Tocqueville’s View of Democracy

3a: Tocqueville claims that the democratic principle of equality begets 2 tendencies- one leading to political independence and possibly to anarchy; the other leading slowly to a kind of servitude. How does Tocqueville reach these conclusions? What remedies does he propose for both dangers? What light do the Federalist Papers shed on these problems?

Alexis de Tocqueville travelled to the United States in 1831 to study a democratic nation and to also report on the American prison system. He analyzed the meaning of equality and individualism, and carefully observed some of the national institutions. Tocqueville then took his analysis and published it five years later. This book, *Democracy in America*, was regarded as one of the best books ever written about American polity. Tocqueville developed two statements, one about political independence and the possibility of anarchy, and the second one about how the United States was leading slowly toward servitude. He reached these conclusions after extensive research, and from first hand experiences in the United States.

The first tendency described by Tocqueville was that as men proceed to independence, they may continue into anarchy. “The Americans have combated by free institutions the tendency of equality to keep men asunder, and they have subdued it. The legislators of America did not suppose that a general representation of the whole would suffice to ward off a disorder at once so natural to the frame of the democratic society…” (150, *Tocqueville*). The plan that the Americans created was most definitely wise. Leading politicians were supposed to handle the general affairs of state. Although Americans were independent, most of the men and women in society would make great sacrifices for someone else. *Tocqueville* states, “I have remarked a