

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

JULY 31 – AUGUST 2 , 2025

EVIL IN RUSSIAN THOUGHT & LITERATURE

Third Annual Conference of the Northwestern University Research
Initiative in Russian Philosophy, Literature, and Russian Thought,
co-sponsored by Trinity College, University of Cambridge



Northwestern Center for International and Area Studies
Research Initiative in Russian Philosophy,
Literature, and Religious Thought



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

**THURSDAY,
JULY 31**

9:00–9:30	Morning Prayer , Trinity College Chapel
10:00–10:30	Welcome
10:30–12:00	Session 1, Panel 1
12:00–1:10	Lunch , St. John's Hall
1:10–2:55	Session 2, Panel 2
2:55–3:15	Break
3:15–5:00	Session 3, Panel 3
5:30–6:30	Keynote address by Rowan Williams
6:30–7:30	Dinner , Nevile's Court

**FRIDAY,
AUGUST 1**

9:00–9:30	Morning Prayer , Trinity College Chapel
10:00–11:45	Session 4, Panels 4 and 5 · concurrent
11:45–1:00	Lunch , St. John's Hall
1:00–2:30	Session 5, Panels 6 and 7 · concurrent
2:30–3:00	Break
3:00–4:30	Session 6, Panel 8
4:45–5:45	Keynote address by Gary Saul Morson
7:00–8:15	Dinner , St. John's Hall

**SATURDAY,
AUGUST 2**

8:45–9:15	Morning Prayer , Trinity College Chapel
9:30–11:00	Session 7, Panels 9 and 10 · concurrent
11:00–11:15	Break
11:15–1:00	Session 8, Panel 11 and 12 · concurrent
1:00–2:15	Lunch , St. John's Hall
2:15–3:45	Session 9, Panel 13



DAY ONE · JULY 31

9:00–9:30	Morning Prayer	Trinity College Chapel
10:00–10:30	Welcome	Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School, St. John's College
10:30–12:00	Session 1, Panel 1	

Chair: Steven Shankman, *University of Oregon*

In the Beginning was the Lie: Dostoevskian Reflections on Language and Evil

George Pattison, *University of Glasgow*

Justification of the “Very, Very Bad” in Russian Philosophical Thought

Evert van der Zweerde, *Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands*

Through a Russian Lens: Evil and Modernity

Susan McReynolds, *Northwestern University*

12:00–1:10	Lunch	St. John's Hall , St. John's College
1:10–2:55	Session 2, Panel 2	Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: Randall Poole, *College of St. Scholastica*

Tyranny as Evil: N. M. Karamzin's Portrait of Ivan IV in *History of the Russian State*

Gary Hamburg, *Claremont McKenna College*

The Trickiest of Sins: Gogol and Tolstoy on *Poshlost'* and Vainglory

Bradley Underwood, *Northwestern University*

The Problem of Evil in Semen Frank

Sr Teresa Obolevitch, *Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Poland*

The Serpent in the Garden: Evil and Knowledge in Lev Shestov and Leo Strauss

Ana Siljak, *University of Florida*

DAY ONE · JULY 31

CONTINUATION

2:55–3:15

Break

3:15–5:00

Session 3, Panel 3

Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: Caryl Emerson, *Princeton University*

Evil Strikes Me in my Horror of Evil: *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Daniel Deronda*

Steven Shankman, *University of Oregon*

Talking about *Brothers Karamazov* with Brothers Incarcerated:

Philosophical and Pedagogical Reflections on Theodicy in Maximum Security Prisons

Paul C. H. Lim, *University of Florida*

Darkness and Light: Saltykov-Shchedrin's *Foolsburg* (*The History of a Town*)

Richard Pevear, *literary translator*

Darkness and Light: Leskov's *Cathedral Folk*

Larissa Volokhonsky, *literary translator*

5:30–6:30

Keynote Address

Wren Library, Trinity College

Devils and Disruptive Grace:

Satan as the Servant of God in Dostoevsky and Mikhail Bulgakov

Rowan Williams, *University of Cambridge*

6:30–7:30

Dinner

Nevile's Court, Trinity College



DAY TWO · AUGUST 1

9:00–9:30 **Morning Prayer** Trinity College Chapel

10:00–11:45 **Session 4, Panel 4 ↗** Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: Steven Shankman, *University of Oregon*

**The Karamazovian Mark as the Blood of Cain:
Maternal Mediation and Redemptive Earth in Dostoevsky's Final Novel**

Michael Ossorgin, *Fordham University*

Between Christian Metaphysics and Anthropological Christianity in *The Brothers Karamazov*

Elizabeth Blake, *Saint Louis University*

Dostoevsky's Tragic Imagination

Denis Zhernokleyev, *Vanderbilt University*

And Again, Resurrect: The Power of the Iterative in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

Grace Clifford, *Northwestern University*

10:00–11:45 **Session 4, Panel 5 ↗** Lightfoot Room, Old Divinity School

Chair: Ana Siljak, *University of Florida*

"Russian Evil" in Sergei Lebedev's Works

Andrzej Dudek, *Jagiellonian University, Poland*

**The Question of Evil: Evgeny Trubetskoy and Dmitry Muretov
on the Meaning of Russia's Participation in the First World War**

