



The Constitution of England (Natural Law Paper)

Jean Louis De Lolme

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The Constitution of England is one of the most distinguished eighteenth-century treatises on English political liberty. In the vein of Charles Louis Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* (1748) and William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–1769), De Lolme's account of the English system of government exercised an extensive influence on political debate in Britain, on constitutional design in the United States during the Founding era, and on the growth of liberal political thought throughout the nineteenth century. **Originally published in French in Amsterdam in 1771, *The Constitution of England* was the first book-length analysis of the “separation of powers” proposed in Book XI of Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws*, which sketched an institutional distinction between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. De Lolme was concerned to show the manner in which the English political system provided an alternative to the republican form of government, one which supplied both a more stable and a more extensive system of political freedom than that enjoyed in republican states. In addition, and as part of this critique, De Lolme examined the political teaching of his fellow Genevan Jean-Jacques Rousseau and repudiated Rousseau's republican attack on England's form of representative government. This edition takes advantage of the work of nineteenth-century editors of De Lolme's text but provides new annotations to elucidate his numerous references to classical, medieval, and early-modern political practices, along with translations of De Lolme's citations from sources in Latin and French.**

Jean Louis De Lolme (1741–1806) was born in Geneva and became an advocate there. Criticism of the political authorities led him to seek refuge in England, where he lived as an author and journalist.

David Lieberman is Jefferson E. Peyser Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley.
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