

Supplementary Study Guide
Written by Robynne M. Graffam

Any Given Monday

By Bruce Graham
Directed by Harriet Power

Act II Playhouse
March 3-28, 2010

Cast:

Lenny.....Bruce Graham
Mickey.....Pete Pryor
Risa.....Catharine Slusar
Sarah.....Genevieve Perrier

Designers:

Set Design.....Dirk Durossette
Lighting Design.....James Leitner
Costume Design.....Alison Roberts
Sound Design.....Mark Valenzuela

Characters:

Lenny—a peaceful, polite, dedicated English teacher, husband and father. He respects and admires Atticus Finch, the father from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for his courage and nobility in defending a helpless man against racism and violence.

Risa—his wife, an energetic, meticulous event-planner who is experiencing a mid-life crisis. She has an affair in hopes of injecting some vitality into her life.

Sarah—their bright, articulate daughter, a philosophy major about to graduate from college, who is questioning everything from religion to the role of football in our culture.

Mickey—Lenny's best friend, an outspoken, opinionated subway worker who often says the unfiltered, unvarnished things he's convinced everyone believes but is too scared to express out loud.

Plus two characters who don't appear onstage:

Frank—a wealthy real estate developer responsible who earned his money building ugly sub-divisions and Wal-Marts on what used to be open land, and who is also responsible for demolishing a historic building in Philadelphia.

Lillian—Risa's sister

Synopsis:

Act I

The play opens with Sarah describing her father's attachment to the movie of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She tells us he has seen it hundreds of times, and it still makes him cry because, as he says, "I'll never be as good as Atticus Finch."

Sarah and Risa exchange text messages between their parallel scenes. Risa complains about an "affair" she has planned, which evolves into the revelation that she is also about to start quite another kind of affair, with Frank.

Sarah and Risa come together to talk about some of the existential questions Sarah has on her mind. She wonders, for example, why there is evil in the world. We quickly see that Risa is much more practical minded. When Sarah tells her it's important to remember things like the Holocaust, Risa responds, "I know it's important not to forget . . . But a day or two won't hurt. People like to talk about other things at dinner. This is why you have trouble keeping a boyfriend." Similar exchanges appear throughout the play, reflecting Sarah's quest to understand the human condition and Risa's struggle to understand her own behavior.

The lights come up on Lenny, who is home alone, watching and rewatching *To Kill a Mockingbird* and drinking screwdrivers. He's disheveled, depressed. His friend Mickey comes over, ostensibly to watch Monday Night Football, but mainly because he's concerned about Lenny. Risa moved in with Frank over the weekend, and Lenny has told Mickey to stay away. Mickey is agitated, even more chatty than usual, and he sympathizes with Lenny in between yelling at the Giants-Cowboys game on the television and trying to convince Lenny to go fishing with him. He's been asked to take a week's leave because a woman at work complained about a suggestive calendar he had in his locker.

Mickey tells Lenny that Dang, a subway motorman and friend of his, has died. A homeless person jumped in front of his train and was killed, and Dang, consumed with guilt, committed suicide, despite the fact that he was blameless. Mickey suggests the only real solution to the homeless problem is to issue hunting licenses and turn people loose to "thin the herd."

When Lenny announces that he skipped Back to School Night for the first time in his twenty-three year career, Mickey becomes alarmed. While he thought Lenny was safely at school, Mickey went to Frank's house and shot him. Back to School Night was supposed to be Lenny's alibi.

Lights come up on Risa talking to her sister Lillian over a glass of wine. She admits she feels guilty about leaving Lenny. She says her affair was not a spontaneous whim, that she tried to reason logically, mapping out the pros and cons of moving in with Frank. When she made her list, there were no "pros" at all. But logic, she says, is useless in this kind of situation, so she tore up the list and left anyway.

Back at Lenny's house, Lenny refuses to believe that Mickey has really killed Frank. Finally Mickey produces Frank's driver's license, and Lenny is forced to accept the truth of what Mickey has done. Lenny, still in shock, argues that he would never have asked Mickey to do this. Mickey can't believe Lenny is so calm about the fact that Frank was sleeping with Risa, and he tells Lenny to get angry for once. Lenny disagrees; he doesn't want Risa back this way. "Results are results, dude," Mickey replies.

