

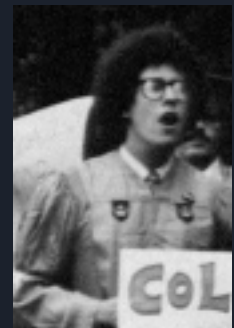
Angels in America

A Dramaturgy Presentation by Abigail Schmitz and Benjamin Burton

Tony Kushner

I HAVE OPINIONS!!

- Tony Kushner has worked as a director, playwright, screenwriter, and dramaturg.
- The child of two professional musicians, Tony was immersed in art from a young age.
- Somewhat of a political prodigy and activist. Can you tell? Neo-Hegelian positivist, anyone?
- He's won some Tonys and Drama Desks and a Pulitzer and been nominated for Academy Awards, but don't worry, he probably has a flaw or two somewhere in his career.
- He attended Columbia as a Medieval Studies major, and then NYU for directing.



Tony Part 2: Perestroika

- Tony Kushner has written a lot of well-known work, and much of it is - surprise - pretty political
- Major screenwriting credits include his adaptations of *Lincoln* (2012), and *Munich* (2005), both of which were directed by Steven Spielberg.



Production History

- Commissioned by Center Theatre Group at the Mark Taper Forum.
- First performed in Los Angeles as a workshop in May 1990.
- World Premiere in 1991 with Eureka Theatre Company of San Francisco.
- January 23, 1992 the London production opened. (Ran 1 year)
- *Perestroika* was in development while *Millennium Approaches* was still being performed. It had its world premiere in Nov. 1992.
- Following its premiere, *Perestroika* had its London debut a year later at the National Theatre.
- Both parts hit Broadway in 1993 at the Walker Kerr Theatre.



Production History Cont'd/Awards:

- In 1993, Tony Kushner won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.
 - “for a distinguished play by an American author, preferably original in its source and dealing with American life.”
- In 1993 and 1994 respectively, both the Tony Awards for Best Play and Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Play.
- Since publishing, Kushner has revised his script several times. The last being in 2010 in correlation with a run at Signature Theatre.
- HBO miniseries in 2004. Where it won a Golden Globe for “Best Miniseries or Motion Picture Made for Television” and it won numerous Primetime Emmys along with other awards.
- *Angels in America* is currently running at the National Theatre in London. It was live broadcasted across the world in movie theaters.



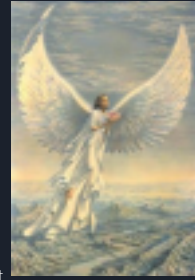
Protests in Relation to AIA

- Protests in for the 1996 premiere in Florida, Michigan, Texas, and most notably North Carolina.
 - Charlotte, NC “ground zero for culture wars.”
 - Protests were in regard to male nudity with homosexual themes.
 - There were protests of the protests supporting freedom of speech and artistic freedom
- *Southern Rapture* by Eric Chole is a parody of this event.
- 2010 revival was recieved well, not only in New York, but even in Salt Lake City



What prompted Tony to write AIA?

- Tony Kushner had a dream about his friend who was a dancer, who died with AIDS.
 - He wrote a poem about this, and then later used it as inspiration for a commissioned play.
- “I set out to write about what it was like to be me, a gay man in New York, in the mid-1980s, and it was not possible to do that without placing it in the middle of the epidemic. It also seemed like there was a huge shift in the political climate with President Reagan. The world I was born into was receding and something new and rather terrifying was taking its place.” (Seattle Times)
- The 1980s: The Rise of the New Right
 - Mass amounts of turmoil for all groups of people with shift.
- After the death of Roy Cohn, Kushner was perplexed by his contradiction and wanted to write about him.
- Kushner: “The question I am trying to ask is how broad is a community's embrace. How wide does it reach?”



Political Context - Reagan Administration

- The Rise of the New Right - Christianity, Morality, and Republicans (WASPS); economic and social policy aligning
- Rejection of Détente
- Cutting Government and Social Policies
 - Food stamps, Medicaid, housing aid, school lunch subsidization
 - The homeless “make it their own choice for staying out there.”
 - G.I. Joe cartoon & military budget
 - Deficit triples
- Lauded as a hero of morality (especially in regards to the courts) and economic tax breaks by his supporters



The Contradiction
of Ronald Reagan



Political Context - Reagan Administration Cont.



