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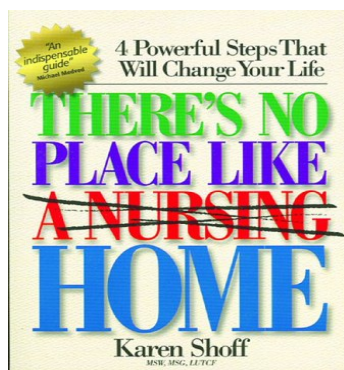
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The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays

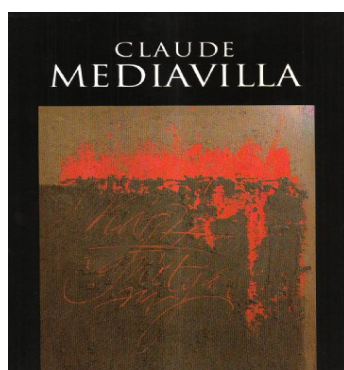
Isaiah Berlin was one of the leading thinkers of our time and one of its finest writers. The Proper Study of Mankind brings together his most celebrated writing: here the reader will find Berlin's famous essay on Tolstoy, "The Hedgehog and the Fox"; his penetrating portraits of contemporaries from Pasternak and Akhmatova to Churchill and Roosevelt; his essays on liberty and his exposition of pluralism; his defense of philosophy and history against assimilation to scientific method; and his brilliant studies of such intellectual originals as Machiavelli, Vico, and Herder.

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"HANDLE IT" is an Autobiography beginning with Joy's early childhood into its present time. She is forced to "handle" whatever situation that comes her way. At 8 years old she's already living in a "survival for the moment" mode. Her past continued to influence her future in a very harmful and regr

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What others say about this ebook:

Review 1:

Never ordered.

Review 2:

I didn't know Isaiah Berlin at all until the mid' 1990's, when I took a subscription on the New York Review of Books. Berlin regularly published articles in it. I was immediately very impressed by his wise, personal and very authoritative way of thinking and looking at the world. Up until now I never read a larger work by his hand, so this anthology makes up for this neglect.

What strikes is that Berlin wasn't a systembuilder, he didn't develop a huge system of thinking nor introduced a new way of thinking. On the contrary, his articles more look like footnotes on certain phenomena, striking personalities and current affairs.

Nevertheless, his work has a relative strong homogeneity: Berlin seems to be the hero of the resistance against nominalistic thinking, the typical western view (since the Greeks) that reality is one and indivisible, and is seizable in a rational scheme. His strongest prose he uses in his battle against scientism, the conviction that the whole reality is comprehensible with scientific methods, and thus also is seizable. I can follow the arguments of Berlin, but to my conviction he has gone too far; he confines science a bit too much to positivism, and ignores the evolution of the past 50 years within science (where subjectivity and intuition have been integrated).

Berlin makes a very clear distinction between the sciences of nature and the sciences of men, and is most radical in his defense of the writing of history: this never can be a science, and scientific methods can only be used as auxiliary instruments. According to Berlin there is absolutely no room for patterns (leave alone laws) in history. Personally, I think he is way too radical in this, although I can understand his concerns.

In several articles Berlin states that rational (and especially scientific) thinking is too "meager" to seize the "thickness" (i.e. complex, multilayered) of reality. Instead he promotes intuition, a sense of reality and wisdom as more effective ways of dealing with reality. Again, I see what he means, but I have my doubts about where these "methods" can lead to.

In short: Berlin is a very impressive and challenging thinker, who questions a lot of what we still hold for evident. But I'm rather sceptic about what he has to offer instead.

Review 3:

Of course it warrants five stars. It is a compendium of Berlin's most widely beloved articles, a trove of treasures.

Review 4:

Helps to make philosophical sense of the modern world with clarity.

Review 5:

One of the Best books that I have read. Isaiah Berlin is a fountain of knowledge.

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