The Woman in the Window
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Commerce, Consensual Fantasy, and the Quest for Masculine Virtue in the Russian Novel

Russell Scott Valentino
For Yasuko
woman in my window

And for Peter and Dante
just a little shorter
Property—the material foundation of both personality and government—has ceased to be real and has become not merely mobile but imaginary. Specialised, acquisitive and post-civic man has ceased to be virtuous, not only in the formal sense that he has become the creature of his own hopes and fears; he does not even live in the present, except as constituted by his fantasies concerning a future.  

—J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History*

There are now two great nations of the world which, starting from different points, seem to be advancing toward the same goal: the Russians and the Anglo-Americans.  

—Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Human beings love not so much the possibility of doing or not doing something as the possibility of talking about various things in words agreed upon among themselves. Such are the words considered to be very important among them. Such is the essence of the word *mine*.

—Leo Tolstoy, “Kholstomer: The Story of a Horse”

And what is good, Phaedrus, and what is not good? Need we ask anyone to tell us these things?  

—Plato, *Phaedrus*