



A Nation Astray: Nomadism and National Identity in Russian Literature

Ingrid Anne Kleespies

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The metaphor of the nomad may at first seem surprising for Russia given its history of serfdom, travel restrictions, and strict social hierarchy. But as the imperial center struggled to tame a vast territory with ever-expanding borders, ideas of mobility, motion, travel, wandering, and homelessness came to constitute important elements in the discourse about national identity. For Russians of the nineteenth century national identity was anything but stable.

This rootlessness is at the core of *A Nation Astray*. Here, Ingrid Anne Kleespies traces the image of the nomad and its relationship to Russian national identity through the debates and discussion of literary works by seminal writers like Karamzin, Pushkin, Chaadaev, Goncharov, and Dostoevsky. Appealing to students of Russian Romanticism, nationhood, and identity, as well as general readers interested in exile and displacement as elements of the human condition, this interdisciplinary work illuminates the historical and philosophical underpinnings of a basic aspect of Russian self-determination: the nomadic constitution of the Russian nation.

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