

KAYA GENÇ, PH.D.

Literary Scholar, Author, and Cultural Critic

Email: kaya.genc@icloud.com • Website: kayagenc.net • Location: Istanbul, Turkey

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in English Literature

Completed 2012

Istanbul University, Faculty of Letters, English Literature Department

Dissertation: "Mastery in servitude: Representations of Hegel's Phenomenology in late-Victorian fiction."

Specialization: Late-Victorian literature, aestheticism, history of criticism, and continental philosophical influences on the English novel, and in works by Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad.

Thesis supervisor: Murat Seçkin

M.A. in English Literature

Completed 2005

Universiteit van Amsterdam (University of Amsterdam), Faculty of Humanities, English Literature Department

Dissertation: "The aesthetics of degeneration : Oscar Wilde and the negation of normalcy"

Focus: Comparative literature, post-structuralist literary theory, focus on Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater, John Ruskin and Max Nordau. Graduated *summa cum laude*.

Thesis supervisor: R.D. Eaton

B.A. in Film (minor in Comparative Literature)

Completed 2004

Bilgi University, Faculty of Humanities

Dissertation: "The aesthetics of Michelangelo Antonioni"

Focus: Comparative literature, post-structuralist literary theory. Graduated *summa cum laude*.

Thesis supervisor: Selim Eyüboğlu

MONOGRAPHS & AUTHORED BOOKS

- **Forthcoming:** *Palgrave Handbook of Attacks on History*, chapter on historians in modern Turkey, February 2027, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- **Genç, K.** (2026), *How We See It: The World Looks at America in the Age of Trump*, chapter on Turkey's Americanization. New York: New Press.
- **Genç, K.** (2025). *Şehir*. Istanbul: Sia Kitap.
- The novel *Şehir* (The City) follows a Turkish graduate student spending 2004-2005 in Amsterdam, chasing a dream of becoming a novelist. Sharing a house with the charismatic philosopher Tomasz, he navigates the city's canals, museums, and bookstores, while the murder of Theo van Gogh injects Islamophobia and nationalism into everyday life. A yearlong portrait of youth, love, and self-discovery, *Şehir* captures Amsterdam in four seasons at the heart of the early 2000s, echoing the spirit of Sally Rooney and Sabahattin Ali.

Genç, K. (2019). *The Lion and the Nightingale: A Journey Through Modern Turkey*.

London

- & New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Featuring new material on the 2023 elections, *The Lion and the Nightingale* presents the spellbinding story of a country whose history has been split between East and West, between violence and beauty - between the roar of the lion and the song of the nightingale. Weaving together a mixture of memoir, interview and his own autobiography, Genç takes the reader on a contemporary journey through the contradictory soul of the Turkish

nation. Used extensively in global academic syllabi.

Genç, K. (2016). *Under the Shadow: Rage and Revolution in Modern Turkey*. London: I.B. Tauris / Bloomsbury Academic.

- Turkey stands at the crossroads of the Middle East--caught between the West and ISIS, Syria and Russia, and governed by an increasingly forceful leader. In *Under the Shadow* Genç meets activists from both sides of Turkey's political divide: Gezi park protestors who fought tear gas and batons to transform their country's future, and supporters of Erdogan's conservative vision who are no less passionate in their activism. He talks to artists and authors to ask whether the New Turkey is a good place to for them to live and work. He interviews censored journalists and conservative writers both angered by what has been going on in their country.
- **Genç, K.** (2015). *An Istanbul Anthology: Travel Writing through the Centuries*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press. *An Istanbul Anthology* takes readers on a journey through the city with travelers' accounts of the sights, smells, and sounds of Istanbul's bazaars and coffeehouses, its grand palaces and gardens, crumbling buildings, and ancient churches and mosques, and the waters that so haunt and define it. With writers such as Gustave Flaubert, Pierre Loti, Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain, and André Gide, we discover and rediscover the many delights of this great city of antiquity, meeting point of East and West, and gateway to peoples and civilizations.
- **Genç, K.** (2008). *Macera*. Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları.
One evening, Gündüz, a young man from Istanbul, finds himself in a dimly lit shop. Here lies a threat to his solitude and freedom, and an entry into a new, strange world. Through a series of events that follow an incomprehensible logic, the reader embarks on a captivating journey with Gündüz, from streets ravaged by a deadly disease to the African coast.

