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SARTRE'S CRITIQUE OF PATRIARCHY

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Philosophical analyses of the works of Jean-Paul Sartre usually focus on his theoretical writings, with his literary fiction treated as merely popularizing ideas whose full articulation can be found in those theoretical works. It is certainly true that Sartre wanted to use novels, plays, and films to bring his philosophy to a mass audience. But that is compatible with developing some ideas through those media. Indeed, his regular reliance on miniature stories to articulate and substantiate philosophical claims in his theoretical writings suggests that he found fiction especially conducive to this purpose. His strong emphasis on dialogue and character interaction in his plays and screenplays matches the formal structures of those vignettes in his theoretical works. Using drama in this way would allow him to develop an idea through a range of situations without being constrained by any theoretical formulation of that idea, while reaching a wider audience than would read his theoretical writings.

This article will show that Sartre did indeed produce distinctive philosophical analyses through his literary work. Specifically, it will show that a sophisticated and insightful critique of western patriarchy evolves across four of his dramatic works written between 1944 and 1946. This critique presents social norms of femininity and masculinity as causes of violence, coercion, and epistemic injustice, operating within an economic and racialized social hierarchy, and owing their force to both bad faith and oppression. At least two of his subsequent dramatic works continue to develop this line of thought. Feminist analyses of Sartre's work have not identified this critique, precisely because they have focused on his theoretical writings and have not found any explicit articulation of it there.¹ The reception of Sartre's

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¹ The landmark text in feminist analyses of Sartre's work remains *Feminist Interpretations of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. by Julien S. Murphy (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). The editor's Introduction (pp. 1–21) places these essays in the context of earlier feminist work on Sartre, making clear the exclusive focus on his theoretical writings. Mary Edwards has recently argued that passages in Sartre's later theoretical writings display a previously overlooked sensitivity to specifically misogynist forms of oppression ('Sartre and Beauvoir on Women's Psychological Oppression', *Sartre Studies International*, 27 (2021), 46–75). Edwards is concerned solely with theoretical writings and so attributes these ideas to the influence of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe*. It is undoubtedly true that Beauvoir influenced Sartre in uncountably many ways and her comprehensive existentialist treatise on patriarchy is one reason why Sartre might not have felt any need to present his own analysis in theoretical writing. Even so, the passages Edwards cites develop themes from the dramatic works discussed in this article.

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drama has also failed to notice it. As we will see, this is partly because of the operation of those same gendered norms.

'Huis clos'

Sartre's best-known dramatic work is the one-act play *Huis clos*, first staged in 1944. Three main characters arrive on stage one at a time and none of them ever leaves. They relate the stories of how they died and arrive at the conclusion that their eternal punishment is simply to be together, each taunting the others by failing to give them the recognition they crave. Hence the much-quoted line towards the end, 'l'enfer, c'est les Autres'.² The play is standardly read as dramatizing one tragic dimension of human life: that how someone is understood by other people is not properly aligned with their self-image. We are necessarily misunderstood, essentially unknown, irretrievably alone. However, this standard reading misses the narrative's central feminist theme and a second feminist point that the play makes along the way.

The narrative is structured by the failed attempts of two of the central characters to live up to the patriarchal norms governing their sex. Garcin arrives first, exuding false bravado. He aspires to the machismo that he considers true masculinity. He treated his wife appallingly, as he admits, but he is not concerned about that. He is preoccupied with whether his final actions were incompatible with his self-image. He wants the other characters to reassure him that he is not a coward, to confirm that he is heroic. He is tormented by his inability to secure this recognition.

Estelle is equally concerned with living up to the norms of femininity. She has lived a life driven by the goal of being attractive to men. This has led her to treat people appallingly, but she is not concerned about that. Her main concern is that her past actions might have rendered her unattractive. She seeks confirmation of her attractiveness from Garcin, which she almost achieves in return for reassuring him about his masculinity. But he then resists her advances, precisely because they are transparently motivated by her own need for affirmation and are therefore not genuine. Inès, the third central character, expresses her attraction to Estelle, but it is not attractiveness in general that Estelle wants affirmed. Indeed, being attractive to Inès positively challenges her self-image as fulfilling the traditional patriarchal role of being attractive solely to men.

Garcin and Estelle are a matching pair. Garcin identifies himself with his society's norms of masculinity and Estelle identifies herself with her society's norms of femininity. Both are concerned that they are failing to live up to those norms. In both cases this is an existential crisis: they each see those norms as essential to their identities. We can read these characters as instantiating two varieties of pride, which Sartre takes to be an attitude towards the characteristics one considers to

² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Huis clos*, in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Théâtre*, 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), pp. 111–68 (p. 167).

be one's essential nature.³ Garcin is vainglorious, proud of his personality. Estelle is vain, proud of her appearance. Sartre has personified these varieties of pride as characters whose sexes align with the grammatical genders of the terms for these forms of pride — *l'orgueil* and *la vanité* — and whose pride consists in wanting to demonstrate their instantiation of the gender norms that align with their sex.

Given this, what are we to make of Inès? She is very confident in her intelligence, perhaps seeing herself as intellectually superior to the other two. We could read her as instantiating a third form of pride — *l'arrogance*. But this would overlook an important aspect of the play. Garcin and Estelle are examples of Sartrean bad faith: their forms of pride consist in identifying some aspects of themselves as their defining natures, ignoring or denying other aspects.⁴ Inès, by contrast, does not seem to be in bad faith. Her self-descriptions seem entirely correct. She challenges the bad faith of Garcin and Estelle not only by reminding them of things that do not fit their respective self-images, but also more deeply by making the Sartrean declaration that they do not have inner defining natures and are each the sum of their own actions.⁵

It is through these lines that Sartre critiques the patriarchal norms of masculinity and femininity. The play sets out Sartre's idea that people like to see themselves as defined by an innate nature rather than by their choices and presents this as an explanation of why people try to exemplify those norms, why they fail to do so, and why this failure is distressing. This is the play's central feminist theme. This struggle to identify with patriarchal norms provides the play's narrative structure. The hero of the play, the character who presents Sartre's views, is a woman who does not even try to conform to her society's norms of femininity.

