarantee of sovereign constitutions.

Whether the complete erosion of sovereignties and thus of borders could lead to efficient, peaceful and democratic co-habitation of different cultures is highly debatable. Hannah Arendt explains the primacy of civil rights over human rights in concrete historical circumstances, or to put it otherwise, she demonstrates how the loss of the status of citizen amounts in fact to no rights at all. The *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* signified, of course, the turn from a divine to a human foundation of rights. Analyzing the 1789 declaration, Giorgio Agamben recalls that the term *nation* derives etymologically from *nascere* (birth). Therefore, the Declaration represents “the originary figure of the inscription of natural life in the juridico-political order of the nation-state.” In this way, *zoe*, “the bare natural life”, the very fact of birth, and not *bios*, the political life, “becomes the foundation of the state’s legitimacy and sovereignty.”<sup>6</sup> From this point of view, “Rights are attributed to man (or originate in him) solely to the extent that man is the immediately vanishing ground (who must never come to light as such) of the citizen.”<sup>7</sup> According to Agamben, refugees represent the uncanny – to put it in Freudian terms – as far as they bring to light “the difference between birth and nation,” and by doing so, they cause “the secret presupposition of the political domain – bare life – to appear for an instant within that domain.”<sup>8</sup> In her historical overview of the first modern appearance of refugees, Arendt explains how stateless people find themselves reduced to bare life within the political domain.

<sup>5</sup> Benhabib, *ibid.*, 45.

<sup>6</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and BareLife*. Redwood, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998, 127.

<sup>7</sup> Agamben, *ibid.*, 128.

<sup>8</sup> Agamben, *ibid.*, 131.

With the dissolution of the Russian, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, new nation-states without linguistic or cultural homogeneity were created, in control of several national minorities that found themselves within their more or less arbitrarily established borders. Several treaties signed to protect the rights of the most recognizable minorities were not accepted or applied by the League of Nations, which led to great discrepancies with regard to the understanding of these rights in different European countries. As a result, the nation-state abandoned its character of state, and thus of instrument of law, to serve national interests only. The subsequent massive denationalizations against minorities caused the emergence of refugees, stateless and displaced people. Kept outside any organized community, these people lost not only their citizenship rights, but also the so-called “inalienable” human rights. Ironically, human rights are inalienable as far as they are independent from citizenship and nationality. In practice, no authority other than the abstract ‘entity’ of humanity itself<sup>9</sup> could guarantee or grant them. The atrocities of WWII led to the elaboration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and other treaties meant to constitute an international law that, as such, could delegitimize the ultimate authority of Westphalian sovereignties. However, the rights of Man never became law; they remain in the realm of morality. Therefore, in Arendtian terms, refugees lost the “right to have rights” and were left with “the abstract nakedness of being human and nothing but human.”<sup>10</sup>

When European sovereign states realized that neither repatriation nor naturalization could solve the problem of statelessness, they left the refugees – outlaws par excellence – either to the good will of humanitarian missions or to the hands of the police.<sup>11</sup> The same applies today as the media and the social media

<sup>9</sup> Hannah Arendt, “The decline of the Nation-State and the end of the rights of Man”, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1973, 297.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

continuously show: the images of drowned children on the Greek islands may address a humanitarian call, but they do not necessarily encourage the idea of an organized living together. Contrary to any political solution, these images testify to thousands of people whose life has been reduced to mere survival.

It remains true that neither repatriation nor unlimited naturalization can solve the problem of massive migrations. But the problem of current Western societies is less the refugees themselves than the fidelity of these societies to outdated definitions of essential concepts. As Agamben puts it, the refugee is “a limit concept that at once brings a radical crisis to the principle of nation-state and clears the way for a renewal of categories that can no longer be delayed.”<sup>12</sup>

The refugee condition is temporary by definition. The refugee time-space is one of transition, discontinuity and suspension. In the precariousness of the contemporary socio-economic situation, the refugee represents for the European middle-class citizen, as I have said, the uncanny: the alien within, the fear of finding oneself at the place of the excluded. But what if this fear could be transformed into an acceptance of a new form of life? What if we were to embrace the precariousness of actuality, what if we were to decide not to know our future – despite our dearest wishes – and leave aside preconceived fantasies that, in fact, transform our future into past? What if, instead of organizing our lives on the basis of old categories, we acknowledged the volatility of our spatio-temporal condition that the economic growth of the after-war period made us forget?

