

The Museum of Russian Art

I'm not kidding—it's coming to our unlikely neighborhood—
at the corner of 35W and Diamond Lake Road—they are
building—*The Museum of Russian Art*—in the old Mayflower

Church—which later became—*The Enga Funeral Home*—so—
there are spirits enough—imbedded in the plaster—enough—
spirits—and voices—to hover around the deep—jeweled—mystery—

of *The Black Madonna*—or—*Christ Pantocrator*—with all the gold—
surrounding the faces—to focus—the devotion of anyone looking—
or—they might have—Kandinsky's funny horsemen—stepping up—

that *Blue Mountain*—or why not—a Fabergé egg—right here—
in South Minneapolis—opening under our eyes—*unclasped?*
I have this dream—I'm a fidgety old man—wanting to move—

so I walk down Diamond Lake Road—*along the Diamond Path*
of the Czars—to the roaring freeway—and none of the noise will
bother me—it will be just like the locomotive—screaching—

to a stop—*The Astapovo Station*—where the old man had to get off—
now freed of his bed sheets—now on that final quest—to get away—
that itching—of life—to get to—where?—where faces are lit in gold.

-Timothy J. Nolan



however, that time-space relationships, or what Bakhtin describes in terms of the chronotope, took on a practical significance they probably wouldn't have otherwise held. As a form of romance/fairy tale, the time of the story is basically empty: Events, such as the routines of Alyosha's life at the merchant's, are not etiologically determined. Indeed, unlike the rest of us, Alyosha seems blithely immune to consequences, standing as he somehow does outside of causality; he never really changes. Thus the story could be temporally transplanted to the Depression era without loss of narrative impact. Spatially, the story is pretty abstract: It could occur anywhere, giving us license to film it in New Hampshire at Canterbury Shaker Village (or in

L.A., for that matter, had we opted to do so). That couldn't be said, for instance, of *Eugene Onegin*, *A Hero of Our Time*, or *Oblomov*, precise sociological studies that are both historically and geographically quite specific. The philosophical connection between Tolstoy and the Shakers, or the landscape similarities between Russia and New England, were simply fortuitous coincidences.

TSJ: Tolstoy was clearly not your only Russian influence. Can you say a bit about some of the models you had for making this film?

PS: I'm especially devoted to the films of Andrei Tarkovsky (*The Mirror* being my favorite), and the outdoor and indoor scenes owe much to the emotional moods