

Dimitry's Shade : A Reading of Alexander Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*

J. Douglas Clayton



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Dimitry's Shade : A Reading of Alexander Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* J. Douglas Clayton In an ambitious reinterpretation of the premier work of Russia's national poet, J. Douglas Clayton reads *Boris Godunov* as the expression of Alexander Pushkin's thinking about the Russian state, especially the Russian state of his own time (some two hundred years distant from the events of the play), and even his own place within that state. Here we see how the play marks a sharp break with the Decembrists and Pushkin's own youthful liberalism, signaling its author's emergence as a Russian conservative. *Boris Godunov*, Clayton argues, can be best understood as an ideologically conservative defense of autocracy.

Sure to shock readers even as it persuades them, *Dimitry's Shade* reveals, incarnated in *Boris Godunov*, those three elements that were to become the slogan of Nicholas's Russia in the 1830s: autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality.

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