

# ~ From One Inquiring Mind to Another ~

"Life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved." [Gabriel Marcel](#) #6 August 28, 2011

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## OUR MOST MOVING MOVIE JUST VIEWED: [PRECIOUS](#)

Once again Patricia's patience paid off, and I was ready to see what I hastily judged a chick-flick; only to be once again proved incorrect and to be



surprisingly moved by this powerful film. It was powerful on many fronts, most notably the true story of one person's horrendous family experiences and her gradual recovery. This film also realistically and courageously addressed some of the real problems with the use and abuse of the welfare system, along with the redemptive effort of other civil servants who created an environment where Precious could survive. Not for the faint of heart, but a film that will leave an indelible impression. This film was a winner of many awards and nominations, and deservedly so.

## DEMOCRACY VS. REPUBLIC: IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS

Oftentimes the terms *democracy* and *republic* are used interchangeably to describe our form of government. Although I knew theoretically that our "democracy" was really a republic, I found myself hard pressed to describe what the difference between the two was, and why knowing that difference is important.

Not knowing whether the government of the states and the United States is a democracy or a republic, or using the terms equivocally, can lead to a great deal of confusion, frustration, and anger among the masses (who Truman called asses). This confusion

and ensuing chaos results in thinking that *the will of the people* is a simple majority, especially when the courts rule against some such popular voted laws (initiatives) as unconstitutional.

It's a little complicated, but the best I could make of it from several [sources](#) is that a pure democracy rules by simple majority, and the rights of the losing side or the individuals affected are not protected.

On the other hand, a republic, rules by majority, but protects the minority by the law. Here are two extreme examples on the working of each:

*The majority rule is destructive of liberty because there is no law to prevent the majority from trampling on individual rights. Whatever the majority says goes! A lynch mob (a mobocracy?) is an extreme example of pure democracy in action. There is only one dissenting vote, and that is cast by the person at the end of the rope.*

Whereas a republic is in part:

*... a government of law under a Constitution. The Constitution holds the government in check and prevents the majority (acting through their government) from violating the rights of the individual (or minority group). Under this system of government a lynch mob is illegal. The suspected criminal cannot be denied his right to a fair trial even if a majority of the citizenry demands otherwise.*

Make no doubt about it, our government is a republic, and for very good reasons.

*I pledge allegiance to the flag...and to the Republic for which it stands...*

Our Republic relies on the wisdom of the Founding Fathers (embodied

in the Constitution) as well as the wisdom and fairness of the qualified legislators, judges, and executors sparing us from the ignorance of the masses and simple majority rule. The question is, of course, getting good people to fill the positions, to keep the checks and balance system working. It's a continual process, demanding continual effort, to be active, informed, and optimistic.

Maybe you knew all of this, but I found it very interesting and informative. I guess I'm still an idealist and an optimist, but what are the alternatives? It's not about being political, but about staying informed, and seeking "truth and justice for all." Such is an essential part of our Republic. TJ himself said it best:

**"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."** Thomas Jefferson, 1816

Jefferson and his good friend John Adams both died on the same day, July 4, 1826, on the 50th anniversary of the USA. Jefferson was in this early 80's and Adams was in his early 90's.

## NOTES ON THIS MUSE LETTER:

- 1) Please read the [Goals and Subscriber's Options](#) link here or at the top.
- 2) I was happy to hear from a writer friend who asked for permission to present my piece on [Student Rights/Responsibilities](#) to some LA educators. Another reader reported that he found the piece on the dialectic helpful in his personal life. Thanks, guys. I really appreciate the feedback.
- 3) I had a great walk/talk hike with a friend on pros and cons of a newsletter vs blog approach, resulting in clearer goals and an unsubscribe option. Around this I also wrote [a fun little poem](#) set in medieval times. Enjoy.

*Namasté -Joe*