



7-23-2020

Rancière's Equality and James's Pragmatism: Renewing Our Democratic Republic Through a Revised View of Intelligence

Matthew Schmitz
Ursinus College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/education_sum



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), [Political Theory Commons](#), and the [Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons](#)

[Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

Recommended Citation

Schmitz, Matthew, "Rancière's Equality and James's Pragmatism: Renewing Our Democratic Republic Through a Revised View of Intelligence" (2020). *Educational Studies Summer Fellows*. 4.
https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/education_sum/4

This Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Studies Summer Fellows by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Ursinus College. For more information, please contact aprock@ursinus.edu.

**Rancière's Equality and James's Pragmatism: Renewing Our Democratic Republic
Through a Revised View of Intelligence**

Matthew Schmitz

Ursinus College

Advised and Mentored by Dr. Stephanie Mackler

Abstract

The prevailing theory of intelligence in American society encourages restrictive treatment of others and endorses a dull impression of human capabilities. In the process of poking at their domestic opponents, modern Democrats and Republicans combine to expose our collective shortcomings on this front. Our discourse too often focuses on jockeying for position and too rarely focuses on the rich intellectual community we inhabit. Through an analysis of William James's *Pragmatism* and Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, I look to recapture a liberating view of intelligence that enables us to revise our interpretation of citizenship in an American democratic republic. I focus specifically on how James's pragmatic method and his reimagining of 'truth' coalesce with Rancière's claims about intellectual equality and our subsequent emancipation from tyranny. Brought together, their arguments urge us to redefine what we regard as intellectually possible for both those around us and for ourselves. This 'coalition of intelligence' can also serve as a theoretical basis for reframing our political discourse and revitalizing our understandings of equality and freedom, all of which are crucial processes in working to preserve a democratic republic. In the process, I engage with modern American narratives as valuable counterarguments to what James and Rancière offer. I conclude that the beliefs about intelligence that underlie our current democratic republic invite substantial moral and intellectual underachievement and that the ideas laid out by James and Rancière remind us of the importance of working to correct these shortcomings.

Keywords: America, democracy, republicanism, democratic republic, truth, intelligence, equality, freedom, pragmatism, emancipation, William James, Jacques Rancière

**Rancièrè’s Equality and James’s Pragmatism: Renewing Our Democratic Republic
Through a Revised View of Intelligence**

Fact has come under attack in America as we have entered into the current era of fake news and credibility wars. On both sides of the political spectrum, we have begun to abandon traditional avenues of information, standards of dialogue, and sources of authority. While healthy skepticism about our news sources, our customs, and our authority figures can provide important balance, we seem to have crossed a line into disillusionment and disorder. When two individuals from opposing political orientation can no longer agree on a common set of assumptions, discourse between the two sides quickly breaks down. We have all fallen victim to these changing standards and norms at some point, regardless of our efforts to resist them. As frustrating as these struggles can be, they can be understood as the latest battleground in a longstanding search for knowledge in human life. Knowledge and the streams of media through which we encounter it are domains that humans constantly seek to define. Whether we find peace in pure knowledge or in the economic benefits knowledge can bring us, we specialize, monetize, and idolize *intelligence* like little else. It provides the assumptions that underlie our political interactions, our business transactions, and, most crucially, our systems of education. Recognized as a vital human quality, our hunger for intelligence stands alongside our desire for religious and existential satisfaction as a pillar of the American cultural makeup. For evidence of this drive for intelligence, one need not look any further than the Space Race, the rich history of American inventors, or the pride we take in our robust, though flawed, public and higher education systems.

The legacy of the Western intellectual tradition, which finds a distinct flavor in the United States, provides a rich but underutilized conceptual basis for understanding intelligence

and other foundational virtues. Those in the global West, like those in the global East, have sought to define and utilize terms like intelligence for a long time and with varying proximity to the daily lives of individuals. Our founding generation, standing on the shoulders of Western giants, sought to synthesize and perpetuate that intellectual legacy through our great American experiment. Imperfectly realized ideals of freedom, human rights, political participation, equality, and many others find themselves woven into the American fabric. Above them all hang the two counterbalanced forces of our ‘democratic republic’: *democracy* and *republicanism*. These overlapping concerns provide a sturdy frame around our ideals, but one which is nearing neglect as we lose connection with a genuine understanding of our country’s founding virtues.

The notions which once composed a dynamic body of revolutionary ideals and counter-cultural action have become stale as our culture has gradually crystallized and institutionalized them. Think, for instance, about the way Americans approach voting. These electoral powers were bestowed upon us by our founding generation like a political sacrament but have since eroded to the point of mindless duty for many Americans. Our jury duty process provides another example. Thomas Jefferson regarded jury duty as a fundamental check on our judicial branch and a vitalizing opportunity for civic participation (Dotts, 2015, p. 7). Years of complacency, however, have turned this beautiful process of judicial involvement into a chore from which we attempt to wriggle free. Even the prospect of deciding on school tax levies, a crucial component of any thriving public education system and its corresponding government, has become a dry, party-line exercise. There is something to be said for having firm, recognizable definitions of the values which underlie our electoral rights, judicial engagement, and tax obligations. Those understandings are crucial to preserving our democracy and our republic. They ensure the survival of these ideas throughout time and work to counterbalance the

vigorous idealism and criticism of subsequent generations. Without these stabilizing tendencies, we risk straying from and betraying the ideals for which our founding generation fought and died. Still, stability and universality alone are wholly insufficient tools for preserving the true nature of our nation and for inspiring political involvement.

In fact, America is much more than a set of rigid beliefs, established in one time and decreed to be valid forevermore. The country we love is a vibrant and pluralistic community bound together by a radical, action-based philosophy of self-government. It is a nuanced and two-fold statement that government is best conceived when its power rests in the hands of the people under the presumption of equality. Left stagnant and neglected, however, that principle of equality leaves the door open for an isolationism and relativism that misconstrues our liberties and ignores our political duties. Under the same conditions, uncritical versions of liberty might rationalize a fondness for hierarchy, as they abandon notions of equality and become a tool for personal advancement. More, then, ought to be done to reaffirm and reengage with those elements of democracy and republicanism in which many of our country's citizens take pride. A revised history curriculum, as many have discussed, would be a fantastic first step, but the issues at hand run much deeper. Our founders fled the obstinate grip of a tired monarchy over two-hundred years ago, but there is reason to fear that such stubbornness has caught up with us yet again. Of course, modern America is not a monarchy in structure, but the way we maintain our values is anything but democratic. The character of a monarchical government is unsubstantiated and absolute power in the hands of one person or family. The character of a monarchical value system is unjustified and absolute in the same manner. A democratic republic relies on the democratic and republican maintenance of its values in order to survive. If we desire to avoid falling back into the pit of tyranny, we should avoid the easy temptation to cultivate an uncritical

value system. Instead, we should be urgent in maintaining and reevaluating our accordance with the indisputable principles we profess.

Nowhere is better to begin this process of revitalizing and recapturing our ideals than the pillar of intelligence and our quest for knowledge. The way we approach the concept of intelligence, as previously alluded to, guides the bulk of our political, commercial, and educational actions. This is because each of those spheres is inherently social and interpersonal in nature, and our concept of intelligence informs the expectations we carry into these social interactions. When we assume, for example, that humans are limited in our ability to search for knowledge and to hold intelligence, we might expect to find those limits in the people we engage with. Expecting to identify limitations, we might then be more likely to look for places where they might play to our advantage in a political and business-related endeavor. This might also lead us to assume that those around us would be similarly driven to look for advantageous positions over us, inviting a bit of cynicism in our subsequent interactions. This idea is summed up in the old-fashioned term ‘gamesmanship,’ in which one player looks to exploit the flaws or weaknesses of their opponent. Few individuals, in contrast, would think they could exploit someone with equal intellectual potential. Rather than exploiting, in this case, we would turn to hard-won persuasion and mutually engaged discourse.

Education operates in much the same way. We utilize different approaches to teaching depending, at least in part, on the assumptions we hold about student intelligence. Students whom we regard as ‘more capable’ of grasping the material are subjected to less handholding, while those who are ‘less capable’ are ushered off into private sessions or given increased attention. The differences become noticeable as one progresses through the years of their education, in most cases gradually being treated more and more like capable adult intellects. In

the meantime, teachers withhold certain pieces of information or problem formations from students because the students are just ‘not ready’ to deal with them yet. All of these decisions are guided by certain assumptions about the capabilities of individual students and those belonging to their age bracket. Even our private lives and the way we understand our identities, a large component of early education, are guided by the way we define intelligence. In the truest sense, our ideas about human intelligence shape what we think is possible for our lives, for the lives of those around us, and for our system of government.

This focus on intelligence, however, is far from simple or one-dimensional. Twentieth-century American philosopher William James, in his lecture series entitled *Pragmatism*, describes our ability to have knowledge in roughly two spheres of our ever-complicated lives: the *abstract* and the *concrete* (1991). As humans occupying physical bodies, we operate in the concrete but remain captivated by the abstract as a source of meaning (James, 1991). James argues that the world of the abstract, despite our typical sense of the word, originates in and depends on its relationship to the concrete (1991). Our process of creating abstraction is motivated by our concrete needs and fueled by our concrete observations (James, 1991). He imagines us as fish, swimming in the water of our day-to-day but drawing our vibrance from the atmosphere above the surface (1991, p. 57). This ‘pragmatic’ method of pulling pockets of abstract atmosphere down into the concrete water formulates a truer relationship between the two than that which we currently envision (James, 1991). Without this process of bringing the two into closer connection with each other, they would only interact at the point where we distinguish them: the surface (James, 1991). By breaching this distinction and stretching the ways through which the abstract and concrete interact, we work to unlock a new level of practical and abstracting power. Throughout his lectures, James paints stunning portraits of truth and

knowledge, two terms that are instrumental in any vision of intelligence, leaning on distinction and detail to define their contours. He takes a special interest in how opposing ideas, such as free will and determinism, provide unique contributions and are constructive in the tensions they create (James, 1991, p. 52).