McCarthyism: 1950-1954

- Affected thousands of Americans
- Constitution was disregarded
- Alger Hiss- espionage charges
- The Atomic Era
- “205 card” carrying members of the communist party”
- Televised in court interrogations of army.
- Public questions credibility leading to downfall.
- Effects lasted decades.
 - “Don’t criticize the United States. Don’t be different. Don’t conform.”

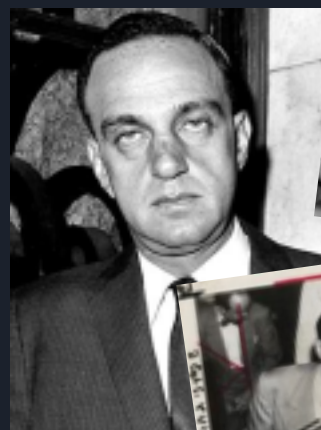
“Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the communist party?”

Senator Joseph McCarthy



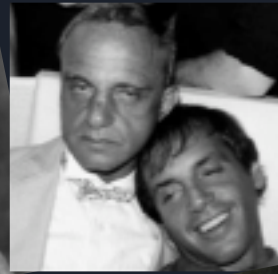
Historical Figures: Roy Cohn

- Childhood - Born in the Bronx in 1927 to a judge and his wife
- Political prodigy
 - Not political science, but Bronx Courthouse politics
 - Dodging the WWII draft
- Law Career - New York powerhouse
 - Trump, Mafia members, Studio 54, Roman Catholic Archdiocese, Yankees baseball club
- McCarthyism
 - Assistant attorney on Rosenberg Case
 - Anti-communism espionage efforts
 - Lavender scare



Roy, Cohn continued

- Army-McCarthy Hearings
 - David Schine
 - Joe Walsh
 - “Pixie” reference
- Homosexuality
 - G. David Schine
 - AIDS
- Roy and Trump
 - Lawyer, mentor, friend
 - Political techniques
 - Gaslighting, Publicity
 - Business techniques
 - Countersuits



Roy Cohn Interview: 1951



Historical Figures: Ethel Rosenberg (1915-1953)

"I have no names to give. I'm innocent."



"Ethel Rosenberg was a trained soprano. In the House of Detention, while awaiting sentencing, she reportedly sang for the other inmates."

- Born in New York City
- Father was a Russian immigrant
- Employed at New York Packing and Shipping Company
 - Union led to support of Communist Party
- Married Julius Rosenberg in 1939.
 - Two sons: Michael(8) and Robert(4).
- Convicted with Julius in 1951.
 - Executed 1953.
- David Greenglass- Manhattan Project.

Execution of the Rosenbergs



Start 1:00 minute

Religion: Mormonism

- . Mormonism, formally the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, began in the 1820s when Joseph Smith said he received a vision wherein God told him that all of the existing churches, in essence, were wrong.
- . Claims of prophecy through angelic visions to re-establish the true Christian church.
- . *The Book of Mormon* was created to be taught alongside *The Bible*.
- . *The Book of Mormon* was transcribed from golden plates with divine help to Joseph Smith. It tells the tale of the Nephites, who left New York hoping to establish the New Jerusalem, but ended up in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Ask Janice:

- “I have a couple of gay friends in the play with me who are confused about how the Mormon church would receive them. They were talking about it today.” -Abbie
- “We know that marriage between husband and wife is ordained of God. People with same sex attraction can still have the opportunity to receive the gospel and be baptized to be a member of the church as long as they don't act on the attraction.” -Janice
- “We know that God is our loving Heavenly Father. He wants us to be happy and successful in the life. He has given us commandments to receive blessings from Him. As we obey His commandments, we will be able to see the changes and blessings in our life.” -Janice



Mormon Clothing Attire Guidelines



“Your body is sacred. Respect it and do not defile it in any way. Through your dress and appearance, you can show that you know how precious your body is. You can show that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ and that you love Him.” –Mormon Website

- MODESTY.
- Never compromise your appearance.
- All wear black name tags if connected to the church and participating in missionary work.
- No fabric restrictions.
- Mormon underwear or garments are not worn by all, but are sacred.