Sarah arrives home from college to check on her father and overhears the news about Frank's murder. She's shocked, but also reveals that Frank tried to hit on her during a barbeque at their house the previous summer. "A total scumbag," as Mickey puts it. She insists they think through the practicalities: alibis, and the possibility that she and Lenny are now "accessories after the fact." Mickey then gives a detailed description of how he cased Frank's house, forced Frank into the trunk of his car, shot him, planted drug paraphernalia in the car and left it in a seedy section of West Philadelphia, and then escaped by the subway where he knew no one would see him. Sarah is convinced that Mickey's plan is flawless; they're in no danger of getting caught.

Still, she still has trouble accepting that Mickey has done what he says. He admits he's been planning something like this for years, pondering the idea of killing someone. They discuss

the moral implications, and Mickey insists that most people think about it but don't do anything, merely because they are too afraid of getting caught. Sarah becomes fascinated by his reasoning and tells him, "You played God! . . . To actually . . . take a life . . . that must have been . . . so . . . cool . . ."

Act II

Sarah tries to explain what she thinks is wrong with her parents' marriage. She knows they love each other, but she thinks Lenny's passivity, his endless patience with Risa's "rules" has made him uninteresting to his wife. She thinks Jewish men are incapable of standing up for themselves, and that's the problem with so many of the relationships she sees.

Risa talks to Lillian again, this time about marriage. She feels disenchanting with the predictable routine of "college-marriage-kid-grandkid-death." She confesses she stopped planning weddings because she found the inevitably unhappy outcome of so many of them too depressing. She also admits that the fact Lenny will probably take her back without even a complaint bothers her, although she can't quite say why.

Back at Lenny's house, Sarah comes downstairs and finds Lenny still sprawled on the sofa, the movie still playing in the background. Lenny thinks the police will show up any minute because the story of Frank's murder, a wealthy white guy from the suburbs, is bound to be big news, much bigger than the death of another "black kid from West Philly."

They talk about the unfairness of this discrepancy. Lenny tries to explain that he has a certain "code" he lives by, but he feels as if no one else does anymore, that there are no rules of conduct anymore. Terrible things happen at his school, and no one seems the least bit surprised or alarmed; his students' parents are idiots he sometimes wishes would stop reproducing, so they could spare any future kids from being similarly screwed up.

He then admits that when he woke up, after sleeping on the news about Frank's murder for a while, he was . . . happy. Relieved his problem had disappeared, and grateful to Mickey for taking care of it. "What does that make me?" he asks. Sarah suggests that since the act is a *fait accompli*, they should let something good come of it. She wants to write about it for her senior thesis. "Moral acts are boring," she says. "I want to get out of there with a solid A if I'm gonna' go to grad school."

Sarah then tries to convince Lenny that if he wants things back to normal, if he wants to save his marriage, he must change his ways and stand up to Risa. She insists that "no woman respects a man she can push around." Lenny seems unconvinced that this is the right way to go; he prefers to remain "civilized." Eventually, though, he grudgingly agrees to try.

Mickey returns with the news that a seventeen year old black kid stole Frank's very expensive car from where Mickey had left it, got chased by police and subsequently killed in a shootout. The boy had a long record of violent crime, and Mickey is overjoyed that there is now no fear of getting caught. The "criminal" responsible for Frank's death has been

eliminated, and they're safe. Sarah objects—the boy was innocent, and they shouldn't feel happy about his death. Mickey reminds her that the boy was likely destined for a life of further crime, and that this event has ultimately spared society more harm than the death itself could possibly cause. Lenny calls her on her strange double-standard, feeling happy about Frank's death but not this boy's, and she's forced to back down.

Sarah raises the idea of writing about the situation for school, and Mickey agrees readily. As long as names are left out of it, he's game. She asks him if he believes in God, in hell, in prayer. He tells her he thinks about it often, but doesn't have any firm conclusions except that the illogic the nuns taught him when he was a kid still frustrates him, and that he's not afraid of hell. He's a one-time criminal, an amateur sinner, and there are far worse people on the planet than he.

Risa arrives with her suitcase, and Lenny is uncharacteristically brusque with her. He insinuates that Frank had a drug problem, and tells Risa that Frank hit on Sarah. Surprised, Risa admits leaving was a terrible mistake, that she knew the instant she arrived at Frank's house it was wrong. Lenny listens, then says he'll go get her suitcase. He flings it out onto the lawn. Risa is shocked. Lenny seems to have taken Sarah's advice. He maintains a chilly, even hostile demeanor, and when Risa asks him to admit that he's grown a little bored with their marriage, his quick agreement throws her off guard. Clearly she never thought he might actually feel the same way. When she discovers that Lenny has, in fact, turned down opportunities to stray himself, she is startled.