The reception of 'Huis clos'

This narrative structure has gone largely unnoticed in writing about the play. Introductions to it and deeper scholarly analyses of it generally agree that there are three characters all facing the same predicament: they are in Hell, torturing one another by refusing to confirm one another's views of themselves. The narrative is generally understood as a morality tale about the importance of focusing on our own aims in life without too much regard for how other people see us.⁶

³ Sartre, *L'Être et le néant: essai d'ontologie phénoménologique*, ed. by Arlette Elkäim-Sartre (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), pp. 302, 329–30. Subsequent citations are marked EN. Original version first published in 1943.

⁴ For a detailed explanation of Sartre's conception of pride as a form of bad faith, see Jonathan Webber, *The Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 121–26.

⁵ 'On meurt toujours trop tôt — ou trop tard. Et cependant la vie est là, terminée; le trait est tiré, il faut faire la somme. Tu n'es rien d'autre que ta vie': Inès in *Huis clos*, p. 165. For her accurate and uncompromising self-description, see p. 144.

⁶ William Barrett's *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1961), which was widely read for decades, contains this interpretation and describes the play as 'illustrating the three evils of cowardice, Lesbianism, and infanticide' (p. 226). For more sophisticated versions of the standard reading, see: Robert C. Solomon, *Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts: Experience and Reflection in Camus and Sartre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 177–79, 187–90; Gary Cox, *Sartre and Fiction* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 132–39; and David Detmer, *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity* (La Salle, IL: Open Court Press, 2009), pp. 149–56.

Proponents of this reading do not seem to notice that one of the three central characters does not fit this description at all: Inès behaves in ways that confirm her self-image for the other two characters, and neither of them ever denies her self-image.⁷ So why has her distinct role in torturing the other two, through which she presents a feminist critique of the social norms of masculinity and femininity, not generally been noticed?

Standard readings of the play tend to focus on Garcin as the character of most interest.⁸ This is not because he dominates the dialogue. As is often noted, each of the three central characters has the same number of lines. Do readers and viewers tend to focus on him because he is the only man? This might be part of the explanation. However, we must not overlook the ways in which Sartre encourages this focus: Garcin is the first main character to arrive on the stage and it is through him that we first explore the room that the whole play remains within; Garcin also delivers the play's closing lines. Sartre's sensitivity to the workings of his audience's attention enables him to nudge us towards focusing on Garcin. This technique sets up a second feminist point.

In focusing on Garcin, the audience tends to read his claim at the end of the play, 'l'enfer, c'est les Autres', as the central discovery that the characters make, so that the drama ends with them facing an eternity in that situation. Garcin presents this as his own insight: 'Je vous dis que tout était prévu', he announces, then compares the traditional images of torture chambers and furnaces with the presence of other people.⁹ Yet it is not really his own insight. Inès already said it around one-third of the way into the play: 'Je vous dis qu'ils ont tout réglé', she says; 'Le bourreau, c'est chacun de nous pour les deux autres', she adds a little later, 'comme dans les restaurants coopératifs'.¹⁰

This is an instance of the now well-known phenomenon where a woman says something, perhaps in a meeting or a seminar, which is dismissed or ignored until later a man makes the same point and it is taken seriously.¹¹ This kind of epistemic

⁷ My claims about *Huis clos* in this article are consistent with, but do not require, my view that the characters are not in Hell at all, but are at the Last Judgement, and that Inès is a demon whose role is to bring the two humans to confess their existential sin of bad faith: see Jonathan Webber, *Rethinking Existentialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 96–110.

⁸ This emphasis on the one male character at the expense of two female characters is nicely crystallized by one scholar's brief description: 'three characters in an imaginary hell where each becomes the torturer of the others by virtue of his (and her) ability to pass judgment'; B. P. O'Donohoe, 'Introduction and Notes to the Text', in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Les Jeux sont faits*, ed. by B. P. O'Donohoe (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. vii–lviii, 144–61 (p. xi).

⁹ Sartre, *Huis clos*, p. 167.

¹⁰ Sartre, *Huis clos*, pp. 130, 134.

¹¹ I am not aware of any systematic academic study of this phenomenon, though Alessandra Tanesini has analysed the first part of it as the hearer violating the norms of assertion ("Calm Down, Dear": Intellectual Arrogance, Silencing and Ignorance', *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, 90 (2016), 71–92). The earliest scholarly description of it that I know of occurs in Mary Rowe's account of some of the thousands of 'micro-inequities' that had been described to her over four years in her role as organizational ombuds at MIT: 'The Saturn's Rings Phenomenon: Micro-inequities and Unequal Opportunity in the American Economy', in *Proceedings of the NSF Conference on Women's Leadership and Authority*, ed. by Patricia Bourne and Velma Parness (Santa Cruz: University of California, 1977), pp. 55–71 (p. 61). Rowe regularly cites the English translation of Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive* (1946) as an important influence in this article.

injustice is a close cousin of 'mansplaining', where a man assumes that a woman needs something explained to her. However, it is a different phenomenon, for which the terms 'bropropriating' and 'hepeating' have been suggested.¹²

There are two responses involved in any occurrence of this phenomenon: the response to the woman initially making the point; and the response to the man subsequently making the same point. Only the first of these occurs within the play itself. Garcin does not simply ignore Inès's claim that they will torture one another, but actively dismisses the idea: 'Je ne serai pas votre bourreau'.¹³ He sets out a plan for silently reaching salvation, and attempts to enact it. Estelle agrees with the plan, but soon returns to worrying about her appearance, though she is now concerned that Inès might torture her. Eventually the conversation between Inès and Estelle draws Garcin back in and the three of them move on to confessing the reasons for their damnation. The idea that they are torturing one another only resurfaces much later, when Garcin announces it as his own. The play ends almost immediately, leaving no time for the other characters to respond to the idea or to his presentation of it as his own discovery.

