

Turkish-German Writer Feridun Zaimoglu (October 12, 2001)

Abstract

In the 1990s, authors and filmmakers began exploring the problematic relationship between immigrants and Germans. Author, journalist, and screenplay writer Feridun Zaimoglu was born in Turkey but has lived in Germany for more than thirty years. After the publication of his first book, *Kanak Sprak* (1995), Zaimoglu gained cult status as an author and became a figurehead for migrant literature in Germany. The book tells the stories of young Turkish immigrants in Germany, or so-called *Kanaken*, a derogatory German term used to denote foreigners and immigrants. The stories are told in the colorful street talk, or "Kanak-Speak" [*Kanak-Sprak*], of young Turkish males. In writing the book, Zaimoglu endeavored to rid "Kanak-Speak" of its pejorative connotations and imbue it with power. He wanted young Turks to celebrate and reclaim their language and, with it, their sense of identity. This new idiom gave second and third generation Turkish immigrants a new language of protest and self-articulation. Zaimoglu's other major works include the novel *Abschaum. Die wahre Geschichte von Ertan Ongun* [*Scum. The True History of Ertan Ongun*] (1997), the collection of short stories *Zwölf Gramm Glück* [*Twelve Grams of Happiness*] (2004), and the bestselling novel *Leyla* (2006). The film *Kanak Attak*, which was based on the novel *Abschaum*, was released in theaters in November 2000.

This photograph shows Zaimoglu at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 2001. He was there to promote his book *Kopf und Kragen. Kanak-Kultur-Kompodium* [*Head and Collar. Kanak-Culture-Compendium*], a collection of articles, short stories, and fictitious interviews.

Source



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