

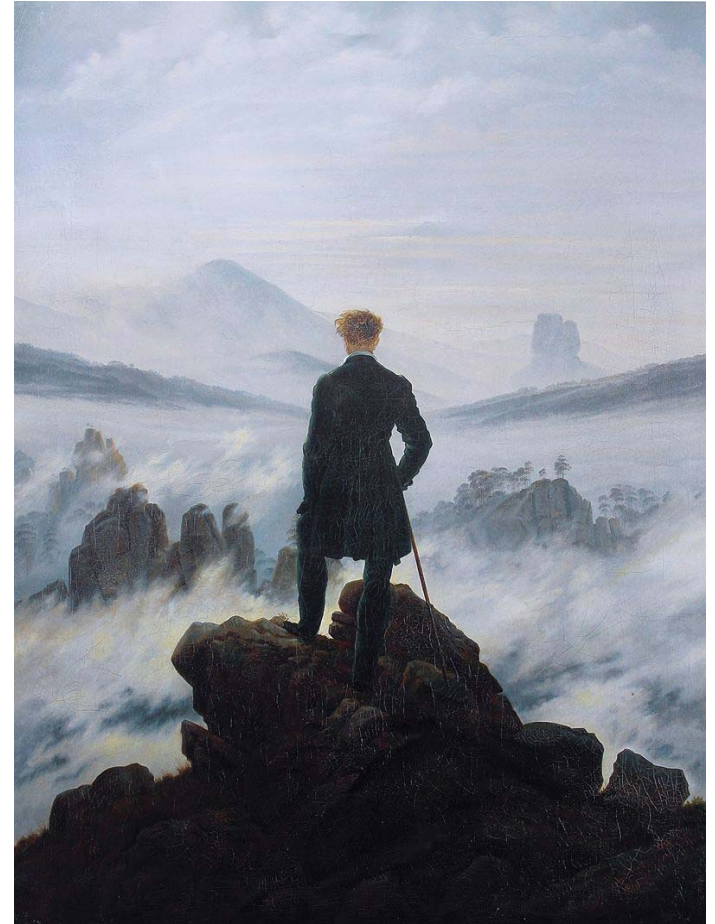
Studies in Literature and Cultural History

The Sovereign and the Subject: Europe and West Asia

COLT 525, 22079, Fall 2015, Tuesdays, 2:00-4:50 pm, VKC 153

This graduate seminar intends to explore the modern notion of the subject through a genealogy of sovereignty. During the course of the eighteenth century, through a complex process, the subject of the sovereign becomes himself the sovereign. Before asking the equally important question, then, after Jean-Luc Nancy and others—“Who Comes After the Subject?”—we will try to come to terms with this momentous transformation and its consequences for politics and art. The effects of this transformation become legible in West Asia through the Ottoman reform movement of the nineteenth century, the Tanzimat, which we will also explore in this seminar through its reflections in Ottoman-Arab and -Turkish letters.

The historical and conceptual background of these transformations will be reconstructed through Hobbes, Rousseau, Benjamin, Auerbach, Foucault, Balibar, Agamben, and Derrida among others. The connection between, even the possible conflation of, aesthetics and politics will be approached specifically through Bataille’s repeated, if also somewhat oblique, references to “the sovereign man of art” and to “the last man” and to his “inner experience.”



Professor Veli N. Yashin