Across the Atlantic Ocean, the French-Algerian philosopher Jacques Rancière, in his work *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, reaches back to the work of Joseph Jacotot to promote an equally stunning vision of both truth and knowledge, marked by radical equality. He argues that *distinction*, within the concept of “intelligence,” is a destructive force rather than an enlightening one (Rancière, 1991, p. 25). To distinguish free will and determinism from each other, to use James’s example, is to create the possibility that one perspective might take and exploit a superior position to the other. Rancière might prefer assuming both under an idea of ‘complex agency,’ in which free will and determinism interact under the same heading. Similarly, we are better served by viewing intelligence as a unified force, a force that is available to all of us without distinction or difference, even if it manifests in several different ways (Rancière, 1991). Differences, he argues, are present and acceptable in how we interpret our manifestations of intelligence, but not in how we interpret our capabilities (Rancière, 1991, p. 27). For Rancière, this conception of intelligence relies on both equality of capacity and the liberty we find when we realize that equality. At first glance, his illustration of intelligence as a unified whole rather than a set of distinctive parts appears to point to a significant tension between his ideas and those of James, but a deeper look reveals a surprising amount of compatibility. Rancière’s dogged support of human equality and ultimate directive to fight for that ideal in the thick of inherently unequal institutions both borrows from and complements James’s potent pragmatic attitude and accessible conception of truth. Taking their ideas together, we can construct a view of

intelligence that holds the power to reclaim our democratic and republican ideals in their pure form and galvanize the way we think about citizenship.

America's Neglected Political Ideals

The American political model, among many other descriptors, is commonly referred to as a 'democratic republic,' representing a marriage of republican and democratic ideas about governance. A sufficiently rich description of this idea deserves its own, separate discussion, but in thinking about a view of intelligence that nurtures our original democratic and republican principles it is important to first think a little about each of these concepts. As James Carpenter and others note, the writings and legacy of Thomas Jefferson present one vehicle through which we can begin to develop this understanding (Carpenter, 2013, p. 2). In characterizing Jefferson's opinions on education, Carpenter notes that they are typically portrayed as bastions of the democratic ideal, though he finds strong republican undercurrents through his analysis (2013, p. 4). Situating Jefferson in the context of the American Revolution, Carpenter recounts Jefferson's anti-aristocratic tendencies and corresponding republican passions alongside his more widely recognized democratic ideas (2013, p. 6). The effect of his analysis is to argue that remembering Jefferson as merely a democrat leaves out the important contributions that republicanism made to his political thinking (Carpenter, 2013). Carpenter's argument shows that we would be hard-pressed to call Jefferson a democrat in the modern sense of the word, and, as such, it is important to bring his republican beliefs to bear on his larger ideas (2013).

The concept of democracy is familiar to most Americans as a process of governing defined by allowing the governed people to shape their society through elections. Traced as far back as ancient Greece, it often relies on ideas of equality like those "self-evident" truths stated

in *The Declaration of Independence* (1779, 1848) and marches hand-in-hand with historical efforts to expand our voting franchise towards its fullest extent. The idea of innate human equality is often taken as the democratic rationale for popular sovereignty and the expansion of voting rights. Our equal status in nature suggests that we ought to have equal opportunity to influence the shape of our collective governance. Interestingly, despite widespread embrace of the term, the actual principles of democracy have been fought and feared by Americans of different political stripes as far back as the founding generation (Dotts, 2015, p. 5). Jefferson himself was attacked for being ‘too democratic’ throughout his political career due to his support for significantly expanded voting rights among White men and for the widespread establishment of democratic institutions (Neem, 2013, p. 1). This is just to mention that democracy, while often viewed lovingly in modern discourse, is not always met with such appreciation in practice. It also highlights the importance of taking countervailing ideas into account in trying to strike a satisfactory balance.

The distinguishing features of a republic, in contrast to those of democracy, might be more foreign to most citizens, as they were to me before conducting this research. Carpenter looks to define the American ideal of republicanism in juxtaposition with “monarchies and rigid aristocracies” (2013, p. 3). Where these other forms of government turned to their leaders to secure the rights of citizens, the new American republic can be seen as an endeavor to regard “the people as the guardians of liberty” (Carpenter, 2013, p. 3). Thought of in this way, the distinctive republican emphasis is on “the protection of individual liberty” through the efforts of each governed individual (Carpenter, 2013, p. 6). This mention of effort brings ideas like individual hard work and accountability into play as crucial components of republican government. Adding to this picture, M. Andrew Holowchak summarizes Jefferson’s

republicanism through concern for “equal and exact justice to all men; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations; jealous care of the right of election by the people; honest payment of debts; and freedom of religion, of presses, and of persons” (2014, p. 2). This summary should reinforce for us the idea that republicanism, like democracy, is an intricate concept and one that is hard to pin down. One way of differentiating republicanism from democracy, however, is through emphasizing its explicit focus on liberty, where democracy focuses on equality.

In seeking to further clarify the distinction between democracy and republicanism, Carpenter looks to how each manifests itself in the realm of education. “*Democratic schooling*,” he argues, aims to “prepare students to be active citizens” through the mechanics of political participation and collective decision-making (Carpenter, 2013, p. 2). Put another way, its primary emphasis is on cultivating the skills and interpersonal qualities that make up an ideal democratic citizen. Where “*republican education*” differs is in its “efforts to prepare students to be good citizens” as opposed to “active” ones (Carpenter, 2013, p. 2). Good citizenship, Carpenter argues, is commonly defined through knowledge of political processes and fulfillment of civic duties (2013). Being a good citizen and being an active one may be interchangeable, and Johann Neem argues just that: few people would want just good citizens or just active citizens (2013, p. 1). Even if the distinction is overly simplistic, it presents a useful framework in which democracy focuses more on action and republicanism focuses more on goodness. Understood in this way, democracy concerns itself more with the principles of discourse and collective participation under the assumption of equality, while republicanism looks to derive duty and obligation from the power bestowed on the people. This is the distinction within which Carpenter

looks to situate Jefferson, and it is the framework most useful for thinking about the arguments James and Rancière present.

Though democracy often seems to be a subset of republicanism, the two do not necessitate the same conclusions. Carpenter notes that Jefferson's republicanism tended towards a fear of centralized governmental institutions and a desire to maintain localized control (2013, p. 9). A popular democracy, in which all citizens voted for a small number of distant and centralized officials, would embody this fear. Discussing the deficiencies of a popular democratic model, Jefferson claims that classically understood democracy is "the only pure republic, but impracticable beyond the limits of a town" (2013, p. 349). Larger cities, states, and countries, he suggests, contain too much complexity to effectively rest their governance in a simple poll of citizens. Popular democracy might well be democratic in nature, but, at least for Jefferson, it would be far from the republican ideal. Some level of representation is needed to allow individuals to elect people from their community who can come together in the context of the larger country. In this model, individual citizens keep their democratic influence but refocus their concern on the local scale instead of the national one.

That said, even our modern representative democracy might be too centralized and disconnected to match up with the republican ideal. Dotts recalls that Jefferson and other members of our founding generation believed "that public officials will forget their attachment to the people as they move further away from the wards" and from local concerns (2015, p. 7). As we lament the detachment of recent presidents and federal legislators—some so far removed that they famously could not recall the price of common groceries—the fear of distance rings all too true. For this reason, among others, republicanism concerns itself primarily with movement away from centralized power structures. This movement, however, does not necessitate the democratic

ideal. In a similar manner, democracy concerns itself with each citizen having representation and voice in shaping the government, but this concern does not necessitate the republican ideal.

Democracy and republicanism, approached in this manner, represent two distinct forces that can be brought together, like the overlapping section in a Venn diagram, to create a democratic republic. Discussing American government as fundamentally one or the other would risk missing an important part of what helped make the American experiment so unique and revolutionary.

With this loose understanding of democracy and republicanism in place, we can turn to think about our political present and the extent to which we embody these principles.

Democracy, in this context, demands that we move towards recognition of all individuals as equal partners in our collective self-governance. By granting each individual a vote of equal value in our electoral processes, we establish this partnership. In the context of intelligence, it dares us to argue that our equality in creation necessitates our equality in capacity for intellectual life. If we argue that all humans are created equal, we must be referring to equality of something. That something is not physical appearance, genetic makeup, or particular circumstance. It must, then, be some intangible worth that derives its meaning from an equally distant claim about our potential. The one thing that ties us together as equals at birth is our potentials, our status as a blank slate ready to be filled out. Differences inevitably emerge over time, but we begin with the recognition of equal capacity. This can extend, under democratic principles, to our potential for intelligence. To suppose that some among us were created with inferior intellectual capacity to others could stand as a contradiction to the stated belief of our founders.