BOOK TRANSLATIONS

Translations from English to Turkish

2005 – Present

Essays of Oscar Wilde (Sanatçı: Eleştirmen, Yalancı, Katil: Estetik ve Sanat Üzerine), Fatih Özgüven, Türker Armaner ve Esin Soğancılar'la ortak çeviri, Oscar Wilde, İletişim Yayınları, 2008

Everyman (Sokaktaki Adam), Philip Roth, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011

Norton Critical Edition of the Complete Stories of Sherlock Holmes (Sherlock Holmes Bütün Hikayeleri), Berrak Göçer ile ortak çeviri, Arthur Conan Doyle, Everest Yayınları, 2013

History of Ideas (Fikirler Tarihi), Barış Pala, Kemal Atakay, Bahar Tırnakçı ve Nurettin Elhüseyni'yle ortak çeviri, Peter Watson, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014

How to Read a Poem (Şiir Nasıl Okunur), Terry Eagleton, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2015

C (C), Tom McCarthy, Notos Kitap, 2015

Bartleby the Scrivener (Kâtip Bartleby), Herman Melville, Can Yayınları, 2019

Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Dr. Jekyll ve Bay Hyde'ın Tuhaf Hikayesi), Robert Louis Stevenson, İletişim Yayınları, 2021

The Portrait of Mr. W.H. (Bay W.H.'in Portresi), Oscar Wilde, Can Yayınları, 2022

The Diary of a Nobody (Önemsiz Bir Adamın Günlüğü), George ve Weedon Grossmith, Can Yayınları, 2023

CORE RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

- **Victorian & Edwardian English Literature:** Aestheticism, the Decadent Movement, and the cross-pollination of Continental Philosophy (specifically Hegelian dialectics and Nietzschean critiques) with the

English novel. Would love to teach classes on Oscar Wilde, Joseph Conrad, Robert Louis Stevenson.

- **Historiography of Censorship:** State surveillance, archival access policies, linguistic exclusions, and sub-textual literary strategies in modernizing empires and successor states.
- **The History and Theory of Creative Nonfiction:** The evolution of literary journalism, longform structural aesthetics, and the integration of ethnography into contemporary cultural criticism.
- **Book criticism:** How to write criticism for periodicals and review fiction
- **Contemporary British novel:** New voices, approaches and themes in contemporary British fiction.

ACADEMIC LECTURES, CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & FESTIVAL APPEARANCES

Delivered research presentations and participated in structured panels on global histories, and independent non-fiction writing at major assemblies including:

Toronto Public Library 2025

Talk on “The Lion and the Nightingale”

Indus Conclave Conference (Lahore) 2025

Talk on two different events, one on “Rethinking Global Governance: The UN at 80” and another on “Travel Writing: The Case of Turkey”

The Oxford Union — University of Oxford 2025

Oxford Union debate on the fall of the Ottoman Empire

Panelist & Speaker: Debated the Demise of the Ottoman Empire, won the debate with a margin of more than 100 votes

Northwestern University 2025

Department of Middle Eastern Studies

Keynote: "The Lion and the Nightingale: The Turkish Government Against Turkey's Artistic Communities"

University of South California Irvine 2025

Forum for the Academic and the Public 2025

Talk: "Facts Under Fire: Reporting in Impossible Times"

New School 2025

Platform Cooperativism Consortium, Cooperative AI Conference

Keynote: "Solidarity, Equity and Cooperativism in Turkey in the Age of AI", also ran a poetry workshop

Mediterraneo Contemporaneo Festival 2023

Two talks on “The Lion and the Nightingale,” one at Unior Palazzo Corigliano, in Naples, and another at Teatro Antonio Ghirelli, Salerno

