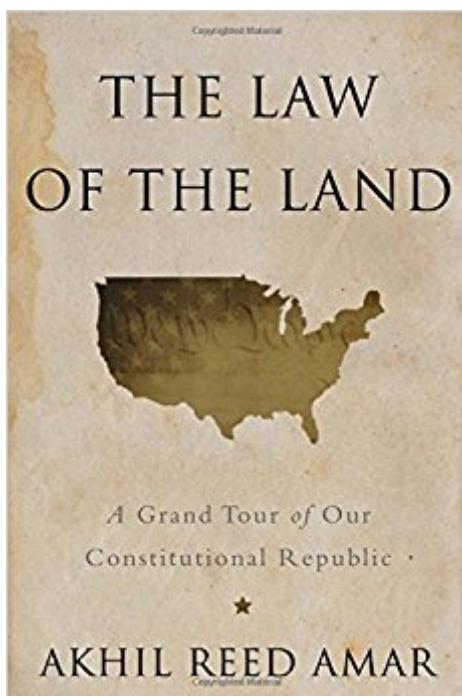


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The Law Of The Land: A Grand Tour Of Our Constitutional Republic



Synopsis

From Kennebunkport to Kauai, from the Rio Grande to the Northern Rockies, ours is a vast republic. While we may be united under one Constitution, separate and distinct states remain, each with its own constitution and culture. Geographic idiosyncrasies add more than just local character. Regional understandings of law and justice have shaped and reshaped our nation throughout history. America's Constitution, our founding and unifying document, looks slightly different in California than it does in Kansas. In *The Law of the Land*, renowned legal scholar Akhil Reed Amar illustrates how geography, federalism, and regionalism have influenced some of the biggest questions in American constitutional law. Writing about Illinois, "the land of Lincoln," Amar shows how our sixteenth president's ideas about secession were influenced by his Midwestern upbringing and outlook. All of today's Supreme Court justices, Amar notes, learned their law in the Northeast, and New Yorkers of various sorts dominate the judiciary as never before. The curious Bush v. Gore decision, Amar insists, must be assessed with careful attention to Florida law and the Florida Constitution. The second amendment appears in a particularly interesting light, he argues, when viewed from the perspective of Rocky Mountain cowboys and cowgirls. Propelled by Amar's distinctively smart, lucid, and engaging prose, these essays allow general readers to see the historical roots of, and contemporary solutions to, many important constitutional questions. The *Law of the Land* illuminates our nation's history and politics, and shows how America's various local parts fit together to form a grand federal framework.

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Customer Reviews

Professor Akhil Reed Amar "polishes" his brilliant, America's Constitution: A Biography by reviewing the historic supreme court cases through the years that have refined our understanding of the Constitution. He reviews for the reader the method he will use in the preface then summarizes it again in the last chapter to, "enable readers to appreciate three interconnected elements of American constitutional federalism: "geography", "states as building blocks" and "local, state and regional identity". Professor Amar encourages a read of the Conclusion as a precursor to the book. And as a garnish, baseball fans will enjoy Amar's occasional analogies, allusions and lessons! The book reads a bit as the basis for a lecture; furthermore a lecture to a fairly learned audience. In some chapters (e.g. ch. 2, Hugo Black) the reader encounters numerous, sometimes strings, of Supreme Court decisions that impact the thoughts under discussion. Beyond Marbury, Roe, and Brown, etc., most people (? , certainly this reader) are not even slightly conversant with the decisions that Amar leans upon to support his conclusions. No matter, read on a kindle a highlight of the case name is only a Wikipedia click away... except that gets distracting, then tiring, then annoying. Amar is reluctant to 'spoon feed' the neophyte in some chapters of this book. Just a sentence or two of explanation for the related decisions would enlighten and smooth the read, but the professor expects a certain level of conversance! There are other chapters (e.g. ch.

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