Turning to republicanism, we find a demand that the power to act and affect change as well as the intellectual ability needed to exercise this power ultimately rest in the hands of the individuals. For a republican society to meet its proper function, the governed must be trusted

and equipped to secure their freedom. It is from this perspective that Jefferson derives the need for a public education that can cultivate responsible and effective republican citizens (Carpenter, 2013, p. 6). To ensure the survival of a nation that rests its hope in the people, the state should see to it that at least some individuals are “rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens” (Jefferson, 1951, p. 527). For a republican government, preparing citizens to use and protect their liberties is a vital activity. One cannot orient their efforts and hold their government accountable without the tools a public education provides. The presumption that we are all capable of a high level of intelligence frees up the self-confidence we need to take up our individual roles and to safeguard our liberties against corruption and overreach. Here, we find that democracy and republicanism come to bear on the same idea from distinct perspectives. Democracy pushes us to believe in a less limiting view of intelligence on the basis of equality while republicanism does so on the basis of liberty. Instead of focusing on these beliefs themselves, as we are so conditioned to do, it seems both important and interesting to focus, as James might, on that idea of intelligence which they construct through their tension, on the practical and pragmatic consequences. Rancière’s arguments on equality and liberty work alongside James’s reconceptualization of ‘truth’ to help us accomplish this goal.

“All People Think”

The two philosophers begin by recognizing the same fact: all people think. For James, this means that all individuals possess and maintain an attitude toward the universe and its content (1991, p. 5). Our attitudes include both the emotional components of our various dispositions and the philosophical qualities of a unique worldview. This claim provides a simple

but striking reminder that each of us holds a personal philosophy about life and that we are bound together by that fact. Rancière recognizes our unique attitudes as well. Their existence becomes clear to him when he focuses on our equally shared human capacities for *reflection* and *articulation* (Rancière, 1991). We are all capable of turning our thoughts inward and of expressing our opinions outward through one medium or another. He likens the combination of these actions to a poetic translation of our experiences (Rancière, 1991, p. 64). Borrowing Descartes's famous phrase, he argues that we think because we are (Rancière, 1991, p. 36). Instead of Descartes's assertion that our ability to think, specifically to doubt, proves our existence, Rancière argues that our existence guarantees that we are thinking beings (1991). From the foundation that all individuals think, James dives into an effort to define the components of our individual philosophies. He starts by arguing that we all take interest in and try to balance the abstract and concrete in our pursuits of truth (James, 1991, p. 8).

James's background as a psychologist, as recounted by Jack Barbalet, sheds some light on this innate human interest. His psychological theory of experience argued that "percepts are ontologically and epistemologically prior to concepts" (Barbalet, 2004, p. 341). Put another way, he argues that our observations precede the concepts we pull from them. This establishes our firm interest in both what we perceive and what we abstract from those perceptions. More than that, it argues that all knowledge originates in the concrete, both within and beyond us. We are interested in the rain as we experience it in a given storm and as we can draw conclusions about the general makeup and consequences of rain, but our concrete interest in a particular storm must come first. Nothing that we think originates in our brain, meaning we can always trace our ideas back to some concrete observation of the physical world (Barbalet, 2004). This seems intuitive, but oftentimes we might be tempted to believe the opposite: that the abstract things we hold in

our head lead us to explore the concrete. James acknowledges that this directional action might be true in isolation (Barbalet, 2004). There are instances where our thoughts lead us to move into the concrete world. If we step back, however, we will always find a concrete concern that preceded that ‘initial’ abstraction (Barbalet, 2004).

Rancière might take James’s commentary about the abstract and the concrete as a distinguishing act, dividing us into two camps: *rationalists* and *empiricists* (James, 1991, p. 8). James, using those terms in his work, acknowledges that schools of philosophy have often been split along these lines (1991, p. 8). Rationalists take pleasure in the purest principles they can generalize from gritty realities, while empiricists find beauty in the grittiness itself, in its various and useful forms (James, 1991, p. 8). If we are true to ourselves, James confesses, we do not find either of these extremes satisfying. The rational approach asks us to disconnect from the world we occupy in a way that resembles Plato’s actor in the “Allegory of the Cave.” A rationalist will too often draw their ideas from the “muddy particulars” of life only to turn around and demean those “muddy” origins (James, 1991, p. 101), similar to how Plato’s actor looks down on the life inside the cave once freed from it. The empirical approach, in contrast, looks at each passing moment with fresh, unprejudiced eyes. It resembles a fearless and curious child-like state. This may sound spectacular, but without the ability to draw and sustain generalized conclusions and to recognize patterns, we lose both our sense of stability and the larger context of our living. We might be left, in this case, to resort to blindly wandering from moment to moment. James reasons that we crave something between the haughty abstract and the brutish empirical extremes (James, 1991, p. 7). That middle ground can be found through James’s process of pragmatism. This introductory stance lays out the pattern that James follows throughout the rest of his lectures, one which is also recognizable in the works of his peer John Dewey: the process of reframing a

stagnant dichotomy as a fruitful tension. Let us linger on that for a second more. It echoes James's later description of the pragmatic method, which aims to focus on the practical implications of ideas rather than a cross-section of their qualities within a particular moment (James, 1991, p. 23), but it does much more for us in an American context.

American discourse is unmistakably defined by the process of mining a momentary cross-section for any inkling of a dichotomy. Wherever an issue meriting discussion exists within our country, we have become adept at identifying the two distinct poles surrounding that issue. These poles dominate our news cycle, seek to frame our approach to problem-solving and provide us with political identities. Lost between them, though not lost on many individuals, is an entire spectrum of nuance. We recognize the presence of alternative solutions, but the narrative of polarity is often effective in pushing us to either extreme. Our mutually exclusive two-party system is the standard-bearer of this American polarity. A great many individuals find both parties unsavory in some way and recognize the possibility for compromise but are pressured into aligning with one of the flawed sides each election cycle. What James offers here is a chance to reframe our discourse in a way that gravitates towards the empty space between the poles. The dominant American political narrative might be comparable to two magnets with a field of pull between them and the objects of focus being the magnets or the extremes themselves. James's narrative more resembles a vehicle rounding a corner as it is pulled on in either direction by centripetal or centrifugal forces. If the car, James's object of focus, moved wholly towards either of the forces pulling on it, it would veer off the road. If, instead, the vehicle relies on both forces and the tension between them, it can chart a course that gets it through the curve safely. Through the pragmatic method, James aims to reframe our focus so that we can see the path between the extremes instead of simply seeing the two extremes. In doing so,

we not only possess better odds of finding a true solution, but we also enter into a discourse that includes both extreme forces in a type of competitive cooperation.

Where James establishes his pragmatic method in response to the phrase ‘all people think,’ Rancière zeroes in on the first word. His inspiration, Jacotot, was challenged to reconsider the idea when his Flemish-speaking students learned French under his nose without his possessing an ounce of Flemish language experience (Rancière, 1991, p. 3). The students, left alone with French and Flemish copies of the book *Télémaque*, were able to both translate and utilize elements of the French language with no further support from their instructor (Rancière, 1991, 3). Instead of relying on the traditional teacher-student dynamic, which Rancière terms ‘explication,’ these students embodied and stretched the idea that all people think. Their method for learning French, referred to in instructive form as “universal teaching,” should be familiar to any parent (Rancière, 1991). It is the same process children use to learn their native language, grappling for meaning by piecing together patterns within their immersive experiences (Rancière, 1991, p. 10). Repeated exposure to certain words and their accompanying actions allow children to develop language skills through a gradual and deliberate process, which Jacotot’s students emulated in his course. If these students could make great strides in learning French through their natural learning processes and a simple text, Jacotot wondered what obstacles prevent this process under normal conditions.

He and Rancière trace this obstruction back to the traditional teacher-student relationship, one that they deem fundamentally unequal. Teachers, regarded as individuals with superior intelligence, engage in a constant practice of creating and filling an “abyss of ignorance” within their student’s knowledge (Rancière, 1991, p. 21). The exercise of education, in this model, relies on showing the student the gap in their knowledge and then filling it, but never showing the

student that they can fill it in on their own. If students learned that they were capable of bridging these gaps on their own, the authority of their teachers could suddenly become baseless and arbitrary. Few things would be more threatening to teachers and schools under the current approach than a loss of authority, so they work to maintain the hierarchical and dependent structure. The student might one day rise to the intellectual level of their teacher, but not so long as they hold the title of ‘student.’ Individuals may even have the same capacity for intelligence, a claim Rancière later argues, but if one is designated as the teacher of the other, somehow the two are no longer equals. This form of teaching requires the assumption that the student is inferior in capacity, otherwise it becomes hard to justify its characteristic stepwise explanation and handholding. We tend to avoid overzealous support and explanation with those whom we presume to be our intellectual equals.

Equality and Truth

Analysis of an oppressive system, like that which Rancière provides, no doubt welcomes comparison to the works of Paulo Freire, especially his argument in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In establishing the problems of modern society, Freire and Rancière key in on the same issue: a hierarchical and oppressive social structure. This structure strips both the ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ classes of their humanity and holds the ‘lower’ class entirely out of the realm of influence (Freire, 1970). One can see these problems magnified, in an American context, within the well-documented presence of staggering economic inequality and class divisions, though they certainly exist elsewhere as well. These are recognizable issues regardless of what response one might meet them with. In the face of these issues, Freire and Rancière both present a bold and dynamic vision for the ‘lower’ class in working to overcome these structures, one that

centers on processes of reflection and action, which Freire terms “praxis” (1970, p. 51). It is through working to realize one’s own humanity and recovering one’s “ontological” efforts that the subjugated class of people can ultimately bring about a more humanizing form of government (Freire, 1970, p. 66). In the process of laying out this reclamation of humanness, Freire utilizes vivid vocabulary and understanding of human complexities which serve to add richness and character to this, already radical, perspective on communal living. His differentiation between “occupation” as a form of work and “preoccupation” as work with a reflective component provides one example of such vocabulary (Freire, 1970, p. 53). He also holds up the term “educational projects” to refer to efforts, like Rancière’s, which occur outside the formal schooling system (Freire, 1970, p. 54).

