

Short Essay: HDT, MLK, and the Colin Ferguson Incident

Hyeyoung Shin

22 Sept 2014

1 Introduction

Michael Brown has created tension between the police and protesters in Ferguson. What really happened on the day of the fatal shooting remains unclear. But the anger and unrest that followed the incident might have been shared or supported by Thoreau and King to some extent.

1.1 Some Background on HDT

Henry David Thoreau and Martin Luther King, jr. were supporters of civil rights movements of their time. They both advocated a form of civil disorder against unjust laws. In his essay, *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau argues that government is mere machine that we created for our own convenience, thus having obligation to obey what it orders does not make sense. Thus, Thoreau would have viewed Ferguson police as a standing army unjustly exercising authority on individual's right to decide what's right and wrong and act accordingly.

1.2 Some Background on MLK

Similarly, Martin Luther King, jr. affirmed that as much as we respect just laws, one has a moral responsibility not to obey unjust laws. He would have advised Lesley McSpadden, Brown's mother, to do what she did at a press conference. Appealing for justice and no violence.(USA TODAY)

Then what kind of justice Thoreau and King would have sought in Ferguson? government is only a tool as easily abused and perverted as a standing army. Thus the physically strong majority violates individual's rights to do what he/she thinks is right through law enforcement.

. would see it as wounded individual's right by government. King would see it as racial injustice.

2 HDT and Ferguson

A 19 century abolitionist Henry David Thoreau viewed government and its law enforcement unnecessary evil created by ourselves. He advocated civil disobedience in his book arguing that as much as we object a standing army we should be against government as the standing army is only an arm of the standing government.(Civil Disobedience) Thus, Thoreau might have seen Ferguson police as the physical force unjustly violating people's right to decide what's right and wrong and act accordingly.

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Thoreau would not have seen the police officer as an agent of injustice nor his action serving the state if the officer believed all he was doing was what he thinks is right. In fact Brown was involved in the armed robbery reported. But even if the alleged physical assaults and a struggle over the officer's gun really happened(CNN.com), it would appear to be unjust to Thoreau that the police carries a gun in the first place. Thoreau would say it is absurd that people pay taxes to buy more guns for the law enforcement however justly used or not. The kind of protection government provides with armed forces would be blatantly rejected by him.

3 King and Ferguson

King would see racial injustice in the center of the problem. By actively engaged in the matter encouraging peaceful protests and negotiating to change unjust laws, he would try to prove that a single gain in civil rights cannot be made without determined legal and nonviolent pressure.(Letter from a Birmingham Jail) From what he might have collected facts to determine whether injustice existed in the investigation of the police officer who killed Brown. Based on the facts collected from various sources, the officer was put on paid leave after the shooting and his name and the details of the shooting were not announced

4 HDT and MLK

5 Conclusion