1 The play

No Exit is the best known play of Sartre. Sartre takes an existential loot at humans relations. Essentially the entire play takes place in a single room. A room that is always bright and never dark. Where you can not sleep. The three characters are dead. They think that they are awaiting in the room before they are escorted to hell.

They are brought to the room, one after the other by a mysterious valet, who in fact is the devil.

The characters:

1. Joseph Garcin is a journalist. He said he was shot for his pacifism. But in fact he was shot because he deserted the war. He thinks of himself as a brave man, a thing that is very important for him. And is his weak point.

2. Inez is a manipulative and a sadist. A lesbian that seduced her cousin’s wife, Florence. At the time she is living with them. This drove the cousin to kill himself and later led Florence asphyxiating herself. Inez feels guilty, and comes to the poisoned room and is killed by the gas.

3. Estelle is a simple woman married to a wealthy old man. She had an affair with a man that resulted in a child. She killed the child, and this causes the father of the child to kill himself. Estelle says that she is here
by mistake. We find out that she is a vane person and a pathological liar.

All characters are terrible humans. Thus they should be taken by the valet to hell.

While they are in the room, they start to fight.

1.1 Torturing each other

_Torturing Inez:_ Estelle finds out that she is attracted to Joseph. Estelle tries seduce Joseph. Joseph says that he cant make love with Estelle, since Inez will be watching. All these attempts of seduction make Inez crazy. Finally Estelle, tries to kill Inez so she could sleep with Joseph.

_Torturing Estelle:_ Inez tries to seduce Estelle and makes her very scared. Estelle wants a mirror to see how she looks. But there are no mirrors there. This shows how vane Estelle is. She counts on her beauty like an evil woman in a film noir.

_Torturing Joseph:_ Joseph suggests that they try to get along. Inez cynically starts to sing about execution (Joseph was executed, and she is trying to make him angry). Joseph is obsessed that people will look at him as brave. Estelle finally agrees to tell him that he is brave. Inez refuses to change her opinion. Inez: you are obviously a coward. She promises to make him miserable forever.

When Estelle tries to kill Inez, the play end as follows. Inez reminds Estelle that they are already dead.

Inez: Dead! Dead! Dead! Knives, poison, ropes useless. It has happened already, do you understand? Once and for all. SO here we are, forever.


Garcin: For ever, and ever, and ever. (A long silence.)

Garcin: Well, well, let’s get on with it...

2 Interpretation

These three people are stuck in the room. They find out that this is it. Namely, they are not going to another place that is hell. This is hell. The three have to be in the room together for ever and ever and ever. Very fast that they start to get at each other’s nerves. While they lie about their death at start, the room makes them reveal the truth at the end. After they
understand that this is it, they ARE in hell, Joseph says the very controversial line: "Hell is other people."

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre argues that the existence of another person will torment others. We see the world in one way, but other people see the world in their subjective way. The different ways we see the world, will make us compete. The existence of another person makes you feel like an object. We simply want the way we see reality to be declared the correct one. Other people say that the play is on how the French felt when occupied by Germany.

In existentialism lying to yourself is the biggest sin maybe. You should be authentic to yourself at all costs. You should agree to go to jail if faced with a tyrannical government that tries to make you say lies. At least Estelle and Joseph lie to themself. A big sin. Estelle lies and says that she should no be there, and Joseph tries to claim that he is brave.

And in the opinion of Sartre, no torture tools are needed in hell. Emotional torment is worse.

They could have chosen to not make life hell for each other. But I think that Sartre does not see humanity in this way. He wrote the play during the second world war, and was highly influenced by what happened.

### 3 The devil in Miss Jones

Every 10 years, when the year ends with 2 (namely at 1962, 1972, and so on until 2012, which is the last for now) the important journal *Sight and Sound* polls, critics and directors (separately in two different polls). Each critic and director gives his list of 10 best films of all times. Then they add the votes. The films are ranked according to the number of times they were chosen.

You would not think that American porn films would be chosen as one of the best 10 films by anybody. But this happened several times.

Around 1972 a very strange (short) era started. A film called *Deep Throat* made a lot of noise. It was shown in regular theaters. It was considered for a short while perfectly fine to watch hard core porn films. The long queues to the film had celebrities such as Jacky O. Very soon after, cinema houses dedicated to porn were born.

The Mitchell brothers, wanted to make *good porn films*. Gerard Damiano, may be the only person in history that wanted to make art porn films.

