

# What's New About the New Atheism?

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The Enduring Relevance of Russian Philosophy



# Northwestern University

Research Initiative for the Study of  
Russian Philosophy and Religious Thought

Inaugural Conference

April 21 - April 23  
Evanston, IL

# WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE NEW ATHEISM? THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

**DAY 1**

Friday, April 21  
The Great Room, 600 Haven Street

**8:45am-9:30am**

## **BREAKFAST**

Welcome and Update on the Northwestern Research Initiative for the Study of Russian Philosophy and Religious Thought

**9:30am-11:20am**

## **CELEBRATING MIKHAIL EPSTEIN: CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS AND METAPHYSICAL THOUGHT**

*SUSAN MCREYNOLDS (NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY), CHAIR*

*MIKHAIL EPSTEIN (EMORY UNIVERSITY), RESPONDENT*

*Alyssa DeBlasio (Dickinson College), Caryl Emerson (Princeton University), Randall A. Poole (College of St. Scholastica), Victoria Juharyan (UC Davis)*

**11:40am-1:10pm**

## **PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND UNBELIEF**

*OCTAVIAN GABOR (METHODIST COLLEGE), CHAIR*

Gregory Skovoroda's Critique and Criticism of Atheism

*Victor Chernyshov (National University "Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic," Poltava)*

J.S. Mill's *System of Logic* and the Russian Debate on the Limits of Scientific Knowledge

*Julia Berest (University of Western Ontario)*

*The "ideal" For Russian "critical" Marxist Thinkers At The Turn of The 20th Century*

*Daniela Steila (University of Turin)*

Nikolai Berdiaev and the Prison of Philosophical Materialism

*Ana Siljak (Queen's University)*

**1:10pm-2:25pm**

## **LUNCH**

**2:25pm-3:40pm**

## **CLASSIC RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHERS AND SOME OF THEIR PROBLEMS**

*MIKHAIL EPSTEIN (EMORY UNIVERSITY), CHAIR*

Reality and Person: Viacheslav Ivanov, Nikolai Berdiaev, Semyon Frank, and Vladimir Lossky

*Daniele Serretti (ITC Luigi Donati, Fossombrone, Italy)*

Why Christ? Why not Kant? V. F. Ern's Christian Values against (the Symbol of) Kant

*Ondrej Marchevsky (University of Prešov, Slovakia)*

Totality, Teleology and Myth: Aleksei Losev and Errol E. Harris

*Vladimir L. Marchenkov (Ohio University)*

# WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE NEW ATHEISM? THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

**DAY 1 CONT.**

Friday, April 21  
The Great Room, 600 Haven Street

**4:05pm-5:05pm**

## **RUSSIAN CHALLENGES TO DARWINISM AND NATURALISM**

*DANIELA STEILA (UNIVERSITY OF TURIN), CHAIR*

In Search of a Harmonious Whole: Nikolai Strakhov's Organicist Critique of Darwinism

*Jillian Pignataro (Northwestern University)*

Divine Evolution and Spiritual Fact: Eurasianism's Challenge to Dawkins' Naturalism

*John Stachelski (Yale University)*

**5:30pm-6:30pm**

## **RELIGION, LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

*RANDALL A. POOLE (COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA), CHAIR*

*Sobornost'* and Law: A Problem and a Discovery in Modern Russian Thought

*Paul Valliere (Butler University)*

Patriarch Tikhon as Defender of Human Rights and the Freedom of Conscience

*Scott Kenworthy (Miami University of Ohio)*

**7:00pm**

## **DINNER**

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: DOSTOEVSKY, BULGAKOV, AND THE DEVIL: ON EVIL AND CREATION**

*DR. DAVID BENTLEY HART (UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME)*

REZA'S RESTAURANT, 1557 SHERMAN AVE. EVANSTON

# WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE NEW ATHEISM? THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

**DAY 2**

Saturday, April 22  
Harris Hall Room 108, 1881 Sheridan Rd.

