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**“Ethic” Side Story
The Creonites vs the Draft Dodgers**

Character Overview-

Creonites

- Creon- the “king” of the Creonites who believes that the laws must be followed no matter what
- Socrates- the oldest member that believes following the rules is more important than death (yet he’s the oldest- go figure)
- Captain Vere- the young recruit that knows he must follow all regulations, but still has some emotion deep down. He has not yet been hardened by time on the job.

Draft Dodgers

- Henry David Thoreau- The philosofather of the Draft Dodgers that believes in doing what is morally right come what may
- MLK- the go-getter of the gang that believes it is always the time to do what is right through direct action.
- Kant- the mediator that believes everyone is born with a conscience and the real battle in life is between prudence and doing something because it is right.

Preface

The movie takes place during the last recess of the day. Mr. I Wont Go of Pasadena has received his draft induction notice to go to Syria, but, because he believes that America’s Occupation of Syria is stupid and immoral. Mr. Go was arrested and six resident men (from two rival gangs)

were brought on trial to give their opinions — should Mr. Go be in trouble for not going along with something he thinks is right?

“Ethic” Side Story

The movie begins in the dark alley behind the Pasadena Court House on East Walnut Street. It is a black and white movie and the blurred screen makes everything different shades of gray. As the camera focuses in, the black and white lines become distinct and the viewers see that there are two groups of three men standing across from each other in the rainy noir ambiance. They are two rival gangs: The Creonites and the Draft Dodgers.

Creon: “You think it is right to stand up for an anarchist?” (164)

Thoreau and his Draft Dodgers were taken aback by this blunt remark. How could anyone think a man sticking up for what is just is anything but a man with a pure heart and true “conscience”, a “real hero” (MLK 620). As the annoyance begins to grow inside the Draft Dodgers, the battle begins.

MLK: Against the Creonites we need all of us. We need to prove to them that “this normal and healthy discontent can be channelized through the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action”, like song.

Music slowly begins to play as MLK begins to sing.

MLK: When you’re an “extremist” (MLK 616)
You’re an extremist all the way
From your first sit-in
To your last dying day

(Thoreau and Kant, the other two Draft Dodgers, begin to join in)

When you’re an extremist
If the laws are “unjust”
We do what we must

We don't care about the "status quo"!

Remember your core
Whenever you're conflicted
Follow the four step campaign (MLK 607)
"Tension" should be expected
But you're well protected!

All of your visions
are right there in your "reason"
We'll never bail
Even when they cart you to jail!

And the music fades out.

The Creonites had never seen "direct action" like this before.

Socrates: Now what I hear you saying is that it's okay to go against the law if you disagree with it? "Do we say that one must never willingly do wrong, or does it depend on the circumstances?" (58).

Kant: Yes indeed it does depend on the circumstances. When "the verdict of the natural conscience [is] in conflict with the verdict of the instructed conscience, he must obey the former" (97).

Socrates: "... to do wrong is in every sense bad and dishonorable for the person who does it" (58).

Thoreau: "I think that we should be men first and subjects afterward."

He said with a sly grin at Creon the self appointed "King" of the Creonites

"It is not desirable to cultivate the respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right" (276-277).

MLK: "The time is always ripe to do right" (MLK 614).

Creon: Well then isn't that nice. "We [Creonites] keep the laws and the lawmakers" (162).

Socrates: "Goodness and integrity, institutions and laws, are the most precious possessions of mankind" (64). When you go against the law you are taking away the moral standards man must live by.

MLK: And when a law is taking away a person's rights that represents goodness and integrity, does it?

Creon: Quiet both of you. It is not about fairness and integrity. Nothing in life is fair. "Whoever is chosen to govern should be obeyed — must be obeyed, in all things, great and small, just and unjust" (162).

MLK: None of you Creonites have answered my question. When a law is taking away a person's rights is that law not "unjust"? "An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law" (MLK 611). Can you stand there and tell me that it is moral to ship off a man to fight for to death for a cause that he believes is stupid and immoral?

Maybe all people don't have consciences ehh Kant. *He muttered under his breath.*

Creon: I believe that a law is a law and everyone should follow it to the letter. "That is the way to behave: subordinate" (161).

An eery silence came over the alley. The Draft Dodgers could not believe anyone in their right mind would say that men should behave subordinate, always doing what they're told like zombies or parts of a "machine".

(Creon continued)

And “our hands are clean” (160). We are not the ones being thrown in jail for civil disobedience. Disobedience is disobedience whether or not you give it the cute little “civil” in front of it. With your sit-ins and freedom rides you’re just as bad as Mr. Go.

