In Alfonso Cuaron's *Children of Men*, the cinematography effectively uses the techniques of hand camera work in combination with long take sequences to give the viewer the illusion of being a spectator within the film, however, never interacting, simply observing.

As the film opens up, Theo pays no attention to the news of Baby Diego's death. As he leaves the café, the cameraman follows him out into the street, giving us the feeling that we are immediately placed within the world that Theo lives in. We feel as if though we are actually a person within the café who has also decided to leave. As Theo pours liquor into his coffee, the camera meanders past him, gazing across the street, and then back towards Theo. The bouncing of the handheld camera giving the illusion of footsteps as the scene plays out. When the bomb goes off in the café, the camera moves erratically, as everyone reacts to the explosion, giving us the feeling as if we have also reacted. As the smoke clears, the handheld camera stumbles forward, as if we the viewer, are urgently trying to see if anyone has survived the explosion.

The first time we see Theo with Jasper, in Jasper's living room, the camera begins in the kitchen and then slowly makes its way towards the living room. The cameraman takes small, quiet steps, as if he doesn't want to disturb the two as they carry on their conversation, but simply wanting to over hear what they are saying.

As the rebels return Theo to the city, the scene begins with the camera being tilted upwards, looking out the sunroof as the rain trickles down onto the van. The camera then tilts downward, until it is level horizontally. We then have the view between two of the rebel's shoulders, looking at Theo with a black bag over his head. The entire sequence gives us the feeling of riding in the van with the characters, and attempting to look around and take in everything around us.

The first of two major long takes within the film takes place in the car when Theo, Julian, Kee, Miriam, and Luke are attacked by a mob. The camera work in this scene is phenomenal, and may be the best camera work I've ever seen in a film. The amount of control is incredible, especially taking into consideration that the entire scene is done in one take. The camera acts as our perspective from inside the car, as if we are along for the ride. Each time a person begins speaking, the camera turns towards them, as if we are intently listening to, and interested in what they are saying. As Theo and Julian begin playing their game with the ping-pong ball, the camera focuses on them, just as the rest of the passengers in the vehicle are. When the mob begins attacking, and the flaming car rolls down the hillside, the camera rotates around the vehicle 360 degrees frantically realizing that they are suddenly surrounded. This movement perfectly mimics the movements of someone who has suddenly become startled and frightened. The camera then turns to Luke, who is driving, urging him to get away from the mob. Suddenly a motorcycle pulls up beside the vehicle and draws the camera's attention. One of the motorcyclists pulls out a pistol and points it towards the front of the vehicle. It appears as though the gun is almost pointed directly at us. At this point, the tension has built to an incredible level, and the first time I saw this film I jumped when the pistol was fired, as if I was inside the vehicle and feared that the bullet may find its way to me. When Julian's head falls back, she immediately becomes the focus of everyone in the vehicle, and the camera turns towards her. As she dies, the camera then pans across the faces of everyone else in the vehicle, looking for their reactions, looking for some comfort in this horrible turn of events. As Luke steers the car free from the mob, two police vehicles rocket past them, going in the other direction. As this happens, the camera follows them through the window and then watches them fade away into the horizon through the back window. The camera then turns to the other characters in turn as they speak. When one of the police vehicles returns and begins catching up to them, the camera once again returns to looking out of the back window as they approach, just as a passenger would. When they are pulled over by the police, Luke jumps out and shoots them. Instead of cutting to a clearer shot of the action, the camera stays inside the car, some of the view obscured by the portion of the car between the camera and the people in the street. Then as Theo exits to confront Luke, the camera moves to the outside of the car, yet stays close to the car itself, not getting in between Theo and Luke, almost afraid to interfere with events that are taking place.

As Julian is given her burial ceremony, the camera pans down her body in a close shot, as if we are knelt beside her body, and taking part in the ceremony. As Theo walks away and then collapses against a tree, the long take gives the impression that we are there with him, kneeling beside him in a vain attempt to comfort him.

Once at the farm that is serving as a safe house, Miriam takes Theo to talk to Kee. As Miriam leads Theo towards the barn, the handheld camera follows behind them, stopping however, to glance inside the window where the meeting is taking place to determine a new leader, and we learn that Luke is the new leader. At this point the "character" of the viewer takes on a more important role as we learn something that the main characters do not yet know.

As another meeting takes place to determine what to do about Kee and her baby, the camera simply stands around, taking on the view of a bystander, but never involving itself with the proceedings.

When Theo learns the true intentions of the rebel group, he decides that he must leave and take Kee with him. As Theo goes downstairs, the camera follows him as he creeps alongside the outside of the building making his way to Kee and Miriam. After waking them and going back outside, Theo creeps, kneeling, alongside the parked vehicles, taking their keys, and disabling them in other ways. As he does this, the camera is also crouched down, following him alongside the cars, trying not to be seen it self. When they finally manage to get the car running and speed away from Luke and the rest whom are chasing them, the camera once again takes the position of looking out the back window of the car.

