

From the *Slavic Review* Editorial Board:

Slavic Review publishes signed letters to the editor by individuals with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be restricted to one paragraph of no more than 250 words; comment on an article or forum should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. When we receive many letters on a topic, some letters will be published on the *Slavic Review* web site with opportunities for further discussion. Letters may be submitted by e-mail, but a signed copy on official letterhead or with a complete return address must follow. The editor reserves the right to refuse to print, or to publish with cuts, letters that contain personal abuse or otherwise fail to meet the standards of debate expected in a scholarly journal.

To the Editor:

J. Douglas Clayton's review of *The Uncensored Boris Godunov: The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy* (*Slavic Review*, vol. 66, no. 1) promised to "summarize the strengths and weaknesses" of our book. Disappointingly, Clayton failed to deliver on that promise, instead launching into a harsh attack on the book's basic premise. He misrepresented our findings, drew erroneous conclusions, and neglected to mention that his own monograph arguing for Boris Godunov as a conservative defender of autocracy received considerable critical attention in our book. There are some fine insights in Clayton's book, but our interpretation of Aleksandr Pushkin's play begins from a very different reading of Pushkin's intent, both as an author and as a historian. Clayton opened his review by claiming that there is no need for our book because it is possible to reconstruct Pushkin's *komediiia* from the appendixes and footnotes of the old Academy edition of Boris Godunov and, in any case, Pushkin did not use the term *komediiia* to mean "comedy." For this reason, he argued, the chapters by Sergei Fomichev and Caryl Emerson exploring the comic elements in Pushkin's comedy are "somewhat beside the point." In fact, the various uses of the word *komediiia* are discussed by all the authors in detail. Clayton also claimed that Pushkin was not interested in historical accuracy and always viewed the *narod* as "passive and impotent." On this point we respectfully disagree. Clayton rather unexpectedly concluded his review by declaring that it "is helpful to have the urtext published in this form." At least we can agree on that.

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Professor Clayton does not wish to reply.