

Northwestern University Research Initiative in Russian Philosophy, Literature, and Religious Thought



Celebrating Gary Saul Morson

Humanistic Traditions in Russian Thought and Literature

April 19 - 20, 2024
Evanston, IL



Northwestern
University

HUMANISTIC TRADITIONS IN RUSSIAN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

DAY 1

Friday, April 19
Harris Hall and University Hall

8:30am-9:45am

BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION (Harris Hall 108)

9:45am-10:30am

**WELCOME AND UPDATE ON THE NORTHWESTERN RESEARCH INITIATIVE IN
RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE, AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT**

Remarks by Provost Kathleen Hagerty, Dean Adrian Randolph
Remarks By Susan McReynolds, Randall Poole, Bradley Underwood

10:30am-12:00pm

SESSION ONE, PANEL 1 (Harris Hall 108)

Wonder Confronts Certainty: Main Ideas and Insights
Donna Tussing Orwin (University of Toronto)

Reflections on Wonder and Certainty
Sanford C. Goldberg (Northwestern University)

*Aphorism as a Laboratory of Thinking: Through the Prisms of Natural and Artificial
Intelligence*
Mikhail Epstein (Emory University)

12:00pm-1:30pm

LUNCH (Harris Hall 108)

Remarks by Daniel Lowenstein (University of California, Los Angeles)
Remarks by Matthew Morrison, MD (Yale University)
Remarks by President Emeritus Morton Schapiro (Northwestern University)

1:30pm-3:00pm

SESSION TWO, PANEL 2 (Harris Hall 108) - **Concurrent**

Returning to Anna Karenina
Frances Brent (Writer & Poet, New York)

Android Karenina and the Prosaics of Steampunk
Timothy Langen (University of Missouri)

Art is for seeing the (extra)ordinary: Tolstoy and Prosaics
Ana Matoso (Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon)

HUMANISTIC TRADITIONS IN RUSSIAN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

DAY 1 CONT.

Friday, April 19
Harris Hall and University Hall

SESSION TWO, PANEL 3 (University Hall 201) - **Concurrent**

Starting Small: Morson's Prosaics and the Person
Ana Siljak (University of Florida)

Prosaics in the Face of the Apocalyptic: Searching for Hope in Russian Literature
Denis A. Zhernokleyev (Vanderbilt University)

3:00pm-3:30pm

BREAK (Harris Hall 108 and University Hall 201)

3:30pm-5:00pm

SESSION THREE, PANEL 4 (Harris Hall 108) - **Concurrent**

On Spending Time with the Dead
Yuri Corrigan (Boston University)

"What Is It Like to Be a Double?" Morson on Persons and Consciousness
Brian Armstrong (Augusta University)

The Underground and Gary Saul Morson
Bradley Underwood (Northwestern University)

SESSION THREE, PANEL 5 (University Hall 201) - **Concurrent**

Two Poles of Poetry: Pushkin and Tyutchev in the Eyes of Andrei Bely and Vyacheslav Ivanov
Dmitry Biriukov (Free University of Berlin)

Empathy and Aesthetics in the Early 20th Century
Stephen H. Blackwell (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)

Performativity in Soviet Literature - and Before
Thomas Seifrid (University of Southern California)

7:00pm-9:00pm

DINNER (Harris Hall 108)

Remarks by President Michael Schill (Northwestern University)

Remarks by President Emeritus Henry Bienen (Northwestern University)

Gary Saul Morson on *Vekhi/Landmarks*: Open Humanism in Russian Thought
Randall A. Poole (College of St. Scholastica)

Concluding Remarks by Emily Morson

HUMANISTIC TRADITIONS IN RUSSIAN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

DAY 2

Saturday, April 20
Harris Hall, Scott Hall, Guild Lounge

8:00am-9:00am

BREAKFAST (Scott Hall, Guild Lounge)

Remarks by Peter Winsky: *Northwestern University Forum in Russian Philosophy, Literature, and Religious Thought*

9:00am-10:30am

SESSION FOUR, PANEL 6 (Guild Lounge)

On Human Nature & the Human Body: How Gary Saul Morson Has Helped Me in the Practice of Medicine
Tod Worner, M.D. (Abbott Northwestern General Medicine Associates, Edina, Minnesota)

Tolstoyevsky in the Time of COVID
Leah Flack (Marquette University)