To signify his newfound backbone, he parks his feet on her precious coffee table and announces that he will be getting the dog he's always wanted and that Risa has forbidden. She bites her tongue on both accounts.

She finds Frank's driver's license. Lenny insinuates that he has killed Frank himself. Risa refuses to believe that her husband, the man who "always does the right thing," is capable of such a hideous crime. Lenny recounts Mickey's story verbatim, but with himself as the killer. Risa is skeptical, astonished, but eventually accepts this new information with relief more than distress. Her problems have been eliminated; a weight has been lifted. Lenny reminds her that a wife could never be asked to testify against her husband, and she reassures him she would never do that, which he believes. They are reunited, recommitted to each other, although the ground rules have changed, and the vitality Risa had been seeking in her affair with Frank is clearly no longer an issue.

Sarah, reassured that her safe, stable family has been rescued, gets her cherished annual family photo on the living room sofa. She has given up on philosophy and all its "thought for thought's sake," and announces that she will pursue an MBA starting in the fall: pragmatism of the highest order. She closes by echoing a line from *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "Thank you, Uncle Mickey. Thank you for my family."

About the Author:

Bruce Graham (From the Theater Alliance of Greater Philadelphia website) PLAYS: *Burkie, Early One Evening at the Rainbow Bar & Grille, Moon Over The Brewery, Champagne Charlie Stakes, Minor Demons, Desperate Affection, Belmont Avenue Social Club, According to Goldman, Dex and Julie Sittin' in a Tree. Coyote on a Fence* won the '98 Rosenthal Prize, was nominated for two Drama Desk Awards, and ran on London's West End starring Ben Cross. *Something Intangible* premiered at the Arden in spring of '09. FEATURE FILMS: *Dunston Checks In, Anastasia, Steal This Movie*. T.V. MOVIES: *Hunt for the Unicorn Killer, The Christmas Secret, Right on Track, Tiger Cruise, Ring of Endless Light*. (Humanitas Award Winner - Best Children's Screenplay.) TELEVISION: *Roseanne, Legwork*. BOOK: *The Collaborative Playwright* (co-written with Michele Volansky). He has received awards from the Pew Foundation, the Theater Association of Pennsylvania, the Rockefeller Foundation and was the 1992 Princess Grace Foundation Statuette recipient. Graham currently teaches film and theater courses at Drexel University. He lives in Philadelphia, PA, with Stephanie and their daughter, Kendall.

Background Information:

Much of this play centers around a fundamental philosophical question. Are certain acts inevitably morally wrong? Or do overwhelmingly positive results, ones that outweigh any negative consequences, justify certain acts that might otherwise be considered evil? In other words, do the ends justify the means? And if so, how far are we willing to take this argument? Can it go as far as to justify a murder?

If some actions, such as lying, are inherently wrong, the argument goes that if you were hiding Jews during the Holocaust, and a Nazi soldier knocked on your door and asked you if anyone was in your house, you would be obligated to tell the truth.

Utilitarians dispute this reasoning. According to the philosophical arguments of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, what determines whether an action is "right" or "wrong" is whether or not that action increases the general "happiness." Even though there may be some negative consequences, if the net result of an act is more happiness for the greater number of people, then the act is "good." Consequentialism, a branch of Utilitarianism, similarly argues that the only criteria by which we should judge an act are by its consequences. If they are ultimately positive, then the act is good, and no nebulous, abstract moral "code" should say otherwise. These schools of thought clearly rest on the idea that logic should govern our actions, since, as Lenny says in Act I, "You bet emotionally and you always get screwed."

One powerful counter-argument against Utilitarianism is presented in this scenario: an orphaned teenager breaks his arm and goes to the hospital. In the course of his being treated, doctors discover he is a good match for four other people who need organ transplants, each of whom is a parent supporting a family. Under strictly utilitarian standards, the doctors would then be justified in killing the boy in order to save the other four people. (Craig's article) Bruce Graham's play, then, explores the boundaries of our

moral senses, and gives us a concrete example of this complicated question in action.

