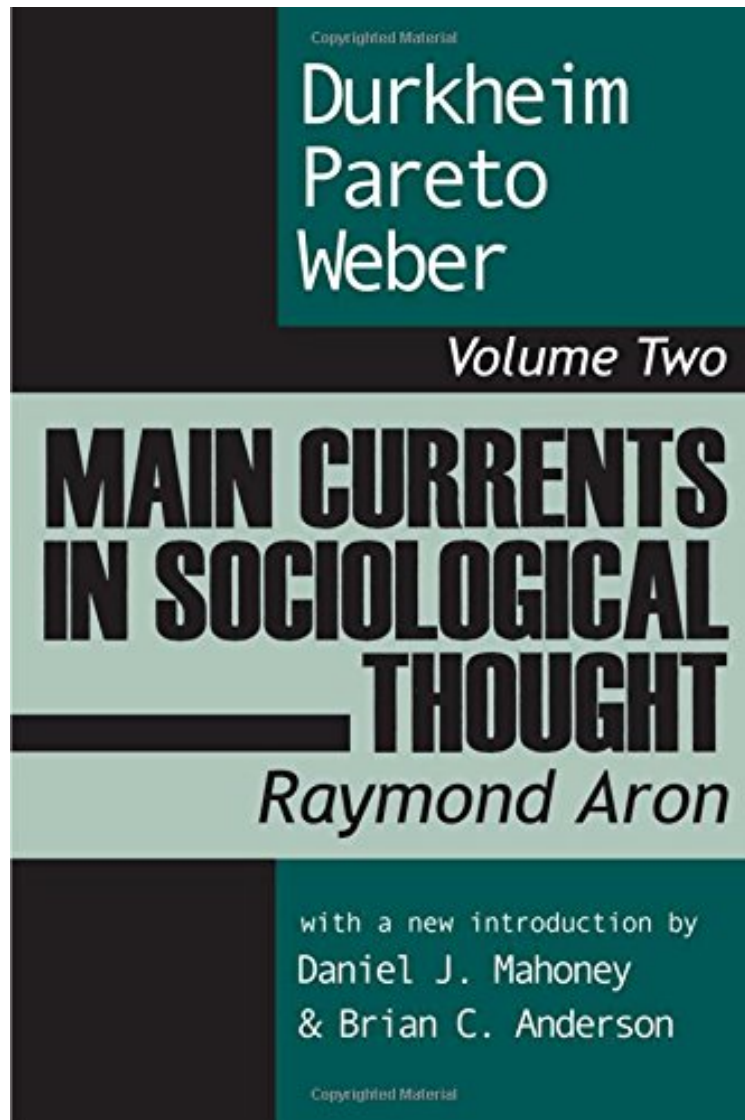


Main Currents in Sociological Thought: Durkheim, Pareto, Weber

Raymond Aron

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Raymond Aron : Main Currents in Sociological Thought: Durkheim, Pareto, Weber before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Main Currents in Sociological Thought: Durkheim, Pareto, Weber:

28 of 29 people found the following review helpful. Volume Two of THE Textbook On Classical Social Theory!By Barron LaycockThis is the second of the superb two-volume treatment of classical social theory written by the famous French Professor and philosopher Raymond Aron. This volume centers around the theories of French sociologist Emile Durkheim, Italian theorist Vilfredo Pareto, and German sociologist Max Weber, all of whom examined the

social and cultural tendencies of modern industrial societies. This is a masterful treatment not only of each theorist's ideas but also how each fits into the overall growth in understanding the structure and function of modern industrial society and what makes it work. Thus, his text strings together the various aspects of each theorist's work into a common thread that links them to their predecessors like Auguste Comte and Karl Marx, on the one hand, and later theorists like Sorokin, C. Wright Mills, and Talcott Parsons, on the other. This approach works brilliantly, largely because of Aron's contribution. His treatment of Durkheim and Weber are simply the standard against which other, and much more detailed treatments are judged. The same is true of his treatment of Karl Marx in Volume One. The two books, which originally were created as part of a yearlong graduate seminar Aron taught at the University of Paris, are an artful combination of scholarship and repartee. Aron's tone is suitable scholarly and thoughtful, and yet is also eminently readable and accessible to the average reader. This two volume set, first printed in hardcover in the mid 1960s, has never been long out of print in the forty years since, and has long been the standard text for use in graduate courses in classical sociological theory. One caution is appropriate, however. These books are not for Everyman, although they are written in a style and a language that makes them quite accessible and easy to comprehend and understand. Rather, the two volume set is more apt reading material for those readers who are seriously interested in the western tradition of classical social thought, and it acts as a suitable introduction to the heritage of critical thought and intellectual insight extending back hundreds of years in western thought. Enjoy!

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By sdecasare
Toilet paper is more useful.

In this second volume of *Main Currents of Sociological Thought*, Raymond Aron continues the analysis, begun in the first volume, of the "great doctrines of historical sociology." Aron explores the work of three figures who profoundly shaped sociology as it entered the twentieth century: Emile Durkheim, the great French theorist of consensus, who continued Auguste Comte's quest for a science of society and a scientific validation of morality; Vilfredo Pareto, the Italian "neo-Machiavellian" who mocked traditional morality and humanitarian pretensions and emphasized the oligarchic or elitist character of all societies; and the German sociologist Max Weber, who reflected continuously on the relationship between science and action, filled with deep foreboding about the prospects for human freedom in an age marked by bureaucratization and rationalization. Aron presents rich portraits of these three thinkers, drawing from them what remains of enduring worth, even as he distances himself from Durkheim's project for a science of society, Pareto's exaggerated critique of humanitarianism, and Weber's tragic pessimism. Aron's book is essential for clarifying his profound indebtedness to and crucial divergences from the thought of Max Weber, the sociologist par excellence, in Aron's view. Together with volume 1, which treats the work of Montesquieu, Comte, Marx, and Tocqueville, it forms the definitive survey of the great social thinkers to date. Yet, as Daniel J. Mahoney and Brian C. Anderson explain in their introduction, *Main Currents* is more than a survey; it is above all a challenge to contemporary social science to retain the ambition of an older, philosophically informed sociology to present an interpretation of modern society and to reflect on the meaning of universal history.

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