The second response occurs in the play's reception. The usual understanding of the play as building up to Garcin's eureka moment attributes to a man something that a woman had already said.¹⁴ Sartre has cued his audience to focus on Garcin, as we have seen, and has further facilitated this reception by ending the play just after Garcin announces his revelation. Sartre seems to have deployed his technical expertise as a playwright to include audience members themselves in an enactment of this form of epistemic injustice. Doing so has allowed him to demonstrate, rather than merely to illustrate, the phenomenon, though with the risk that this demonstration might pass unnoticed.

¹² The term 'epistemic injustice' was coined by Miranda Fricker in *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). This form of epistemic injustice is an example of what Fricker calls 'testimonial injustice', where the speaker's word is taken less seriously because she is a woman. Jessica Bennett suggested the label 'bropropriating' for this form of epistemic injustice: 'How Not to Be "Maninterrupted" in Meetings', *Time*, 14 January 2015, <<http://www.time.com>>. Nicole Gugliucci suggested 'hepeating' in a tweet that went viral (see Zameena Mejia, 'How to Combat "Hepeating" at Work, according to a Harvard Professor', *CNBC Make It*, 11 October 2017, <<http://www.cnbc.com>>). It is unclear who coined 'mansplaining', but it gained currency in response to Rebecca Solnit's essay 'Men Explain Things to Me', *Tom Dispatch*, 13 April 2008, <<https://tomdispatch.com/rebecca-solnit-the-archipelago-of-arrogance>>. Solnit has since argued that the emergence of this and related terms is useful, but the phenomena they name should be understood as aspects of a single pervasive inequality of voice rather than merely a set of similar occurrences: 'The Serious Side of "Mansplaining" Has Been Lost. That's Where the Harm Begins', *The Guardian*, 9 February 2023, <<http://www.theguardian.com>>.

¹³ Sartre, *Huis clos*, p. 134.

¹⁴ Returning to the recent descriptions of the play mentioned above: Detmer focuses almost exclusively on Garcin and does not mention that Inès has already made the point that Garcin makes at the end of the play (*Sartre Explained*, pp. 147–57); Solomon comes close to noticing that Inès is not in the same predicament as the other two main characters (*Dark Feelings, Grim Thoughts*, pp. 171–72), but his overall prioritization of Garcin prevents him from developing this thought; Cox does say that Inès makes the point earlier that Garcin makes at the end of the play, but still describes the play as building towards Garcin's realization (*Sartre and Fiction*, pp. 134, 138).

'Les Jeux sont faits'

A similar phenomenon occurs in the reception of Sartre's film *Les Jeux sont faits*, written shortly after *Huis clos* and premiered at the 1947 Cannes Film Festival. In this romantic comedy, which presents a particularly haunting image of life after death, the two central characters, Ève and Pierre, die at the same time, meet in the realm of the dead, and fall in love. They are informed that there must have been a clerical error, since they should have met while still alive. They are allowed to return to life for twenty-four hours and if by the end of that time they are genuinely committed to one another, they can remain alive, but otherwise they will die again at that point.

The film does not have a happy ending. Ève and Pierre attend first to unfinished business. Ève tells her husband she is leaving him, but does not succeed in persuading her sister to stay away from him. Pierre almost succeeds in persuading his comrades to postpone the insurrection they had planned for that day, since he has discovered that the dictator is aware of their plans and intends to ambush them, but the first phase of the plan goes ahead before he has been able to prevent it. By the end of the film, Ève has given up on her sister and is looking forward to her new life. Pierre, however, decides to remain with the insurrection, perhaps thinking that his commitment to Ève has already been demonstrated. The dictator's spy shoots Pierre for a second time. Ève dies at the same moment.

Despite this clear difference between them, the two characters are routinely described as both failing to let go of their past and thereby failing to demonstrate their love for one another.¹⁵ Why does this happen? Why do audiences miss the female character's success in demonstrating her love for the male character and instead see her simply as echoing his failure? In this case, Sartre has not cued his audience to focus on the male character. Ève is the first character we meet. She delivers the final line. In the penultimate scene, when Pierre tells Ève that he will be part of the insurrection, she pleads with him not to do this, because risking his life demonstrates that he is not committed to her. In the final scene, she says that he didn't really love her. Why are these statements, which are clearly in line with her own behaviour towards her husband and sister, overlooked in the film's reception?

It has always been normal in movies for lead characters to be male. It may also be that audiences saw Pierre's project of political insurrection as more significant than Ève's project of love, especially so soon after the Second World War ended.

¹⁵ This reading occurs, for example, in a newspaper review of the film upon its opening in the USA with English subtitles: 'Existentialism Expounded in Movie', *The New York Times*, 2 February 1949, <<https://www.nytimes.com>>. For more recent examples, see Linda A. Bell, *Rethinking Ethics in the Midst of Violence: A Feminist Approach to Freedom* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993), pp. 181, 216; Colin Davis, 'Sartre and the Return of the Living Dead', *Sartre Studies International*, 11 (2005), 222–33 (pp. 224, 227, 230–31); Sam Coombes, *The Early Sartre and Marxism* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 35–36; and Jeremy Ekberg, 'Invisible Ghosts: *Les Jeux sont faits* and Disembodied Consciousness', in *Pre-reflective Consciousness: Sartre and Contemporary Philosophy of Mind*, ed. by Sofia Miguens, Gerhard Preyer, and Clara Bravo Mirando (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 495–506 (pp. 498, 504). A variant on this reading has the protagonists as Sartrean heroes retaining their past commitments to collective freedom even at the cost of their own individual freedom: O'Donohoe, 'Introduction and Notes', pp. lii–lviii.

These influences on the film's reception would both reflect the patriarchal assumption that typically masculine projects are more important than typically feminine ones, the first via that assumption's influence on cinema generally and the second directly.