Dmitry Biriukov, *Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome*

Fully Present: Nadezhda Mandelstam, Hannah Arendt, and Totalitarianism

Ana Matoso, *Universidade Católica Portuguesa*

Science against Evil: Reflections on Vladimir Vernadsky's Ethics

Lenka Naldoniová, *University of Ostrava*

DAY TWO · AUGUST 1

CONTINUATION I

11:45 – 1:00	Lunch	St. John's Hall, St. John's College
1:00 – 2:30	Session 5, Panel 6 ⇆	Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: Bradley Underwood, *Northwestern University*

The Evil in Gogol's *Viy*

Ilya Kutik, *Northwestern University*

Evil or Just Misunderstood? The Faustian Tradition in Slavic Literature, Music, and Film

Victoria Juharyan, *Johns Hopkins University*

"Who is Like unto God?": The Paradox of *Theosis* and *Prelest*' in Dostoevsky

Peter Gregory Winsky, *University of Southern California*

1:00 – 2:30	Session 5, Panel 7 ⇆	Lightfoot Room, Old Divinity School
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Chair: Octavian Gabor, *Methodist College*

What *Madness* is This? Sergii Bulgakov, Evil, and Love

Daniel Lightsey, *Southern Methodist University*

Changing Faces of Evil:

Kasimir Malevich, Revolution, and the Avant-Garde in Russia – 1914 to 1924

Stephen Garrett, *Rivendell Institute at Yale University*

Between Dostoevsky and Nietzsche:

The Construction of Evil in Andrei Bely's *Petersburg*

Irina Simpson, *New Economic School, Moscow, Russia*

2:30 – 3:00	Break
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DAY TWO · AUGUST 1

CONTINUATION II

3:00–4:30

Session 6, Panel 8

Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: George Pattison, *University of Glasgow*

Are Genius and Virtue Compatible?

Russian Philosophical Perspectives on Creativity and Morality

Mikhail Epstein, *Emory University* · virtually

Thrice *Three Conversations* (Solovyov, Bulgakov, Tolstoy)

Caryl Emerson, *Princeton University*

Evil and Freedom in Bulgakov via Schelling

Joshua Heath, *University of Cambridge*

4:45–5:45

Keynote Address

St. John's Hall

Misanthropology of Evil

Gary Saul Morson, *Northwestern University* · virtually

7:00–8:45

Dinner

St. John's Hall



DAY THREE · AUGUST 2

8:45–9:15 **Morning Prayer** Trinity College Chapel

9:30–11:00 **Session 7, Panel 9 ⇌** Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: Randall Poole, *College of St. Scholastica*

**Nikolai Berdyaev's Interpretation of Jakob Böhme's *Ungrund*:
A Basis for a Mystically Informed Theodicy**

Christos Veskoukis, *University of Exeter*

Evaluating Raskolnikov from the Islamic Creation Perspective

Dursun Ali Aykit, *Marmara University, Turkey*

Evil as Distraction? Anesthetics and the Salvific Other in *Crime and Punishment*

Austin Benedetto, *Northwestern University*

9:30–11:00 **Session 7, Panel 10 ⇌** Lightfoot Room, Old Divinity School

Chair: Peter Winsky, *University of Southern California*

Out of God's Sight: Pavel Evdokimov's Eschatological View on Gender Antagonism

Iva Manova, *Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences*

Moral Taboo in Print:

Yevgeny Kharitonov's *Under House Arrest* as Narratologically Evil

Angel Estevez, *Northwestern University*

Evil Here, Evil There: An Evolution of Evil in the Thought of Tatiana Goricheva

Joanna Burdzel, *Harvard University*

DAY THREE · AUGUST 2

CONTINUATION I

11:00–11:15 **Break**

11:15–1:00 **Session 8, Panel 11 ⇄** Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: Susan McReynolds, *Northwestern University*

Wu Wei and the Western Front: Tolstoy's *Hadji Murad* as a Critique of Moral Evil

Michael A. Denner, *Stetson University*

***Demons*: The Banality of Evil and Honorable Persons in Dostoevsky**

Octavian Gabor, *Methodist College*

Re-education for the Good?

The Elusive Dynamics of Evil in Dostoevsky as a Theological Challenge

Maike Schult, *Philipps-University Marburg, Germany*

Free Will and the Problem of Evil in Late 19th-Century Russian Thought

Maxim Demin, *Ruhr-Universität Bochum*

11:15–1:00 **Session 8, Panel 12 ⇄** Lightfoot Room, Old Divinity School

Chair: Michael Ossorgin, *Fordham University*

Anthropology and the Problem of Evil in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

Lindsay Martin, *Baylor University*

The Body and the Trinity:

Anti-Tragedy and Political Spirituality in Vladimir Korolenko's *The Dream of Makar*

Alex Villas Boas, *Universidade Católica Portuguesa*

The Evil of Dostoevsky's Double

Sabri Gürses, *writer and literary translator, Turkey*

DAY THREE · AUGUST 2

CONTINUATION II

1:00–2:15	Lunch	St. John's Hall, St. John's College
2:15–3:45	Session 9, Panel 13	Main Lecture Theatre, Old Divinity School

Chair: Joshua Heath, *University of Cambridge*

This Side of Good and Evil: Solovyov and Gedeon (Krinovskii)

Catherine Evtuhov, *Columbia University*

Vladimir Solovyov's Metaphysics of Good and Evil

Randall A. Poole, *College of St. Scholastica*

The Bashi-Bazouks' Kitchen: Solovyov on Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and What's Wrong with the World

Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *University of Wisconsin, Madison*



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