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) Graham presents Frank as a morally distasteful character. He has engaged in adultery with Risa, attempted to start a relationship with Sarah, and reaped profit by destroying historic buildings and natural beauty. Do these negative characteristics, or in Mickey's words, does the fact that Frank is "a prick," along with the obvious benefits to Lenny's family, make his murder justified? What are the possible problems with this argument?
- 2) If Frank had been a generally upstanding, ordinary guy, would we have felt differently about his death? What if the kid who stole Frank's car had been an honors student, a star athlete, a girl, or anyone other than the character Graham chose? How might that change the moral equation?
- 3) Lenny describes a dinner where he held Risa's chair for her at a restaurant, and the young people at the next table laughed at him. He feels he is a dying breed, the last of the chivalrous men in the world. Is this true? Are good manners a thing to be mocked in today's world? What does the fact that Lenny eventually decides to treat Risa more harshly, less chivalrously even, suggest about this question by the end of the play? Are we better off being *less* polite?
- 4) Mickey makes several nakedly prejudiced statements throughout the play, particularly in his inclination to use the "n-word" in reference to black people, and in his dismissal of homeless people as "worthless." Does his apparent bias, and his willingness to make uncomfortable value judgments on the relative worth of different groups of people, force us to question his belief that killing Frank was justified and morally acceptable? Or is Graham just delivering an uncomfortable, but true, philosophy through a flawed character?
- 5) Sarah says football is one of the last outlets for men's naturally violent tendencies; even a gentle soul like her father needs such an outlet. After the murder, Mickey confesses that he was far less interested in the football game than normal. Do all people naturally have these violent, destructive impulses? If so, what does keep us from acting on them? Actual moral beliefs? Or simply fear of getting caught? Can good ever really come out of violence?
- 6) Is this tendency or struggle the same one that makes Risa try to feel more "alive" by breaking the social rules and having an affair? Is there a danger in becoming too "civilized"?
- 7) If presented with the news that a friend had committed a crime to help you, and that you were unlikely to get caught, would you react the same way Lenny did?
- 8) Throughout the play there is tension between logic and emotion. What are the risks if we base our decisions too much on one or the other? Based on the play, what conclusions

can we draw about this tension?

9) How are we supposed to feel about Sarah's decision, at the end, to abandon philosophy, the struggle to understand morality and human existence, in favor of a business degree? Is this a triumph? Or a tragedy? Or both?

10) Are we supposed to feel good about the reunited family at the end? Or somehow uncomfortable? Is this a "happy" ending?

Glossary of References:

Chud: Refers to a 1984 film of the same name, and is an acronym for "Cannibalistic humanoid underground dweller."

Frank, Anne: Young Jewish girl hidden, with her family, from the Nazis from 1942-1944. Her diary, describing her experience and expressing her belief, despite everything, that people were fundamentally good, was published in 1947, after her death in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Johnson, Samuel: Eighteenth century English writer and thinker who produced the *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755, sometimes erroneously called the first, but widely considered the most important English dictionary until the *Oxford English Dictionary* was produced nearly 150 years later.

Socrates: (469-399 B.C.) A Greek philosopher most famous for his development of the "Socratic Method" of learning, which is based on dialogue to refine one's understanding of a subject, and for his prosecution and death for his political activities. "The [Κριτων \(Crito\)](#) reports that during Socrates's imprisonment he responded to [friendly efforts to secure his escape](#) by seriously debating whether or not it would be right for him to do so. He concludes to the contrary that an individual citizen—even when the victim of unjust treatment—can never be [justified in refusing to obey the laws of the state](#)" (<http://www.philosophypages.com/ph/socr.htm>).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig: Austrian philosopher (1889-1951) who studied questions of logic, aesthetics and linguistics.

Sources consulted:

Sandel, Michael J. *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, September 15, 2009.

University of Pennsylvania Center for Bioethics, High School Bioethics Project, Resources for Secondary Educators:

http://www.highschoolbioethics.org/files/lessonplan4/Neuroethics4_1_Page_1.pdf

www.bookrags.com/research/wittgenstein-ludwig-addendum-2-eoph/

<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Johnson/Guide/who.html>

<http://www.annefrank.org>

<http://www.urbandictionary.com>

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Appendix:

By: john.immerwahr@villanova.edu

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PROBLEM OF EVIL

The Problem of Evil:

Note, Sarah has continual references to evil. “Which brings us to the next question: why is there evil?”

