George Crowder deftly expounds the links between liberty and pluralism in Berlin’s work, which he subjects to a sympathetic yet penetrating critique. In so doing, he offers an important interpretation of Berlin, and makes a substantive contribution of his own to our understanding of this topic.

Professor Richard Bellamy, Academic Director ECPR, Department of Government, University of Essex

This is an impressive book which dominates the existing critical studies of Berlin.

Dr David Miller, Nuffield College, University of Oxford

Isaiah Berlin: Liberty and Pluralism is the most balanced, comprehensive, and insightful examination of Berlin’s thought yet written. Everyone interested in the history and future of liberal thought can profit from Crowder’s painstaking study.

William A. Galston, Saul I. Stern Professor of Civic Engagement and Director, Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, University of Maryland

Isaiah Berlin was one of the leading political thinkers of the twentieth century, and his work continues to attract admiration and debate. George Crowder provides both an accessible introduction to Berlin’s ideas and an original contribution to political theory.

Berlin’s range of interests and learning was vast but united by a single overarching project: the uncovering of the conceptual roots of twentieth-century totalitarianism. He traces these through three levels of analysis: the distortion of the concept of freedom by thinkers such as Rousseau, Fichte, Hegel and Marx; the contest between the Enlightenment and the Counter-Enlightenment; and moral monism, the idea that all ethical and political questions can be answered by reference to a single formula. Against monism, Berlin asserts the claims of value pluralism, which he aligns with a politics of liberal moderation.

In this new assessment, Crowder argues that Berlin’s political thought is exciting and powerful but also marked by a tension between its liberal and pluralist elements. Crowder goes on to suggest how that tension can be resolved by arguments that go beyond the case actually presented by Berlin while remaining within the spirit of his general outlook.

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