

The Problem with Democracy: Can Freedom and Equality Coexist?

Illustration by Olle Havars



"Formerly tyranny used the clumsy weapons of chains and hangmen ... but in democratic republics ... it leaves the body alone and goes straight for the soul."

—Alexis de Tocqueville

Democracy is a noble political enterprise, thought Alexis de Tocqueville, but also dangerous, reinforcing an egalitarian mentality that at its extreme will relinquish **liberty** and **freedom of thought** in favor of a **tyranny of the majority**.

De Tocqueville was a Frenchman writing about the America of the 19th century, but he might as well have been writing about the U.S.A. in the 21st. His *Democracy in America* is both a celebration of our institutions and a diagnosis of their self-destructive tendencies.

The cure? He has something to say about that as well.

A Live Recording of The Partially Examined Life Philosophy Podcast at Brown University

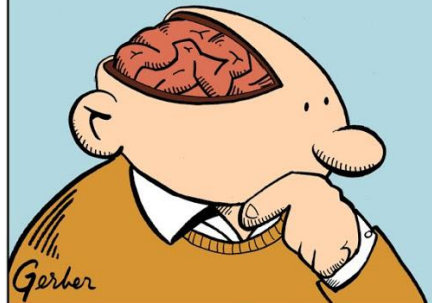
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