The most significant difference between the Freire’s work and that of Rancière lies in the tendency for Freire to push for structural change, while Rancière turns away from structural concerns entirely. Rancière’s work, despite being less well-known, fits more comfortably into the framework of a democratic republic for that reason. This may seem counterintuitive, but a closer look shows Rancière’s ideas leaning much closer to Jefferson’s republicanism than Freire’s do. For Freire, hope lies in our ability to overturn oppressive systems and replace them with better institutions, evident in his use of the phrase “new regime” (1970, p. 57). His solutions exist more within the framework of institutional turnover, where one system is called upon to replace another, much like the American Revolution. Rancière, on the other hand, is more cynical and rests his hope in our ability to create and sustain change outside of the system, claiming that systems themselves always breed inequality. Todd May further extends this in claiming that Rancière’s argument about equality “allows us to think [of] anarchism in a positive fashion” without going so far as to set up a structure like Marxism (May, 2007, p. 22). Far from

our typical picture of anarchy, Rancière's ideas do borrow from the same cynicism toward institutions and faith in individuals that anarchism often relies on. In this sense, his approach is more sympathetic to the, less extreme, republican ideal that power should come to rest in the hands of the people, instead of in the government itself. Where Freire's institutional turnover aims to re-humanize everyone in the society, it makes no promises for a democratic republic as the new structure. Rancière, though he rejects all structures, seeks out a radical form of democratic republican government by advocating for a complete focus on giving power to the citizens. Because they share the same theoretical basis, however, Freire's beautiful language and complex understanding of the condition of the oppressed can serve to clarify and strengthen our understanding of the arguments Rancière lays out.

This shared argument rests on the idea that inequality is established early in our lives and permeates the actions and interactions that compose our society. Students raised under a belief in superior and inferior intellects are bound to create a larger world that recognizes superiority of intelligence as well. Even while they are students, they tend to look at those behind them in school as their inferiors (Rancière, 1991, p. 22). This is often the first in a pervasive pattern of hierarchical perception that pits young against old, 'blue-collar' workers against 'white-collar' workers, and countless other groups against one another, all jockeying for the superior position. As individual humans engaging in the natural learning processes, however, we can all be equals in both capacity and method. Only when our innate learning method is pulled out of its natural form, divided, and sorted into neat categories do we begin to see differences emerge. Taking the claim of our inherent thoughtfulness together with this renewed recognition of our natural learning processes, Rancière finds solid ground for the democratic hypothesis that all people possess an equal capacity for intelligence (1991, p. 27). If we all think and can make progress

towards our intellectual potential by using our thoughts, then our capacities for improved intelligence must be equivalent. The main tool for convincing us otherwise is the term ‘difference’ (Rancière, 1991, p. 24). Recognition of differences in our capacities combines with our desire to compare the worth of different things to quickly move a distinction into a statement of hierarchy. Even the simplest acknowledgement of difference provides the proponents of explication “enough to exalt all the thrones of the hierarchy of intelligence,” as the human tendency to turn difference into inequality takes over (Rancière, 1991, p. 24). These thrones, which place limits on intellectual capacity, are deeply unsatisfying for Rancière and push him to commit wholeheartedly to the democratic principle of equal potential.

It is certainly true that distinct differences do exist in some human individuals, including the presence of developmental, expressive, receptive, and intellectual disabilities. None of these, however, provide grounds for refusing to recognize equal capacities in these individuals for intelligence, for two reasons. The first draws support from the ‘social model of disability’ prevalent in the discourse of multiple fields, such as psychology and sociology. Broadly understood, this model argues that the disabling force in a person’s life is not their impairments, but the social forces themselves which presume that those impairments create inferiority (Goering, 2015, p. 135). Individuals do not ‘have’ disabilities but rather are disabled by the societal belief that their differences make them inferior in some way. It is almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy that a society forces onto an individual through a given cultural belief. Accepting this perspective, there is no inconsistency in extending assumptions of equal intellectual capacity to all individuals, since any perceived and substantial differences are not believed to be innate, but rather found in society.

The second reason we ought to, without hesitation, include disabled individuals among the ranks of humans with equal capacity for intelligence is the recognition that our understanding of intelligence is incomplete. We have worked for generations to develop a firm definition of intelligence and to measure it in precise ways, but we are far from completing that definition. Assuming that the human brain is both limited in its range of comprehension and imperfect in its ability to grasp the whole scope of wisdom, we will never have a full and absolute picture of intelligence. With possible discoveries about human intellect always on the horizon, it seems fruitless to make definitive and restrictive statements about someone's relative capacity for intelligence when our definition of that concept is constantly in flux. In the absence of any tangible and recognizable proof, what reason can we find for differentiation between our intellectual capacities and those belonging to people whom society disables? The benefits of Rancière's principle of equality ought to be extended equally among all human beings, without exceptions being drawn from our provisional claims about the differences between us.

James is not as noticeably fervent in his support of equality, though his continued development of pragmatics offers glimpses of universally accessible modes of thinking. Any approach to truth-seeking carries a view of truth within it, and James's definition of truth bears a striking resemblance to Rancière's universal teaching and learning. Truth takes on its meaning, he claims, when "*we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify*" it (James, 1991, p. 88). This works much the same as a dynamic understanding of the scientific method. A static truth is as useless to a pragmatist as it is to a scientist. We must be able to meet two requirements in our truth-seeking and reaffirming: lining up our truth candidates with a verifiable "sensible terminus" and reconciling them with our existing body of truth (James, 1991, p. 95). Scientists meet similar criteria when they provide detailed accounts of their findings and situate their ultimate

conclusions within the existing scientific literature. A scientist who omitted part of their data would be suspected of manipulating their results. One who intended to overturn a prevailing notion based on the results of a singular study would be viewed as foolish. If left unchecked, such practices would unravel the reliability and credibility of scientific study. Our truth-seeking process works much the same way. The new truths we find “must derange common sense and previous belief as little as possible,” otherwise they threaten the integrity of our conception of truth (James, 1991, p. 95). We recognize conservatism and stability as valuable precisely because they provide an anchor, a tether that keeps us from drifting aimlessly through different iterations of truth. When we allow a new truth to disturb this stability, beyond a certain point, we also lose the predictability and reliability which lend meaning to our truths (James, 1991). In addition to this need for verification and reconciliation, our truths must ‘work’ for us in achieving some end beyond themselves, often achievement of our basic needs (James, 1991). They become dynamic both in continually fulfilling the burden of proof and in providing instrumental use.

For Rancière, our natural learning process is a simple exercise of “comparing two facts,” in essence verifying one using the other (1991, p. 22). In the case of Jacotot’s students, the two facts were as follows: first, the first sentence of *Tèlèmaque* reads “Calypso could not be consoled after the departure of Ulysses” and second, “the words are written there” (Rancière, 1991, p. 22). With knowledge of the content of the first sentence and of its location in the French text, students could begin the process of comparing facts. They might naturally begin by comparing the word ‘Calypso’ to the first word written on the page. From there they could proceed through the rest of the text, using processes of induction and deduction, creating abstractions and applying them to decipher the grammatical construction and to find the parallel words between the two translations. James argues that we make things true in much the same

way: by comparing the fledgling truth with our existing truths (1991, p. 29). It is a process of trial-and-error reminiscent of our curious manner of living early in childhood or the ridiculed but effective ‘guess-and-check’ method in mathematics. In this moment, the two philosophers come together, in effect, to create a vision of natural learning as an active process of making truths through verification (James, 1991, p. 89). James comes to this idea with a focus on the process itself, while Rancière emphasizes our equal capacity to make use of it. One lays the simple but awe-inducing mechanical foundation, while the other dreams up grandiose structures to lay on top of it.

The Power of ‘Calypso’

An assumption that both James and Rancière build on in establishing this ‘truth-making’ process is the importance of discourse and language in human life. We are thinking beings, but our “thought must be spoken, manifested in works, communicated to other thinking beings” (Rancière, 1991, p. 62). Without moving our thoughts beyond our heads, through some form of communication or action, the very concept of thought barely has meaning. The mechanics of this process, the particular language we choose, are of little consequence for Rancière (1991, p. 60). Discussing Jacotot’s arguments about languages, he summarizes a belief that “all languages [are] equally arbitrary” (Rancière, 1991, p. 60). James similarly argues that our names for various concepts are meaningless (James, 1991, p. 94). This idea that our language is arbitrary, Rancière notes, does not sit well with many people (Rancière, 1991), especially those who value our historical customs and the concept of randomness as an attack on those customs. He is quick to contend that “only the lazy are afraid of the idea of arbitrariness,” but this rebuke of ‘the lazy’ goes a step too far (Rancière, 1991, p. 62). The fear that arbitrariness leads to relativism and

confusion is both genuine and valuable. True, operating in an arbitrary realm demands a good deal of work from us, but that does not automatically mean that all who oppose arbitrariness are lazy. Rancière mistakenly conflates an aversion to work and an aversion to subjectivity. Some individuals, guided by their justifiable fears, are just cautious of that tendency to slip away from tradition and values, and those considerations should be both present and validated in any discussion of arbitrariness.

