

## **Sex, Drugs and Violence: Turkish Underground Literature**

### **Abstract**

‘Underground literature’ is a concept usually associated with clandestinely published texts that exist in the grey zone between illegality and tolerated subcultural discourse, between antisocial anarchy and society’s hegemonic aesthetic, moral and social norms. However, once these texts achieve a certain circulation and popularity and are co-opted by mainstream literature, the underground quickly becomes the overground. In the last 25 years, the Turkish publishing industry seems to have discovered the potential of this formerly niche genre and actively promotes the publication of texts that satisfy the hunger of young urbanites for the strange, the provocative, the anti-systemic, and the shocking. Can we still talk about defying the mainstream? Or has the marginal become just another commodity in the fiercely competitive literary marketplace?

The lecture will introduce the genre of *yeraltı edebiyatı*, outline its development and touch upon the discussions surrounding the meaning of ‘underground’. How can we define ‘underground literature’ and is such a definition even possible? Can we speak of a homegrown Turkish version of this genre, something like ‘underground *à la turca*’? What function does it fulfill in the Turkish literary polysystem? These are some of the questions the lecture will address. Metin Kaçan’s *Ağır Roman* (1990) and Hakan Günday’s duology *Az* (2011) and *Daha* (2016) will serve as examples to illustrate the scope and limits of *yeraltı edebiyatı*.

### **Bio**

**Petr Kučera** teaches Turkish studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. His research interests include late Ottoman and modern Turkish literature, travel writing, and ideology and culture in Turkey. He has translated into Czech, among others, ten books by Orhan Pamuk and co-authored a book on late Ottoman travelogues. Recent publications include co-edited volumes on genre in Islamicate literatures, on Orhan Pamuk’s oeuvre and on converts and renegades in the Ottoman Empire.