This bias leads scholars to interpret the film's title in one of the two senses that Sartre gives to that phrase in *L'Être et le néant*, published in 1943 shortly before Sartre started work on this film. The phrase 'les jeux sont faits' occurs four times in that book. The first and fourth occurrences refer to the fact that the meaning of your life depends on how other people view your actions, so you can shape that meaning while you are alive but it will continue to change after you have died.¹⁶ If this is the meaning of the film's title, then because the characters have already died they can do nothing more to change their lives, so they fail to abandon their old commitments.¹⁷ This interpretation, however, seems incompatible with the characters' return to life for the crucial twenty-four hours.

The second and third occurrences refer to Sartre's claim that deliberation can only reach a conclusion determined by the importance the deliberator attaches to each of the considerations in question, which in turn reflects the deliberator's deeper commitments or values.¹⁸ This is part of Sartre's overall theory of freedom: the reasons we encounter in the world and respond to, whether immediately or deliberatively, are reflections of our own 'projects', and we are free to alter those projects.¹⁹ Pierre deliberates over whether to remain with the insurrection, concluding that he cannot leave his comrades. Were he genuinely committed to Ève, the situation would seem different to him. The outcome of his deliberation would be that he should not risk his own life, so that she might live happily ever after with him. Ève is right that his decision to remain with the insurrection shows that he does not really love her.

In defending his decision in the penultimate scene, Pierre evinces two aspects of Sartrean bad faith. In saying that he cannot ('je ne peux pas') leave his comrades, he treats his own commitment as though it is a fixed feature of himself rather than something he can change. And in saying that he has no right ('j'ai pas le droit')

¹⁶ These two occurrences are: 'au moment de la mort, les jeux sont faits, il ne reste plus une carte à jouer'; 'La vie morte ne cesse pas pour cela de changer et, pourtant, elle est faite. Cela signifie que, pour elle, les jeux sont faits' (*EN*, pp. 150, 588). Sarah Richmond translates the first of these as 'the bets are placed' but translates the second as 'the die is cast'; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. by Sarah Richmond (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 174, 705. Hazel Barnes translates them both as 'the chips are down', which is also how the film's title was translated for its subtitled release and for the translation of the film script; *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. by Hazel E. Barnes, ed. by Arlette Elkaim-Sartre (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 115, 543.

¹⁷ One scholarly analysis of the film refers explicitly to this use of the phrase in *L'Être et le néant*, paying careful attention to Pierre and making only passing reference to Ève (Davis, 'Sartre and the Return of the Living Dead', pp. 229–32; compare O'Donohoe, 'Introduction and Notes', pp. lvii, 161).

¹⁸ These two are: 'Quand je délibère, les jeux sont faits'; 'Si donc la volonté est par essence réflexive, son but n'est pas tant de décoder quelle fin est à atteindre puisque, de toute façon, les jeux sont faits' (*EN*, pp. 495, 496). Richmond translates these as 'the die is already cast' and 'it has in any case placed its bets' (*Being and Nothingness*, pp. 591, 592). Barnes translates them both as 'the chips are down' (*Being and Nothingness*, both on p. 451).

¹⁹ 'Freedom and the Origins of Reasons' in my *Rethinking Existentialism* (pp. 39–56) elucidates and critiques this aspect of Sartre's theory of freedom.

to leave them, he treats his own commitment as an external moral rule. He never considers whether the situation seems this way to him only because he is deeply committed to overthrowing the dictator.²⁰ Ève, by contrast, is a hero of Sartrean authenticity. She understands that she can abandon her previous commitments in favour of being with Pierre; that any apparent reasons against doing so are just manifestations of those prior commitments. She leaves her husband, relinquishing her material wealth in the process, she gives up trying to persuade her sister not to marry the man she is leaving, and she explicitly defies social disapproval of her relationship with Pierre.

The general critique of patriarchy that structures *Huis clos* is present in the narrative of *Les Jeux sont faits*, though less prominently. Ève defies the social expectations of femininity in leaving her husband and in threatening him at gunpoint. In doing so, she is rebelling against the same patriarchal structures that have put her in this position in the first place, since her husband only married her for her dowry and now wants to marry her sister for a second dowry. Pierre's bad faith includes seeing himself as a macho hero, just as Garcin's does. In the final scene, Ève tries to console Pierre by saying that someone will eventually lead his revolution to success, which does not help because fundamentally his project was to be the person who overthrows the dictator. Ève's success and Pierre's failure are both rooted in their responses to patriarchal norms.

The film closes with a young couple who have just met in the afterlife asking Ève and Pierre if it is true that they can return to life for twenty-four hours to try to demonstrate their love for one another. Ève explains how to go about it, but the couple are unsure whether to believe her. 'C'est vrai, au moins? Il ne va rien nous arriver de mal?', asks the young woman. 'On peut essayer recommencer sa vie?', asks the young man. 'Essayez', replies Pierre. 'Essayez tout de même', adds Ève, the final words of the film. Ève thinks they will fail but should try anyway. This often interpreted as indicating that Ève and Pierre have learned that they could not have changed their commitments.²¹ But if that is right, then it is not clear why the young couple should try. Ève's closing words are better understood as indicating her suspicion that the young man's question indicates his real motivation as something other than love for the young woman. Ève suspects he will fail for the same reason that Pierre failed.

'Typhus'

A more complex feminist narrative drives the other screenplay Sartre wrote around the same time. *Typhus* is a tale of gradually dawning love between a destitute

²⁰ Treating one's own commitments as external moral rules is one form of what Sartre calls 'l'esprit de sérieux', usually translated as 'the spirit of seriousness'. I argue that we should read this attitude as a strategy of bad faith, in *The Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre*, pp. 98–99, and in 'Sociality, Seriousness, and Cynicism: A Response to Ronald Santoni on Bad Faith', *Sartre Studies International*, 26 (2020), 61–76 (pp. 70–72).

