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The virtual suppression of explicit ethical and evaluative discourse by current literary theory can be seen as the momentary triumph of a sceptical post-Enlightenment reflective tradition over others vital to a full account of human and literary worth. In *Ethics, theory and the novel*, David Parker brings together recent developments in moral philosophy and literary theory. He questions many currently influential movements in literary criticism, showing that their silences about ethics are as damaging as the political silences of Leavisism and New Criticism in the 1950s and 1960s. He goes on to examine *Middlemarch*, *Anna Karenina*, and three novels by D. H. Lawrence, and explores the consequences for major literary works of the suppression of either the Judeo-Christian or the Romantic-expressivist ethical traditions. Where any one tradition becomes a master-narrative, he argues, imaginative literature ceases to have the deepest interest and relevance for us. Overall, this book is an essay in a new evaluative discourse, the implications of which go far beyond the particular works it analyses.

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DAVID PARKER

Australian National University



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For Jean, Fabian, and Tim

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