

Proposal for a presentation to the UEL research conference on 'Inside Outside: Creating external and community links'.

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“Social science and politics: an historical case-study of ‘impact’ or conceptual exchange – Raymond Aron in 1948/9”.

This is the first of a series of case-studies through which I shall develop further the position which I outlined in my *French Post-War Social Theory: International Knowledge Transfer* (Sage, November, 2011). That book sketched the contexts of production and English reception of the work of five French social theorists (Aron, Althusser, Foucault, Lyotard, Bourdieu), presented decade by decade between 1945 and 2010. Implicit in my argument was a consideration of the changing social function of intellectuals or academics in relation to the socio-political context with which they were engaged and, additionally, an examination of the deployment of their texts in England in relation to different conditions and different perceptions of the role of intellectuals. For the book, I established a web-site: www.derekrobbins.com/international-knowledge-transfer/ in which I presented, in chronological order, bibliographic details of the French texts of the five authors and their English translations. I am now systematically adding abbreviated details of contemporary political ‘events’ in France and the UK to this bibliography, and am embarking on a series of close analyses of the relationships between texts and events.

Aron (b. 1905) published his doctoral theses on the philosophy of history at the end of the 1930s. At the beginning of World War II, he fled to England where he wrote regularly for *La France libre*, which was the mouthpiece of de Gaulle’s Free French, based in London. On returning to France after the war, he wrote for the post-resistance journal, *Le Combat*, before becoming a regular columnist for *Le Figaro* in 1947. In 1948, he joined the political party – le Rassemblement du peuple français (RPF) - that de Gaulle had founded the previous year. Also in 1948 his journalistic activity counted against him in his application to the Chair of Sociology at the Sorbonne. Subsequently he was to be appointed to that Chair in 1955 and he was largely responsible for the introduction of sociology as a degree subject in France, and, in 1959, he wrote a substantial introduction to the French translation of Weber’s two influential essays – ‘Science as a Vocation’ and ‘Politics as a Vocation’.

In outlining this case-study, I shall stimulate discussion of the function of sociology in our political context. The paper will contribute to the accumulation of case-studies which I shall append to my web-site prior to publication.