²¹ Bell, *Rethinking Ethics in the Midst of Violence*, p. 216; Davis, 'Sartre and the Return of the Living Dead', pp. 231–32; O'Donohoe, 'Introduction and Notes', pp. lvii–lviii, 161.

nightclub singer and an alcoholic former doctor under colonialism during an epidemic. The central character, Nellie, has been made destitute by the financial rules of her society. Her partner, Tom, has died of typhus. He was in possession of all their money. Because they were not married, the money does not pass automatically to her. Since he blamed her for his contracting typhus, he refused to bequeath it to her while he was dying. Nellie's destitution puts her immediately in danger. She finds work singing in a nightclub, where it turns out that she is expected to engage in prostitution. When she refuses and stands her ground, she loses her job. She cannot pay her rent, so loses her accommodation.

The screenplay's other main character, Georges, by contrast, is destitute because he abandoned his role as a doctor and has no other means of employment, is regularly humiliated because he is an alcoholic, and is assaulted by criminals because he is a police informer. Nellie is made destitute by patriarchal rules of finance, then humiliated and assaulted because she does not meet the expectations of the men around her. What happens to Georges because of his choices happens to Nellie because she is a woman.

As with *Les Jeux sont faits*, the contrast between the two central characters of *Typhus* embodies Sartre's ethic of authenticity. Georges first became a doctor ultimately because he wanted the social recognition that comes with the qualification. This embodies two aspects of bad faith. He had treated the external indications of being a doctor as themselves objectively valuable, rather than seeing their value as derived from the project of being a doctor. And he had persuaded himself that he was pursuing the project of being a doctor, when actually his project was to have the social position of a doctor. The difference between these two projects became apparent when he was faced with an epidemic of a highly contagious disease. He fled.

His response to this weakness was to slip into a different form of bad faith. His recognition that he had never really had the project of being a doctor was not accompanied by the recognition that our projects are maintained by our own free commitment. Instead, he saw himself as by nature not having that project. This is the position of despair or hopelessness (*désespoir*) that Sartre describes towards the end of *L'Être et le néant*. It shares with other forms of bad faith the beliefs that people have fixed natures. The person in this form of bad faith draws the conclusion that '[il revient] au même de s'enivrer solitairement ou de conduire les peuples' (*EN*, p. 675).

Nellie, by contrast, has a clear understanding of her projects and situation. She recognizes that her difficulty in navigating her misogynistic environment is partly due to her fidelity to her values. At one point, she considers abandoning those values, commenting that it would then not really be her who survives.²² She recognizes that she can abandon everything that is important to her but that doing so would be abandoning herself, her character and perspective on life, her own

²² Sartre, *Typhus: scénario* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), pp. 129–32.

agency. This is what she means when she tells Georges that ‘on ne peut rien *vouloir*, quand on crève de faim’.²³ When your situation is that bad, you no longer have the luxury of acting in line with your goals and values.²⁴

This screenplay has something like a happy ending. Through his recognition that another doctor is behaving just as he had in response to an earlier epidemic, and inspired by Nellie’s attitude of authenticity, Georges emerges from his despair into a new project of actually being a doctor. This is an example of a Sartrean conversion, where the remnants of an old project are repurposed to a new end; ‘où le projet antérieur s’effondre dans le passé à la lumière d’un projet nouveau qui surgit sur ses ruines et qui ne fait encore que s’esquisser’ (*EN*, p. 521). Meanwhile, Nellie has taken on gainful employment as a nurse. They start working together to treat typhus patients in full knowledge of the risk this poses to them both. We are left wondering how this works out.

‘*Les Orgueilleux*’

Sartre wrote *Typhus* and *Les Jeux sont faits* under commission from Pathé during 1943 and 1944. They had invited him to pitch stories that would help to unify the French people once the war was over. Of the ideas that Sartre sent, they selected only these two to be worked up into full screenplays. However, on reading the completed works they decided against making either film. It is not entirely clear why. The director Jean Delannoy managed to persuade another film company, Les Films Gibé, to make *Les Jeux sont faits*. Pathé retained the rights to *Typhus*, which remained on the proverbial shelf for a few years until the director Yves Allégret took its two central characters and one pivotal scene as the basis of a new story.

Allégret’s film, *Les Orgueilleux*, is a tale of love dawning between a wealthy woman named Nellie and an alcoholic former doctor named Georges during a meningitis outbreak. The two lead characters are French, but the story takes place in Mexico and the dialogue switches between French and Spanish. It was released in 1953 and credited Sartre as the author of its story. After a version with English subtitles came out, Sartre was shortlisted for the 1957 Academy Award for Best Writing, Motion Picture Story.²⁵ He refused this nomination on the grounds that the film did not tell the tale he had written. But the extent of the difference between his unpublished screenplay and Allégret’s film was not clear to anyone

²³ Sartre, *Typhus*, pp. 148–49; original emphasis.

²⁴ Sartre soon developed this point into the idea that desperate hunger is experienced as a need for freedom in his short polemical article ‘Avoir faim, c’est déjà vouloir être libre’, *Caliban*, 20 (October 1948), pp. 11–14.

²⁵ George Bernard Shaw and Bob Dylan are the only people to have been awarded both a Nobel Prize and an Oscar to date. Given that he turned down the Nobel Prize for Literature and disowned this film, Sartre came very close to being the only person to *refuse* both a Nobel Prize and an Oscar to date. However, in a fittingly Sartrean twist, the winner of the Oscar for which Sartre was nominated did not even exist. It was won for a film whose credited author was a pseudonym used by Dalton Trumbo because he was on the Hollywood blacklist for refusing to co-operate with the House Un-American Activities Committee. There was never again an Oscar in that category. Trumbo was eventually acknowledged as the real winner of that Oscar eighteen years later in 1975. A further seventeen years after that, he was also acknowledged as the true author of *Roman Holiday*, which had won the same Oscar in 1953. Trumbo is best known as the author of *Spartacus*.

else. Sartre had not retained a copy of his screenplay and it was considered lost for half a century. A copy surfaced more than twenty years after Sartre's death and was published to critical acclaim in 2007. It is now clear that Sartre was right to deny authorship of Allégret's film's story, which is politically diametrically opposed to the one he wrote.

