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***The Companion to Raymond Aron* by Jose Colen and Elisabeth Dutartre-Michaut (eds). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. 336pp., £72.50 (h/b), ISBN 978-1137522429**

*The Companion to Raymond Aron* seeks to provide an overview of the works and ideas of the French sociologist, political thinker and commentator Raymond Aron (1905-1983). The main aim of the book is to 'aid in the study of Aron's political, sociological and philosophical thought and writings' (p.1). It is especially directed at an English-reading audience, where Aron's ideas remain less known and studied, often due to lack of good English translations of his works. The volume is divided into three parts, representing the main themes of Aron's work: international relations, philosophy, and the history of ideas. The long list of contributors includes French and international scholars of Aron's thought, such as Serge Audier, Pierre Hessner, Perrine Simon-Nahum, Joel Mouric, Iain Stewart, Daniel J. Mahoney and Giulio de Ligo. The essays seek to shed light on Aron's versatile and diverse intellectual production, ranging from historical analysis to political commentary and philosophical studies. Each part includes numerous essays on various aspects of Aron's thought, from totalitarianism to the Cold War, from the philosophy of history to the theory of democracy, from Machiavelli to Marx. Furthermore, the volume includes an essay by Aron's biographer, Nicolas Baverez, and a detailed bibliography of his works by Elisabeth Dutartre-Michaut.

The volume provides valuable studies of Aron's thought. The essays succeed in contextualising Aron in the intellectual horizon of the twentieth century and in shedding light on the nuances of his thought. The essays share a commitment to depicting Aron as an original liberal thinker who made a lasting, if sometimes underappreciated, contribution to Western liberal thought. Thus, the volume presents a complex, intriguing portrait of an important liberal thinker that goes beyond his stereotypical reputation as a 'cold warrior' and anti-communist. One of the underlying aims of many of the essays is to emphasise Aron's relevance to contemporary thought, and to highlight his importance as '*the* greatest figure in French liberalism of the twentieth century' (p.3). It is doubtlessly true that, as the contributors to this volume ceaselessly argue, Aron's impressive and original political analysis deserves greater attention than it has so far received. Yet sometimes the reader is left with a feeling that a more critical rather than celebratory attitude would have helped some of the essays to do his work justice. Nonetheless, the volume makes an important and welcome contribution to the English-language literature on Raymond Aron.

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