


KIAROSTAMI'NİN JEPOETİKLERİ

KIAROSTAMI'S GEPOETICS

 İzlemek için tıklayınız.***

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On account of a definition of geopoetics, Sarah de Leeuw y and Eric Magrane points to the "reading, writing, and performative practices" in which "earth always denotes much more than soils and waters, or the physical geographies of a planet" (2019, 148). Geopoetics, according to the author's view, is an attempt to "conceptualise and produce space and place anew, in part by recognising, respecting, and celebrating differences" (2019, 147). In the video essay presented here, we tried to put together some celebrated images of Abbas Kiarostami, to depict Iranian landscapes as this mentioned practice of geopoetics.

Born in 1940, Abbas Kiarostami started his career as a filmmaker in the 1970s and until his sudden death in 2016, had involved over forty films, including documentaries, fiction, short and feature films. Kiarostami also was an avid photographer, particularly noteworthy is the prolific use of roads in his works – winding roads in Maryam Ghorbankarimi's words (2018). The period of Kiarostami's approach to the Iranian landscape, as the background of his films and as the first protagonist of his prolific still photographs started after the second part of the so-called Koker Trilogy, when close contact with nature became a main theme of his creation, in much the same way this was addressed by the Iranian poet Sohrab Sepehri. One film, entitled *Zendegi va digar hich* (Life, and Nothing More or And Life Goes On, 1992), as Alberto Elena aptly observes, marked a 'real turning point in Kiarostami's films' (Elena, 2005). It is based on the filmmaker's personal journey as a consequence of unexpected circumstances and is the first of many Kiarostami works in which human contact with the natural landscape is the central theme.

The film is based on a true story: in 1990 a massive earthquake devastated the Manjil–Rudbar region in northwest Iran and caused tens of thousands of deaths. The village of Koker, the main location of *Where Is?* was located close to the epicentre of the earthquake. Seeking news of the young protagonists of the film, Kiarostami set out on a journey to the zone with his son. He found all roads to Koker blocked, and his quest for information about the two little boys was unresolved, but he returned to Tehran overwhelmed by the power of life over death. He decided to turn this very personal experience into a film with the title *Life, and Nothing More* (1992).

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The film recreates his journey with his son – with an actor playing Kiarostami – to try and discover whether the young protagonists of his previous film *Where Is the Friend's House?* had survived the earthquake. The result was another Kiarostami fiction bordering on the documentary, a visual poem of life set in the natural landscapes of the devastated zone.

One scene of the film is full of interest as it shows Kiarostami's view of the earth and the roads made by humans. In a traffic jam in the devastated zone, the director turns his car into a side road. When the director's son, asks his father whether he knows the road's destination, he replies no, and adds "but every road reaches somewhere." That quasi-mystical response is challenged immediately by the son, who reminds the father about the dead ends, "What about them, are they also reaching somewhere?"

The geopoetics of Kiarostami might be seen as his personal contests to the ideological framework of his time in postrevolutionary Iran. As he puts elsewhere, tired of proto-mystical official propaganda, he makes *Where is the Friend's House*, during the Irak-Iran war in a village far from big cities, to depict a child endeavour to find his friend's house and returning his notebooks to avoid his expulsion in the next day from the school. The film started with a dedicatory to the memory of Sohrab Sepehri, the Persian modern poet, having as the title, a verse of Sepehri's poem. Earth, in contrast to the sky, is a place in which material life grows and develops. The film's tactic of leading the viewer to look down to the earth—in a similar way that Tarkovski and Bilge Ceylan's characters do—stands in the very opposite of looking up to the sky, with all ideological and transcendental promises. The geopoetics of Kiarostami, might be thus considered as his reaction to the vacuity of these promises.

Apart from Sepehri and his new age turning back to nature in the background of Kiarostami's visual poems, one can find the classical Persian poems, particularly the Khayyam quartets behind the narrative structure of some other Kiarostami's works. Two films are worth mentioning: *The Taste of Cherry* (1997) and *The Wind Will Carry Us* (1999). In the first, a man about to commit suicide is reminded by a taxidermist of the beauties of life, particularly nature and earth's richness, and in the latter, again a rural doctor warns a young journalist not to search death, but the life, and especially the mundane life on the earth. This life view, in the omnipresence of death, forms also an important part of the Khayyam poetic universe, in which, the poet, invites the reader not to be anxious about the religious promises of the afterlife enjoyments, and instead take the small mundane pleasures of day to day life on earth.

The Kiarostami's geopoetics are full of road images to uncertain ends. These solitary roads make nostalgic sense to the landscape, as an invitation to the viewer to contemplate nature, to look down to the earth. Kiarostami is a perfect representation of his generation, who starts making creative images and film narratives on a native basis, and by the passage of time, polishes his style radically to depict empty spaces and nationless landscapes. Kiarostami's geopoiesis of roads to nowhere, is a sign of his view of the historical zeitgeist of his time, an invitation to coming back to the land and the agricultural soil, and the human figures as part of this nature.

References

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