



Main Currents in Sociological Thought: Montesquieu, Comte, Marx, Tocqueville and the Sociologists and the Revolution of 1848

By Raymond Aron

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This is the first of Raymond Aron's magisterial two-volume treatment of the sociological tradition?perhaps the definitive work of its kind. The second volume treating Durkheim, Pareto, and Weber is scheduled to appear in spring 1998. More than a work of reconstruction, Aron's study is, at its deepest level, an engagement with the question of modernity: What constitutes the essence of the new modern order that, having emerged in the eighteenth century, still forms the categories of our experience, sweeping us along toward an unknown destination? With his usual scrupulous fairness, Aron looks to the major social thinkers to discern how they answered this pressing question.

Volume 1 explores three traditions: the French liberal school of political sociology, represented by Montesquieu and Tocqueville; the Comtean tradition, anticipating Durkheim in its deemphasis of the political and its elevation of social unity and consensus; and the Marxists, who posited the struggle between classes and placed their faith in historical necessity. A foreword by the eminent French philosopher Pierre Manent highlights *Main Currents* as a unique contribution to political philosophy as well as the history of sociological thought, while Daniel J. Mahoney and Brian C. Anderson provide an introduction situating *Main Currents* within the corpus of Aron's work as a whole. This work is essential reading for philosophers, historians, sociologists, and political scientists.

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- Sales Rank: #1257445 in Books
- Published on: 1998-02-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .85" w x 5.98" l, 1.21 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 354 pages



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Editorial Review

Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: French

About the Author

Raymond Aron (1905-1983) was the foremost political and social theorist of post-World War II France known for his skeptical analyses of leftist ideologies. was well known in both the United States and United Kingdom, serving as Andrew D. White Professor-At-Large at Cornell University. He also taught at Columbia and Oxford. He authored more than forty books, including *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, and *The Imperial Republic*, all published in new editions by Transaction.

Daniel J. Mahoney is chair and professor of political science at Assumption College, Worcester, Massachusetts. He was the recipient of the Prix Raymond Aron Award, is currently associate editor of *Perspectives on Political Science*, and is book review editor of *Society*. His books include *The Liberal Political Science of Raymond Aron*; *Bertrand de Jouvenel: The Conservative Liberal and the Illusions of Modernity*; and *De Gaulle: Statesmanship, Grandeur, and Modern Democracy*.

Brian C. Anderson is senior editor at *City Journal* and author of *Raymond Aron: The Recovery of the Political*.

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