



"A Natural Anomaly": Democracy, Equality and Citizenship in Nineteenth- century British Travelogues about America [

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Analítica

Many British travelers who visited America in the first half of the nineteenth century did so in order to see first-hand the democratic system and, depending on their own political views, warn their British readers against its dangers or present the U.S. as a model to imitate. My paper focuses on British travelogues written between the end of the Napoleonic wars (1815) and the American Civil War (1861), exploring how their authors conceived the American system and how they wanted to portray it to their compatriots. While progressive writers such as Harriet Martineau and Frances Wright believed that the young republic could, at most, be faulted on not being democratic and egalitarian enough, Tories such as Frances Trollope, Basil Hall and Charles Augustus Murray believed that the American model was harmful. The word "citizens" was used by them as a term of abuse, to signify people characterized by materialism and bad manners. They warned against equality, which they thought would result in leveling down, the tyranny of the majority and universal suffrage. The American model of citizenship seemed menacing especially in the 1830s and 1840s, when British Conservatives felt that the order of the Empire was threatened by the Radicals and the Chartist movement

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