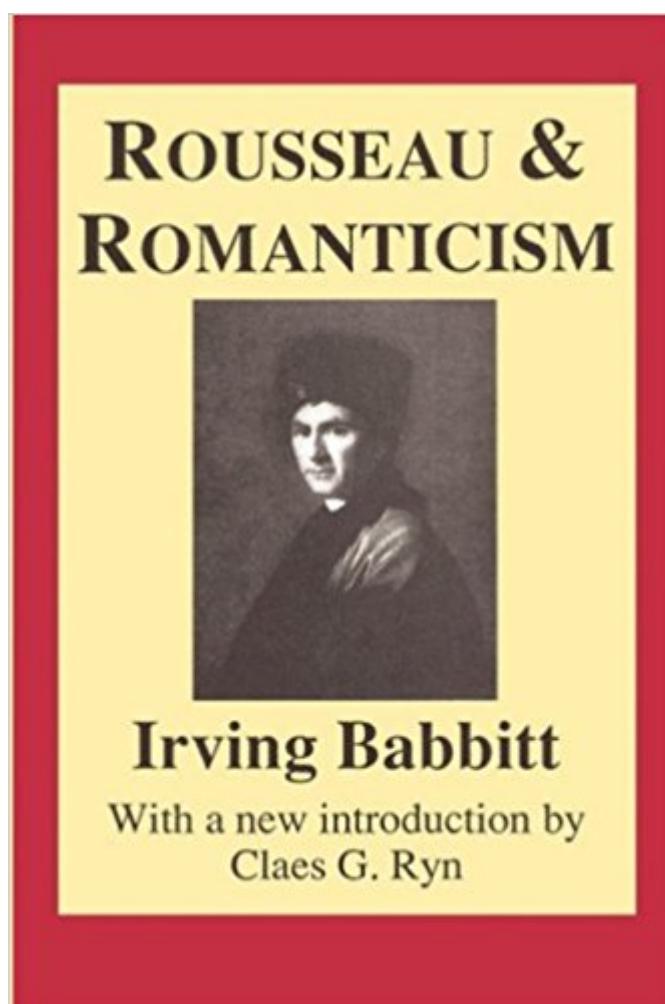


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Rousseau And Romanticism (Library Of Conservative Thought)



Synopsis

This volume is the best-known and most widely discussed work of the influential scholar and critic Irving Babbitt (1865-1933), intellectual leader of the movement known as the New Humanism. It is also the work that best conveys the ethical and aesthetic core of his thought. Broad in scope, it examines a variety of manifestations of romanticism and presents a typology of the imaginative inclinations of that movement. Rousseau is analyzed as paradigmatic of the ethical and aesthetic sensibility that is replacing the classical and Christian outlook in the Western world. For Babbitt, works of imagination are integral to human life in general. He explores romanticism with a view to its implications for Western civilization. Babbitt identifies serious ethical, religious, aesthetic, and philosophical problems in the modern world, but he also shows how remedies to those problems must incorporate the best insights of modernity. First published in 1919, the book is strikingly relevant to today's discussion of the crisis of American and Western culture and education. Babbitt anticipated and analyzed dangerous cultural trends whose consequences are now widely bemoaned. He applies to these phenomena an intellectual breadth and depth rare today. At the end of the twentieth century his prescriptions for dealing with the central problems of Western civilization have acquired an acute urgency. At a time of much renewed interest in Rousseau, Babbitt's book offers a penetrating commentary that challenges widely held beliefs and interpretations. Graced with a lengthy and wide-ranging new introduction by Claes G. Ryn, *Rousseau and Romanticism* is simultaneously a work of literary history, criticism, and a theory of civilization. In addressing its special subject, this classic study reflects the main themes of Babbitt's thought, making it representative of his work as a whole. Ryn explicates and critically assesses Babbitt's central ideas, refutes widely circulating misinterpretations, and demonstrates the relevance of his writing in the intellectual and cultural circumstances of today.

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Customer Reviews

“There are many ways to re-read a classic. One can go to it to participate again in something permanent. One can use it as a measure of one’s own growth or decline. One can mine from it that which is useful for enlightening the present cultural situation. Irving Babbitt’s Rousseau and Romanticism repays re-reading in all of those ways. . . . Rousseau and Romanticism is an enhancement and a subversion of postmodern discourses. Babbitt answers Deleuze’s penchant for intensities with a celebration of amplitude.”

•Michael A. Weinstein, Humanitas

Irving Babbitt (1865-1933) was professor of French literature at Harvard University. He is a noted literary critic who helped start the New Humanism movement in the early twentieth century. His numerous books include *On Being Creative*, *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*, and *Literature and the American College*. Claes G. Ryn is professor of politics at the Catholic University of America where he was chairman of his department. He has taught also at the University of Virginia and Georgetown University. He is chairman of the National Humanities Institute and editor of the journal *Humanitas*. In 2000 he gave the Distinguished Foreign Scholar Lectures at Beijing University. His many books include *A Common Human Ground*, *Will, Imagination, and Reason* (2nd., exp. ed. published by Transaction), and *Democracy and the Ethical Life*.

Not Babbitt’s greatest work. Well-written, but repetitive and sonorous. Especially for those who’ve read Democracy and Leadership, which is a far superior book. Babbitt should be read, but not this volume.

A very comprehensive account of the influence of Rousseau on the Romantic Movement. His influence extended in many directions, including literature, philosophy and sociology. (This book is an edited paperback)

THIS IS A CLASSIC AND NO ONE SEES ROUSSEAU MORE CLEARLY THAN IRVING BABBITT.

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