

Title: The Transcendent Ouroboros: Mamleev's Aesthetics of the Body
Author: Amanda Allan, Northwestern University

The most obvious features of Mamleev's fictional prose are its program of metaphysics and its grotesque description of the body and carnality. This presentation aims to understand the potential roles of the body in Mamleev's metaphysics by looking at how characters in his novella, *Shatuny*, relate to their bodies. As a border territory between the self and the outside world, characters in *Shatuny* provide a spectrum of bodily means of negotiating and comprehending the self. Mamleev writes in *Sud'ba Bytiya* that although "the body is...one of the lowest levels of the 'I'...there is no fundamental negation of it. The body is not repudiated; it may be considered to be an absolute instance of I-ness." The question therefore becomes: when is the body useful to the transcendent self and when is it an earthly skin to be shed?

This discussion will be couched in a brief glance at Mamleev's concept of the "Metaphysical I." Though Mamleev's work is always in dialogue with many other thinkers – Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bataille, Dostoevsky, and Ramana Maharshi, to name a few – he has written extensively on his specific version of metaphysical solipsism. Select components from his own writings on metaphysics and cosmography, e.g. the destructive and transcendent self, the effect of the limits of human reason on earthly existence, will be brought in to contextualize the discussion of Mamleev's project in *Shatuny*.