conveyed in translation. By and large, though, the translation is excellent and readable, and pays careful attention to Baratynsky's epistolary style.

JAMES WEST
University of Washington

WOMEN IN TOLSTOY: THE IDEAL AND THE EROTIC. By *Ruth Crego Benson*. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1973. xii, 141 pp. $6.95.

Tolstoy early concluded that the chief enemy of his own and his heroes' moral aspirations was woman's nature, unless subdued by marriage and motherhood. Later in life he doubted even this solution. No one acquainted with Tolstoy can question the centrality of this theme to both his biography and his works. The special merits of Ruth Crego Benson's essay on the double image of woman in Tolstoy are its lucidity and singleness of aim. In view of the quantity of writing on Anna Karenina, if not Natasha Rostova, the author's statement that "most Tolstoyan critics have written chiefly about his heroes" may raise some question. Nonetheless, an intelligent, sharply focused treatment such as this one is welcome. Using journals, letters, and recollections to establish Tolstoy's mentality—indeed the traditional Christian one, rigorously applied—she studies its expression in Tolstoy's literary work by way of theme, character portrayal, and novelistic structure. Besides the two great novels, the author has chosen five works (*The Cossacks*, *Family Happiness*, the late *Kreutzer Sonata*, "The Devil," and "Father Sergius"), representing the "optimum of thematic relevance and artistic excellence." Interesting is the effort to rescue *Family Happiness* from certain influential, if obtuse, negative critical opinions. Yet the argument that male writers and critics are unlikely to regard "female experience as the legitimate substance of moving literature" suffers in the light of Chekhov's achievement. Nonetheless, the author's own critical analysis is lively and perspicacious.

There are small inaccuracies and oddities. Why are *Fathers and Sons* and *Asya*, not *On the Eve*, used as examples of Turgenev's attitudes toward the "woman question"? And, for all of his distaste for the lady, Tolstoy would have had not George Sand but her heroines dragged through the streets of Petersburg. As for the central subject matter, certainly further development could be given the theme. But need it? The author set out to make a point—energetically, incisively—and most readers will agree she has made it.

JOAN DELANEY GROSSMAN
University of California, Berkeley

OBLOMOV AND HIS CREATOR: THE LIFE AND ART OF IVAN GONCHAROV. By *Milton Ehre*. Studies of the Russian Institute, Columbia University. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973. xi, 295 pp. $14.50.

The main purpose of Milton Ehre's book, as defined in the preface, is "to reach beyond the standard clichés of Goncharov criticism to a contemporary reading of his art." The book succeeds splendidly in doing precisely this. It is an outstanding work, certainly one of the best American studies on Russian literature. In cliché-ridden Russian criticism, only Gogol may have fared worse than Goncharov, who did not even benefit from the Symbolist and Formalist respite. André Mazon's and Evgenii Liatsky's books had merit, but they are now obsolete in most respects. More recently, "contemporary readings" of Goncharov's masterpiece have