



The Roots of Romanticism (The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts)

Isaiah Berlin

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In *The Roots of Romanticism*, one of the twentieth century's most influential philosophers dissects and assesses a movement that changed the course of history. Brilliant, fresh, immediate, and eloquent, these celebrated Mellon Lectures are a bravura intellectual performance. Isaiah Berlin surveys the many attempts to define romanticism, distills its essence, traces its developments from its first stirrings to its apotheosis, and shows how it still permeates our outlook. He ranges over a cast of some of the greatest thinkers and artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Kant, Rousseau, Diderot, Schiller, the Schlegels, Novalis, Goethe, Blake, Byron, and Beethoven. The ideas and attitudes of these and other figures, Berlin argues, helped to shape twentieth-century nationalism, existentialism, democracy, totalitarianism, and our ideas about heroic individuals, self-fulfillment, and the exalted place of art.

This new edition, illustrated for the first time, also features a new foreword by philosopher John Gray, in which he discusses Berlin's belief that the influence of romanticism has been unpredictable and contradictory in the extreme, fuelling anti-liberal political movements but also reinvigorating liberalism; a revised text; and a new appendix that includes some of Berlin's correspondence about the lectures and the reactions to them.

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