The introductory chapter suggests that the rise of parliamentarism should be understood in contradistinction to democracy (p. 5). Later on, the US Constitution is said to be the "defining antagonist" (p. 144) and "a political regime very different from parliamentarism" (p. 145). These claims and the meaning of regime that undergirds them are puzzling and unexplained. So is the assertion that parliamentarism constitutes "an entirely different tradition" (p. 83) from the ideological legacy—republicanism, democracy, human rights—usually associated with the French Revolution. What Selinger gestures at is that classical typologies, which define regimes according to the locus of sovereignty, are no longer relevant in a world where most polities, including Weber's "decisive political alternative" (p. 203)—the USSR—are (or were) based on popular sovereignty and representative institutions. So how to rethink the notion of regime, and of political alternatives, in the twenty-first century is a question that may restore parliamentarism, as Selinger envisions it, to the frontline of theoretical debates.

This brings me to Carl Schmitt, parliamentarism's greatest detractor. Making two cameo appearances, Schmitt is the *éminence grise* lurking behind Selinger's account and its stated concern with reconciling parliamentarism and democracy. Schmitt famously insisted on the incompatibility between the two and the necessity to choose between undemocratic liberalism and democratic dictatorship. Although not engaging with it directly, Selinger dubs Schmitt's analysis "prophetic" (p. 204). If the intellectual history of classical parliamentarism can bear on contemporary concerns, it is by helping us address the Schmittian challenge. As it stands, Selinger's argument is not yet up to this task. It is, nevertheless, an impressive beginning.

Raymond Aron and Liberal Thought in the Twentieth Century. By Iain Stewart. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 316p. $99.99 cloth.
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The name Raymond Aron is virtually synonymous with French liberalism, both with the nation's Tocquevillian "revival" and its antitotalitarian turn. But as Iain Stewart observes in *Raymond Aron and Liberal Thought in the Twentieth Century,* Aron's relationship with liberalism is simply assumed, "taken for granted," so much so that it "needs to be explained, not proclaimed" (p. 5). By tracing the thinker's development from his early political associations through the Aronism of the 1970s and '80s, Stewart complicates the assumptions behind a straightforwardly liberal Aron. What emerges from this intelligent book is an image of Aron the critic, the pessimist, even the sometimes anti-liberal, whose intellectual trajectory reveals as much about the complexity of French liberalism as it does about the thinker himself.

Aron's putative liberalism spans different parts of the French tradition. For his rediscovery of "the political" (*le politique*), he is credited with releasing the Marxist hold on the French academy. His attention to Alexis de Tocqueville, Benjamin Constant, and other nineteenth-century thinkers purportedly restored their relevance for twentieth-century readers. And he is among the exemplars of Cold War liberalism and antitotalitarianism. For Stewart, these assumptions-turned-accolades conceal essential features of Aron's intellectual position. They also lead to an unsophisticated, monolithic view of French liberalism. Stewart's corrective for such assumptions lies partly in the book's method: to understand Aron, we have to go back to his beginnings, because "a detailed knowledge of Aron's very earliest political commitments is essential to reaching a full understanding of his intellectual ethic and Cold War liberalism" (p. 17). Chapters 1 and 2 offer a thoroughly researched, deep dive into these formative commitments, discussed by way of Aron's student activism and associational activities at the École normale. As he dissects these episodes, Stewart maintains that Aron's brand of liberalism actually emerged from critical and anti-liberal foundations; specifically, from a conscious break with his liberal teachers and from the non-French, nonliberal influences of Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Martin Heidegger. The early Aron often sounds like an accidental liberal, led by a "critical attitude" (p. 46) to reject the prevailing academic currents of his day—Marxism and even individualist liberalism among them—only to find himself eventually on the liberal side of things.

The book's central arguments rely on the method of its first chapters. Aron's political origin story influences how we ought to understand the theories for which he is best known: antitotalitarianism (chap. 3) and the end of ideology (chap. 4). Stewart reinterprets Aron on totalitarianism in light of his criticism of the "venerable liberal historian" Élie Halevy, set against the overarching inspiration of Schmitt's work, which was formative for Aron in the interwar years (p. 119). The author follows others in raising questions about the "theoretical coherence" of so-called Cold War liberalism that originated neither during the Cold War nor from liberal sources (p. 15). Still, the reader might wish for more than questions on this point. Although Stewart reiterates that Aron's example "could be used in support" of arguments against the tradition's coherence, he never makes the argument himself, allowing the arc of Aron's intellectual development to drive the conclusions for his readers (p. 236). But insofar as the book aims to say something about liberalism and not only Aron, it misses an opportunity to engage with the analytical concerns about European liberal *tradition* and the *traditions* that the subject matter raises.