That the words we form and the ways we combine them are arbitrary, however, does not take away from the influence that the more general concept of language possesses. It would be a mistake to think that the arbitrary nature of individual languages means that we ought to have no language. In fact, we would be hard-pressed to imagine a world in which we were unable to communicate with one another. Such an existence would be an isolating and lonesome experience. Even setting the solitude of a language-less world aside, there remains another issue in a world devoid of communicative interaction. Rancière proposes that “there is only one power, that of saying and speaking” (1991, p. 26). Lacking the ability to speak—or, in the broader sense, to communicate—with one another leaves us powerless and frustrated. It denies us the chance to engage with others in meaningful ways, one of the core activities of human existence and a primary tool for meeting some of our basic needs. This claim is built on a well-regarded, though contestable, assumption that humans are both social and political animals, using political in the broadest sense. Rancière views our social needs, described as “the desire to understand and to be understood,” as the single driving force in all of our ‘truth-making’ efforts (1991, p. 63). This chance to understand others and to have one’s own experiences validated comes through social activities and communication. For the purposes of this analysis, I regard Rancière and James’s

socially inclined human as both a reasonable and agreeable theory and, therefore, agree that discourse plays a crucial role in human existence.

Through this discussion of language, specifically the language within *Tèlèmaque*, Rancière sets the groundwork for his revisions to our theory of intelligence. The grandiose statement he borrows from Jacotot claims that “everything is in everything” (Rancière, 1991, p. 41). Bringing this to bear on language, he presents Jacotot’s belief that “the power of intelligence that is in any human manifestation” can be found in the word ‘Calypso’ (Rancière, 1991, p. 27). ‘Calypso,’ in this case, is a stand-in for any word or portion of human communication. The effects of these claims are twofold. First, the idea that everything is contained in everything else simultaneously expands and shrinks our understanding of what ‘everything’ means. To take Rancière’s, slightly less abstract, example of intelligence, it tells us that we can find the entirety of human intelligence in one small object of human intellect, like the word ‘Calypso.’ This claim injects immense possibility into the smallest fragment of our intellectual history, even as it seems to reduce that history to a simple process. That process, the second effect of Rancière’s claim, is built on the assumption that speaking about the ‘truth’ is impossible (1991, p. 65). This is the same contention James makes: that absolute truth lies beyond the reach of our imperfect human minds (1991, p. 98). The impossibility of grasping truth redefines our process of articulation as one that “translates and invites others to do the same” (Rancière, 1991, p. 65). We cannot comprehend or express the pure image in front of us, but instead of letting that discourage us, we opt for the closest approximation we can manage: our translations of that reality (Rancière, 1991). “Everything is in everything” because all of our great works are equally distant from the true nature of that which we are trying to describe (Rancière, 1991, p. 41). These two effects, the

expanded power of a word and the redefinition of communication processes, craft a remarkable conception of language and grant that conception a vital role in human existence.

That prominent new role Rancière and James assign to language, the facilitator of all human thoughts, solidifies it as the medium for any human cognition or communication. This becomes especially evident as James argues that “all human thinking gets discursified” and that “all truth thus gets verbally built out” for our equal access (1991, p. 94). An active and social view of truth means that our discourse facilitates the process of our thoughts and subsequent construction of truth. In this vision, our languages become much more than accessories to our thoughts and experiences. Though they remain tools, their presence in our lives becomes indispensable. They not only help us express and organize our lived experiences in repeatable ways, but they also provide the essential link between ourselves and those around us. Language frees us from both the isolation of disorganization and the isolation of loneliness. For James, language also makes it possible for us to verify truths that we cannot directly locate without our immediate senses (1991, p. 95). As obvious as this may sound, systems of communication provide a vital and underappreciated service when they let us develop and consistently apply abstract concepts. Without the “consistency, stability, and flowing human intercourse” that language provides us, we would be left with only those truths we could access through our senses at a given time, those found in our current environment (James, 1991, p. 95). Between this, and the powers Rancière assigned to language, it is clear that language education serves a vital role in the revised view of intelligence James and Rancière offer.

Language, no doubt, important to those who preceded both James and Rancière, but arguably not to the same extent. The hardline rationalist and empiricist perspectives James opposes each seem to miss a crucial element of the power communication can hold. Rationalists

miss the ability of language to tie itself to both actions and non-absolute forms (James, 1991). This can cause them to become preoccupied with a certain arbitrary form of communication and to miss the need for that interaction to spur activity. It can also lead to a full rejection of anything which does not claim to be absolutely held or absolutely true, a categorization that covers a good deal of human ideas. Empiricists, in contrast, miss the consistent and stabilizing elements of language that allow for cleaner exchange of ideas and for understandings to be built up over time (James, 1991). When this happens, they may lose sight of their context and become both redundant and inefficient. By adopting the two together, under the heading of pragmatism, James can offset the weaknesses of both approaches and bring their strengths into harmony with one another.

Similarly, those explicative manners of teaching and interacting Rancière seeks to oppose also rely on language in their methods and do so in a variety of creative ways, though they neglect one of communication's crucial roles. All explicative uses of language are oriented towards sustaining the hierarchy that explication depends on. Explicators might recognize a great amount of the beauty that language has to offer the human spirit, but they will always miss one crucial component: the ability of language to free us and recognize our autonomy. The liberating capacities of language are substantial in both form and influence, as can be seen through any number of literary genres and notable works, but explication denies us the chance to utilize those capacities. True, Rancière ignores the hierarchical capabilities of language, but he does so in a manner that allows him to pull the benefits of those capabilities—such as order and respect—without adopting the restrictive characteristics. The form of discourse James and Rancière set forth seeks to recognize all of the capacities found in the use of language, including those of liberation, actionability, and stability, which other approaches neglect. In bringing a larger share

of our discursive power together, and in redefining elements of it more fully, they allow us to come much closer to a complete understanding and use of that power than we might have before.

Freeing Our Intelligence

The existing beliefs Rancière seeks to challenge are built on a familiar tautology which argues that superior individuals do better in areas of intelligence because they are smarter (Rancière, 1991, p. 49). In different words, he argues, this logic can be reduced to ‘they are smarter because they are smarter’ (Rancière, 1991, p. 49). He concedes that physical differences would present real evidence for intellectual superiority, but such superiority would then be self-evident, like the difference between humans and animals (Rancière, 1991, p. 47). If we do not find such distinction on clear physical bases, then any professed differences must be based in unprovable reasoning. One cannot prove something in the absence of such physical evidence in support of their claim. Because the foundation for traditional practice is built on such unproven claims and circular logic, Rancière reasons he can and should present an equally unproven claim for consideration: that some produce poorer quality of work because they have worked more poorly (1991, p. 50). Stated different, it is not an innate quality of the person, but their effort level that accounts for the difference. In doing this, he again takes a pragmatic approach, thinking not about any provable or absolute reality, but rather what benefits his theory might have if we let it guide our actions. Recognizing our equality of intelligence at birth and our subsequent intellectual differentiation as we progress in age, he postulates that the differences are attributable to the amount of work we apply to realizing our capacities. This focus on effort instead of innate intellectual fitness presents a host of personal and societal implications worth pursuing. The most immediate is an increased emphasis on one’s agency and work ethic in the

pursuit of both knowledge and truth. From there we might begin to imagine a different form of society built around this responsibility to actively realize our potential.

This proclamation of our autonomy also aligns with James's tendency to favor those ideas that invite "promise" and possibility (1991, p. 54). In one of his lectures, he presents several concepts, among them free will and spiritualism, which he claims invite more possibility than their alternatives (1991, p. 54). Spiritualism, he argues, allows us to escape the inevitable consequences of materialism, the belief that the physical world is all that exists (James, 1991). Those consequences include the grim idea that the entire material world will collapse into nothing on some distant date (James, 1991). Spiritualism, however, presents the brighter possibility of some afterlife or some rescue from inevitable death (James, 1991). A belief in free will, similarly, gives us the chance to think beyond a predetermined course for our lives and to act with the thought that our actions can make a difference (James, 1991). Rancière's focus on effort and recognition of agency is desirable for this same reason because it "holds up improvement as at least possible" and justifies striving for that improvement (James, 1991, p. 54). If we suppose that our innate capacities for intelligence are fixed at different levels, then we find no reason to push ourselves to try to surpass those levels. It becomes an issue of motivation and the intricate relationship between what we view as possible and what we find ourselves inspired to accomplish. An expectation of different capacities puts a firm cap on possibility to the detriment of human tenacity.

It is equally important to recognize that the world which Rancière constructs is not a meritocratic ideal, where all are rewarded in equal portion for their efforts. Our recognition, in line with Rancière, that effort plays a crucial role in realizing our intellectual capacity does not necessarily mean that effort translates to the realization of intelligence in equal proportion for all

people. Different circumstances and contexts may well mean that two individuals reach different intellectual levels despite exerting the same level of effort. Put another way, the clear differences in how close we come to our intellectual potential could be a result of any combination of effort and circumstance. Our unequal expressions of intelligence, for Rancière, cannot be a result of different capacities for intelligence (1991), but they can be the consequence of various effort-levels or circumstances. I cannot do full justice to the intricacies of the meritocratic ideal, or meritocratic myth, in American society within this space, but it is sufficient to make this distinction. Rancière is concerned with recognizing equal capacity for intelligence within others and the implications of such a presupposition on how we educate and interact with each other. He does not conclude, nor will I, that effort is the sole engine in driving us towards the realization of those capacities. These are questions of great importance as we continue with this great American experiment and seek to fully understand the struggles and realities facing our fellow citizens. What is relevant for Rancière and for my discussion here, however, is understanding the possibilities we create when we start from an assumption of human potential, instead of human differences and limitations.