This is a classic philosophical puzzle or paradox that everyone who studies philosophy deals with at some point. All four of these statements seem true, and yet they can't all be true at the same time. Which one is false:

- God is all powerful.
- God is all good.
- An all-powerful, all-good God would not permit evil to exist.
- Evil exists.

There are many ways to solve this problem, but one is to assume that God is indifferent to human suffering, powerful perhaps, but not good in our terms. To say this is, in effect, to say that (as far as humans are concerned), “God is dead.” As Sarah says, “I really do believe there is a God but that he or she just kind of . . . doesn't give a shit anymore.”

FRAGMENTS FROM THE SOPHISTS

Why read the sophists? The philosophy that so fascinates Sarah is based on the writings of Nietzsche (more on him later), but Nietzsche's thinking is in turn based on the thinking of the Sophists. But the Sophists are much easier to read, and give us a whole philosophy in a few paragraphs.

Who were the sophists? During the time the Greek tragedies were written (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides), the Greeks lived in a new type of political structure, the *polis*, different from either the great empires (such as Egypt) or from the feudal and tribal groups that we see depicted in the Old Testament or the *Iliad*. In a polis, many decisions were made in some sort of public forum, either in a law court or in an assembly. The ability to speak in public was thus essential, and many wealthy people wanted their sons to be trained so that they could speak effectively in these public venues. The Sophists emerged as a response to this need. The name "Sophist" is derived from a Greek word for wisdom, but the connotation is more negative. The Sophists were regarded as somewhat suspect, just as some people today might object to political

consultants, lobbyists, or trial lawyers. While these people are regarded as clever, they are also thought to be somehow dangerous. The Sophists went from polis to polis, instructing young men in public speaking and charging money for their services. Some of the Sophists also developed a theoretical and philosophical world view that became extremely influential. Although they wrote many books, we don't have any of them left. The truth is that it is remarkable that we have as many texts from the ancient world as we do. But it is also the case that the people who preserved texts (including medieval Irish monks living on barren rocks in the Irish Sea) tended to preserve the texts they agreed with. They had less interest, apparently, in preserving the texts of the Sophists. Most of our information about the Sophists comes from quotations of their materials from people who don't like them much.

The Sophists are especially interesting for Graham's AGM because they were very influential on the German Philosopher, **Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche** (1844 –1900). Nietzsche studied these writers closely and based some of his later works on their thought. Sarah has obviously studied Nietzsche.

Here are three fragments from the Sophists.

Antiphon:

This passage is a modernization and adaptation of the thinking of several ancient sources. Most of it comes from a fragment by a philosopher named Antiphon, who lived in Athens in the Fifth Century BCE. I started with a fragment by Antiphon and then added some of the thinking of other Sophists as reported in some of Plato's dialogues. For the original fragment, see The PreSocratics, edited by Philip Wheelwright (New York: MacMillan, 1966), p.259).

People are innately selfish. Left to their own devices they would take whatever they wanted and kill anyone who stood in their way. But individuals have found that although they desire to act selfishly, they also don't like it when other selfish individuals hurt them or take their things. So they decide to form a society to protect themselves from the selfishness of others. They all agree to restrain their natural selfishness if others will do the same, and they hire police officers to punish or kill those who act selfishly. The actions they have agreed not to do, they call "wrong," and the actions that remain they call "right," but these terms don't have any other meaning other than what the society gives them. (We can see this when we notice that the definitions of right and wrong change from place to place, so that something that is right in one place is wrong in another.) Eventually people hire school teachers and religious leaders, and they pay them to tell everyone, especially children, that there is a god who made the world and who also made these rules, so that right and wrong come from this god, rather than from humans. They teach that god will be angry if they break the rules, and will punish people even if they are not caught. After they hear enough of this, the children internalize it, so that when they break the rules they punish themselves by feeling guilty.

The only reason to avoid the wrong actions is to avoid being caught and punished. Really smart people, however, can take the best of both worlds. When they can get it away with it, they will act naturally, and take whatever they want and even kill if they wish to. But when people are looking, the smart people behave according the rules, give money to the church, and pretend they

are outraged by others who break the rules. So the smart people get the advantages of living in a society where people don't hurt them, but they also get to hurt others.

