



Oblomov

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Ivan A. Goncharov

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Oblomov is the best known novel by Russian writer Ivan Goncharov, first published in 1859. Oblomov is also the central character of the novel, often seen as the ultimate incarnation of the superfluous man, a symbolic character in 19th-century Russian literature. Oblomov is a young, generous nobleman who seems incapable of making important decisions or undertaking any significant actions. Spoiled as a child to the point of not even being able to put on his own socks, Oblomov is unprepared to deal with the smallest difficulty of adult life. In his fevered dreams he sees the words "Oblomovstchina" ("Oblomovism" or in this translation "the disease of Oblomovka") in flaming letters on the ceiling putting a name to the disability of which he is all too aware. This romantic novel was considered a satire of Russian nobility whose social and economic function was increasingly in question in mid-nineteenth century Russia, and from it the word "Oblomovstchina" entered the Russian vocabulary. "Oblomov" is one of the greatest Russian classics, and has never before been translated into English. It constitutes a study of a perfectly new type in Russian fiction of a man who, though plunged in a slough of apathy from which nothing can arouse him, is yet a man of fine and noble instincts. What he utterly lacks and is ruined by, is his total lack of will-power. Mr. MAURICE BARING says : " In Oblomov Goncharov created a type which has become immortal, and Oblomov has passed into the Russian tongue, just as Tartuffe has passed into the French language, or Pecksniff into the English tongue."

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Binding: Paperback

Review

The combination of Goncharov's edits and Schwartz's translation left me thumbing back to the copyright page to confirm 1862, not 1962, as this translation sparkles with contemporary lyricism and humor."Karen Vanuska, *Quarterly Conversation* -- *Quarterly Conversation*

Oblomov is a truly great work, the likes of which one has not seen for a long, long time. I am in rapture over Oblomov and keep rereading it.Leo Tolstoy -- Leo Tolstoy

"[Goncharov is] ten heads above me in talent.Anton Chekhov -- Anton Chekhov

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"Offers a fine example of sly and compassionate satire, a very rare genre indeed"--Michael Wood, *London Review of Books*--*London Review of Books*

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--Bookforum From the Inside Flap

The sly, subversive side of the nineteenth-century Russian literary character -- the one which represents such a contrast to the titanic exertions of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky -- was most fully realized in Ivan Goncharov's 1859 masterpiece, *OBLOMOV*. This magnificent farce about a gentleman who spends the better part of his life in bed is a reminder of the extent to which humor, in the hands of a comic genius, can be used to explore the absurdities and injustices of a social order. About the Author

The Russian novelist IVAN GONCHAROV (1812-1891) was born in Simbirsk, Russia. He served for thirty years as a minor government official and traveled widely. His short stories, critiques, essays, and memoirs were published posthumously in 1919. *Oblomov* was his most popular and critically acclaimed novel during his lifetime.

MARIAN SCHWARTZ has translated Russian literature for over thirty years. She has published over two dozen book-length translations, along with twenty issues of *Russian Studies in Literature*. She is the principal English translator of the works of Nina Berberova and is a past president of the American Literary Translators Association.

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