Stewart is more direct on Tocqueville, the totem figure in a sociological tradition that was "to a significant extent, a figment of Aron's imagination" (p. 172). In the book's most impressive chapter (chap. 5), Stewart weaves together Aron's active construction of French political sociology with twentieth-century battles among sociologists to stake claim to their discipline. Aron acknowledged that Tocqueville never described himself as a sociologist, and "admitted that neither Montesquieu nor Tocqueville had formatively influenced his own thought" (p. 171). Nonetheless, these thinkers and the Aron-invented "tradition" to which they belonged had a role to play in displacing Marxist and Durkheimian approaches to sociology in Aron's own time. The political, pluralistic Tocqueville of Aron's pen could stand against the social, deterministic Durkheim, reshaping the French academy.

As with the entire book, the discussion of Tocqueville complicates Aron's status as the torchbearer of an established French tradition. Chapter 6 continues this line of thought, recasting the idea of an Aron-led "liberal moment" in France as a series of moments prompted not only by the thought of other figures (Claude Lefort, François Furet) but also by critique rather than emulation of Aron. Here, the author suggests that the very idea of a homogeneous French liberal tradition stretching from Montesquieu to Aron and beyond changes in light of such evidence about its deliberate idealization and instrumental use in academic debates. At the very least, Aron's admission that he had never heard of Tocqueville during the years when he was formulating his own worldview should give us pause about the reality of a single liberal thread running from *Democracy in America* to *The Opium of the Intellectuals*.

Still, Stewart perhaps too quickly downplays Aron's own words about his debt to Tocqueville, however belated or modest that debt might have been. When Aron described himself as having "played Tocqueville" as he looked on at the events of May 1968, he suggested a wider affinity between Tocqueville's thought and his own. He sometimes viewed democracy through a Tocquevillian lens that exposed its political crises as spiritual ones, prompted by an egalitarian restlessness that had to be overcome by moral authority. The author suggests as much, but does not follow the premise provided by Aron's words to a conclusion about tradition. Aron's thought and, with it, the French liberal take on the problems of twentieth-century democracy were eventually altered by engaging with Tocqueville. And insofar as traditions are as much about active appropriation as passive reception, a point that the author himself makes (p. 169), we ought not to ignore how Tocqueville's ideas altered Aron's views of democracy in the 1960s, views that were by that time mature but certainly not fixed.

Despite some earlier scene setting about the meaning of tradition, Stewart largely avoids intervening in recently resurrected debates about the homogeneity of liberalism spanning continents and centuries. If, as he writes, "Aron's significance…appears differently depending on the angle from which its observed," the same could be said of liberalism (p. 235). The book accordingly emphasizes the heterogeneity and intricacy of the twentieth-century French tradition, in which main players vie for academic influence, using and discarding the mantle of "liberal" when it suited other immediate intellectual or political purposes. This is an important argument, and Stewart should be commended for making it in such a sophisticated way. But it does limit some of what he is willing and able to say about liberalism's ongoing value and about Aron's.

Can the history of liberal thought offer us any solutions to current problems? Stewart is quick to caution against an affirmative answer because his story of twentieth-century French liberalism is so tied to its own time. The reader might wonder, however, whether he gives Aron's relevance too little credit. As the book reminds us, Aron theorized totalitarianism alongside democracy, not as its political opposite but as a threat within democratic political culture. We might revisit his work with an eye toward understanding populism in the present day as a distinct phenomenon but one with the same potential source. Those of us interested in democracy's pathologies would do well to turn to Aron and to Stewart's important, erudite study of the intellectual's complex liberalism.

Lessons from Walden: Thoreau and the Crisis of American Democracy. By Bob Pepperman Taylor. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020. 240p. $29.00 cloth.
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The title of *Lessons from Walden*, an extraordinary book, is puzzling. The word "lessons" brings to mind a kind of education that Thoreau, the central figure of Taylor's book, might well have balked at. Lessons require compliant, passive students who, doing as they are told, lack any sort of freedom or personal direction over the shape of their education. Thoreau rejected this sort of overly disciplined, utilitarian instruction, instead preferring intellectual expeditions that were risky, passionate, and personal. If a lesson connotes the pap of conventional classrooms, Thoreau opposed it.

The reference to lessons in the book's title also raises a question: Is *Lessons* a conventional endeavor, with Taylor instructing us didactically in the central insights of *Walden*? Such lessons require an authority figure, and Taylor has the credentials to fill this role. He has studied and written about Thoreau for more than 25 years.

For those who are looking for it, the book does provide a conventional argument, a lesson, that fits squarely into