The three of them arrive at Jasper's home, where they explain the situation to Jasper. Part of this scene depicts Jasper cooking for them and serving them food. During this scene the cameraman is seated at the table, watching the characters eat and Jasper serving them. However, once again, the viewer doesn't interfere with the actions. There is no bowl set out for us, and Jasper does not serve us any food, we simply observe the actions taking place.

Shortly after eating, Miriam is outside practicing a religious ceremony. Theo walks to the window to look at her, and the handheld camera follows him. Kee speaks to him and when he turns to look at her, it appears as though he is glancing over our shoulder to see her. As Jasper comes rushing back into the house, the camera backs away so that it does not interfere with his need to deliver the news to Theo, Miriam, and Kee, it simply steps back far enough to view the entire situation.

Theo is then shown outside placing branches over the stolen car. The camera watches him from a distance, and when he finishes he looks up at the trees that are swaying in the breeze. When Theo looks up, the camera follows his gaze, and then tilts back downward as Theo begins walking up the hill.

Back inside, Theo pours himself a drink. The cameraman is opposite the small countertop from Theo. This gives the viewer the ability to see everyone who is sitting in the living room, listening to Jasper tell them about Theo's past, while monitoring Theo's reactions at the same time.

When Jasper's alarm system begins going off, the camera is hovering over Theo who is asleep on the couch, almost as if it wants to wake him but can't. Instead Jasper wakes him. They then crowd around the computer monitor showing the security camera images.

As they make their escape and Jasper gets them into the car, the camera takes the position of a person who is seated in the front passenger seat. We then watch as Jasper says goodbye and the camera pans down the side of the car from the inside watching him as he talks to Kee.

When Theo gets the car far enough up the hill, he gets out to see what is to become of his dear friend Jasper. The camera follows him to the edge of the hill and then looks down on the house as we see Jasper meet his fate. When Theo turns to rush back towards the car, so does the camera.

They find the abandoned school where they are to meet Sid. Theo is asleep in the car and as he gets out and goes inside, the camera follows him, pausing to look at the paintings on the wall. We then catch back up to Theo inside the hallway and we follow him until he finds Miriam. We then peer out the broken window at Kee just as Theo does. Then, as Miriam begins to speak and tell her story, the handheld camera moves in closer to her, intently listening to her every word. As she finishes and goes to the window to call Kee, we follow her. As Theo exits the front of the school to confront Sid, the camera stays inside with Miriam and Kee, as if trying to stay out of the way and let Theo handle the situation.

As they ride with Sid to the immigration camp, the camera once again takes the position of sitting in the front passengers seat as Sid is talking, and then panning over to look in the back of the truck and at Theo, Kee, and Miriam. However, the camera then switches to the point of view of riding in the back of the truck, the view of a prisoner looking through the bars at Sid. As Sid opens the back of the truck to let them out, the camera waits until everyone else has filed out and then exits itself. We then follow them onto the bus.

After making it through the immigration camp and being led to their room by Marika, the camera watches as Theo prepares to deliver Kee's baby. The camera slowly creeps toward Kee's side as she begins to give birth. The handheld moves closer to Theo and then slowly moves downward as if it feels compelled to witness the first childbirth in over eighteen years, and yet at the same time afraid to look. The camera moves just in time to witness the baby being born into Theo's hands. The handheld then follows the movement of Theo's hands as he places the baby on Kee's chest. The camera then backs away as Theo washes his hands, as if giving Kee her space.

The second major handheld long take begins as civil war rages in the streets. Theo has Kee in a wheel chair and begins moving quickly down the street. The cameraman follows them, glancing at injured people on the side of the street. When Luke and his group ambush them, the camera crouches down, just as Theo does, looking around at what is taking place. Kee is taken away from Theo, and then as Luke's group is attacked, Theo gives chase. The camera follows his movements and gaze as he frantically tries to catch up to Kee, while also avoiding being shot. When Theo takes cover in a wrecked bus, someone is shot and blood spatters on the camera, staying there for the remainder of the scene as if we have been sprayed with the blood. When Theo reaches his destination, the camera crouches behind the rubble with him, waiting for his opportunity to make a break for the door. When a rocket hits the top floor of the building and dust flies everywhere Theo takes the opportunity to run for the door. The camera follows and glances downward at the people who are half buried under rubble. The camera then follows Theo upstairs on his quest to find Kee. The camera peeks around corners just as Theo does, afraid of being seen by the wrong people. As Theo escapes with Kee and the baby, a rocket hits the building and the camera ducks towards the ground just as Theo and Kee do. The camera then follows them as they make their way through the military that is stunned and amazed at the sight of a child.

Children of Men makes more use of handheld camera work and implements more long takes than any other film that I can recall. The film overall is truly amazing and the camera work successfully and powerfully draws the viewer in and makes them feel as if they are witnessing the events of the film in person.

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