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The intertopian mode in the depiction of Turkey-originated migrants in European film

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Summary

The *Intertopian* Mode in The Depiction of Turkey-Originated Migrants in European Film

Films are one of the best test subjects for examining the depictions of hopes and despairs of migrants and the interactions between communities.

This study is an inquiry into the presence and the utility of utopianism in film, in which I explore the succession of utopianism as a mode. The issues that arise out of this research relate to the question of “Can migration-themed films use an everyday utopianist mode and could this mode be described as *intertopian*”? The answer to this question relies on utopianism and a yet overlooked and necessary investigation into relationships between, or convergence of utopia, film, and migration.

In this regard, this study delves into the understudied relationship between utopianism and film with specific attention to the relationship between utopianism and European migrant film in the context of Turkish migrants’ hopes and fears. It proposes a new concept, the *intertopian* mode, by engaging with the relevant concepts in utopianism and migrant cinema. The *intertopian* mode is the space between the extremities of the utopianist spectrum, utopia, and dystopia at their most ultimate forms.

This study provides close and socio-politically situated readings of the selected films that serve as case studies to test the presence of *intertopian* mode. It situates each case study/film in the specific contexts and applies the research questions to demonstrate the patterns. Hence, this study explores how utopian motives, as in the form of *intertopian* mode, appear in migrant film and it engages with utopianism as a method for representing change, socio-cultural issues, desires, hopes, fears, and values. It lays the foundation for future investigation of utopianism in film.

Chapter 1 elaborates on utopianism by reviewing the current literature and develops the *intertopian* mode as a concept, which inform the analyses of the case studies. The next chapter, Chapter 2, places the focus on migration to Europe in the 20th century, briefly traces the history of migration, and analyses the sociocultural aspects of the lives Turkish migrants in Europe. The same chapter then moves on to a discussion about European migrant cinema.

Building on this theoretical framework, Chapter 3 examines whether, and to what extent, the elements identified in the analytical framework can be found in the four European films that demonstrate the experiences of migrants in Europe who come from Turkey. In this

case, Tevfik Başer's 40 Quadratmeter Deutschland (1986), Fatih Akın's Gegen die Wand (2004), Anno Saul's Kebab Connection (2004) and Yasemin Şamdereli's Almanya: Willkommen in Deutschland (2011) constitute the case studies. For the purpose of answering the question of "if and where has utopianism survived in cinema?", the chapter tests the *intertopian* mode in the four case studies, and highlights the patterns of *intertopian* by providing a comparative analysis between them. It utilises utopianism as a method of social dreaming, filmmaking as a social and utopianist practice. It approaches utopias and dystopias not only as a subset or a subgenre of science fiction/speculative fiction but as allegorical modes that can help instigate social and cultural change by identifying social problems and raising awareness by imagining alternatives and possibilities.

The final chapter highlights the findings that the *intertopian* mode is effective in depicting the experiences, hope, miseries and despair in the existing societies along with possibilities and can act as a warning sign or a good notice about the future. It shows that utopianism exists in film through the *intertopian* mode and that the qualities of utopian and dystopian modes collide in the *intertopian* mode.

The *intertopian* mode suggests a new way of approaching utopianism and reinforces the idea that it is relevant. Further research would be required to implement *intertopian* mode into different genres and categories of film. More studies need to be done to explore the use of the *intertopian* mode in other films than migrant film.