Kant: “But conscience has the power to summon us against our will before the judgement seat to be judged on account of the righteousness or unrighteousness of our actions” (93). What I am saying is that there is a higher law than the state laws. Man does not consciously decide whether or not to do something because someone else says to do it; man acts in accordance to what he believes is right. And in the end we will be judged on whether our actions are just or unjust according to “moral law”.

Captain Vere, a new recruit, has been quiet the entire time. He is unsure where he stands in his gang. His voice started soft, but eventually grew louder until all eyes were on him. He had been a sea captain for a long while “always acquitting himself as an officer mindful of the welfare of his men, but never tolerating an infraction of discipline” (Melville 24).

Captain Vere: You must take into account the well-being of a person, but still stick to the rules.

Creon: Speak up boy we can’t hear you.

Captain Vere: You have to take into account the well-being of a person, but still stick to the rules.

Kant: Still can’t hear you.

Captain Vere (*in his loudest voice*): I said I have been on many ships and I know what it’s like to be out there on the open sea where order must be maintained at all times because you are in such close quarters. But, you must also take into account the well being of a person. Creon you were correct when you said “good lives are made by discipline” (162), but that does not mean we can

not have any emotion at all. Now don't get me wrong we must follow every rule and regulation, but can't you admit that there are some times you feel a little bad at least?

Creon looks at Socrates.

Creon: I told you the knew recruit had a soft side deep down.

MLK: Okay let's get back on track. "We must use time creatively" (MLK 614).

Thoreau: We need to get back to the real problem at hand. What should happen to Mr. I Wont Go?

Kant: Obviously he cannot be in trouble for following his conscience. Everything will be worked out in the "divine judgement seat" (97).

Captain Vere begins to sing to the same tune MLK sang to earlier.

Captain Vere: Our heads are a spinnin'
The Draft Doggers should stay clear
'Cause some old fashioned fight winnin' is near

Here come the bets
The Creonites are looking pretty swell
Someone gets in our way
they won't feel too well!

Here come the Creonites
Little Dodgers step aside
Better follow the law
Or be ready to run and hide!

I've got this "unobtrusiveness of demeanor" (Melville 25)
And some "isolated leisure" (Melville 27)
But now we're drawing the morality line
We don't need a sign

All the Creonites burst into song.

Breaking laws is forbidden
We must keep our emotions hidden

Here come the Creonites
Ready to fight
We have no joy
for this poor “fated boy”

Creon: Now that’s better my little starry captain.

Thoreau: He is not fated. We control our own fate. And going against the grain, when we know we are doing what is right, is true justice.

Captain Vere: “But, in natural justice is nothing but the prisoner’s overt act to be considered?” (Melville 79)

Creon: Yes.

Captain Vere (*to the Draft Dodgers*): “Do these buttons that we wear attest that our allegiance is to nature? (he pauses for a moment) No, to the king” (Melville 79).

Kant: Well we will always do what is just, “be the consequences what may” (94).

Thoreau: “A people, as well as an individual, must do justice cost what may” (279).

MLK: We believe that Mr. Go, punished or not, made the right choice. Subordination and unjust laws are un-American. “The goal of America is freedom” (619). And forcing Mr. I Wont Go to go somewhere and risk his life for something he feels is immoral and stupid is not freedom, it’s a monarchy. And the last time I checked America doesn’t like kings.

And the camera blurs again and fades out while the omniscient narrator sums up the scene.

Narrator: The two gangs fighting is a metaphor for the right and wrong in everyone that are always at ends, the angel and the devil on one’s shoulder. In the case of Mr. I Wont Go a global question arises: is it better to do what you believe is right or is it better to follow the law. Both have their plusses and minuses. Laws were put in place so America’s democracy and the world in

general can function, so everyone can live their own life. But, when a law is unjust or not being apply justly then is it one's moral obligation to do what is right? Progress never happened from waiting around. When is the right time to act on what is thought to be right and when should the laws be followed. The Creonites wholeheartedly believed that Mr. I Wont Go should be punished because he broke a law. And the Draft Dodgers stayed strong in their firm belief that no one should go long with something they feel is unjust. In the end all six gang members were suspended from the trial for the ruckus they caused behind the court house. The trial continues on, just as the debate between "natural conscience" and "instructed conscience" goes on perpetually.

This is the sight I found the West Side Story Lyrics on and then changed the words.

<http://www.westsidestory.com/site/level2/lyrics/lyrics.html>