We Shall Not Cease from Exploration: The Lessons of Literature in the Context of a Non-Academic Career
Dr. Lindsay Sargent Berg (Microsoft Corp., Seattle, Washington)

10:30am-12:00pm

SESSION FIVE, PANEL 7 (Guild Lounge) - **Concurrent**

Alyosha Accepts Wonder: Dostoevsky's Prudential, Incarnational Realism
Paul Contino (Pepperdine University)

Temporality and Personhood: The Second Novels of Alyosha Karamazov
Octavian Gabor (Methodist College)

The Meek Literary Type and the Ordinary in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*
Jillian Pignataro (Northwestern University)

SESSION FIVE, PANEL 8 (Harris Hall 108) - **Concurrent**

"Away From the Absolute": Friedrich Schlegel's Concept of Narrative Freedom
Boris Gasparov (Columbia University)

Criminal Blade and Fallen Purple: Pushkin's Ideas of Freedom in 1817
G. M. Hamburg (Claremont McKenna College)

Narrative, Freedom, and Sideshadowing
Nina Gourianova (Northwestern University)

12:00pm-1:30pm

LUNCH (Guild Lounge)

Remarks by Julio M. Ottino (Northwestern University)
Remarks by Barbara J. O'Keefe (Northwestern University)
Remarks by Daniel Diermeier (Vanderbilt University)

HUMANISTIC TRADITIONS IN RUSSIAN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

DAY 2 CONT.

Saturday, April 20
Harris Hall, Scott Hall, Guild Lounge

1:30pm-3:00pm

SESSION SIX, PANEL 9 (Guild Lounge)

Sterne's Tristram Shandy, Diderot's Jacques le fataliste et son maître, and Nabokov's Pnin: The Comic Novel in Light of Morson's Wonder Confronts Certainty
Robert B. Alter (University of California, Berkeley)

From Literature to Life: An Essayistic Testament to a Friendship
Dalya Sachs-Bernstein (The Dalya Estate, Sonoma County, California)

Ideology, Small Acts of Kindness, and Maternity in Vasily Grossman's *Stalingrad*
Steve Shankman (University of Oregon)

3:00pm-3:30pm

BREAK (Guild Lounge)

3:30pm-5:00pm

SESSION SEVEN, PANEL 10 (Guild Lounge)

Between Good and Evil: The Ethics of Dealing with the Devil
Andrew Wachtel (Compass College of Art and Design, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)

Thinking of the Future: Jewish Writers at the Crossroads of History
Jonathan Brent (The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)

Sentences and Sensibility
Robin Feuer Miller (Brandeis University)

Wonder Confronts Prosaics
Caryl Emerson (Princeton University)

6:30pm-8:30pm

DINNER (Guild Lounge)

String quartet performance by Sanghoo Lee '24, James LaFayette '26, Eliana Kim '24, and Angela Choi '25

Gary Saul Morson and the Teaching of Literature
Susan McReynolds (Northwestern University)

Concluding remarks by Susan McReynolds, Randall Poole, and Bradley Underwood

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HUMANISTIC TRADITIONS IN RUSSIAN THOUGHT AND LITERATURE



The second annual conference of the Northwestern University Research Initiative in Russian Philosophy, Literature, and Religious Thought (NU RPLRT Research Initiative) honors a preeminent scholar, searching public intellectual, and beloved Northwestern University professor.

Gary Saul Morson, the Lawrence B. Dumas Distinguished Professor of the Arts and Humanities and Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Northwestern University, is an author or editor of twenty-one books – three with Morton Schapiro, two with Caryl Emerson, and one with Elizabeth Allen – as well as some 300 shorter publications on Russian and comparative literature, the philosophy of time, the relation of the humanities to economics, utopia and anti-utopia, the role of quotations in culture, and the aphorism as a literary/philosophical genre. His most popular class has enrolled over 500 students, when it was the largest course at Northwestern and the best enrolled Russian literature course in North America. In recent years, he has published extensively in *The New York Review of Books*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other national publications, including Jewish, Catholic and Protestant ones. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 1995, he has won numerous awards for teaching and scholarship, including best book awards from Slavic and Comparative Literature organizations, the Kohl Education prize, and the *New York Times*'s Sidney Award for a 2017 long form essay. His most recent book is *Wonder Confronts Certainty: Russian Writers on the Timeless Questions*.