Seminar: “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Absent: Gruber, Savarese

Andrew Smith: He’s not saying anything in too radical of a way.

* Eli: Tone—patient, reasonable. No hate… “I understand you guys, but this is why we’re doing this.” This would be effective. This type of tone is more effective.
* Aiden: Respectful, but assertive.
* Andrew Smith: During / Right after Ferguson… a clip of Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson. Response = anger, firmness.
* Eble: So… conciliatory tone works?
* Smith: Not crazy… not pleading…
* Aiden: He demands attention with his vast intelligence. He could do this *from prison*.
* Jake Wermes: Contrasted the context between Sharpton / Jackson and King. Referenced “I Have a Dream,” speaking to a legion of protesters. Jackson / Sharp
* Eble: Challenge—how was he seen?
* Smith: A threat… he could spark change, violence, tension
* Eble: But his ethos is not established yet. He was seen as a villain.
* Wermes: Embodying that type of person carried the civil rights movement. He carried the movement on his shoulders. Today, with a black President who graduated from Columbia, Yale = educated black person is less rare. Establish ethos in a different way.
* Smith: I felt the same way… I went in thinking it was influential.
* Eble: Questioned…
* Aiden: Different reaction to Thoreau… he didn’t lead a protest in D.C.
* Eble: Thoreau affected Mandela, Ghandi, King
* Aiden: Thoreau = forgotten grandfather. Slavery, Mexican-American War still happened.
* Wermes: Civil disobedience was put into words by Thoreau. Today in our society, we can see this idea being built upon. MLK = 340 years of constant discrimination; Sharpton / Jackson = more understandable anger. Illustrates unacceptable nature of such prejudice.
* Aiden: More situation…

Eble: So… separate the person…

* Zane: Conceding, refuting… shows that he’s a very knowledgeable guy on both sides of the argument.
* Eble: Where?
* *Silence as people looked…*
* TJ: Builds persona in the first line… “My dear fellow clergymen…” Established them as equals. Helps subconsciously to make him sound like a reasonably-thinking person.
* Logan: What makes the letter so effective is the foundation he built up. He used Civil Disobedience perfectly in that he didn’t react… he let the enemies destroy themselves.
* Chase Hawkins: Question…
* Smith: Did it explode across the media?
* Eble: I dunno… anybody?
* Zane: People didn’t fight back… were attacked with dogs, firehoses. If that happened today: Ferguson, feeling of how terrible, racist it is… it’s diluted by the rioters, violence. Media’s effect today. We focus on the riots.
* Eble: Media / nonviolence.
* Zane: Social media / injustice.
* Aiden: Challenge…
* Zane: Response.
* Jake: You also have a more violent approach (Malcolm X, Black Panthers)… retaliated in kind when they saw war.
* Eble talked…

Zane: Paragraph 12. Example of concession / refutation.

* Eble: Yes! Concession / refutation.
* Sam W: Read from the text.

Kevin: Allusions… identifies himself with famous extremists, religious leaders.

* TJ: A variety of figures: Catholics, Protestants, American / non-American heroes. Gives everyone their pick.
* Eble: Claim = extremists? Read from the text.
* TJ: Mentions historical events (Holocaust, War) to make this movement seem to have equal gravity.

Eli: Patient, reasonable… periodic sentence shows frustration. At the end… last two paragraphs. Read from the text; you can see an almost sarcastic bite. He’s not intentionally confrontational, but challenging them. He is suffering. Spoke of tone…

* Eble: Shared hypothetical element…
* TJ: Fake persona?
* Chase: I think it’s real. Actions, life… clergyman.
* TJ: I don’t know if he would sit down and have dinner…
* Chase: I think he would.
* Aiden: He pulled it off… either way, ti doesn’t matter. False or not, it served his point. Turn the other cheek.
* Eble: Is it a Koombaya moment?
* Aiden: This part… but… new point: It wouldn’t work today. Once someone puts something out there…it spreads, instantly it’s everywhere, then fades away.
* Smith: Couldn’t it have been like that then?
* Aiden: A certain power being fermented…
* Chase: Gladwell… social media / trending… people would think they’re taking action…
* Eble: Slacktivism…
* Logan: Internet… it would become irrelevant. “So much” has happened… it gets filed with everything else.
* Andrew Smith: Breaking news = all they talk about for a week.
* Logan: I also think… [bold claim]… racism was blatant. Lynching, Jim Crow… still heavy discrimination, more of a passive racism today.
* Andrew: People don’t want to talk about it.