Civil Disobedience Seminar

Absent:

JJ: Reminds me of *Grapes of Wrath*… doubt that many people were out reading Thoreau. Eble pressed… this is a link

Johnson: Government as a machine; connection to *Grapes*… Thoreau talks about a lack of conscience, humanity.

* Marshall: Communist?
* Eble: Is Thoreau propounding that?
* Marshall: How he views the government.
* JJ: Stating the modern perception of communism.
* Spuzz: That’s anarchy; Thoreau promotes individualism. Like how he went to *Walden*.
* John Geyer: Communism / Socialism require government.
* JJ: Original point of the manifesto: Government until people don’t need it?
* Spuzzillo: Semantics about a Communist state.
* Fendinger: Thoreau is trying to get us to a point of people being conscientious.
* Nick Wright: As of right now, government is a necessity. Ideally, government doesn’t work…
* Geyer: A bit too optimistic. To think society could function without government is ridiculous. Tull: Problem with average person = they are too average.
* Eble: Transcendental view… society is evil!

JJ: End of paragraph 13. Ferguson, voting rate… asked a question: If the people are not performing the methods of resistance, therefore they are hypocrites? Is that an insult to the resister?

* Menke: Insult to resister?
* Fendinger: Insult for hypocrisy…
* Spuzz: Gladwell—lukewarm, tepid commitment…
* Fendinger: “On the Rainy River”… he didn’t do what he believed in.
* JJ: Don’t just petition your state; break away… impracticality of states breaking away from the union. You cannot abandon…
* Menke: You can abandon your government…
* JJ: States versus people…
* Menke challenged…
* JJ returned the challenge
* Nick Wright: Challenge.
* Menke: You choose not to
* Spuzzillo: Amount of coercion… holding a gun to the head.
* JJ: Shared Thoreau’s observations of the prison section, not
* Geyer: Slavery, Mexican War… assumed that everyone thought they were wrong. He didn’t qualify his argument… you can’t break away from government… bad job qualifying…
* Olinger: Highway tax “to be a good neighbor”
* Eble read paragraph 18.
* JJ: Back to government class… friction against the machine…takes *a lot* of friction to change things… New York / Lincoln during the Civil War was awful.
* Olinger: Voting doesn’t really do anything. When you vote as a country, the decision had already been made.
* Fendinger: Not really democratic elections—electoral college. Faux election.
* John Geyer: Some of that friction is necessary. What if people were civilly disobedient over the immigration issue today?
* Eippert: 2000 election… Green Party… splinter parties… they may not win, but they will affect those who win.
* Eble talked.
* Olinger: Machine = good metaphor. Dehumanizes it… like a machine…
* Wright: Makes it harder to stop…
* JJ: Webster, Calhoun… worked to keep the union together. Thoreau = abolitionist.
* Eble: Yea…
* JJ:
* Spuzz: Challenged…
* Fendinger: Challenging on slavery… bad! You have to take out the pulley or the mechanism. “At one point, you’re going to end up on the Rainy River…”
* JJ challenged.
* Fendinger: Why not make it sooner?
* Menke: Human rights issues, slavery… illegal immigrants today. Why not keep the laws, increase the quota?
* Olinger:
* Geyer: Slavery is only really wrong in hindsight. People could justify slavery. I bet immigration takes a similar path. Unfair to say that.
* Marshall: Society of the time didn’t consider it to be wrong… but… it’s human to human…
* Spuzzillo: Objective moral stance… recognition by society. How do we as individuals relate when we believe there to be a problem. At what point do we stop supporting a government?
* Olinger: spoke of a “soft spot…”
* Geyer: There are “unenlightened” people… it’d be nice to think they are… that’s “not true…”
* Eble talked.
* JJ: Mexican War, slavery perpetuated… so much friction…
* Fendinger: Frederick Douglass…
* Spuzzillo: So you want Thoreau to work within the system?
* JJ: He wrote the essay…
* Eippert: What if Thoreau thought the system was broken? It’s his view; why would he go through the system that doesn’t work.
* Liam: Especially if he wants to change it.
* Olinger: We should compromise instead of going to jail? Or just conform?
* Hank: I’m going to agree with JJ: Ferguson. Burning buildings… MLK accomplished change in a corrupt system.
* JJ: Analogy—not two blocks smashing… There needs to be elasticity. Civil Rights = rallying…
* Spuzz: Letter from Birmingham Jail…
* Eble: Subtitle = on why we can’t wait…
* Spuzz: Creating a wall…
* Menke: If you wait, you won’t get what you want…
* Eble: Tried to bring things to a head…
* JJ: Question…
* Nick Wright: No clean step the first time.
* Eble: Thoreau’s idea of changing…
* Olinger: Majority of friction would come before the war. That’s the climax. Compromise didn’t work.
* Wright: That’s better than nothing…
* JJ: Did we change things in name only?
* Liam: You have to change things over a long period…
* Spuzzillo: Changed the letter of the law…
* Olinger: Mr. Fowler: We all want to sing koombaya, but that’s not realistic.
* JJ: MLK came to change the letter of the law even more…
* Wright: King’s actions wouldn’t have worked without earlier amendments…
* JJ: Frederick Douglass…
* Marshall: It wouldn’t be probable with all as slaves…
* Olinger: 50, 60 years before…

Eble read the conclusion…

* JJ: Optimism about the power of the individual
* Eble: Yes…
* Fendinger: Democracy isn’t the last step… we can always go further… we have to keep pushing further…
* Olinger: Ties essay today well. Government has to recognize that authority comes from above. That helped put everything into one sentence. We make laws, but
* Eble: Social contract theory… we give up rights …one man brings a government to its knees…
* Menke: That’s a bit impractical…
* Spuzzillo: Individual protected. Cited Gideon (a la Gideon v. Wainwright).
* Fendinger: Steinbeck… congressman… immigration.
* JJ: Supreme Court ; Gideon was the right person at the right time.
* Wright: Improbable, but impossible.
* Geyer: Government has a tough time mediating when the little guy … spoke about the guy in humanities hoping for a mass genocide of individuals. You need a mediator.
* Wright: This goes with what you said earlier… there’s a mix of people. Different moral compasses.
* Olinger: The greatness of our country… we are different…

Geyer / Eble / Olinger / JJ on the tree metaphor.

Olinger:

JJ: Lingering question … Mexico, legal immigration…

Eble: Other questions?

Geyer: Biggest objection = unfair for people who did it legally.

* Fendinger: The “work” aspect, people risking their lives were putting in more work.
* Eble: Read from Chomsky…
* JJ: Being civilly disobedient can lead to good things… his essay is lacking that we do have to do things through our system.
* Eble: Challenged.
* JJ: Challenged…
* Liam: Good points… he’s not completely saying “screw government.” He’s providing a solution in which government is more run by the people.
* JJ: Point I’m still thinking about…
* Eble challenged.
* JJ challenged.
* Spuzzillo: Government should work for him…
* JJ: This is right… I want to fight it. Should the government come to you?
* Alex Johnson: Read from paragraph 19.
* JJ: Question…
* Fendinger: Constitution = evil. Back-lobby politics; Mr. Smith didn’t do anything… when he spoke out, he did…
* JJ: He wasn’t selected by the people.

Eble: So… at what point should we withdraw our implicit / explicit

Nick Wright: John Brown… Harper’s Ferry..