

BOOK REVIEW

Freedom and its Betrayal
Six Enemies of Human Liberty

Isaiah Berlin
Edited by Henry Hardy

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This volume is the second impression of the original work undertaken by Henry Hardy an executive of Isaiah Berlin's literary trustees. The book comprises an Introduction and six chapters each explaining the philosophy and application by of a notable philosopher who was not in favour of the liberal theories and practices we enjoy today. The contents will be of special interest to students of philosophy and ethics.

Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997) was an outstanding academic of the 20th century. I have learnt so much from reading this book under review and will incorporate some of these details into my lectures on ethics to my graduate students. Berlin was an erudite scholar, who delivered lectures in a thick accent and at great speed. Berlin's use of the English language was astounding, the more so, when one considers that he arrived in England at age eleven, from Latvia via Russia with no ability to speak, read or write English.

Introduction This chapter explains how Berlin was the first to broadcast these topics on early BBC radio. Recording of only one of the lectures remains available. Berlin's notes were later written up in the form of lectures for delivery at Oxford, England and at Brin Maw College in America. Berlin was asked to write these up in book form, but with his busy schedule he never did. His secretary and faithful friend of many years, Russian, Anna Kallin, (1896-1984) did all Berlin's secretarial work and facilitated his publishing during her lifetime. The book under review is dedicated to her *in memorium*.

Chapter I Helvetius: was a wealthy, amiable person well-connected at the highest levels of aristocracy. His wealth came from his profession as a tax farmer. He was an enlightened thinker who proposed the idea of Utilitarianism, ahead of Jeremy Bentham, who is widely credited with the development of that ethical philosophy

Chapter II Rousseau: is credited with creating in his book "*Confessions*" a book very difficult for anyone to put down, a book which has had more effect upon readers than almost any similar work of literature." (Berlin, 2013, p27).

Chapter III Fichte: opens with a discussion of the different understanding of the terms "freedom" and "liberty" held in Europe, England and America in the early 1800's. The chapter then moves on to a discussion of Kant's ethics of duties and rights. The most important qualities according to Fichte being integrity and dedication.

Chapter IV Hegel: according to Berlin “had the greatest influence on contemporary thought” (Berlin 2013, p 74). Followers of Hegel claim that previously “where they saw things from the outside, they now saw things from the inside.” (Berlin op.cit.)

Chapter V Saint-Simon: is quoted by Berlin to be “the greatest of all the prophets of the twentieth century.” “His writings and life were confused and even chaotic He rote badly - with flashes of intuition mingled with immense tracts of naïve and fantastic imagining (Berlin 2013, p105)

Chapter VI Maistre: according to Berlin “was a very frightening figure to many of his contemporaries because of what he wrote rather than because of what he was.” The important years of his life were spent in the service of the King of Sardinia, and at the court of St. Petersburg (Berlin, 2013, p.131)

Conclusion This book is highly recommended to faculty and students of philosophy and ethics who are curious to understand beyond details provided in traditional texts. Berlin has read and researched in great depth across several languages and brought to the light details which have escaped most other contemporary researchers.