*Deep Throat* by Damiano was chosen in some sight and sound polls, by serious critics, as one of the best 10 films ever made. Damiano wanted to do a comedy. I thought it is horrible, and stopped watching after 15 minutes. A
boring trash. Another films that appeared in the choice of the best 10 films ever was *Beyond the green door* by the Mitchell brothers. I started seeing it in video but stopped after 15 minutes. Boring trash.

The third highly acclaimed porn film was *The devil in Miss Jones* by Gerard Damiano, However I did not bother seeing it.

In 2002 I went and watched the choice of various critics on what the best 10 films of all times are. There were many films I did not see at the time (by 2012 I managed to almost all off them).

A surprise came with a very prestigious Philippines critic, who chose the porn film *The devil versus Miss Jones* as one of the best 10 films ever done. He left a comment: "Can an American porn film be better than *Citizen Kane*? Most of them are not, but a few precious ones are. I always thought of *Citizen Kane* as a film on white people that feel sorry for themselves".

Roger Ebert a famed critic gave *The devil in Miss Jones* film 3 stars. He says that the film should be judge as a part of a porn films and not as a regular films. And among porn films it is good. His partner to the fames TV program Siskel, also gave the film 3 starts.

What is so special about this film? I took a look. What I can say is that this is the best porn film I have ever seen. Probably, the only good porn film I have ever seen.

There were several good things about it. It was directed by Gerard Damiano, the only porn director that wanted to make art. The leading female actress is called Georgina Spelvin. She is the only woman in porn I ever saw, who was able to act.

The film talks about a sexually frustrated woman, Miss Jones, that wants to have sex with her husband. She has a very strange husband, that would engage in sex with her. He seems to be mentally sick and feeds us strange lines on insects (the one playing the husband also directed: Damiano). Then comes a unique scene for a porn film. Miss Jones kills herself. The only time I saw suicide in porn.

She arrives above and it is established that she must go to hell. Every human who kills himself/herself must go to hell. But Miss Jones convinces the devil that if she is to go to hell, she deserve to have some sex. She is a virgin because of her husband. The devil agrees and Miss Jones is temporarily sent back to earth to have sex. She meets a teacher. He is played by the then famed porn actor Harry Reems, the main leading character of Deep Throat.

The teacher gives her three sexual experiment. Namely, three sex scenes. They are done in rare good taste. The last one is a lesbian scene. However when the sex of Miss Jones ends, she should go to hell now. But does not go to hell. She returns to her husband and again cries about the lack of sexual
satisfaction. Her life was hell, so she does not need to go to hell. The script is clearly based on No exit.

Was Sartre (that died in 1980) aware of the porn adaptation of his play? I wish I knew.

4 Irrational man

This is an underrated but vane film by Woody Allen.

4.1 The plot

In a New England college campus, a famed existential philosopher and professor Abe Lucas is hired as faculty. He suffers from existential depression. Abe says: “I couldn’t remember the reason for living, and when I did it wasn’t convincing.” The usual symptoms. He find no meaning to his life. He is in a bad shape. Looks like a slob. Somehow, two ladies are attracted to him, because some women are attracted to intellectuals. Allen hates intellectuals. He mocks then at any opportunity. Of course Allen is an intellectual himself. And yes, Allen hates himself and made it clear in many interviews. Allen lets Abe state his opinion on philosophy: Abe says: ”So much of philosophy is just verbal masturbation.”

One woman that is attracted to Abe is a Chemistry professor Rita Richards. Allen hates science, and even more, hates logic. Therefore Rita is posed as an unethical person, like any scientist (in Allen’s opinion) is. The second girl attracted to Abe is a young student of philosophy, Jill Pollard, (played by the lovely Emma Stone).

Jill has a boyfriend that all of a sudden seems boring. She lives with her parents. Rita lives with her husband, but her love to him was lost long ago. Abe is an opportunist. Clearly an unethical person. So he tries to sleep with Rita. His first sexual experience with Rita goes badly. Abe says: ”I wanted to be an active world changer and I’ve wound up a passive intellectual who can’t fuck.” But probably because of bad previous experiences, he does not sleep with Jill at the time. It is hinted that he was fired in the past because of such things.

Abe and Jill overhear a woman that is about to lose her children. An unethical judge will give them to her evil husband in family court.

This cures Abe’s depression. He decides to murder the judge. Maybe thinking on Nietzsche and his ideas on the super human that is not bound by the usual morality. Alternatively, he looks himself as the hero of the book Crime ond Judgment which makes no real sense, because the main character
kills the elderly woman for no reason. The author of this book was an extreme
catholic and thought of murder as a mortal sin.