Religion: Judaism

- Jews can refer to a culture and heritage or a religion or both. Many of the Jews in *Angels in America* (i.e. Louis and Roy) are non-practicing Jews with the culture, but not the religion.
- Movements of religious Judaism are determined by literal interpretation of scripture, degree of biblical requirements, and whether or not those requirements are mandatory.
- Rabbinical Judaism split into Chasidic, Orthodox, Reform and Conservative in the US today.
 - The Rabbi in *Angels in America* is an Orthodox Jew
- Approximately 5 million of the world's 13 million Jews live in the United States, and New York City has the second largest population of Jews of any city in the world.



13 Principles of the Jewish Faith

- God exists
- God is one and unique
- God is incorporeal
- God is eternal
- Prayer is to be directed to God alone and to no other
- The words of the prophets are true
- Moses' prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets
- The Written Torah (first 5 books of the Bible) and Oral Torah (teachings now contained in the Talmud and other writings) were given to Moses
- There will be no other Torah
- God knows the thoughts and deeds of men
- God will reward the good and punish the wicked
- The Messiah will come
- The dead will be resurrected



Jewish Themes in *Angels in America*

- Image of Louis as Judas and Prior as Christ
- Tribalism amongst the characters
 - Sticking together, spiteing each other, and arguing with each other.
- Anger at an absent God
- Solidarity with suffering people even when that goes against God
- Struggle - it's not the result that truly counts, but the ability to keep struggling
- The Jacob Cycle

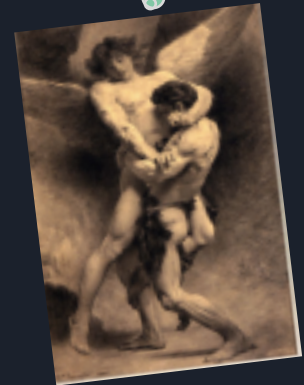


The Jacob Cycle

- Jacob wrestles with the Angel of Death
- The struggle is what counts
- An event with political implications that establishes a collective identity
 - Lineage and the sciatic nerve - sexual interaction, or impairment of lineage
- Jacob doing Esau drag → Roy's blessing
- "Queering" of history and religion



Bite my nipple again, Joe!!



Opioid Crisis



- 1980s- Hershel Jick, a doctor at Boston University Medical Center: quoted with the statistic that out of 39,946 patients 11,882 had at least one narcotic prescription and only four became addicted.
- Traced as the root of careless prescriptions in the 1980s leading to the opioid crisis.
- In 1986, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act establishing in response to the drug outbreak.

---Diazepam (Valium): used for treating anxiety, muscle spasms, and seizures.

Symptoms of overdose:

- Change in consciousness
- difficult or troubled breathing
- irregular, fast or slow, or shallow breathing
- lack of coordination
- loss of consciousness
- loss of strength or energy
- muscle pain or weakness

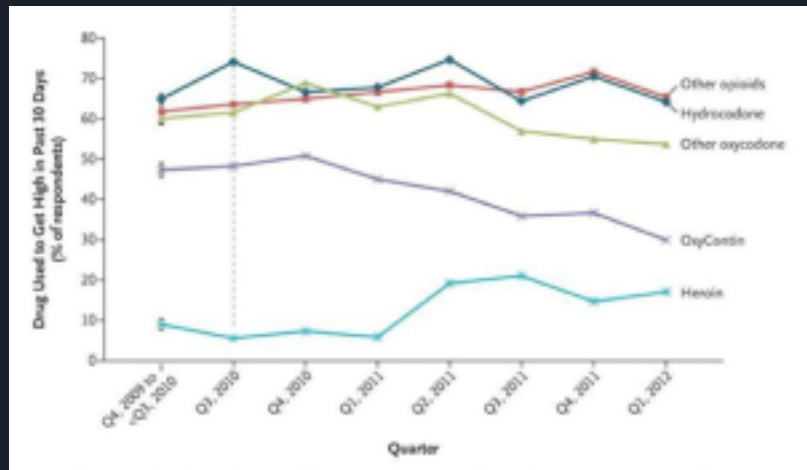
America's Opioid Epidemic

- Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illicit drug heroin as well as the licit prescription pain relievers oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine, fentanyl and others

-Opioids are chemically related and interact with opioid receptors on nerve cells in the brain and nervous system to produce pleasurable effects and relieve pain.

-20.5 million Americans 12 or older that had a substance use disorder in 2015.

-23% of individuals who use heroin develop opioid addiction.



