

Knowledge at Risk: Academy in Exile

Wednesday 24 July 2017 4:15–5:30pm

School of History Seminar Series

Speaker: Kader Konuk, University of Duisburg-Essen

McDonald Room, Menzies Library, ANU



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In light of the rise of authoritarian regimes and populist movements in countries such as Turkey, the US, and Hungary, this seminar discusses the history of critical thinking, its significance in policies of higher education, and relevance for today. As the director of the Academy in Exile that hosts over 25 scholars at risk in Germany, Kader Konuk is interested in the role of refugee scholarship and asks how to develop strategies to foster knowledge at risk.

Historically, the concept and practice of critical thinking is associated with the scholarly output of German-Jewish émigrés in the 1930s. Critical thinking has long been the collective term for methodologies that foster a self-critical awareness and analytical skills in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Although the term is used loosely and refers to a whole range of methodologies, from critical theory to secular criticism, feminist theory, and postcolonial studies, its role in contributing to democratic processes and an open society seems uncontested. In



Kader Konuk is Professor and Chair of Turkish Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. In 2017, she founded the Academy in Exile which offers over 25 scholars at risk fellowships to continue their research in Berlin and Essen. Konuk completed her PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of Paderborn in 1999, and was Assistant and Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and German Studies at the University of Michigan between 2001–2013. Her research focuses on the disciplinary nexus between literary criticism, cultural studies, and intellectual history and is situated at the intersections between religious and ethnic communities, beginning with the Ottoman modernization reforms and continuing on to Turkish-German relations in the twenty-first century. Her monograph *East West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey* (Stanford University Press, 2010) investigated the relationship between German-Jewish exile and the modernization of the humanities in Turkey; it was selected for the René Wellek Prize by the American Comparative Literature Association and the DAAD award by the German Studies Association.