

COLLOQUIUM: TOCQUEVILLE'S DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

MARCH 25–28, SAN DIEGO, CA
HARVEY MANSFIELD AND DELBA WINTHROP

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) came to America in 1831 to see what a great republic was like. What struck him most was the country's equality of conditions, its democracy. The book he wrote on his return to France, *Democracy in America*, is both the best ever written on democracy and the best ever written on America. It remains the most often quoted book about the United States.

Tocqueville declared himself a friend of democracy, but a candid friend willing to speak sincerely of its problems and faults. The only solution to the ills to which equality of conditions gives rise, he believed, was political freedom, and that is what he found in the actual practices and institutions of the Americans. So he praised both the spontaneous free cooperation of the New England township and the complicated art revealed in the Constitution.

In the first volume of the work Tocqueville describes the political workings of American democracy. But in the second volume he enters into the theories, sentiments and mores of democracy—the dubious logic of democracy—that produce the dangers of mild despotism that he was the first to set forth. Reading this book is a must for every educated American.

Harvey Mansfield is the William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Government at Harvard and studies and teaches political philosophy. He has written on Edmund Burke and the nature of political parties, on Machiavelli and the invention of indirect government, in defense of a defensible liberalism and in favor of a Constitutional American political science. He has also written on the discovery and development of the theory of executive power. His current research is a book on manliness. He has held Guggenheim and NEH Fellowships, and has been a Fellow at the National Humanities Center. Delba Winthrop is a lecturer at Harvard.

All participants will be expected to have read all of the materials before the colloquium begins. If you do not think your schedule would permit this, please decline this offer and we will try to include you in a subsequent program.

*Harvey Mansfield and
Delba Winthrop*