Abe quite reasonably thinks that since he is not involved with the case
he is not going to be caught. Abe steals a key to the chemistry lab of Rita.
He manages to get a hold on cyanide which is completely lethal.

The judge runs (jogs) every morning and after that drinks orange juice
on some bench. Abe manages to pour the the poison in an identical cup, and
exchanges the cups. The judge does not notice, drinks the orange juice, and
dies.

Abe thinks that he finally did something important. The world is better
without this evil man. After that the relation of Abe and Jill becomes a
romance. Jill’s breaks us with her boyfriend. A very important scene is
when the two go to some fare and Abe plays a game that is basically one of
chance. He wins a flash light.

Abe’s is truly stupid. True, how can anybody suspect him? But he makes
highly stupid decisions. This is the revenge of Allen against intellectuals.
But a movie in which the director hates his main character is somewhat
problematic.

The first doubt of Jill and Rita, is because of the missing key. There
were better ways to find poison. Rita is aware that her key is missing, and
later a student recalls that Abe was in the respective room. Then Abe does
the stupid act of leaving his window open while he has the book Crime and
punishment, open in a particularly incriminating place. Jill enters his house
and see’s the open Crimes and punishment book. Only a stupid person will
do such a thing. Like Allen said many times before: how can people be so
brilliant (intellectuals) but have no idea about life?

Rita decides that even if he is guilty, she wants to leave her husband and
live with Abe in Europe. Since she is in science, she is unethical. Allen
can not help it. If he has a person that works in science, basically all such
characters are unethical.

But Jill has a moral compass. She confronts Abe and accuses him of the
murder. Abe then admits his guilt expecting her to forgive him. Jill at start
promises that she is not going to tell the police. However, as in many such
cases, the police charges an innocent man of the crime. They intend to execute
the innocent man.

Then Jill tells Abe that he must go to the police. Otherwise she will
report him.

Abe, who has only recently started enjoying life, is determined to stay
out of jail. He attempts to kill Jill by pushing her into an elevator shaft, but
he trips over the flash light he won by chance, and falls himself to the shaft.
and dies.

Jill reconciled with Roy, her boyfriend and continues her life, after learning a lesson of two.

4.2 Some remarks

The flashlight kills Abe and this means that life is random. This is something that Allen says in all his movies. Since he is an atheist.

As Friedrich Nietzsche said: ”Some people die too soon and some die too late.” Namely, people die at a random time. Never mind how good or evil they are.

A lot of the film is on the question: Can you kill for the greater good? Allen clearly says ”no” and punishes Abe. Abe once an idealistic man, fed starving families in Darfur. But good people do not get rewarded in this world. Abe contracted meningitis. His wife ran away with his best friend. And the friend died in Iraq (maybe its not the same friend? Allen does not say).

The fact that we will die and know it, is felt strongly in the film. Woody Allen loves Bergman, and many other artists. When he listens to Cole Porter he forgets for a second that he is mortal. But as Allen always said: Even Bergman and Porter are only a distraction.

Abe drinks as a distraction. But this distraction does not work for him. Simone de Beauvoir the girlfriend of Sartre warned us: Change your life today. Don’t gamble on the future, act now, without delay. Nietzsche suggests finding a triumphant Yes to life. Accept that you will die, and make your life great.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky raises the question: without God, is everything is permitted? The answer of Allen is: ”God does not exist, but we have to find ethics within ourselves”. Like in existential philosophy Allen says: be authentic to yourself. But in his opinion, this has limits. Do not hurt other people. The movies of Allen make clear that he agrees that ”Hell is other people”.

4.3 The vane citation by Allen

Abe cites a lot. The critics saw that as a showoff. But no. It is a very careful collection of citations, the last one of which, tells the end of the film way before it ends.

Abe needs to justify the murder to Jill. He cites philosophers to justify his act. He cites philosopher in the order of the time they lived in. Abe
starts with a philosopher that is very far from his philosophy and says that Kant said human reason is troubled by questions that it cannot dismiss, but also cannot answer. Kant is miles away from existentialism, so Abe is being an opportunist to cite him. This does not convince Jill. Abe says that ”Dostoevsky got it”, due to Crime and Punishment. Jill is not impressed. Dostoevsky was highly religious person. Using him is another opportunist act by Abe.

