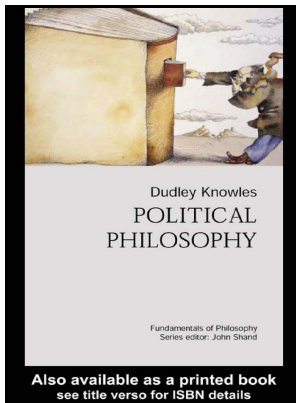


# Lives, liberties and the publicgood - new essays in political theory for Maurice Cranston

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Like the bourgeois, Cranston is a city man, respecting the fleeting nature of time, and so both aspiring and accomplished. Science is specifically human and conditional, the knowledge of consequences; prudence is shared with beasts and concerns fact. As Freedom of Nature is to be under no other restraint by the Law of Nature.

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau, A Discourse on Inequality, trans.

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This so-called freedom, justified by its emotional content, by its spontaneity, by its appeal to nature, is in fact the opposite of true freedom, which by definition transcends nature. The first consists of the rule of law, which is the basis of civil liberties. Here the audience, to be sure, is infinitely larger, the terms of discourse set in a format radically different in character from that of the classical dialogue in the strict sense.

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Can free government be strong? Why does Hobbes not specify which good and that it be truly a good? He shows how it is that, through its love of knowledge, philosophy teaches the city about its true but hitherto unrealised public good. The state tends no longer to be simply a political power, but becomes a social, economic, and even a cultural power - an all-encompassing power which tends with all its weight towards totalitarianism. Yet Locke in his invention had the aid of two political philosophers who were somehow but not altogether liberal, Machiavelli and Hobbes.

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It is wholly compatible with necessity. This said, however, we must refute another modern assumption which alters the time-honoured image of freedom.

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Barker Cambridge and New York, 1962 Book II, chs 1-7, 1260b27-1266a22; and, generally. But when these writers had in various ways established the primacy of legislative power, or the opportunity for legislative power to rule under an inexact and unexact divine law, it was found necessary to distinguish the executive from the legislative so as to make it clear that the legislative serves the rule of law, and does not permit the tyranny of political men.

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Liberty or death, cry others, to the applause of everyone. The problem is that the idea of civil or political justice is based on equality. From the prospective of his own city, Cranston looks outward to a wider world of other cities and distant states, reflecting on the enduring aspiration amongst peoples in all times and places to freedom and the claim of individuals everywhere to be treated as possessors of moral or human rights.

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Riches, honours, commands are goods that cannot be assured, hence are not assuredly good; so men are compelled to seek one good after another.

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