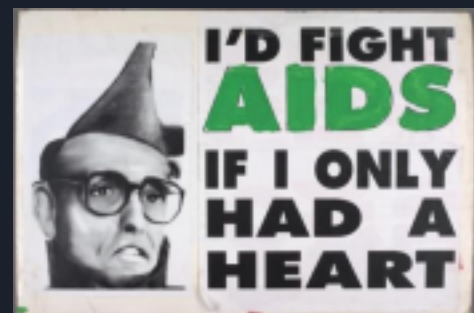
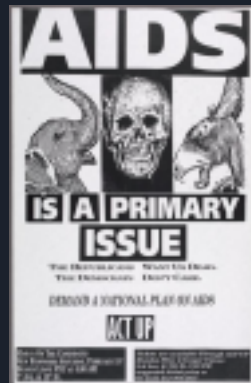
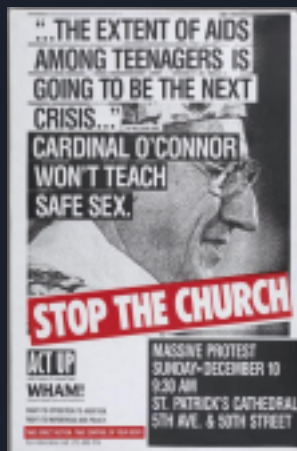
HIV/AIDS

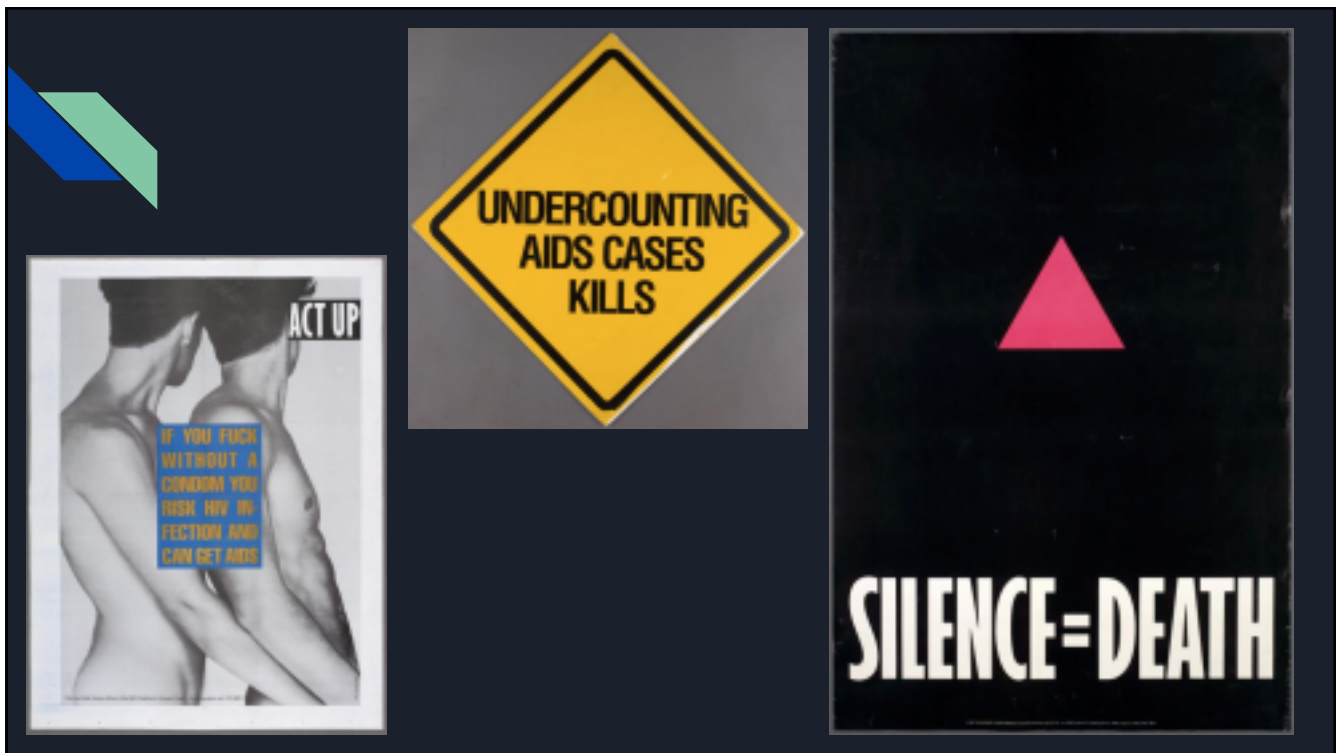
- What is HIV?
- HIV Stages/AIDS
- Transmission through bodily fluids
- Treatment for HIV/AIDS
 - AZT
 - Triple drug cocktail
 - Multi-drug cocktail
 - PrEP
- Stigma
 - “Gay plague”
 - Transmission fears
 - School children
 - Travel ban (1987-2010)
 - Continued stigma of disease/gay/promiscuity intersection
- Race and Income Privilege