Then Abe goes to existentialism to convince Jill. He says: ”Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom” due to Kierkegaard that is for some reason considered an existential philosopher (I do not get it. He was religious). In another try he cites Simone de Beauvoir, the girlfriend of Sartre. This does not convince Jill either.

Could we know the faith of Abe upfront, given my knowledge of (all) Allen’s films? No. It is not like people do not get away with murder in his films. It happens a lot. For example Crimes and Misdemeanors and Match point. In other films (see for example Manhattan Murder Mystery) the killer is caught. So Abe may get away with the murder, or not.

Allen wanted to cite No exit. But this citation would give away the end of the film. We will understand that Abe has ”No exist”. So he will get caught or will die at the end. Allen thinks that the people who watch his films are idiots. The low opinion he has on the viewers is most clear in his film, Stardust memories. At the end of this film a fan kills him. Allen always complained about people that wanted him to continue with comedies, etc. He said countless bad things on his viewers.

So Allen makes Abe just say: ”Hell is other people”. Allen hoped and in fact was sure, that the viewers will not connect this line to No exit.

After he cites No Exit, I knew the ending of the film a long time before the end. I knew that Abe has ”No exit”, and I knew that at the end he either will go to jail, or will die. When I saw the flash light scene I knew that Allen will have to use this randomness. He cant help himself. So I was sure that Abe will die because of the flash light, a thing which unfortunately happens in the movie. He ruined the film for me. I think even though I knew the citation, I am an idiot in Allen’s eyes.

4.4 Another ugly citation

I will give another example of a bad taste citation by Allen that shows amazing vanity. This citation probably achieves his goal. Probably hardly anyone who watch this film Midnight in Paris understood the vane quote. This makes Allen feel that he is smarter than everybody.

In Midnight in Paris a struggling writer named Gil, is in vacation in Paris.
He finds a portal to the 1920’s in Paris and therefore meets the remarkable artists that worked there at the time. He meets the famous Jean Cocteau. I had excellent knowledge about him, since he among other things made films. He was quite amazing. He was a poet, playwright, novelist, designer, filmmaker, visual artist and critic. Only people like Pasolini or Welles, can compete with such record.

Gil also meets the hero of Allen (and of course, my hero) Cole Porter and the legendary Zelda, and Scott Fitzgerald (I admit that I do not like his books. I read them in Hebrew and it was lost in translation). They see Josephine Baker dancing. He meets Ernest Hemingway and Juan Belmonte.

The most important true person that Gil meets, is Gertrude Stein. Here I was a victim of ”stupidity”, as Allen would describes it. I knew her as an important art collector. I never heard of her in other contexts. I did not understand why Allen gave her such importance in the film. But I Googled her after the film. She was an American novelist, poet, playwright, besides being one of the most famous art collector ever. I did not know almost anything about her. I must admit that in this case Allen is right to call me an idiot. Fair enough.

The Novel Gil writes, as almost always, is on Gil’s life. There are good jokes like Ernest Hemingway understanding that Gil’s girlfriend is cheating on him. Gill tells his girlfriend: You can fool me but not Ernest Hemingway. His girlfriend tells him that he has a brain tumor. Why otherwise will he be talking on Ernest Hemingway as if he is alive? But then she admits the affair. Indeed, one can not fool Ernest Hemingway.

Then Gil meets the surrealists Salvador Dal, Man Ray, and Luis Buuel. The surrealists see nothing strange about his claim to have come from the future, finding it to be perfectly normal.

The tasteless citation comes here. Bunuel is one of the most admired director in cinema history (lets face it: admired by the critics. Not by humans. I doubt anybody in the theater knew Bunuel. And those who heard about him usually did not see his films).

Gil tells Bunuel: I have an idea for a film for you: A bunch of people come to eat in a house, and then loose their will to leave. He is talking about the film of Bunuel The exterminating angel. I always disliked this film. I saw it several times and it did not help. The film indeed describes people who come for dinner and loose their will to leave the house (no reason is given for that). Bunuel answers by: ”But why cant they leave”? In fact Bunuel asks this several times. This is a clear insult of Bunuel that was a surrealist. He would never ask such a question. This citation is just annoying. Just bad taste. And also vane. Who do you expect to understand the citations, besides the critics. This citation was not for the critics? Nobody else. And
Allen hates critics so what gives?

The people of *The exterminating angel* went to a place and lost they will to leave.

I had a similar experience. I went to cinema to see *Midnight in Paris*. I almost lost my will to stay in the cinema after the tasteless citation. But at the end, I did stay.

It's ironic that Allen has ”No exit” now. He will never again make a good film.