Raymond Aron’s Remarkable Relevance for our Decaying World

Dominique Schnapper and Fabrice Gardel, L’Abécédaire de Raymond Aron

Olivier Schmitt, (Ed.), Raymond Aron and International Relations

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Introduction

“Far from being captive to the past, Aron’s oeuvre, for what it tells us and the way it tells us, awakens us more than any other to the intelligent drama that is human history”. Pierre Manent.

Raymond Aron belongs to a very select club of grand masters of International Relations whose names are often quoted but whose books are rarely read. This is especially true for Aron, a true fox in the current age of hedgehogs, since his oeuvre is particularly eclectic and his range considerably broad. As it is often quipped, in what did this committed observer not take an interest? Moreover, translations in English remain limited and Aron suffered from a persistent disregard for non-English writers in a discipline still dominated by American academia. Any attempt to cross these cultural prejudices must thus be applauded. Two books illustrate these features. The first, edited by Aron’s daughter, Dominique Schnapper – a renowned sociologist in her own right – is a dictionary of Aron’s quotations, covering a wide range of issues, from atomic weapons to political violence. It is not only useful but also, in France current political and social context, very timely too. The weekly magazine Le Point