HIV/AIDS - The American Epidemic

- The American Epidemic
 - 1981 - PCP and KS; GRID
 - 1982 - AIDS
 - 1983 - Transmission & virus discovered
 - 1984 - Bathhouses and sex clubs shut down; 4,000 fatalities
 - 1985, March - First blood test developed
 - 1985 - AZT Clinical trials begin; 20,000 people have been infected worldwide; Ronald Reagan says the word AIDS for the first time in a press briefing
- CDC attempted to work closely with gay activist groups like ACT UP for public health info
- Large marches and publicity events were held in attempts to attention and research funding
- Harsh attacks from ACT UP and similar coalitions against the political establishment's lack of response



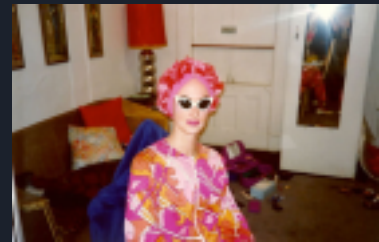


Brief Drag HERstory

- Drag has been around as long as theatre has.
- Shout out to William for coining the term 'drag.'
- 1869 Harlem Hamilton Lodge- first drag ball. Beginnings of gay culture.
 - The balls were illegal and public called them "Faggot Balls." They detested them as immoral.
- 1870-1920 based heavily around pantomime.
- 20s and 30s first LGBT bars began to open- "pansy craze"
- 50s and 60s "no less than three articles of men's clothing."
- 1965 Imperial Court System was established.
- 1980s and 90s brought on "The Drag Explosion" with nightclubs in New York.
 - Lady Bunny and RuPaul - Wigstock and *RuPaul's Drag Race*.
- The 1980s became the first time in history for drag to be a part of mainstream culture.
 - *Rocky Horror Picture Show*
 - John Waters: *Hairspray* and *Divine*.



1980s Drag



Cruising

- Cruising: how to pick up gay men before Grindr/internet hookups.
- Central Park has been a popular location since its creation in 1857.
 - NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project.
 - Hosted first gay pride marches in the 1970s.
- Internet chat rooms have caused cruising to decrease and have a closer limitation to night clubs.

Codes:

- Earring left side or ring on little finger.
- “Hanky Code” would signal what type of sex you liked.
- Safety pin meant that you were into safe sex.
- Tapping in bathrooms
- Eye-contact/3-second rule



WORN ON LEFT		WORN ON RIGHT
Safe Sex Top	Safety Pin	Safe Sex Bottom
Safe Sex Fister	Red/White Check	Safe Sex Fister
Safe Master (S&M)	Black/White Check	Safe Slave (S&M)
Safe S&M Fister	Black/Red Check	Safe S&M Fister
Wants Head	Light Blue	Expert Cockbucker
69-er	Robin's Egg Blue	69-er
Cop	Medium Blue	Cop-sucker
Cock & Ball Torturer	Navy Blue	Fuckee
Fist Fuckee	Teal Blue	Cock & Ball Torturee
Dildo Fuckee	Red	Fist Fuckee
Tit Torture	Light Pink	Dildo Fuckee
2-handed Fister	Dark Pink	Tit Torture
Likes Menstruating Women	Dark Red	2-handed Fister
Into Navel Worshipers	Maroon	Woman Menstruating
"Suck My Tits"	Mauve	Has Navel Fetish
Piercer	Purple	Amput Freak
Like Drags	Lavender	Piercer
Praser	Yellow	Drag
Spits	Pale Yellow	Pras Freak
Has 8" or More	Mustard	Oral Crazy
2 Looking for One	Gold	Wants a Big One
Anything Anytime	Orange	One Looking for 2
Two Tons of Fun	Apricot	Nothing Now
"Suck My Toes"	Coral	Chubby Chaser
A Cowboy	Rust	Shrimper
Spanker	Fuschia	Has Horse
Butler	Kelly Green	Spanker
Military Top	Olive Drab	John
Daddy	Hunter Green	Military Bottom
Dines off Tricks (Sex w/Food)	Lime Green	Hunting for Daddy