Sartre's screenplay is set in the British colony of Malaya, which is now part of Malaysia. Allégret's film is set in Mexico long after the end of colonialism. Sartre's story explores the racialized contours of an epidemic by contrasting its differential effects on the colonizer and colonized populations. For example, one scene cuts back and forth between singing in a segregated whites-only bar and singing at a Malay funeral. In removing the colonial contrast between two distinct communities, Allégret has entirely excised this dimension of the story.

Moreover, within this colonial context, Sartre's story has Nellie made destitute by the patriarchal structures of her own European society and the caprice of her European partner. She is then humiliated, coerced, and assaulted by men in her own European community. Noticeably, she is never under any threat from the Malay population. But in Allégret's film, Nellie is made destitute by being robbed by a Mexican and is then under threat of coercion and assault by only one man, the Mexican owner of the hotel she is staying in. Allégret has replaced Sartre's focus on the structural and individual misogyny of Nellie's own European society with crude stereotypes of Mexican men.

In some respects, Allégret's film even positively indulges the sexist attitudes that Sartre's screenplay was designed to expose. Sartre had presented Nellie as a resourceful woman who earned her own living, first by singing in nightclubs and then as a nurse. Allégret has removed this counter-patriarchal dimension of her character by making her independently wealthy. And in two lengthy scenes of his film, Nellie is in her hotel room wearing only her underwear.

The feminist themes of *Typhus*, themes that also structure *Huis clos* and *Les Jeux sont faits*, are not merely missing from Allégret's film, but are roundly opposed by its indulgence of sexist and racist attitudes. Sartre had very good reason to disown the film. Even so, his name was not removed from the film's official information or the list of Oscar nominees. It remains in both those places today.²⁶ Given that Allégret's film was commercially as well as critically successful, this can only have encouraged a misperception of Sartre's interests and work among its audiences. Indeed, the association between Sartre and the film persists: the cover art for the English translation of the screenplay, first published in 2010, incorporates an image used in the film's publicity, a shot of Nellie undressed and lying on her bed. The misattribution of this film to Sartre may well have helped to obscure the feminism in his dramatic fiction.

²⁶ See *The Proud Ones*, IMDB, <<https://www.imdb.com>>, and Oscars, 29th Academy Awards, 1957 <<https://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1957>>.

'La Putain respectueuse'

Sartre's themes of the epistemic injustice, economic oppression, and outright violence faced by women, which he developed across *Huis clos*, *Les Jeux sont faits*, and *Typhus*, neatly coalesce in his shortest play, *La Putain respectueuse*, first staged in 1946.²⁷ Lizzie has just arrived in a southern city in the USA, intending to earn her living through prostitution. While she was on the train from New York, four drunk white men sexually assaulted her and then attacked two black men. One of the white men, Thomas, shot one of the black men dead. The other black man escaped. Thomas has been arrested. He claims that he entered the carriage after Lizzie called for help and found two black men attempting to rape her, one of whom then attacked him. The play begins with the man who had escaped, who is not named in the play, arriving at Lizzie's apartment and asking her to tell the judge the truth.²⁸

Thomas's cousin and uncle have also found Lizzie, intent on getting her to corroborate Thomas's story. They try bribery, blackmail, and emotional coercion. In the final phase, Thomas's uncle, who is a senator, explains that although Lizzie is telling the truth, what matters is whose life will be ruined — Thomas, a Harvard graduate and captain of industry, or the nameless black man, whom the senator describes as making no real contribution to society — 'il traîne, il chaparde, il chante'.²⁹ He puts a pen in Lizzie's hand, physically moves her hand to sign a witness statement, and leaves. Lizzie runs after him demanding that he 'Déchirez le papier!'³⁰

This first scene continues the exploration of economic structures of misogynistic violence that Sartre had begun in *Les Jeux sont faits* and *Typhus*. The class of railway carriage Lizzie was travelling in would have indicated that she was not

²⁷ Sartre, *La Putain respectueuse*, in *Théâtre*, 1, 253–98.

²⁸ Mabogo Percy More suggests that this character has no name in order to dramatize his lack of individual identity in the eyes of the white characters in the play; *Sartre on Contingency: Antiracist Racism and Embodiment* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), pp. 114–15, 148–49. In the 1952 film version, Sartre has named this character Sidney, but this change is consistent with More's interpretation of the play: the film is significantly longer and includes many more black characters in scenes that provide depth to Sidney's individual character ahead of the scenes that are also in the play. This character is no longer the 'invisible man' for the film's audience that he was perhaps intended to be for the play's audience.

²⁹ Sartre, *La Putain respectueuse*, p. 282.

³⁰ Sartre, *La Putain respectueuse*, p. 284.

a wealthy woman.³¹ Thomas assaulted her on the assumption, which turns out to have been well founded, that his own wealth would protect him from prosecution. His cousin Fred does the same when he squeezes Lizzie's throat and suggests he might murder her. The scene integrates this with racist violence. Thomas has murdered a black man. His family wants Lizzie to frame another black man for this crime. A crowd wants to lynch the man Thomas's family is trying to frame, and eventually do lynch another black man. At one point, Fred tells Lizzie she is 'le Diable', adding that any black man 'aussi est le Diable'.³²

The same scene deepens Sartre's presentation of epistemic injustice. In this case, it is the coercive suppression of a woman's testimony to protect the career and reputation of a man. Sartre even has the senator explicitly say this is what he is doing. This instance of epistemic injustice contributes to making everyone except wealthy white men vulnerable to their violence.³³ In the play's second and final scene, Sartre presents this social structure as dependent on the bad faith of those men. Fred sees himself as having inherited a macho nature from his ancestors and thereby having an objective right to behave however he pleases in the land they settled and governed: 'Nous avons fait ce pays et son histoire est la nôtre'.³⁴ He even tells Lizzie that he has run all the way to her apartment not knowing 'si c'était pour te tuer ou pour te prendre de force'.³⁵

