

Dostoevsky Between Theory and Practice, Fantasy and Terror



**Dr. Caryl Emerson
of Princeton University**

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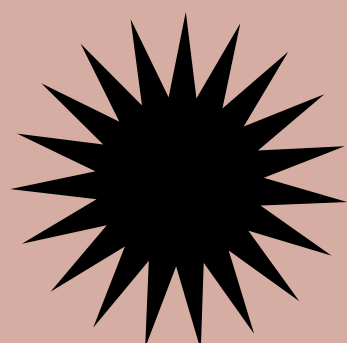
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**Center for Slavic, East European
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World-class writers date in different ways, and to different depths. Dostoevsky's bicentennial gives us the chance to ponder his continuing extraordinary influence. Did he "predict" our current 21st-century catastrophes, or is he simply such a fabulous thinker and storyteller that we now perceive our catastrophes in Dostoevskian terms? If "applied Tolstoy" gives rise to Gandhi and Martin Luther King—spiritually luminous messengers—then "applied Dostoevsky" has always been darker, less idealistic, less ecumenical, indeed, perhaps even demonic. And yet Dostoevsky is far and away the funnier, more flexible writer, with a comic genius that seems stitched in to his tragic scenarios.

The intent of this talk is to illustrate how a rising generation of Dostoevsky scholars is pushing back against some of Bakhtin's now-canonical judgments about this great writer. It will also pay tribute to two recently departed colleagues, Professors Nina Perlina and Robert Bird, who contributed profoundly to our understanding of Dostoevsky's quest.



**November 5
12-1:30 PM
Hagerty Hall 180**

