

# *Socratic Seminar Questions:* **GROUP A**

## **DIRECTIONS**

ANSWER EACH OF THE QUESTIONS BELOW THOROUGHLY (ABOUT 5 SENTENCES). YOU MAY TYPE YOUR RESPONSES DIRECTLY INTO THIS DOCUMENT, FOLLOWING THE FORMAT IN THE EXAMPLE BELOW, BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO PRINT THEM OUT AND BRING THEM TO CLASS WITH YOU ON THE DAY OF SEMINAR TO SUBMIT. YOU MAY ALSO HAND WRITE YOUR RESPONSES IF YOU WISH TO DO SO.

## **EXAMPLE/FORMAT:**

1. HOW HAS TRANSCENDENTALISM IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?

RESPONSE: Transcendentalism has helped me become more self-aware. Prior to this unit I felt like I was merely coasting through life, without really taking the time for self-reflection, much less taking time to change the things I realized I needed to change because of my time spent engaged in self-reflection. This unit has taught me about the importance of taking time for solitude, and how that's really the only way we can come to discover who we truly are. We are so heavily influenced by things that are not reflections of who we are, yet we follow along because of societal pressure. I've made a commitment to embark on the journey to greater self-discovery by deliberately and regularly spending time alone in nature.

EVIDENCE: "Standing on the bare ground, —my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space— all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all..." *Nature*, Emerson

## **QUESTIONS**

1. IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE GOVERNED SOLELY BY INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE AS OPPOSED TO A SYSTEM OF MAJORITY RULE? WOULD A SOCIETY GOVERNED BY INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCES BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN A SOCIETY WHERE RULES ARE AGREED UPON BY MAJORITIES?
2. IS "THAT GOVERNMENT BEST WHICH GOVERNS LEAST?" EXPLAIN.
3. SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT HAVE THE POWER TO RESTRICT YOUR BELIEFS? ARE THERE ANY BELIEFS OR ACTIONS THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO ALTER? EXPLAIN.
4. THOREAU TALKS ABOUT HOW PEOPLE BECOME SLAVES TO THEIR OWN CREATIONS (THE TRAIN, THE WATCH, ETC.). DOES HE HAVE A POINT?
5. "MAN CANNOT DO WRONG, SIN, OR FAIL AS LONG AS HE OBEYS THE TEACHING OF HIS SOUL..." EXPLAIN THIS BELIEF. IS THIS TOO IDEALISTIC TO BE REALISTIC? DO PEOPLE TODAY KNOW THEMSELVES WELL ENOUGH TO BE GOVERNED BY THEIR "SOUL?"
6. DO THOSE WHO LIVE A SIMPLE LIFE LIVE A BETTER LIFE? JUSTIFY YOUR ANSWER.
7. "...ALWAYS DO THAT WHICH YOU ARE AFRAID TO DO." IS FACING OUR FEARS AND TAKING RISKS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO LIVE A FULFILLING LIFE?

8. "THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS NOT TO BE HAPPY. IT IS TO BE USEFUL, TO BE HONORABLE, TO BE COMPASSIONATE, TO HAVE IT MAKE SOME DIFFERENCE THAT YOU HAVE LIVED AND LIVED WELL." DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EMERSON? EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER.
9. WHICH OF THE SIX TENETS OF TRANSCENDENTALISM ARE STILL APPLICABLE TODAY AND WHY?
10. WHAT PARTS OF TRANSCENDENTALISM DO YOU AGREE WITH AND WHAT PARTS DO YOU DISAGREE WITH?
11. HOW HAS THIS UNIT IMPACTED YOU PERSONALLY?