The original version of the play has an unhappy ending that ironically resembles the supposedly happy endings of Hollywood movies of the time. Fred promises Lizzie a big house, a beautiful garden, as much money as she wants, and black

³¹ Richard Wright pointed out to Sartre a number of factual infelicities in the original script, not least that in a segregated state a white woman would not be travelling in the same train carriage as black men, and that a black man would not seek refuge at a white woman's apartment: see Paige Arthur, *Unfinished Projects: Decolonization and the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (London: Verso, 2010), p. 24; and Kathryn T. Gines, 'Sartre, Beauvoir, and the Race/Gender Analogy: A Case for Black Feminist Philosophy', in *Convergences: Black Feminism and Continental Philosophy*, ed. by Maria del Guadalupe Davidson, Kathryn T. Gines, and Donna-Dale L. Marcano (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010), pp. 35–51 (p. 40). Sartre did not change the play in response. The content of his article 'Retour des États-Unis: ce qui j'ai appris du problème noir', *Le Figaro*, 16 June 1945, p. 2, indicates that he already knew this information. The improbable juxtapositions therefore seem intended as part of the play's style, which Sartre described it as 'comédie bouffée': see B. P. O'Donohoe, *Sartre's Theatre: Acts for Life* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 106; and Adrian van den Hoven, 'The Reception of Sartre's Plays: *The Respectful Prostitute* and *Dirty Hands* during the Cold War Period', in *Sartre and the International Impact of Existentialism*, ed. by Alfred Betschart and Juliane Werner (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 93–108 (pp. 95–96). The play is an acerbic blend of farce, satire, and parody.

³² Sartre, *La Putain respectueuse*, p. 270; compare pp. 272–73.

³³ Recent philosophical analyses of epistemic injustice recognize that it can prevent victims from challenging other injustices: see Miranda Fricker, 'Epistemic Justice as a Condition of Political Freedom?', *Synthese*, 190 (2013), 1317–32 (pp. 1320–27); and Gaile Pohlhaus Jr, 'Discerning the Primary Epistemic Harm in Cases of Testimonial Injustice', *Social Epistemology*, 28 (2014), 99–114 (pp. 107–10). However, this literature does not yet consider what Sartre's play suggests: that the *purpose* of epistemic injustice is to uphold systematic racialized patriarchy. Charles Mills does portray what he calls 'epistemology of ignorance' as having the purpose of upholding dominance, but this is the dominance of white people generally rather than wealthy white men in particular; Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 17–19, 60–61.

³⁴ Sartre, *La Putain respectueuse*, p. 297.

³⁵ Sartre, *La Putain respectueuse*, p. 296.

servants of her own. She agrees to be his mistress in return.³⁶ She gains the white elite lifestyle but remains dependent and subservient. This is a betrayal of her principles: she has been assaulted by Fred and his cousin, has tried to resist Fred's and his father's attempts to frame a black man for Thomas's crime, has been physically coerced by Fred's father, and has tried to persuade the black man to shoot Fred in order to escape.

However, she is not simply selling out. She clearly retains an affection for Fred despite everything. She confesses to feeling guilty about opposing him and his family, though she does not know why. Similarly, the unnamed black man says that he cannot shoot Fred. In both cases, he says, it is because Fred and his family are white. Fred later echoes this point: 'Une fille comme toi *ne peut pas* tirer sur un homme comme moi'.³⁷ Lizzie and the black man have internalized the claimed superiority of white men. They continue to have a deeply engrained respect for Fred and his family, which makes it difficult to act on their own judgements. In this respect, they contrast sharply with Inès, Ève, and Nellie, who all act on their rejection of social expectations without any internal struggle.

Economic oppression, epistemic injustice, misogynistic violence, and racist violence are thus presented as an integrated and mutually supporting system. Yet the play is routinely described simply as concerned with racism in the USA.³⁸ Even though Lizzie is the titular character and the only character on stage throughout the play, audiences have seen her as merely caught up in interactions between white and black men. The early Cold War context of its first performances certainly facilitated seeing it as a critique of American racism: Sartre was accused, on both sides of the Atlantic, of anti-Americanism.³⁹ But this does not explain why the play's presentation of this racism as deeply integrated with misogyny has been overlooked. As with *Les Jeux sont faits*, the reception of *La Putain respectueuse* seems to have been influenced by the tendencies to see female characters as merely supporting male leads and to see typically masculine projects as more significant than typically feminine ones.

³⁶ Sartre changed the ending for the film version so that Lizzie and Sidney escape together with the help of the police. He changed it again for the 1954 Moscow production of the play so that the nameless black man escapes and Lizzie phones the police to confess having made a false statement. Sartre later said these new endings were intended to be more hopeful. See van den Hoven, 'The Reception of Sartre's Plays', pp. 99–101.

³⁷ Sartre, *La Putain respectueuse*, p. 298; original emphasis.

³⁸ For descriptions of the play that make no reference to patriarchy, see Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life* (London: Heinemann, 1987), p. 242, and Cox, *Sartre and Fiction*, pp. 144–49. For descriptions that briefly mention patriarchy as part of the background of the play's focus on racism, see O'Donohoe, *Sartre's Theatre*, pp. 106–17; Gines, 'Sartre, Beauvoir, and the Race/Gender Analogy', pp. 38–40; and van den Hoven, 'The Reception of Sartre's Plays', pp. 94–101.

³⁹ O'Donohoe, *Sartre's Theatre*, p. 107. Arthur argues that the tendency to see Sartre's works of the 1940s and 1950s entirely in Cold War terms has occluded his general anti-racism and anti-colonialism (*Unfinished Projects*, pp. 30, 44). *La Putain respectueuse* is a case where this tendency frames his anti-racism as a critique specifically of American racism, rather than racism generally, and occludes his presentation of the integration of racism with misogyny.