If such a possibility is plausible, only art could reveal this experience of suspension, the ethics and esthetics of the liminal experience of borders beyond the banality of evil. For reasons that will soon become clear, I have chosen to concentrate my analysis on a single cinematic work of 1991, *The Suspended Step of the Stork*<sup>13</sup>, di-

rected by Theo Angelopoulos. Along with *Ulysses's Gaze* (1995) and *Eternity and a Day* (1998), *The Suspended Step of the Stork* is a part of what the Greek director calls his ‘Trilogy of Borders’.

In his ‘Trilogy,’ Angelopoulos moves from the anonymous collectivities of his previous works, towards marked individualities, further stressed by the presence of international stars. In *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, Marcello Mastroianni finds himself reunited with his co-star in Antonioni’s *La notte* (1961) Jeanne Moreau, as if to allude to the couple’s bygone days. Remarkably, the voice of the actor or his language are not heard. A “fissure between actor and character,” a mismatch between body and voice seeks to represent not “the estrangement of modern distancing”<sup>14</sup>, but an identity fissure that is not an impasse but rather an openness towards a plurality of identities.

Helicopters that approach dead bodies floating on the open sea of Piraeus introduce the spectator to the universe of those who preferred death to repatriation, as the voice-over of Alexandros, a young TV reporter informs us. From the cut onwards, the camera follows Alexandros, the only named character in the movie, to the little town on the border between Greece and Albania, where he arrives on a mission for a documentary on immigrants, temporarily settled there until they receive permission to pass to another European country. Thousands of illegal refugees – Kurds, Turks, Albanians, Poles, Romanians, and Iranians – live in camps, as if to recall the first European camps created to host and surveil refugees, long before WWII. They seem to have also squatted the different cars of an abandoned goods train – another reference to WWII deportation and concentration camps. The camp, according to Agamben, is the space opened when the exception becomes the rule or the normal situation. In the camps, there is no distinction between law and life, so that bare life becomes the “threshold in which law

<sup>12</sup> Giorgio Agamben, “Beyond Human Rights”, in *Means without End. Notes on Politics*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 22.

<sup>13</sup> *The Suspended Step of the Stork*, France/Italy/Greece/Switzerland, 1991. 143 min. Dir. Theodoros Angelopoulos, with Marcello Mastroianni, Jean-

ne Moreau, Gregory Patrikareas, Ilias Logothetis.

<sup>14</sup> Anne Rutherford, “Precarious Boundaries. Affect, mise-en-scène, and the senses”, in Richard Candida Smith (ed.) *Art and Performance of Memory: Sounds and Gestures of Recollection*. Oxford: Routledge, 2002, 72

constantly passes over into fact and fact into law.”<sup>15</sup> When accused of being a traitor, a young man is found hanged, there is nobody to blame. Women of his ethnic group perform the ritual of public lamentation, but the story behind the murder remains unknown, since silence is what prevails in the camps. Like storks, they seem to be mute, giving no call. Observing the hanged man, the army colonel who surveils the Greek border – an alternative figure whose insightful comments ironically subvert his role – deplores that “they cross their borders to find freedom and create a new border here.” Later he will ask an ex-serviceman of the Albanian army to show Alexandros his scar. The young man of Greek origin explains that his mother made this scar with a knife while he was a kid to preserve the race. The absence of a homeland, or of a direct link between blood and locality does not lead to the disappearance of the idea of origins; instead, it needs to be inscribed on the body, as an ultimate visible effort to cling to a belonging already lost.