London Review Bookshop 2023

Talk on Turkey

Majlis Talks (Alserkal Avenue, Dubai) 2023

Talk on Turkey's cultural world

Salone Internazionale del Libro di Torino (Turin, Italy)	2022
Talk on “Il leone s l’usignolo”	
Internazionale a Ferrara (Ferrara, Italy)	2022
Talk on “Il leone s l’usignolo”	
Edinburgh International Book Festival	2020
Talk on “Under the Shadow”	
SOAS University of London (School of Oriental and African Studies)	2020
<i>Department of Middle Eastern Studies</i>	
Seminar on <i>The Lion and the Nightingale</i>	
Free Word Center (London, UK)	2019
Talk on the legacy of the Sertel family	
Jaipur Literature Festival (India)	2018
<i>Symposium on Turkish politics</i>	
Two talks, one on Under the Shadow with Suzy Hansen and Christopher de Bellaigue and another on “the future of new writing” with Joshua Ferris, John Freeman, Nadifa Mohamed, Jeet Thayil and Charmaine Craig	
Lahore Literary Festival (Pakistan)	2018
<i>Symposium on Turkish politics</i>	
Two talks, one on “writing of nationhood in an age of rage” with Mohsin Hamid and Nadifa Mohamed, and another on “the magnificence of Istanbul” with Christopher de Bellaigue, Sinan Antoon and Ghaith Abdul-Ahad	
International Journalism Festival (Perugia, Italy)	2018
<i>Symposium on Turkish politics</i>	
Talk on culture writing in Turkey	
Royal Anthropological Institute (London)	2017
<i>Symposium on Turkish politics</i>	
Lecture on Under the Shadow	
Words by the Water Festival (Cumbria, UK)	2017
<i>Symposium on Turkish politics</i>	
Lecture on Under the Shadow	
Ways with Words Festival (Dartington Hall, Devon, UK)	2017
<i>Symposium on Turkish politics</i>	
Lecture on Under the Shadow	
University of Pennsylvania (US)	2017
<i>Symposium on Turkish politics</i>	
Lecture on Under the Shadow	
Yaşar University (İzmir)	2016
<i>Walking Cities</i>	
Panel talk: “On Shakespeare”	

London Review Bookshop (London)	2016
Bookshop talk on “The State of Turkey”	
Asia House (London)	2016
<i>Turkey Beyond the Headlines</i>	
Lecture on Turkey	
SALT Galata	2014
Writing Workshop: Ran three creative writing workshops, one on Woolf, Tanpınar and Auster (May 2014), another on Marquez, Salinger and Auster (November and December 2014) and a third on “writing under censorship” in November 2015	
London Review Bookshop	2013
Talk on Turkish literature with Maureen Freely	
International Authors Forum	2013
Opening Speech	
Koç University ANAMED	2011
Talk on craft with Elif Batuman	
International PEN New Images—New Balkans conference (Skopje, Macedonia)	2011
Presentation on “A new image for the Balkans? On the bombing of Belgrade in Underground”	
Istanbul University	2010
<i>Akşit Göktürk Conference on English Literature</i>	
Paper Presentation: "Two journeys on the River Thames: Utopia and Horror, Horror".	
European Writers’ Parliament	2010
Paper Presentation: "Being a novelist in Turkey".	
Winternachten Istanbul	2009
<i>Literature program at Dutch Consulate, Istanbul</i>	
Paper Presentation: "Literature and Engagement".	

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS & HONORS

European Press Prize	2022
<i>Shortlisted Laureate / Finalist</i>	
Recognized internationally for exceptional investigative and literary longform writing for "An Ode to Marmara," representing outstanding contributions to continental journalism.	
Ford Foundation & Rest of World Reporting Grant	2025
<i>Principal Recipient</i>	
Awarded project funding for specialized investigations documenting the intersections of technology labor, digital control mechanisms, and content platform censorship protocols.	
Santa Maddalena Foundation Writing Fellowship	2015, 2018, 2023
<i>Three-Time Residential Fellow (Tuscany, Italy)</i>	
Awarded prestigious international residency fellowships by the foundation's panel to advance longform literary and	
Kaya Genç, Ph.D. — Curriculum Vitae	Page 5 of 10

The Atlantic's Annual Honors List

2014

Best Works of Journalism Selection

Inducted into the global curated compilation for excellence in narrative non-fiction and cultural reportage.