Callicles:

The first is a from Sophist named Callicles. We don't know anything about him except that he is quoted in a work by Plato, but we assume he is a real person who lived in the fifth century B.C.E. This passage is taken from a dialogue by Plato called *Gorgias*, starting at 482c

Callicles: Now, for the most part, these two, nature and convention, are antagonistic to each other. . . . For by nature everything that is worse is more shameful, suffering wrong for instance, but by convention it is more shameful to do it. For to suffer wrong is not even fit for a man but only for a slave, for whom it is better to be dead than alive, since when wronged and outraged he is unable to help himself or any other for whom he cares. But in my opinion those who framed the laws are the weaker folk, the majority. And accordingly they frame the laws for themselves and their own advantage, and so too with their approval and censure, and to prevent the stronger who are able to overreach them from gaining the advantage over them, they frighten them by saying that to overreach others is shameful and evil, and injustice consists in seeking the advantage over others. For they are satisfied, I suppose, if being inferior they enjoy equality of status. That is the reason why seeking an advantage over the many is by convention said to be wrong and shameful, and they call it injustice. But in my view nature herself makes it plain that it is right for the better to have the advantage over the worse, the more able over the less. And both among all animals and in entire states and races of mankind it is plain that this is the case--that right is recognized to be the sovereignty and advantage of the stronger over the weaker. For what justification had Xerxes in invading Greece or his father in invading Scythia? And there are countless other similar instances one might mention. But I imagine that these men act in accordance with the true nature of right, yes and, by heaven, according to nature's own law, though not perhaps by the law we frame. We mold the best and strongest among ourselves, catching them young like lion cubs, and by spells and incantations we make slaves of them, saying that they must be content with equality and that this is what is right and fair. But if a man arises endowed with a nature sufficiently strong, he will, I believe, shake off all these controls, burst his fetters, and break loose. And trampling upon our scraps of paper, our spells and incantations, and all our unnatural conventions, he rises up and reveals himself our master who was once our slave, and there shines forth nature's true justice. And it seems to me that Pindar expresses what I am saying in that ode in which he writes,

*Law is the sovereign of all,
Of mortals and immortals alike,
and it is law, he says, that
Carries all, justifying the most violent deed
With victorious hand; this I prove
By the deeds of Heracles, for without paying the price--†1*

it runs something like that--for I do not know the poem by heart--but it says that he drove off the oxen of Geryon which were neither given to him nor paid for, because this is natural justice, that

the cattle and all other possessions of the inferior and weaker belong to the superior and stronger.

From Plato's *Gorgias*, translated by W.D. Woodhead, in Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns Edition THE COLLECTED DIALOGUES OF PLATO INCLUDING THE LETTERS Edited by EDITH HAMILTON and HUNTINGTON CAIRNS, 1961 by Bollingen Foundation. Found in PastMasters by InteLex Corporation.

Thrasymachus:

Here is one other passage, from Plato's *Republic* (343b), attributed to a sophist named Thrasymachus

Thrasymachus: If someone commits only one part of injustice and is caught, he's punished and greatly reproached – such partly unjust people are called temple-robbers, kidnappers, housebreakers, robbers and thieves when they commit these crimes. But when someone, in addition to approaching their possessions, kidnaps and enslaves the citizens as well [by seizing power and become the ruler of a country], instead of these shameful names he is called happy and blessed, not only by the citizens themselves, but by all who learn that he has done the whole of injustice. Those who reproach injustice do so because they are afraid not of doing it but of suffering it. . . . Injustice, if it is on a large enough scale, is stronger, freer, and more masterly than justice. And, as I said from the first, justice is what is advantageous to the stronger, while injustice is to one's own profit and advantage.

From Plato *Republic*, trans. G.M.A.Grube (rev. C.D.C. Reeve. (Hackett, Indianapolis 1992).

FRIEDRICH WILHELM NIETZSCHE (1844 – 1900)

(graphiti from the men's room in the basement of one of the most famous philosophy departments in the country)

God is Dead
Nietzsche

Nietzsche is Dead
God

Nietzsche is Spelled Wrong
Walter Kaufman (famous Nietzsche Scholar)

Friedrich Nietzsche is an incredibly important philosopher, very influential on many modern trends and beloved of lots of philosophy majors, like Sarah. As I mentioned above, his work is based on the writings of the Sophists. The best way to get a sense of what Nietzsche is about it to read one of two Internet Encyclopedia Articles about him.