**8:15am-9:00am**

## **BREAKFAST**

**9:00am-10:15am**

### **RELIGION AND SOCIETY: SLAVOPHILISM, SOCIALISM, CONVERSATISM**

*PAUL VALLIERE (BUTLER UNIVERSITY), CHAIR*

Religious Belief and Mutual Obligation in the Age of Capital: Some Observations on Carlyle's "Gospel of Work," Old Believer Merchants, and Slavophile Entrepreneurs  
*Frances Nethercott (University of St. Andrews)*

Bloody Sunday and a Transposed Transcendence in Gor'kii's Spiritual Socialist Literature  
*Aaron M. Thompson (University of Virginia)*

Constructing the "Credo of a Conservative": Aleksandr Shchipkov's *The Discourse of Orthodoxy* and the Popularization of Religious Philosophy in Contemporary Russia  
*Jacob Lassin (Miami University of Ohio)*

**10:35am-12:05pm**

### **DOSTOEVSKY ON NATURE, HUMANITY, AND DIVINITY**

*PAUL CONTINO (PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY), CHAIR*

"Every Blade of Grass": The Divine Language of Nature in Dostoevsky  
*Amy Singleton Adams (College of the Holy Cross)*

Theandricity and the Healing of a Desecrated Earth: Notes on Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*  
*Octavian Gabor (Methodist College)*

Bakhtin, Bergson, and Dostoevsky: A Time-Sense Reading of Blazhenstvo in Dostoevsky's *White Nights*  
*Michael Ossorgin (Fordham University)*

Sympathy from the Devil: Dostoevsky's Compassionate Approach to Atheism and Its Contemporaneous Application  
*Peter Winsky (University of Southern California)*

**12:05pm-1:30pm**

## **LUNCH**

# WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE NEW ATHEISM? THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

**DAY 2 CONT.**

Saturday, April 22  
Harris Hall Room 108, 1881 Sheridan Rd.

**1:30pm-2:45pm**

## **GOGOL AND TOLSTOY ON RELIGIOUS FAITH** CARYL EMERSON (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY), CHAIR

Gogol's Phobias or Gogolphobia? How Gogol's Understanding of Christ and the Soul Continues to Haunt Religious Belief and Unbelief

*Brad Underwood (Northwestern University)*

In Search of the Living God: Tolstoy and Romantic Spinozism

*Lina Steiner (University of Bonn)*

The Mystical in Russian Literature and Thought: Gogol and Dostoevsky vs. Pushkin and Tolstoy

*Victoria Juharyan (UC Davis)*

**3:00pm-4:00pm**

## **SERGIUS BULGAKOV: LIFE, DEATH, AND BEAUTY** VLADIMIR L. MARCHENKOV (OHIO UNIVERSITY), CHAIR

The Artist's Podvig: Vladimir Nabokov and Sergii Bulgakov

*Daniel Lightsey (Southern Methodist University)*

The Corpse of Beauty: Sergii Bulgakov on Dostoevsky via Picasso

*Denis Zhernokleyev (Vanderbilt University)*

**4:15pm-5:15pm**

## **RUSSIAN ORTHODOX THOUGHT BEYOND RUSSIA** SCOTT KENWORTHY (MIAMI UNIVERSITY OF OHIO), CHAIR

Reginald Wright Kauffman's *A Man of Little Faith*: A Russian Orthodox Novel for the Jazz Age  
*Aram G. Sarkisian (Washington University in St. Louis)*

The Resonance of Russian Religious Thought in Catholicism

*Paul Contino (Pepperdine University)*

**7:00pm**

## **DINNER: PLENARY SESSION: THE "NEW ATHEISM" AND THE RUSSIAN LITERARY ETHICAL TRADITION** SUSAN MCREYNOLDS (NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY), CHAIR

Lenin's New Atheism

*Gary Saul Morson (Northwestern University)*

The New (α?)Theism of Vasily Grossman and Emmanuel Levinas

*Steven Shankman (University of Oregon)*

# WHAT'S NEW ABOUT THE NEW ATHEISM? THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

**DAY 3**

*Sunday, April 23  
Harris Hall 108, 1881 Sheridan Rd.*

**9:00am-10:00am**

**BREAKFAST**

**10:00am-11:15am**

## **METAPHYSICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SEARCHING IN LITERATURE: FOUR CONTEMPORARY WRITERS**

*ROBIN FEUER MILLER (BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY), CHAIR*

"It is as clear as the fact that it is raining": Nabokov's Theological Failures  
*Erik Eklund (University of Nottingham)*

Yuri Mamleev Considered as an Autarchic Metaphysicist  
*Charlie Smith (University of Illinois at Chicago)*

Repossessions: Tatiana Goricheva and Manuela Gretkowska  
*Joanna Burdzel (Harvard University)*