Early in the film, the army colonel shows Alexandros the borders. Slowly approaching the borderline upon the breach, he stays still for a moment while we see his back and the armed soldiers of the other side, then he lifts one foot, keeps it up and says: “If I take another step I am elsewhere... or I am dead.” The refugee experience is enclosed in this suspended step that Alexandros repeats at the very end of the movie. The line cuts a village in two. On the other side, it is Albania and on this side, the Greek side, are those who managed to cross borders. They cross the river secretly, risking their lives. Thus, the refugees “are represented as heterogeneous: unable to find their place in a world divided into national communities by political borders, they are neither simply excluded nor simply included.”<sup>16</sup> Refugees are this “heterogeneous excess”, the leftovers of the arbitrary borders that separate and connect, that

function as boundaries and as such, drive them “insane,” as the colonel says. As a category, sanity is a citizen matter, Foucault would say.

Arbitrarily uprooted, these refugees of often dubious identity, are grouped in this no-man’s land, called “the waiting room”. A long tracking shot, supposedly taken by the TV crew camera, a camera within the camera, reveals a series of people of different origins, in traditional clothes, occupying different train cars, as if borders should always be reestablished, to recall the colonel’s words. This twice mediated view creates more boundaries, but this time the boundaries are those of the subjective gaze estranged from the real refugee experience. These boundaries separate citizens from non-citizens, the insiders from those who are neither insiders nor outsiders, those who escape defining categories. Alexandros becomes aware of these boundaries at the end of his own adventure, admitting that he only knew how to film “the others, without any concern about their feelings.” Recorded voices of actual refugees relate in different languages the adventures of escaping death either in their homeland or while crossing the borders. If, in Angelopoulos films, the boundaries between fact and fiction are blurred, it is only because of the fictitiousness of the media reality that we interpret as facts. Refugees are expecting to move elsewhere – an elsewhere that the colonel calls: “mythical.” Inasmuch as the “elsewhere” is a construction of the refugee fantasy, it is a myth: a story projected into the future unfolds the set of expectations of people who lost everything but the scars on their bodies.

Among them, an old refugee catches the attention of the young journalist, who believes he has identified a politician who disappeared ten years ago. He then undertakes an inquiry to prove the truth of his findings. As he views TV archives, we have the first close-up to the figure of the politician (a younger Mastroianni) whose farewell words to the Parliament consist in a single enigmatic phrase, closer to an artistic choice than to a political speech: “there are times when silence is imperative for us to listen to the music behind the rain-

<sup>15</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 171.

<sup>16</sup> Lass Thomassen, « Towards a Cosmopolitics of Heterogeneity: Borders, Communities and Refugees in Angelopoulos’ Balkan Trilogy », in Diane Morgan, Gert Bauham (ed.) *Cosmopolitics and the Emergence of a Future*. London/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 192.

drops.” Weary of the pretentious political speeches that followed the failure of communism – the last collective dream –, he advocates a return to the “music of life”.<sup>17</sup> In order to find this silence, the former politician (if it is the same man), would have chosen to share the destiny of refugees. His legacy is inscribed in his book *Despair at the End of the Century*, from which Alexandros keeps citing the sentence: “And what are the key words we could use in order to make a new collective dream come true.” This is maybe the greatest philosophical question of the postwar period.

After forty days, like Jesus in the Wilderness, the politician returns home, saying he does not remember anything, only to disappear again leaving a last message on his answering machine: “I wish you health and happiness, but I cannot join in your journey. I am just a visitor. Everything I touch hurts me deeply and it does not belong to me. I do not have anything that is mine as I arrogantly said once. Now I learn that nothing is nothing.” Inasmuch as ‘nothing’ in political discourse is different from ‘nothing’ in the refugee experience, this phrase is of course not a tautology. The ideological or existential nothingness that remains in the realm of a socio-political community has nothing to share with the uprootedness of the bare natural life that also refers to the complete loss of identity.

