

**Extract: Thomas Jefferson's Translation of Destutt de Tracy's
Commentary on Book 2 of Montesquieu's Esprit des Lois, [ca.
12 August 1810]**

“The common division of governments into republican, monarchical & despotic, appears to me essentially bad.

The word republican is a very vague term, under which is comprehended a multitude of governments, very different from one another, from the peaceable democracy of Schwitz & the turbulent one of Athens, to the concentrated aristocracy of Berne, & the gloomy oligarchy of Venice. this characteristic of republican moreover is not proper to be placed in opposition with that of monarchical.for the United Netherlands, and the United States of America have a single head, and are considered as republics, and we have been always doubtful whether we should say, the kingdom, or the republic of Poland.”

Full transcript available at:

<http://founders.archives.gov/?q=%20Author%3A%22Jefferson%2C%20Thomas%22%20destutt&s=1111311111&r=4>