PEDAGOGIC IMPACT & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Curricular Integration & Syllabus Impact

Ongoing

Global Higher Education Networks

Monographs and structured texts (specifically *Under the Shadow* and *The Lion and the Nightingale*) are assigned readings across specialized core modules, undergraduate seminars, and graduate syllabi at elite global institutions, including the **University of Cambridge**.

Broadcast Essayist & Cultural Commentator

2022 – Present

BBC World Service

Regularly commissioned to draft and deliver spoken audio essays for the global *Weekend* program. Frequently featured as an expert guest analyst on cultural and historical programs including *BBC's Start the Week*, WNYC's *The Leonard Lopate Show*, and PBS/NPR's *Democracy Now!*.

Decennial Film Critic & Juror

2022

Sight & Sound — British Film Institute (BFI)

Voting critic for the highly selective, globally authoritative decennial poll determining the "Greatest Films of All Time."

Editorial Fact-Checker

The New Yorker (New York City, NY) 2024

Provided high-level editorial vetting, textual verification, and language/historical expertise for complex investigative features concerning Middle Eastern geopolitics and cultural history.

SELECTED ESSAYS, JOURNALISM & LITERARY CRITICISM

Selected essays, articles and journalism (see a full list of my published work here: <https://kayagenc.net/writing/>):

June 2026 – *Literary Review* (June 2026 issue) – When the Shine Rubs Off: On Suzy Hansen

May 2026 – *The Believer* (Summer 2026 issue) – On Hélène Bessette

April 2026 – *The Point* – A History of Erasures: On Leylâ Erbil

March 2026 – *Foreign Policy* – Sex, Liberation, and Obsession in 1970s Istanbul: *On The Museum of Innocence*

February 2026 – *Psyche* – Each of us has a song: A portrait of Burhan Sönmez

February 2026 – *The Los Angeles Review of Books* – Sex in the City: Istanbul 1923: On “One Thousand and One Kisses: The Most Joyous and Flirtatious Stories”

February 2026 – *Electra* (Winter 2026 issue) – Erich Auerbach: o exilado mais famoso de Istambul

September 2025 – *The Nation* – Tezer Özlü – the Rebel of Turkish Letters

December 2024 – *The Point* – Only Disconnect: On Oğuz Atay

February 2024 – *The Los Angeles Review of Books* – Whatever I Can Have, Nothing I Want: On Nazlı Koca

November 2023 – *The Dial* – Kurdish Ulysses

November 2023 – *The Nation* – Surreal Tales From Erdoğan’s Turkey: On Kenan Orhan

October 2023 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – Turkey’s Feminist Autofictionalist: On Tezer Özlü

October 2023 – *The New York Review of Books (NYR Online)* – Ruffians, Gamblers, Thieves, Outcasts: On Reşad Ekrem Koçu

September 2023 – *The Markaz Review* – Lojman: On Ebru Ojen

July 2023 – *The Los Angeles Review of Books* – Literature Takes Courage: On Ahmet Altan

June 2023 – *The Nation* – Ferit Edgü’s Prescient Fiction of a Turkey in Crisis

April 2023 – *New Republic* – Nationalism, Unrest, Reaction: On Orhan Pamuk

October 2022 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – All That Really Happens Happens to Me: On Annie Ernaux

August 2022 – *New Humanist* (Autumn 2022 issue) – The woman in the mirror: On Elif Batuman

April 2022 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – The Sights and Sounds of Life: On Matthew Sturgis’s Biography of Oscar Wilde

March 2022 – *The Point* – An Invisible Thread: On Rachel Cusk

December 2021 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – Exquisitely Curated Lives: On Ayşegül Savaş

June 2021 – *The Happy Reader* (Summer 2021 issue) – On Sabahattin Ali

April 2021 – *The Times Literary Supplement* (April 23, 2021 issue) – Geography militant: On Joseph Conrad

December 2020 – *The New Republic* – The Ottoman Quartet: On Ahmet Altan

November 2020 – *The Times Literary Supplement* – The form of a tragicomedy: On Kurdish theatre

