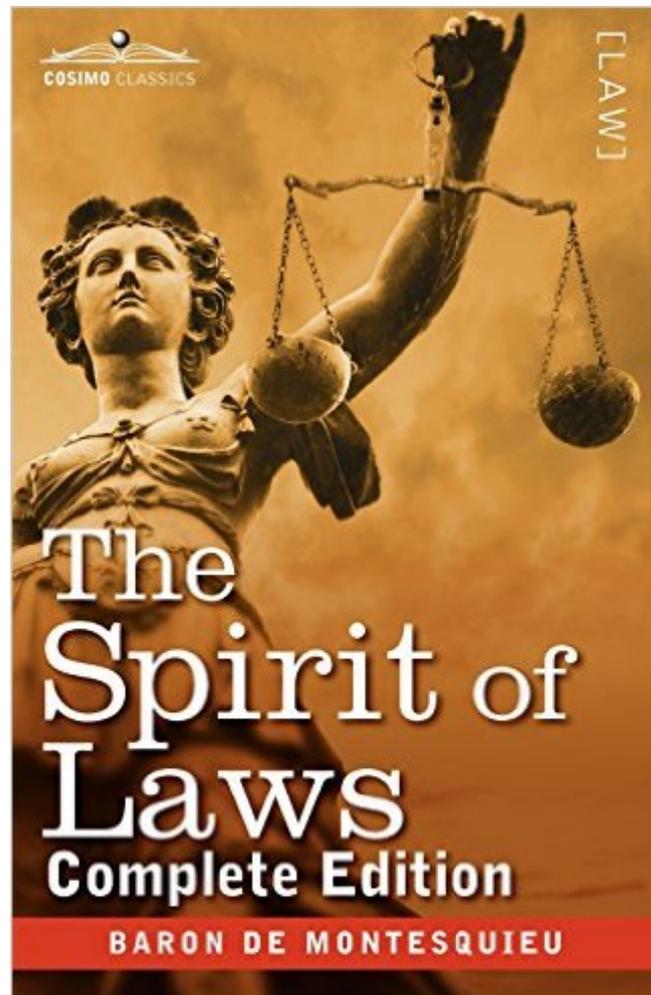


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The Spirit Of Laws



Synopsis

The Spirit of Laws, first published in 1750, is a detailed treatise on the structures and theory of government by French political philosopher Baron de Montesquieu. Unlike his well-loved Persian Letters, The Spirit of Laws scandalized the French-it was even banned by the Roman Catholic Church. The fact that it is hardly dated to modern readers is a testament to how revolutionary it must have seemed 250 years ago. Among its comparisons of different forms of governments, such as monarchies, despotic regimes, and republics, is the now-famous section on Montesquieu's concept of the separation of powers, dividing the ruling body into legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Also included is the author's thinking on slavery, religion in government, families and censuses, the influence of climate on politics and culture, and the making of laws. A powerful influence on the framers of the U.S. Constitution, this classic work will appeal to history buffs and anyone interested in the roots of modern political theory and government. CHARLES-LOUIS DE SECONDAT, BARON DE MONTESQUIEU (1689-1755), born in the South of France and often known simply as Montesquieu, was a political philosopher and social commentator known for his influential political views, especially for his "separation of power" theory, still used today in constitutions around the world. Some of his best-known work, the satirical Persian Letters, which made fun of life in Paris under Louis XIV, delighted France in the 1720s.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What you need to know about this book is that it was an instant best seller when it was first

published in 1748, was widely read around the world, translated into many languages, was read and studied by America's founding fathers, and has remained in print since that time. Without looking it up, let me paraphrase one of many great quotes: "It is the universal experience that every man who holds power tends to abuse it. He will proceed until he finds the limits." We can see that right now in our own time. That was a wise observation then and it still is. Montesquieu was the thinker that inspired the 18th Century Enlightenment idea of separation of powers and checks and balances in government. The United States Constitution was built around that idea, and it is an idea that is constantly under attack by reprehensible politicians and so must constantly be defended by all who cherish liberty. The United States is suffering now from people in power who want to demolish our Constitution and erase Montesquieu from America's exceptional heritage. The spirit of laws is the restrictions it places on those in power to keep them from imposing tyranny over the people. That's why we see men in power who are now rebelling against what they call "negative rights." The current holder of the American White House has used this term to denigrate our constitution for saying what the government cannot do to its citizens. He has said a better constitution would not focus on limiting what government can do but would spell out what government can do on your behalf. Unfortunately, that would soon become what government can do to you. Montesquieu knew this and explained it well. This is one of those books that is usually found on the shelf of any person who loves life and philosophy. The current writings of Paul Rahe of Hillsdale College are a good complement to this book.

This book is a wide ranging view of the laws by which people have governed themselves spanning time from ancient Greece and Rome to the Enlightenment. He does not gloss over the part that naked power and brutality have played in forming these rules, which at times have had little to do with justice. Montesquieu is, of course, one of the great enlightenment thinkers on whom our founding fathers relied in writing the U.S. Constitution.

For the most part Montesquieu is remarkably readable and the book is a wonderful glimpse into the mind of a pragmatic, independent 18th century philosopher.

I love this book from Montesquieu. I am loving it. It might be a little complicated at first but it will help expand your perspective on law and community.

Good source of information on how our laws were formed and are used today in our society.

Everyone should read something of Montesquieu`s writing.

This is of course a fascinating work and the edition here presented makes navigation of it as easy as possible.

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