The latter assumption, that of human limitations, has historically worked hand-in-hand with the idea that humanity is a will that serves an intelligence. Our brain or our cognition leads the way through processes of thinking and our effortful action follows in line. This view often assumes that humans are inherently rational and that we put our passions to work for our reason. Rancière and Jacotot reverse the order of this concept when they argue that “*man is a will served by an intelligence*” (1991, p. 52). They recognize that we tend to regard our intelligence, whether inborn or not, as the engine that dictates how we will act. This may come from the intuitive observation that our brain controls all of our muscle movements and physical processes. James,

drawing again on his psychological roots, would be sure to remind us of the role sensations and environment play in this process of connecting thought and action. Our brain might send the signal to our muscles, but the environment around us is what sprung our brain into action. This is similar to his previous assertion that our perceptions come before the concepts we make out of them (Barbalet, 2004).

Barbalet notes that James's theory of emotion was revolutionary because it recognized that our physical stimuli-responses sometimes precede our emotional responses (2004, p. 350). In taking this stance, James points out that our actions often precede our cognitions about those actions, meaning we are hardly always a will that follows the orders of an intelligence. Sometimes we act and our intelligence is left to adapt to those emotional or instinctual responses. If we assume that our intelligence is the only factor that dictates our actions, we overlook the key role that emotion and will play in defining how we use that intelligence in the first place. This emphasis on desire and emotional response differs from Freud, Barbalet remarks, in that James regards the emotional components of our brain as vital contributors to our stores of both truth and knowledge, where Freud viewed them as untamed urges (2004, p. 351). Instead of being distrustful of our gut reactions and feelings, James embraces them as partners in our truth-seeking processes (Barbalet, 2004). For those who embrace the role of custom and tradition in our societies, this recognition of emotion's value apart from consideration of reason is fantastic news. It sets the stage for us to place more value in our traditions when they provide comfort, familiarity, and other positive emotional responses, even if those traditions contradict reason. In a sense, James aims to temper the dominance of reason in determining our actions, both personal and collective.

James's psychology and philosophy bring our focus to these emotional and impassioned origins and suppose that it is our intelligence that serves our wants and our actions. The lack of will or lack of attention, by extension, would then partly account for differences in how our intelligence expresses itself (Rancière, 1991). When we attend to our equal capacity and allow our desires to reflect confidence in that equality, we are much more inclined to realize our intellectual possibilities (Rancière, 1991). Democratic theorists dream of a reality where citizens of their republic proudly see and exercise their capacities for intelligence and civic participation. Belief in our capabilities makes us much more likely to see ourselves as worthy partners in the democratic government we occupy. Thomas Jefferson, echoing the republican idea that power ought to rest in the hands of the people, asserted that we should educate individuals to protect the freedoms and powers of their neighbors from the wandering eyes of tyranny (1951, p. 527). Here, Rancière and James offer a potential route to achieving this goal. In a truly republican sense, the onus is ultimately on each citizen to engage in this process of emancipating themselves from a perceived hierarchy through simple recognition of their capacities.

Intelligence in Discourse

Rancière's ambition hits a new gear as he describes how our attention and emancipation work through a view of truth that James might be proud to extend alongside his own. James's view of truth looks at those beliefs which serve a purpose in our lives and allows that they be regarded as truths so long as they can be traced to verifiable realities (1991, p. 88). Placing the question of absolutes either to the side or beyond our ability to reckon with, his conception of our quest for knowledge is founded in our personal store of these 'working truths' (James, 1991). Rancière steps in from a similar angle, choosing to refer to these working truths as translation of

experience into poetic forms. To Rancière, we are all poets. Just like a painter aiming to express their experiences of reality, we attempt to relay our observations when we regard something as true. This expression is driven by our desire to have our experiences verified by others around us (Rancière, 1991, p. 64). It is what Rancière calls “the poetic virtue,” through which we try to “communicate our feelings and see them shared by other feeling beings” (1991, p. 64). Not only does such communication and validation in the company of others make us feel less alone in our struggles and experiences, but it also serves as an anchor with which we can compare our perceptions and ground our stances. It gives us both a home and a community.

For Rancière, like James, the absolute truth represents something distinct and entirely apart from our discourse. What we can express is a mere translation of our experiences, which finds its meaning in the efforts of others to ‘counter-translate’ these poems (Rancière, 1991, p. 64). This mere translation, far from insignificant, is the closest that our innately imperfect human minds can come to the absolute truth. Through it, we invite a counter-translation process that represents an effort to empathize with our original translations and to bring them into the terms of another person’s experiences with reality. The word translation encapsulates it perfectly. Our attempts to convey our experiences of truth are much like exchanging conversation through translation into various languages; the translation is never a pure representation of the original message and we must take some creative license in working to understand what the other person meant to say. The goal, regardless of the license we choose to take, is always centered around seeking to understand the experiences of others and the meaning they derive from those experiences. In this sense, our exchanges are inevitably empathetic, as we are always working to consider the context of the other person and how it shapes their interactions with us.

To communicate in this manner, therefore, we must assume that we have an equal capacity to those who engage with our translations, otherwise they would be hopeless to understand our expressions. A painter who creates works of inaccessible meaning is bound for a lonely and meaningless existence, assuming, as Rancière does, that we paint to have others understand our perspectives. Similarly, those who believe in some form of ‘high art’ that requires a refined taste doom themselves to an exclusive and limited social realm. All true art is made for mutual enjoyment and is written in a language we are all capable of speaking. Such mutuality and translation of experience is an innate part of the power art holds in our lives. If we hold this view, it follows that educators ought to bring their students to the point where they feel confident echoing Rancière’s declaration: “me too, I’m a painter” (Rancière, 1991, p. 67). This simple, yet potent expression boldly asserts that the speaker is equally capable of translating their experiences into the field of “intelligence” and counter-translating the works offered by others before them (Rancière, 1991, p. 67). It is a statement of recognizing one’s own qualifications to partake in exchanges of human experience.

Our modern approach to education looks to do just the opposite. Students can become confident in their painting and translating abilities once they graduate, but, until that time, they should lack confidence in these abilities and should depend on the teacher to help them translate in manageable portions. Those who become too confident in their abilities too quickly, we are told, are likely to miss key steps along the way and enter the world with an incomplete foundation for adulthood. Therefore, adults are necessary for the primary purpose of keeping student confidence low so that they may lay this foundation on the students’ behalf. Students will eventually be let loose on the world, but only once they are ready. There is, no doubt, some merit in these protectionist sentiments which look to ground students in the reality of their

inexperience and to counterbalance their overconfidence. There are many times students might become too cavalier in attempting to take on projects they have not adequately prepared for. In these times, cautious warnings can be important, especially if the student might find themselves in danger due to their bullishness. This caution becomes dangerous, however, when we use a student's lack of experience to justify a hierarchical view of human capacity for intelligence. Our current system has crossed this line and moved from helpful caution in guiding student opportunities to oppressive limitation of those opportunities.

Such a view is both unhealthy and dehumanizing, and it is far from the only system of education we can construct. In contrast with the explicators and facilitators of traditional instruction, Rancière's ideal instructor has two roles: interrogator and verifier (1991, p. 29). Interrogation involves demanding responses from students and encouraging them to articulate their experiences. It rests on the fundamental assumption that students are capable of responding as full human beings. In the process, the instructor also exposes students to a world beyond their locality, which serves to stretch their curiosities further than they otherwise might reach alone. In both instances, however, the emphasis remains on the student as a complete person at the center of their learning experience. Students are respected as full persons, instead of objects that are in the process of human completion. The instructor's role, in the process of interrogation, then becomes that of another complete human individual working alongside the student and spurring them on.

Working in tandem with interrogation, the verification processes seek to hold the student accountable. They are accountable not to the truthfulness of their responses, as we might commonly think, but to the effort to remain "always searching" and attentive (Rancière, 1991, p. 33). Here, the unrelenting desire to learn replaces 'correctness' as the ultimate value in the

education process. The sole punishable offense is inattention or laziness (Rancière, 1991). Students take on a new life within an approach that asks them only to relentlessly reflect on and articulate their observations. No corner of education is beyond their reach in the right circumstances and with the right amount of hard work. In addition, their instructor is no longer a repository of correct answers, but rather a human who pushes them to search for the truths and realities which ground their conclusions. Rancière's teachers retain their professionalism and authority to the extent that they pride themselves on their ability to expand curiosities, provoke responses, and hold students accountable to constant effort. Their profession becomes one of action, respect for the humans they work alongside, and mastery of nurturing educational relationships. This role represents a stark departure from our traditional conception of teaching, which emphasizes the ability to bestow knowledge, hold students at a distance, and maintain an intellectual boundary between the two parties. As stark as the contrast may be, the distinguishing features of this new professionalism bring us a great deal closer to our democratic and republican ideals than traditional manners of teaching ever could.

Democratic and Republican Implications

Rancière's presumed equality of intelligence, while always present as capacity, is neither reliably inevitable nor capable of ever being so. His ideas of equality and emancipation are defined as processes, as truth is for James. They can never exist unless we actively bring them to fruition in a given situation. Claudia Ruitenberg argues that Rancière defines democracy itself as a process, as it is "never in place, but always *enters*" (2008, p. 5). This idea that democracy and other qualities must enter demands that we continuously work to see those qualities embodied in our actions (Ruitenberg, 2008). Equality, taken as a static principle, only requires stating one's

belief and making a passing effort to structure institutions around those belief statements. The process of equality, in contrast, brings those ideas into action, recognizing that they are never fulfilled, that they have no value in written form alone, and that our understanding of them is constantly susceptible to revision. A society, being built on the need to distinguish individuals for role assignment and the need to hold certain steady principles, cannot host truth, equality, or freedom in these living forms. Ruitenberg notes that Rancière operates from a belief that membership in a society is “based on assumptions of inequality” (2008, p. 4). That assumption is a necessary step in determining hierarchical roles within a society. Therefore, a thriving vision of equality and democracy cannot belong to the society itself. Rather, dynamic principles are the sole property of each human individual, as Jefferson argued the procurement of liberty is (Rancière, 1991, p. 102; Jefferson, 1951, p. 527). To say otherwise, Jefferson and Rancière argue, would wrest a great deal of power from each of us and would betray our republican ideals.