November 2020 – *Global Literature in Libraries Initiative* – Literature of Exile: Şavkar Altınel

September 2019 – *The Times Literary Supplement* (September 11-18, 2019 issue) – Walled future: On Cyprus Literature

May 2019 – *Point Magazine* – How to Lose a Language: On Linguistic Migration

June 2018 – *The New York Review of Books* (June 28, 2018 issue) – Sex Changes in Turkey (cover story): On Sexual Culture in Ottoman Empire

December 2017 – *The Nation* (December 4-11, 2017 issue) – Fathers and Sons: On Orhan Pamuk

April 7, 2017 – *The Times Literary Supplement* – Gothic Sherlock (cover story): On Arthur Conan Doyle

November 25, 2016 – *The Times Literary Supplement* – Blank spaces on the map: On Joseph Conrad

October 24, 2016 – *The Believer* – A Young Turk in Love: On Sabahattin Ali

July 15, 2016 – *The Times Literary Supplement* – Wilde the child: On Oscar Wilde

June 3, 2016 – *The Times Literary Supplement* – ‘Please don’t leave us alone’: ‘A TLS symposium with leading figures in academia, literature and the humanities’

May 10, 2016 – *The Millions* – Here’s to the Cowardly Ones: On Dmitri Shostakovich and Emotional Rebellion in Julian Barnes’s work

December 17, 2015 – *New Republic* – The Graphic Memoir Comes to Turkey: On Özge Samancı

September 13, 2015 – *The Los Angeles Review of Books* – Turkey Under Western Eyes: On Alev Scott

July 19, 2015 – *The Los Angeles Review of Books* – Murder Mysteries After the Death of the Author: On Agatha Christie

November 26, 2014 – *Guernica* – Windows in the House of History: On Hilary Mantel

November 25, 2014 – *The Believer* – On The Book of Mormon

October 23, 2014 – *The Rumpus* – The Children Act: On Ian McEwan

October 5, 2014 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – Hercule Poirot and Us

July 12, 2014 – *The Guardian* – An appreciation of Andrew Mango

March 12, 2014 – *Guernica* – The Self-Inventions of Modernity: On Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar

March 1, 2014 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – The Embassy of Gossip: Zadie Smith's First-Person Plural

February 18, 2014 – *Rumpus* – The Daylight Gate: On Jeanette Winterson

January 12, 2014 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – Auerbach in Istanbul

January 2, 2014 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – Such, Such Were the Miseries: Down and Out in Paris and London and Istanbul: On George Orwell

December 19, 2013 – *Full Stop* – The Circle: On Dave Eggers

November 25, 2013 – *London Review of Books* – Bricklayer, Waiter, Gravedigger, Spy: On Erje Ayden

August 1, 2013 – *PEN Atlas* – Our man in Berkhamsted: On Şavkar Altınel

November 28, 2012 – *Guernica* – Ian McEwan's Sweet Tooth

November 20, 2012 – *Rumpus* – Lionel Asbo: State of England: On Martin Amis

August 24, 2012 – *The New Inquiry* – Coming Out of the Coffin: On Bram Stoker

August 12, 2012 – *Los Angeles Review of Books* – Wilde in the Office: On Oscar Wilde

June 14, 2012 – *The Millions* – Mario Vargas Llosa and the Heart of Roger Casement

February 8, 2012 – *Guernica Magazine* – Conrad’s First Novel & His Personal Record

ACADEMIC & EDITORIAL APPOINTMENTS

Contributing Editor 2024 – Present
The Dial

Staff member at international magazine of essays, literary dispatches, and deep cultural reporting

Istanbul Correspondent & Critic 2015 – Present
Los Angeles Review of Books (LARB)

Providing extensive coverage, book reviews, and intellectual essays concerning contemporary Turkish fiction, poetry, translation politics, and Middle Eastern intellectual history.

Contributing Editor 2013 – Present
Index on Censorship

Investigating and reporting on global press freedom, digital surveillance models, institutional gatekeeping, and the preservation of dangerous or banned archives in transitional societies for London-based organization.