In his desperate effort to identify the politician, Alexandros follows the old refugee in the streets, the railway cars, or the camp. The old man is trying to catch a fish in the river that serves as a physical border, when the young journalist comes with a tape player to make him hear his supposed last message. The initial message is then repeated and complemented by the following sentences: “one does not even have a name and needs to borrow one from time to time. Give me a place to look at. Forget me in the sea.” Neither the name of the old refugee nor that of the politician are mentioned. Even the close-up on his book does not allow us to make out his name. The archives of a political career,

<sup>17</sup> Edna Fainaru, “Silence is as Meaningful as any Dialogue: *The Suspended Step of the Stork*”, in Dan Fainaru (ed.), *Theo Angelopoulos. Interviews*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001, 79.

the posthumous fame of a prophetic book and the image of the ragged old refugee belong to different identities of the same - or not - man.

His ex-wife, the French woman who went on with her life, will later be asked to visit the village to identify her disappeared husband. Alexandros chooses for her room number 7 – the biblical connotations are again evident –, as a reminder of the hotel room her husband rented when he had returned after his first departure, and where they had made love like “strangers”. The description of this love scene between strangers echoes the affair Alexandros has with the supposed daughter of the old refugee. Without actual flirtation, in silence and in slow motion as if the scene was staged, we watch the almost severe faces of the two characters who meet at a bar and leave together for Alexandros’ room. It seems that the girl calls Alexandros by some other name during the encounter, as if a mismatch between body and identity revealed an interior rupture – a lack of coincidence, like that of the local actors who lend their voices to the international stars. This other name is most probably the name of the girl’s future husband, as we learn through the startling marriage ceremony with the bride on one shore of the river and the groom on the other shore. Alexandros gives a body to the young man of across the borders, this young man of the same “race”, as the girl says, someone she met as a child and who is meant to cross the river to come to her. This dream belongs to what the colonel called a “mythical” realm. The suffering of expectation gives way to all the precarious encounters that are meant to transform the citizens.

The TV crew is again on call to give us its point of view on the recognition scene that takes place on the liminal space of a bridge. When facing her supposed ex-husband, the French upper-class woman remains silent before turning to the camera and exclaiming in a trembling, non-convincing voice: “It’s not him”. The close-ups on her face and then on the face of the old refugee reveal the bewilderment of a shared silence acknowledging the change in time and space, beyond any

recognition. The return of the French woman to the borders at the end of the film, while the old refugee has already left, enhances the idea of the multiple identity in the old refugee's body.

His supposed son, a young boy says to Alexandros that he saw him walking away with his luggage on the river waters, again like Jesus. But the boy only thinks about the story of "Great Migration," the story without end that the old refugee narrated to him. "Maybe he wanted you to give an end," Alexandros says to the boy, as if there was an end to any journey – especially if the journey is the complete recreation of the world:

People will leave their homes by any means possible, and all the people of the earth will gather in Sahara. There, a child will be flying a kite. And all people, young and old, will hold onto the string. And all of mankind will rise high into the sky, in search of another planet. Each one will be holding a plant, a handful of grain, a newborn animal. Others will be carrying books of all the poetry man has ever written. It will be a very long journey.

No less "prophetic" than the politician's book, this story that predicts a great migration to another planet, possibly after some ecological catastrophe, seems to outline a natural thread shaping the collective dream that we are unable to conceive. Despite its apocalyptic nature, the story talks about a common reality, in which everyone becomes an immigrant. The borders are located at the end of the earth and sovereignty will be replaced by poetry. The universality of the refugee condition questions the very notion of home: "How many borders should we cross to get home?", he asks. In a world where there are more borders than homes, maybe we should start reconsidering borders. The old refugee's legacy, a story without end, terminates on the graphic and choreographic image of a cohort of yellow-dressed workers climbing on the telephone poles to connect wires. He himself worked to re-set this wiring, to establish communication. And in one of the most striking moments of the film, while bursting into tears, he declares himself happy.