Surrendering ownership of our principles to a government would leave us wholly reliant on society in a way that would cripple us, especially considering the modern manifestations of human government. This surrender was precisely what Jefferson feared when he pushed for a continued “revolutionary spirit” (Dotts, 2015, p. 3). Among his greatest concerns was the possibility that we would gradually lose sight of our individual and influential role in shaping governance (Dotts, 2015). Our abandonment of personal power, he worried, willingly submits us to the possibility of an oppressive community structure (Dotts, 2015). Despite his well-documented concern, this abandonment has become the subtle quality of our American cultural tendencies. The moment a national, or even local, crisis arises in any facet of our lives, the knee-jerk response is to demand action from our government. Rarely, if ever, do the majority of Americans place demands on themselves or take ownership of solving the issue. The same can

be said for slower attempts to bring about change and improvement. Though there are exceptions, to be American generally means subscribing to a belief in our elected governing body as our saving grace. Even those who look beyond government for change still operate under the assumption that such efforts are exceptional in some way. We laud their efforts because it seems somehow remarkable that a ‘common’ citizen could make an impact without going through their government. This dependence on our government would not be inherently harmful except that our predominant view of that government rests power overwhelmingly in the hands of politicians, either in Washington D.C. or our state’s capital.

In this process of becoming more dependent, our prevailing notion of citizenship in America becomes a stagnant one: ‘if I stay informed and vote each cycle, I have done my civic duty.’ Outside of a singular event of political action, the archetype American relies entirely on elected representatives to do the work of maintaining our democratic republic. We have fallen far from Jefferson’s vision for us. He yearned for a republic where every individual could view themselves as “a participator in the government of affairs not merely at an election, one day in the year, but every day” (Jefferson, 2012, p. 437). Speaking in a time of very exclusive White-male citizenship, he writes of a passion in which a person would “let the heart be torn out of his body sooner than his power be wrested from him by a Caesar or a Bonaparte” (Jefferson, 2012, p. 437). The serious and important limits of his definition of citizenship aside, there is little of that passion among us today. The ground does not shake with our collective, momentous action like Jefferson recalls in *Revolutionary New England* (2012, p. 437). We scarcely even *recognize* our vital role in preserving democratic and republican principles, let alone that we are “the ultimate line of defense” against tyranny (Carpenter, 2013, p. 6). Suzanna Sherry notes this phenomenon as she laments that “everyone now has rights, but no one has responsibilities” (1995, p. 148). I

would take her, already bold, claim a step further: no one even wants responsibilities, at least in the civic realm. Why have we fallen into such dispassion? Rancière would posit, and Jefferson would likely agree, that we have lost sight of our capacity to affect change and, therefore, have no reason to strive for passionate action.

Recognizing our schools as both a cause and consequence of this tendency away from passion, it becomes obvious in any given civics-education classroom. The idea of ‘American equality’ that we learn is a God-given or naturally endowed state of being, assumed absolutely and requiring no further maintenance if we hope to enjoy it. ‘American freedom’ is etched in parchment and tucked away in our nation’s capital, only invoked and wheeled out when its limits are in question. ‘American truth,’ especially in our schools, is absolute, digestible, and reproducible in recognizable forms. Widely accepted criticism of standardized testing, by educators and politicians of both ideological stripes, points to our tendency to fixate on concepts which can be measured, broken down into sections, and covered in classrooms in a routine manner. This is not to say there is no value in the absolute, digestible, and reproducible, but rather to point out that these are the unmistakable qualities of modern American education. Variations on these views exist across our country’s discourse, but the ideas laid out above are identifiable and dominant narratives in our country. Together they paint and frame a distinct way of life and manner of discourse that represents the American democratic republic, but is our form of governance true to its name? Rancière lays a foundation for serious doubt.

What he and James provide, by way of contrast, are alternative narratives that invigorate and distribute equality, freedom, truth, and, consequently, intelligence. Equality, in the American sense, shows up in our capacities for qualities like intelligence. This alone does nothing for us if it remains an idle quality of our birth. Rancière proposes a shift in approach where equality

moves from an abstract aim of our actions to an assumption that underlies those actions (Ross, 1991, p. xix). In other words, equality is not the house we aim to build, but the bricks we build with. This change would give us both license and reason to begin treating each other as equals immediately, instead of waiting for some distant utopian future (Ross, 1991). It moves us beyond the simple, though significant in its own right, step of recognizing equality as something that can only exist in action. Coming to view equality as both needing routine attention and operating best as an assumption turns our static idea of ‘equality under the law’ on its head. It borrows the idea that we ought to hold equality as an assumption in our actions but rejects the notion that we could ever do so institutionally. Systems, Rancière suggests, can never cultivate an equal view of others for us, and to expect such cultivation is neglectful of our responsibilities to each other (Rancière, 1991). We must actively take up the mantle of equality in each moment of our lives, he argues, and make a conscious decision to carry that assumed equality to our interpersonal lives (Rancière, 1991).

In order to operate under this assumption of equality, we also need to lean on Rancière’s conception of emancipation, as he argues that only emancipated individuals can see and hold this assumption (Rancière, 1991). Emancipation, far from constitutionalized freedoms, is a single and twofold process. It requires us to recognize equality of intelligence between humans, which includes acknowledging our partnership in that equality. The first step in emancipation, therefore, is recognizing one’s capacities to be regarded as equal. That step is necessarily entangled with respecting the equal capacity of others since equality demands some other individual that we can be relatively equal to. The republican view of liberty or emancipation, here, draws on the democratic ideal of inherent equality, and therefore cannot exist with singular consequences. Our government does not emancipate us, rather we free ourselves and, in the

process, free others with whom we come into contact. These are the mechanics of Rancière's vision for emancipated equality and it is the foundation of a Jeffersonian democratic republic. The particular medium of self-emancipation that Rancière has in mind is the realization that we are all on equal footing when it comes to intellectual capacity, the understanding that no one has grounds to claim greater fitness for intellectual achievement. Such a realization frees us to reach for the fullest extent of our potential, instead of some imaginary limitation placed on us externally.

The third virtue, truth, though desirable in absolute form, becomes much more useful in active and discursive forms. A conception of absolute truth permits unequal intellectual capacity because it leaves room for the assumption that some of us hold understandings that other individuals may never be able to reach, which immediately sets the table for exploitation and hierarchy. It does not require this assumption, but it does permit it. Discursive truth, in contrast, finds no room for it. To engage with truth in discussion, the two parties must have equal capacity for understanding and must be free to make use of those capacities. We enter a discussion, centered around our working truths and interpretations, as liberated equals. Absolute truth, therefore, hardly lends itself to this discourse, especially when one side is professed to be absolutely incorrect. On the other hand, discursive truth, as it helps to facilitate communication, does not rule out the absolute. James sees the two as compatible, with working truths laying within our reach and the absolute form of truth existing beyond our comprehension but existing just the same (1991, p. 98). A democratic republic, as a form of government reliant on our ability to converse about issues from diverse perspectives and to draw information from other parties, draws infinitely greater strengths from those forms of truth which lend themselves to debate and exchange.

None of this is to condemn the dominant American narratives on intelligence, truth, freedom, and equality, but simply to show that they may not be the best narratives for fully realizing our ideal democratic republic. Rancière doubts altogether the tangibility of this ideal but, even still, recognizes that a dynamic understanding of equality, freedom, and truth provides our best chance at reaching it. Their stale and stagnant counterparts, inked in the foundations of American society and trusted to hold us up, will inevitably fail us so long as we place them in that role. These lofty human ideals long to come out and dance between the abstract and the practical, like James's fish. Allowing them to do so, however, is a process that requires each of us to energetically believe in our capacities and see them to fruition. There are no shortcuts to democracy or to republicanism. They are won through a daily, relentless, hard-fought defense of their ideals and components. Rancière and James beg us to wake from our collective slumber, our impatient waiting for institution-led deliverance, and to accept the work laid before us by our founders.

Education: Personal Methods, Civic Goals

The immense task Rancière and James present to us, in working to take ownership of our democratic republic, marks a shift in how we understand citizenship. It is a paradoxical shift and one that demands more from us than we are accustomed to give. Where before we might have deferred certain components of our civic duties to politicians, Rancière echoes Jefferson and calls us to take up these responsibilities ourselves. The onus for sustaining our system of government shifts from experts or from the state into our hands. The same is true for our preparation for public life, understood broadly as our education. We have the power and the obligation to procure and to take advantage of our educational opportunities. In this sense, our

education becomes an individual and private concern. Its methods are personally determined and require our full ownership of the process. We endanger our democratic republic if we hand off this responsibility to others, search for shortcuts, or otherwise look to shirk the necessary effort to prepare ourselves for citizenship. Each of us alone can cultivate the dynamic qualities we need to become a useful party in discourse and an effective check against tyrannical government. Rancière and our republican tendencies push us to emancipate ourselves and to recognize our equal capabilities, but emancipation and capability bring with them responsibility and relentless hard work. Put differently, freedom in a democratic republic never means freedom from effort, and educational autonomy is no different.