- The Stanford Encyclopedia (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/>)
- The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/nietzsch/>)

Here is a quote from the Stanford Encyclopedia:

Nietzsche philosophizes from the perspective of life located beyond good and evil, and challenges the entrenched moral idea that exploitation, domination, injury to the weak, destruction and appropriation are universally objectionable behaviors. Above all, he believes that living things aim to discharge their strength and express their “will to power” — a pouring-out of expansive energy that, quite naturally, can entail danger, pain, lies, deception and masks. As he views things from the perspective of life, he further denies that there is a universal morality applicable indiscriminately to all human beings, and instead designates a series of moralities in an order of rank that ascends from the plebeian to the noble: some moralities are more suitable for subordinate roles; some are more appropriate for dominating and leading social roles. What counts as a preferable and legitimate action depends upon the kind of person one is. The deciding factor is whether one is weaker, sicker and on the decline, or whether one is healthier, more powerful and overflowing with life.

On the Genealogy of Morals, A Polemic (Zur Genealogie der Moral, Eine Streitschrift, 1887) is composed of three sustained essays that advance the critique of Christianity expressed in *Beyond Good and Evil*. The first essay continues the discussion of master morality versus servant morality, and maintains that the traditional ideals set forth as holy and morally good within Christian morality are products of self-deception, since they were forged in the bad air of revenge, resentment, hatred, impotence, and cowardice. In this essay, as well as the next, Nietzsche's controversial references to the “blond beast” in connection with master morality also appear. In the second essay, Nietzsche continues

with an account of how feelings of guilt, or the “bad conscience,” arise merely as a consequence of an unhealthy Christian morality that turns an evil eye towards our natural inclinations. He also discusses how punishment, conceived as the infliction of pain upon someone in proportion to their offense, is likely to have been grounded in the contractual economic relationship between creditor and debtor. In the third essay, Nietzsche focusses upon the truth-oriented ascetic ideals that underlie and inform prevailing styles of art, religion and philosophy, and he offers a particularly scathing critique of the priesthood: the priests are allegedly a group of weak people who shepherd even weaker people as a way to experience power for themselves. The third essay also contains one of Nietzsche's clearest expressions of “perspectivism” (section 12) — the idea that there is no absolute, “God's eye” standpoint from which one can survey everything that is.

Some ideas from Nietzsche:

- “God is Dead” which implies not so much that God died, but that God is irrelevant.
- “Master” morality vs. “slave” morality.
- Tension between Apollonian (logical) vs. Dionysian (creative) elements of life
- Nietzsche is frequently associated with Nazism, and clearly the Nazis drew inspiration from him, partly from the influence of his sister after he died. Nietzsche sometimes spoke approvingly of “the blond beast” and the “superman.”

Some Nietzsche quotations (imagine how these would appeal to a young college student like Sarah):

From: www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Friedrich_Nietzsche/

Note: I can't promise that these are all by Nietzsche, but they all sound like Nietzsche

A casual stroll through the lunatic asylum shows that faith does not prove anything.

At times one remains faithful to a cause only because its opponents do not cease to be insipid.

Battle not with monsters, lest ye become a monster, and if you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.

Be careful when you fight the monsters, lest you become one.

In heaven all the interesting people are missing.

In truth, there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross.

Insanity in individuals is something rare - but in groups, parties, nations and epochs, it is the rule.

It is hard enough to remember my opinions, without also remembering my reasons for them!

Man is the cruelest animal.

No price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.

One must have a good memory to be able to keep the promises one makes.

Talking much about oneself can also be a means to conceal oneself.

The advantage of a bad memory is that one enjoys several times the same good things for the first time.

The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.

The irrationality of a thing is no argument against its existence, rather a condition of it.

The overman...Who has organized the chaos of his passions, given style to his character, and become creative. Aware of life's terrors, he affirms life without resentment.

The visionary lies to himself, the liar only to others.

To forget one's purpose is the commonest form of stupidity.

To predict the behavior of ordinary people in advance, you only have to assume that they will always try to escape a disagreeable situation with the smallest possible expenditure of intelligence.

What else is love but understanding and rejoicing in the fact that another person lives, acts, and experiences otherwise than we do...?

When one has much to put into them, a day has a hundred pockets.

When you stare into the abyss the abyss stares back at you.

You need chaos in your soul to give birth to a dancing star.

There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness.

But thus do I counsel you, my friends: distrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful!

Digressions, objections, delight in mockery, carefree mistrust are signs of health; everything unconditional belongs in pathology.

Poets are shameless with their experiences: they exploit them.

He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.

What is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil.

Only sick music makes money today.