

Theo Angelopoulos' 1995 film *Ulysses' Gaze* (*To Vlemma tou Odyssea*), constructing the journey of a film director, A., around the Balkans after the collapse of the Iron Curtain as a modern Odyssey, has attracted considerable interest among Classicists for its high culture reception of the ancient world. One particular episode is particularly striking for its visual imagery: the protagonist travels from Constantia (Rumania) along the Danube to Belgrade in a barge that is transporting a colossal statue of Lenin. As the barge progresses, the local inhabitants rush to the riverbank to pray before this strange divinity. The Homeric references have been noted previously (Odysseus leaving Calypso ['Kali' in *Ulysses' Gaze*] on a raft), but the genealogy of the epiphany shows a much more complex relationship between the ancient Greek past and the present mediated through Greek literature of the first half of the twentieth century.

Epiphanies are a striking feature of Angelopoulos' work (for instance, the gigantic hand over Thessaloniki harbour in *Landscape in the Mist* [1988] which alludes to the statue of Jesus being transported across Rome in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* [1960]). The mysterious appearance of a head of Apollo on Delphi that inspires A's quest to discover the origin of Balkan cinema in two lost rolls of film is derived from the poetry of Seferis (*Mythistorema* 3) – the same poet provides the epigraph for the film (derived from Plato's *Alcibiades*) and the words of welcome to the traveller in Serbia (*Stratis Thalassinos amongst the Agapanthi*, with additions by the poet-director Angelopoulos). Seferis was interested in the ancient past and his *Engomi* combines the depiction of Bronze Age excavations on Cyprus with an epiphany derived from the apocryphal *Book of James*. Perhaps even more important for its mixture of Christianity and paganism is Sikelianos' Delphism, most notably represented in his 1930s poem, *The Sacred Way*.

The linkage of the classical past and Greek orthodox beliefs has, however, generally been the preserve of the right in modern Greek politics. The left has even sometimes denied the value of any connection with ancient Greek culture. In this paper, I will show how in the barge scene from *Ulysses' Gaze*, Angelopoulos has substituted another belief system (Marxist-Leninism) for Christianity as one of the elements of the fusion of beliefs in modern Greek epiphany scenes. This both gives the scene spiritual weight and draws attention to the mixture of belief systems that has created the modern Balkans.

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