



The Literary Criticism of F. R. Leavis

By R. P. Bilan

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This book is an attempt at a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the many strands of Leavis's work, emphasising the basic unity of his ideas. The literary criticism needs to be understood in the context of his wider social concerns, and so this study begins with a discussion of his views on society and culture, explaining his critique of modern civilisation and the importance he attributed to the values of the cultural tradition and to the educated public who are the effective embodiment of those values. From here, Professor Bilan moves on to consider the basic ideas informing Leavis's criticism of both poetry and the novel. Attention is drawn to the kind of criteria that Leavis employed in his writings and, in particular, to the sense in which they can be described as 'moral'. Professor Bilan shows that Leavis's preoccupations persisted and evolved, and that the principle underlying them is not, as is often thought to be the case, a moral one, but rather a religious one, which is clarified in the closing argument of the book.

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