

I do not think it unkind to add that the lack of such a collection has not caused much alarm among students of Russian literature until this point, and I doubt whether the present collection will cause many to revise their low opinion of Russian literature (and ideas) in the eighteenth century. Indeed, I wonder whether the rise in interest in eighteenth-century Russian literature—which the editor catalogs with obvious pride in his introduction—amounts to little more than the fact that graduate students find the period a mine of manageable dissertation topics. It is surely significant that very few mature scholars, in this country at least, continue to specialize in the period. Perhaps eighteenth-century Russian literature has been unjustly slighted and deserves further consideration, but a cogent case is not made by its champions in this volume.

The book illustrates a growing trend in scholarly publication: it has soft covers and is produced by photo-offset from a typescript without right-hand margins.

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IVAN GONCHAROV: HIS LIFE AND HIS WORKS. By *Vsevolod Setchkarev*. Colloquium Slavicum, Beiträge zur Slavistik, vol. 4. Würzburg, Germany: Jal-Verlag, 1974. vii, 339 pp. DM 53, paper.

Vsevolod Setchkarev's monograph on Ivan Goncharov represents a comprehensive and long-needed study of one of Russia's major literary figures. Western Slavists will be grateful for this detailed, informative work. Especially valuable for the English reader are the succinct accounts and shrewd analyses of Goncharov's lesser-known works—his early and late prose, which, for the most part, has been unjustly neglected by Western specialists.

The book is arranged chronologically, following Goncharov's literary career according to his biographical data. This order gives a peculiar impression of a drawn-out, somewhat indolent unfolding of events which reflect and parallel Goncharov's laboriously slow literary evolution. As might be expected from such a monograph, each stage of Goncharov's development is given equal space and attention. Setchkarev raises many interesting points to which a short review cannot possibly render justice. His treatment of Shtolts and Olga in *Oblomov* is noteworthy: he rejects the hackneyed notion of their stiff "woodenness" and instead offers a convincing analysis of their quite modern existential approach to the problems of life. Setchkarev also succeeds in proving that Goncharov, not unlike Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, presents a complete and consistent philosophical and ethical system, which accounts for the lasting impression of his *oeuvre* on world literature. Goncharov's keen awareness of the metaphysical problem of existential boredom is propounded again in the stimulating chapter on *The Precipice*, "artistically and philosophically . . . [the] most relevant work" of the writer (p. 203). Contrary to the opinion of Goncharov's "liberal" contemporaries and present-day Soviet critics, Setchkarev points to Tushin, Vera's faithful suitor in *The Precipice*, as the "unconscious new man," a real representative of the new generation, "a man formed by life itself whom Russia needs" (p. 245).

Setchkarev also demonstrates Goncharov's potential as a playwright and as a capable essayist who left a substantial heritage of interesting articles, feuilletons, and book reviews, some of which still await meticulous research for proper identification and evaluation. The extremely useful bibliographical remarks and indexes listing Goncharov's works and proper names contribute to the value of the study as a basic source book, possibly the best available in Goncharov scholarship.

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