'Hanky Code'

Dines off Tricks (Sex w/Food)	Daddy	Hunter for Daddy
Runner	Lime Green	Dinner Plate
Scat Top	Beige	Runner
Has Uncut Dick	Brown	Scat Bottom
Circumcised	Brown Lace	Likes Uncut Dick
Heavy S&M Top	Brown Satin	Likes Circumcised Cock
Bondage Top	Black	Heavy S&M Bottom
Latex Fetish Top	Gray	Bondage Bottom
Actually Wants a Suit	Charcoal	Latex Fetish Bottom
"Beat My Meat"	Gray Flannel	Likes Men in Suits
Cums in Scum Bags	White	"It's Do Us Both"
Shaver	Cream	Sucks it Out
Likes Black Bottoms	Red/White Stripes	Shaves
Likes Latino Bottoms	Black/White Stripes	Likes Black Tops
Likes Oriental Bottoms	Brown/White Stripes	Likes Latino Tops
Likes White Bottoms	Yellow/White Stripes	Likes Oriental Tops
Wears Boxer Shorts	White Lace	Likes White Tops
Bestalist, Top	Paisley	Likes Boxer Shorts
Starfucker	Fur	Bestalist, Bottom
Likes Bottom Musclemen	Silver Lame	Star
Has Tattoos	Gold Lame	Likes Top Musclemen
Smokes Cigars	Leopard	Likes Tattoos
Cuddler	Tan	Likes Cigars
Chicken	Teddy Bear	Cuddler
Wears a Dirty Jock	Kewpie Doll	Chicken Hawk
Has Drugs	Dirty Jockstrap	Suckles 'em Clean
Sinks	Zip-Lock Baggie	Looking for Drugs
Gives HOT Motor Oil Massages	Kleenex	Sniffs
Rides a Motorcycle	Kendywipe	Wears it Well
Bar tender	Chamois	Likes Bikers
Teasroom Top	Cocktail Napkin	Bar Groups
Top for Sex Outdoors	Dolly	Teasroom Bottom
	Mosquito Netting	Outdoor Bottom

Cool Facts About Antarctica & Global Warming:

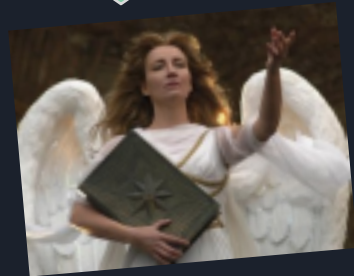
- Antarctica is the largest desert in the world.
- Antarctica is the coldest, windiest, highest and driest continent on Earth.
- The coldest place on Earth is a high ridge in Antarctica where temperatures can dip below -133°F (-93.2°C).
- The highest temperature ever recorded in Antarctica is 58.2°F (14.5°C).
- Melting glaciers.
- Rising sea levels.
- Heat waves and increased flooding.
- Disruption of habitats
- Environmental catastrophes (hurricanes, etc.)
- Allergies, asthma, and infectious disease outbreaks will become more common due to pollution from industry and natural pollutants.



Philosophies and Themes in *Angels in America*

- **Louis's "Democracy in America" Monologue**
 - Political vs. racial basis for cultural identity
- ***Millennium Approaches***
 - "History is about to crack open." - Ethel Rosenberg
 - "Something's going to give." - Harper Pitt
- **The Angels' Philosophy**
 - Stasis vs. change
 - Metaphor for political struggle in America
- ***Perestroika***
 - Restructuring/Rebuilding
 - Mikhail Gorbachev

I HAVE OPINIONS!!!!



Why This Play Now?

- The moral implications of relationships are always relevant
- Roy-Trump connection
- Cyclic problems with drugs, fear, discrimination
- "Humanity struggles" is a pretty universal, neverending theme (assuming you're a Neo-Hegelian Positivist, at least).
- Travel bans and segregationist nationalism
- The American political battle since the 1980s has changed relatively little



The Great Work Begins