At the same time that we are recognizing this freedom, the community we occupy takes an acute interest in ensuring our preparedness, since well-equipped citizens are necessary for its survival. In the context of a democratic republic, the education of citizens is both a means of preservation and a public concern. Any individual hoping to partake in the political life of a healthy republic must regard the education of their fellow citizens as equally important to their own. This idea seems radical in our modern, consumerist American framework because, plainly stated, it is. We may be accustomed to regard education as a consumer product that we can exploit, but our republic begs us to avoid that view. The education of republican citizens, in this context, is a prerequisite to the health of that republic. The goal of this education, then, is primarily the maintenance of our government, with that government ultimately being a tool for the public good. Our republicanism calls us to recognize our education as a vital tool for perpetuating the community we have established. The form of citizenship that it supports involves recognizing both our unique educational authority and the civic importance of our education. It creates an education that is private in its methods, but public in its goals. In this

sense, all education in a republic is civic education, not because it directly concerns civic participation, but because the motivating force for that education is the civic good. This is the dual demand we accept in establishing a democratic republic: sole responsibility for our personal growth and dedication of that growth to the good of our neighbors.

If we were to argue, instead, that the goals of our education are private, we would be inviting selfishness into a system of governance that relies on interdependence. A republic could not very well find a direction that serves the public good if each individual was only concerned with their own good. A degree of social-orientation and interest in affairs beyond our selves is crucial for accomplishing a well-rounded image of public wellbeing. This is not to say that a citizen cannot be *self-full*—concerned with both our self and the public in a non-exclusive manner—but rather to point out that the success of our community relies on our willingness to mind the public interest. The noticeable American tendency towards isolationism and self-reliance, here, is an unhealthy outgrowth responsibility. A republic demands citizens that are responsible, but not to the extreme that they neglect the very communal world over which the republic hangs. This is the reason a deeply personal form of education like that which Rancière promotes cannot primarily serve private goals in a democratic republic. One's personal aspirations can certainly be reached for, but they remain secondary or incidental to those necessary for the public good. More often than not, in a well-run republic, the two will coincide.

The methodology, on the other hand, must remain private, or else we risk lapsing into the explicative forms of education Rancière so opposes. Just as an explicative teacher cannot wield their expertise without taking something away from the student, a system of public education cannot hang experts or uniform practices over local communities without implicitly attacking the authority that locality holds. The way the public can express its concern for education is by

allowing it to run through localized authorities and providing resources that are supportive instead of mandated. Dotts reminds us that Jefferson's concept of 'state-sponsored' education "meant only that government would help fund education without determining the curriculum" (2015, p. 5). This is the heart of the democratic-republican tension as it concerns education: finding a healthy middle-ground between public overreach and private isolationism. Not surprisingly, it mirrors the polarized political friction in modern American life, but with one key difference: increased recognition of the need for responsibility. In turning to James at the first instance of the word 'paradox,' we find a solution that rests within the tension, encapsulated in an education of private methods and public goals. Tangibly this might resemble a robust system of public schools, controlled locally, and deferring to the agency of individuals, a system that closely resembles Jefferson's vision for education.

In laying out a vision of intelligence that frees us to see equal capacity and to take up our civic burdens, Rancière and James inform educational thinking both on this, institutional level and on the interpersonal level mentioned previously. Our freedom to take ownership of the educational processes welcomes an institutional system that simultaneously demands personal and local autonomy over the mechanics and deliberative deference to public goals or welfare. At the interpersonal level, it challenges us to cultivate a cultural atmosphere that deconstructs capacity-based hierarchies and regards all humans as equally endowed with potential. It pushes teachers into a new professional role, one that provides authority justified by something more than fictitious superiority. Most importantly, it reimagines what is possible for students, both in their personal growth and in their ability to take up an active role in society. This educational vision, as it frees us to see the possibilities that rest within us, paves the way for a society that is more empathetic and truer to its democratic and republican ideals. It challenges us to move from

the isolationist pseudo-republic we have developed toward the authentically communal democratic republic that our founding generation dreamed we might create. This grand vision of education is short on details but ripe with actionable ideas. What is left for us is to engage with Rancière's challenge and to take up that action.

Conclusion

The works of William James and Jacques Rancière shed new and important light on our current understanding of democratic and republican principles. James's pragmatic method urges us to refocus our discourse on the products of ideological polarity rather than the poles themselves. He challenges us to overcome division and gridlock by viewing our political parties as constructive tensions rather than opposing armies. We ought to see, he argues, that they create new possibilities as they simultaneously beg us to attend to different concerns. His dynamic reconceptualization of truth, then, pushes us to reconsider our understandings and to be more open to the validity of those understandings held by others. It allows for absolute truth to exist but stops short of letting us believe we could ever grasp the absolute as imperfect human beings. This ought to leave us both humbler and more empathetic than we are accustomed to being, while also encouraging us to undertake the relentless hard work of justifying and energizing our truths and values.

Rancière's work builds alongside James's ideas to further present a view of intelligence which regards all humans as equally capable of intellectual achievement. In this, he sees an emancipating force that opens us up to the fullest extent of possibilities and human potential, not just for the best-educated individuals, but for all of us. Accompanying this freedom and equality of capacity, he also finds a deserted sense of personal responsibility. Contrasted with common

American narratives about discourse, truth, equality, and freedom, which are often stale and unjustified, the ideas put forth by James and Rancière breathe new life and urgency into the promise and principles of our great democratic republic. Fundamentally, they expose how far we have fallen and continue to fall short of the lofty goals our founders set out for us. This realization can be taken one of two ways: as an offensive affront to American greatness or as an unassuming call to action. We would be remiss to view it according to the first perspective.

What stands before us has likely always stood before us in varying degrees of plainness: the reality that we have work to do to more fully realize our democratic and republican ideals. The arguments laid forth by James and Rancière call us to reengage with this reality, especially as we stand in divisive and hostile times. How better to bridge the divides that slow our responses to global pandemics and racial tensions than to reconceptualize our view of discourse and our view of each other. The authors I have engaged with here provide a next step in that direction, but they would be among the first to acknowledge that there is, and will always be, more work to be done. That is part of the beauty of this process and of the great American experiment. It will never be perfect, nor will it ever be complete, but it will always offer us the opportunity to realize a better world for ourselves and those around us. By no means will we be able to make great strides in becoming more democratic, liberated, and considerate of each other overnight, but we can and should resolve to do the work, nonetheless. We are privileged to belong to an intellectual and cultural tradition that openly recognizes our ability to constantly be at work. Individuals across the world protest, fight, and die for the ideals that shape a democratic republic, ideals that our founding generation laid on the table for us to pick up and run with.

The path forward is simple but challenging. On an individual level, it begins with moving to enact a view of equal intellectual capacity in our personal interactions and relationships.

Constant awareness of those hierarchical phrases, jokes, and comments that can sneak into our conversations is crucial. So too are our efforts to reform our places of business, our religious institutions, our local political landscapes, and, most critically, our schools. The tendency to look for and to exploit opportunities for advancement above others is arguably an innate human instinct. The principles of a democratic republic, however, ask us to fight those instincts at the same time we are fighting our urge to pass our political power onto representatives and institutions. These smaller-scale efforts, combined with continuing theoretical and practical work reflecting on our democratic and republican efforts, are crucial in working to bring our country closer to the best society it can possibly be. The accountability and deliberative discourse we can open up through these processes will not only bring us closer to that ideal but will reestablish a trend of reflective hard work that our founding generation sought to set in motion years ago. It will renew and reengage the ceaseless American activities that at one point made our system of governance the envy of the world. What is left for us is to realize the possibility and to take action.

References

- Barbalet, J. (2004). William James: Pragmatism, Social Psychology and Emotions. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7, 337-353. doi: 10.1177/1368431004044197
- Carpenter, J. (2013). Thomas Jefferson and the Ideology of Democratic Schooling. *Democracy & Education*, 21, 1-11.
- Dotts, B. W. (2015). Beyond the Schoolhouse Door: Educating the Political Animal in Jefferson's Little Republics. *Democracy & Education*, 23, 1-12.
- Freire, P. (1970). *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York City, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Goering, S. (2015). Rethinking disability: the social model of disability and chronic disease. *Current Reviews in Musculoskeletal Medicine*, 8, 134-138. doi: 10.1007/s12178-015-9273-z
- Hollowchak, M. A. (2014). Jefferson and Democratic Education. *Democracy & Education*, 22, 1-3.
- Jefferson, T. (1951). 79. A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 2: January 1777 to June 1779*. Ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 526-535.
- Jefferson, T. (2012). To Joseph C. Cabell. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series, Volume 9: 1 September 1815 to 30 April 1816*. Ed. J. Jefferson Looney. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 435-439.
- Jefferson, T. (2013). To Isaac H. Tiffany. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series, Volume 10: 1 May 1816 to 18 January 1817*. Ed. J. Jefferson Looney. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 349.

James, W. (1991). *Pragmatism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

May, T. (2007). Jacques Rancière and the Ethics of Equality. *SubStance*, 36, 20-36.

doi: 10.1353/sub.2007.0033

Neem, J. (2013). Is Jefferson a Founding Father of Democratic Education? *Democracy & Education*, 21, 1-4.

Rancière, J. (1991). *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*. (K. Ross, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Ross, K. (1991). Introduction. In J. Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*. (K. Ross, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Ruitenberg, C. (2008). What if Democracy Really Matters? *Journal of Educational Controversy*, 3, 1-8.

Sherry, S. (1995). Responsible Republicanism: Educating for Citizenship. *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 62, pp. 131-208. doi: 10.2307/1600132

The Declaration of Independence. (1779, 1848). Bedford, MA: Applewood Books.