

Shen, Ming-Cong, 'Anti-Procrustean Liberalism: On Isaiah Berlin's Anti-Monist Philosophy and Political Thought', Ph.D. thesis, Department of Political Science, National Yat-Sen University, 2013

Isaiah Berlin is an important twentieth-century political thinker. His concepts of freedom and pluralism are central to scholars of political theory. However, freedom and pluralism are only part of Berlin's thinking. There is also an anti-Procrusteanism running through his history of ideas, which criticises the 'three-legged stool' of the tradition of Western political thought, and the limits of rationalism and scientism. Berlin's pluralism comes from his anti-Procrusteanism, and is opposed to the monism of morals and values, but it does not mean that he is a relativist. In his political thought, Berlin rejected any theories which claimed that there can be a utopia without conflict, and this is the source of his concept of freedom. Berlin did not try to construct a complete and logical political theory, but emphasised contingency and political judgement in the real world. This dissertation attempts to distinguish human plurality and complexity from Berlin's anti-Procrusteanism.