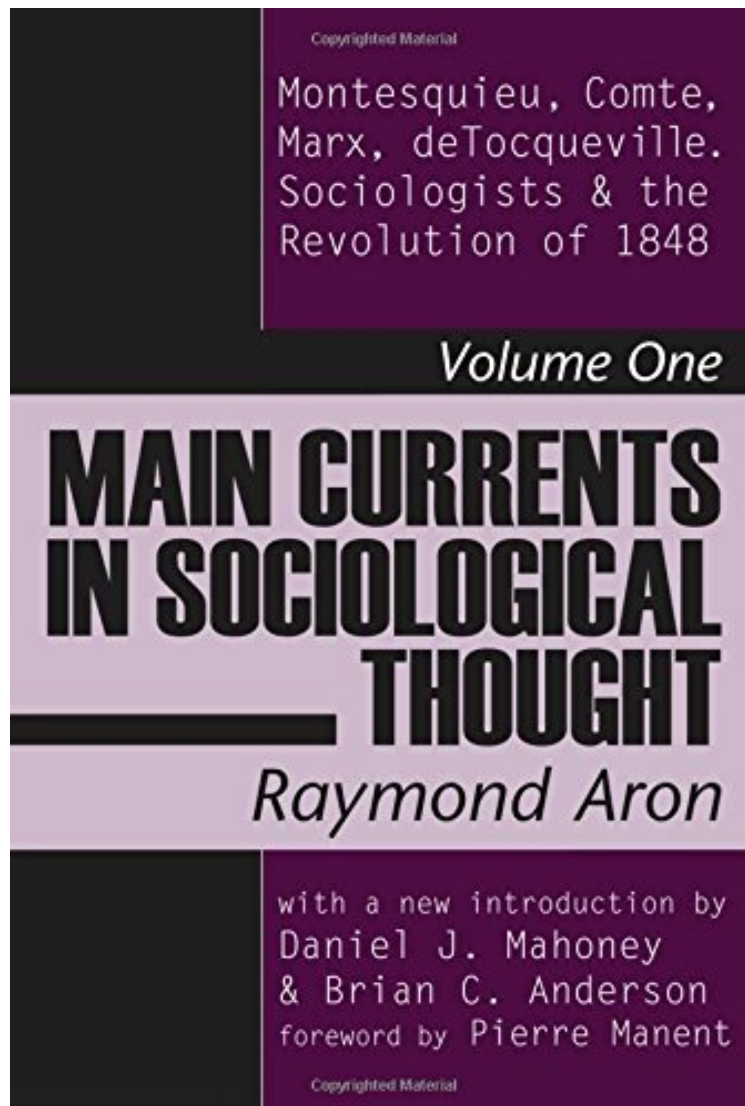


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Main Currents in Sociological Thought: Montesquieu, Comte, Marx, Tocqueville and the Sociologists and the Revolution of 1848

Raymond Aron

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Raymond Aron : Main Currents in Sociological Thought: Montesquieu, Comte, Marx, Tocqueville and the Sociologists and the Revolution of 1848 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Main Currents in Sociological Thought: Montesquieu, Comte, Marx, Tocqueville and the Sociologists and the Revolution of 1848:

28 of 29 people found the following review helpful. Raymond Aron's Sociological Masterpiece, Volume One! By Barron Laycock This is the paperback edition of the first of the superb two-volume treatment of classical social theory written by the famous French Professor and philosopher Raymond Aron. This first volume centers around the theories of a number of early sociological theorists, ranging from the eccentric theorist and philosopher Auguste Comte, to Alexis de Toqueville, to Montesquieu, and finally to Karl Marx. Professor Aron traces how the contribution of each helped to create the foundation of modern social theory, and he masterfully threads these collective contributions together into a narrative of theory that later masters of sociological thought like Durkheim, Pareto, and Max Weber then built upon. This is an acclaimed and 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 successors. This approach works brilliantly, largely because of Aron's contribution. His treatment of Karl Marx is particularly masterful, and is perhaps the standard against which other, and much more detailed treatments are judged. The same is true of his treatment of Durkheim and Max Weber in the second volume. 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!

0 of 3 people found the following review helpful.
boring text book
By roseannearrived on time. boring text book.

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.

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. 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. 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*.