

Democracy in america 1835, 1840

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Central to the ideal society which he saw in America was the crucial role of equality in American life. His fascination for and study of American society gave birth to the book *Democracy in America*. 1

Ida B. Wells revealed the myopia of American society and showed an America hidden in the shadows. 2

2. Equality in American Politics and American Life

Uprooted from England, the American settlers built a new democratic society with more equal terms and ranks afforded to every citizen, leaving behind the walls of the aristocracy and throwing off the yoke of the motherland. This pioneering spirit was set in contrast with those of the Native American Indians gave birth to a distinct social condition and resulted in the legislative pursuit of utopian objectives by democratic means. This political set-up was reinforced by religion and the evangelical climate of the time.

Different from European monarchies or oligarchies, the American system was democratized and governed by the majority which prefers the interests of the many vires--vis that of the few. Government by the majority is made possible through the mechanism of the Constitution, separation of powers of branches of government, elections, and the government of laws and not of men.

3. Equality in Social Class, Race and Gender

Social Class. '[T]he fortunes of men [that] are equal in America'. 3 Wealth and education are within reach of anybody. Absent the rigid laws of English aristocracy and transmission, there is no class that transmits intellect or even superior status with inherited property and in its stead is the healthy growth of democracy. This is true only for the white race in society.

Race. Because the pioneers came to a vast land that required manpower to
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cultivate, the institution of slavery of blacks was part of the social system. Tocqueville foresaw the impact of the increasing black population which threatens the whites. 4 Slavery created an under-class and anomaly to the Constitutional ideal of all men are created equal. Tocqueville himself support slavery.

Gender. Tocqueville saw that the foundation of freedom and a free community or society is morality and that moral training is the result of the participation of women in nation-building, not by competing with men but by enthusiastically taking on the domestic task of home-building, without which any society would just be a hollow shell.

He saw in the American women the indicia of emancipation and discernment brought about by knowing their unique place and individual role in the natural scheme of things and not by competing with the men or becoming similar to them. American women are not placed on pedestals but work in their own chosen offices in society hand in hand with the men.

4. A Red Record Challenge to Racist Equality

'[D]emocracy destroys or modifies the different inequalities that originate in society'⁵ wrote Tocqueville. He was talking about a democracy that lives in the hearts of the people but democracy falls short when the very people are stricken with myopia, discrimination, and hatred. He was correct about the tyranny of the majority and the mob. In fact, in footnote 4 or of Chapter XV he told the story of the equal rights of suffrage given to the blacks and with the choice of their not so exercising the right. The ideal of equality developed further and resulted in the freeing of the slaves during the American Revolution. The social conscience developed slower as would be seen from the book A Red Record.

Ida Wells-Barnett wrote about the death and pain brought about by an aversion to skin color. She complained that the American Revolution may have freed the black man from slavery but the government has failed to protect them from racism, lynching, torture, and rape. She collated the various crimes committed to the black people chronicled the meager efforts to criminalize lynching and racism.

When Miss Wells said that the white man's democracy is on trial, she is reiterating the insight of Tocqueville on the weakness of the rule of the majority. She illustrated with hard facts the correlative rule of the mob which, unchecked, would destroy the efforts of the founding fathers of American Democracy.