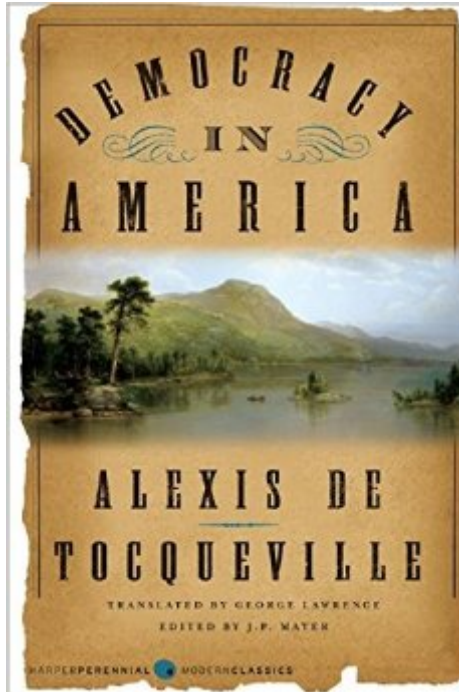


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Democracy In America (Harper Perennial Modern Classics)



Synopsis

The complete edition based on the revised and corrected text of the 1961 French editionOriginally penned in the mid-eighteenth century by Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* remains the most penetrating and astute picture of American life, politics, and morals ever written, as relevant today as when it first appeared in print nearly two hundred years ago. This edition, meticulously edited by the distinguished de Tocqueville scholar J. P. Mayer, is widely recognized as the preeminent translation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

De Tocqueville was an amazing man who possessed amazing insight into the workings (and not-workings) of American society. One only laments the fact that he was not a middle caste American politician arguing amongst great minds during the Constitutional conventions. Then again, we are equally lucky of the fact that he was a curious Frenchman of the leisure class who happened to be passing through. This is what gives de Tocqueville the ability to refrain from emotionalism and give us an outsiders view of what makes America good, bad and just plain different. See, de tocqueville recognizes, as did our founders, that liberty and democracy are key ingredients to a healthy society. On the other hand, he points out that too much freedom or democracy lead to lazy, public-opinion driven conformity, over-emphasis on materialism and restlessness. Another

contradiction de tocsueville points out is that although self-government is generally a good idea, there are times when an all powerful aristocracy is just more efficient. He can see all sides. The best part then is that de Tocqueville doesn't come to any final conclusion. He just observes and reports on America's inner workings as seen by an aristocratic Frenchman. A few recommendations to the de tocsueville virgins. First, as this is the unabridged, it may be advised to read the first book, pause to read something else, then read the second book. I read it straight through and found that not only would I have benefited from reflection, but much of the second book is a rehash the first. Second, keep in mind during the second book that the word 'democracy' is also de tocsueville's word for 'capitalism'. The word 'capitalism' would be introduced only years later by one Karl Marx.

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