Despite these weaknesses, however, this book remains a well-informed contribution to the continuing policy debate on Iranian and American foreign policy.

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The Circle of Rights Expands: Modern Political Thought after the Reformation 1521 (Luther) to 1762 (Rousseau)
Arthur P. Monahan
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The Circle of Rights Expands is the final installment of Arthur P. Monahan’s trilogy on the development of “modern” political thought. It outlines the development of several core ideas of Western political thought, especially sovereignty and the right of resistance, from the renaissance to Rousseau. Virtually completed before his death, David Braybrooke has provided some light editing, though some sections toward the end of the book seem truncated.

As in his earlier volumes, Monahan does not aim to provide a comprehensive account of the political theory of his age but a selective one. He focuses on key themes and theorists of sovereignty, and on these grounds the book is in general successful. Neither is his treatment strictly linear; he treats overlapping continental and British writers separately. Monahan follows theorists like Skinner, arguing that we can’t read the past though the lens of the present. Somewhat circumspect about large-scale historical processes, Monahan sees the theories and theorists he treats in historical context as developed in relation to social struggles and not as a logical progression of ideas. Nor does Monahan have much sympathy for theories which link the emergence of these “rights” to modernity. The roots of these notions lie in the middle ages. Despite these reservations, he nonetheless sees a gradual expansion of the sphere of individual rights against the state.

The main focus of this volume, as with the previous one, is the relation between political sovereignty and the right of resistance. In the late Renaissance and Reformation this is expressed through struggles for religious tolerance, freedom of individual conscience, and the grounds (and right) under which a sovereign can be challenged. These political and religious struggles raise important questions about the scope of sovereign power. Monahan traces an arc running from Bodin (or slightly before him) to Locke and Rousseau in which one of the major problems of political theory is the development of a defensible theory of popular sovereignty. In short, Monahan’s thesis is as follows. The modern notion of sovereignty, which rests on a notion of unitary power to legislate and command, was part of a reaction to elements of late medieval and early modern thought that advocated of freedom of conscience (at least with regard to religious belief) and intimations that sovereignty required some form (however minimal) of popular consent. This defense of absolute monarchy and its privileges was the source from Bodin onward of the idea that sovereignty is both the will of the ruler and indivisible. This established the problem that others have to encounter.

This way of thinking is evidenced even in theorists in the social contract tradition, which stresses conditions of natural freedom. Though Althusius argues that authority is located in the popular sovereignty, the major trend of others, like Grotius and Pufendorf, the alienation of natural freedom is interpreted so that political authority and law-making authority derive from the unified sovereign and not from popular sovereignty based in that pre-existing freedom.

Despite a tip of the hat to the Diggers and Levelers, who advocated ideas of universal suffrage and advanced ideas of economic justice, Monahan argues that it is
only in the work of John Locke that notions of freedom of conscience, popular sovereignty and the right of resistance are firmly established. While Rousseau’s radical equation of sovereignty and popular will gets some consideration in the last chapter, his work is treated more as a coda to Locke than as an independent work.

Monahan’s book does not break a lot of new ground, but it is still rich in detail and sensitive to the nuances of theories. On one ground, however, I think that his stated goals are not fully achieved. While Monahan certainly makes an effort to locate political theories in the context of political struggles of the times, he operates with a narrower reading of those conflicts than he could. This is evident in his treatment of the more radical challenges to political order. While given a positive reading, the theoretical contributions of the English radicals are downplayed as are the more radical implications of Rousseau’s work. Similarly, the treatment of the theory that sovereignty is a reaction to religious conflicts, while helpful, leaves out its relation to the formation of the modern state. While Monahan may correctly point to that fact, culture (including political ideas) and society do not develop along a single connected axis. Monahan does not really get at the linkages between ideas and the mergers of the structures of modernity—what Weber called elective affinities.

The most contentious and telling aspect is Monahan’s treatment of Locke. Like many recent treatments that follow Skinner, he champions Locke as a modern liberal democrat and contains the obligatory dismissal of Macpherson’s reading of Locke as a possessive individual. But Monahan’s dismissal seems simplistic. He reads Macpherson as an extremely orthodox Marxist who reduces everything to economic property and sees his view of Locke as derived from this straw man. Whether every element of Macpherson’s reading of Locke holds up, it does not seem to me that he should be read as orthodox as his critics claim. Nor can Locke be read as advocating modern egalitarian democracy. In order to consider seriously the relation between social context and political theory, the relation between political and social democracy in Locke and in many of the thinkers Monahan treats needs a more thorough consideration.

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La famille et l’État dans La République de Jean Bodin
Ginevra Conti Odorisio
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Voici un ouvrage décapant sur Jean Bodin, connu dans l’histoire des idées politiques pour son rôle de théoricien de la souveraineté étatique. L’homme qui est réputé avoir jeté les bases pragmatiques de la tolérance religieuse, afin de maintenir la paix civile, nous apparaît ici sous un jour bien différent, à la lecture que nous en propose Ginevra Conti Odorisio, professeure de philosophie politique à l’Université de Rome III.

Elle présente un Bodin intolérant, misogynie et patriarcal et s’explique de la façon suivante : « [c] ’ est justement pour cerner les points aveugles de la théorie, ses contradictions, sa construction idéologique, que je me suis attachée à étudier le parallèle entre famille et État au fondement de la République » (8).

À l’appui de sa thèse centrale, cet ouvrage s’attache à « montrer que la place des femmes n’est pas cet impensé de la politique dénoncé par certains courants du féminisme de la différence. Il faut au contraire la lire comme l’envers, dûment pensé et réfléchi, de la politique exercée entre pairs » (10). Tout en reconnaissant le rôle majeur de Bodin dans l’établissement du principe de souveraineté, l’auteure cherche également à nous montrer que le principe de souveraineté étatique cache un autre phénomène, celui de la réitération de l’autorité patriarcale, et que ces deux éléments...