Operations of patriarchy

Sartre has developed an intricate analysis of the economic, epistemic, and violent dimensions of patriarchy across these four works. *Huis clos* and *Les Jeux sont faits* present violence as an effect of patriarchal norms, but this is strengthened in *Typhus* and especially in *La Putain respectueuse* to the suggestion that one purpose of those norms is to facilitate violence. *Huis clos* presents epistemic injustice without any particular relation to other dimensions of patriarchy, but *La Putain respectueuse* presents it as crucial to upholding the whole system. In these works, Sartre presents economic class as merely shaping the way patriarchy operates. Nellie is working class and Ève is upper class, but both suffer misogynistic violence due to the financial structures of patriarchy. When she becomes an upper-class mistress, Lizzie loses the degree of financial independence she had when she was working class and (illegally) self-employed.

The evolution of this analysis of patriarchy introduces two forms of oppression through the inclusion of a racial dimension. *Huis clos* and *Les Jeux sont faits* have no racial aspect and present patriarchy only as functioning through bad faith. *Typhus* adds oppression as a coercive force external to the individual, especially in Nellie's comment that 'on ne peut rien *vouloir*, quand on crève de faim'. *La Putain respectueuse* adds an internalized form of oppression: Fred and his family explicitly identify with the norms of white masculine entitlement, seeing themselves as having fixed natures and corresponding objective rights; Lizzie and the nameless black man explicitly reject those norms, yet their own desires and outlooks still embody them. Oppressive attitudes originating in the bad faith of the oppressors have here become socialized deep into the minds of people who do not explicitly accept those attitudes, indeed in people oppressed by them.⁴⁰

Why are these themes of economic dependency, epistemic injustice, and misogynist violence not noted in the reception of Sartre's drama? We have seen a number of reasons: Sartre seems to have designed *Huis clos* not only to illustrate one form of epistemic injustice but also to facilitate an audience response that demonstrates it; the screenplay for *Typhus* was lost and Sartre's name was attached to a commercially and critically successful film derived from it that indulges the attitudes he intended it to challenge; *Huis clos*, *Les Jeux sont faits*, and *La Putain respectueuse* were initially received in the context of the Second World War and the nascent Cold War. All of these reasons are underpinned by the expectation that lead characters are male and by the attitude that typically masculine projects are inherently more interesting, both of which reflect the same patriarchal norms that these works critique.

⁴⁰ This account of the development of Sartre's conception of oppression between 1944 and 1946 is consistent with, but does not require, my view that Sartre replaces his initial theory of 'radical freedom' with Beauvoir's theory of project sedimentation between 1943 and 1948; see Webber, 'Sedimentation and the Grounds of Cultural Values', in *Rethinking Existentialism*, pp. 113–30, and Jonathan Webber, 'Rethinking Existentialism: From Radical Freedom to Project Sedimentation', in *Freedom After Kant: From German Idealism to Ethics and the Self*, ed. by Joe Saunders (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), pp. 191–204.

We can see the same biases influencing the reception of his later attempts to continue developing his critique of patriarchy for a popular audience. His most successful film project, *Les Sorcières de Salem* (dir. by Raymond Rouleau, 1957), is an adaptation of Arthur Miller's famous play *The Crucible*, which is a historical tale of systematic violence against women operating through institutionalized epistemic injustice and partly motivated by a racist fear of the African heritage of enslaved people.⁴¹ Despite this clear portrayal of racialized patriarchy masquerading as moral purity, Miller's play is routinely described simply as allegorizing the US government's persecution of communists and their sympathizers.⁴² Sartre's screenplay is seldom mentioned at all, even in biographies of Sartre, perhaps because this work is seen purely in this same Cold War context.⁴³ The reception of this film seems to have been distorted in just the same way as that of *La Putain respectueuse*, though in this case the distortion will have been facilitated by the narrative's focus on John Proctor, one of the few male victims of the witch hunt.

Sartre's final screenplay, *Le Scénario Freud*, is a fictional portrayal of a pivotal moment in Sigmund Freud's career — his formulation of the famous theory of Oedipus and Electra complexes. Sartre's story has Freud uncovering fourteen women's memories of being sexually assaulted in childhood and first postulating this early sexual trauma as the cause of their neuroses, but then reclassifying their testimonies as repressed fantasies to help him understand his own relationship with his father. Freud is thus portrayed as covering up cases of early sexual abuse and creating a theory that silences women's testimony of such abuse.⁴⁴ The producer who commissioned it, John Huston, estimated Sartre's original version as amounting to five hours of film, so asked him to shorten it. Sartre's second attempt

⁴¹ *Les Sorcières de Salem* was released in French, with English and German subtitled versions. This was the only big-screen adaptation of *The Crucible* for almost forty years, until the 20th Century Fox film starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Winona Ryder, and Paul Scofield, with a screenplay written by Miller himself, and produced by the playwright's son Robert A. Miller, was released in 1996.

⁴² Miller did write *The Crucible* in response to the activities of the House Un-American Activities Committee, but later insisted that this was not the play's major theme; see Susan C. W. Abbotson, 'Commentary' to Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*, ed. by Susan C. W. Abbotson (London: Methuen Drama, 2010), pp. xxiii–li (pp. xxvii–xxix). Miller was himself called before the Committee a few years after writing *The Crucible*. He refused to testify and was convicted of contempt, but his conviction was overturned the following year on grounds that the Committee had no right to the information it was demanding (see Abbotson, 'Commentary', p. xxix). For a detailed description of the play's central themes, which includes gender and race but does not see the witch hunt as driven by racialized patriarchy, see Abbotson, 'Commentary', pp. xxxi–xxxix.

⁴³ For rare mentions of Sartre's screenplay, entirely in relation to the Cold War, see Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, p. 354, and Abbotson, 'Commentary', pp. lviii–lix.

⁴⁴ There are essentially three analyses of silencing in recent philosophical literature. The first holds that social factors can render a speaker unable to make a particular kind of speech act (Rae Langton, 'Speech Acts and Unspeakable Acts', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 22 (1993), 293–330; Tanesini, 'Calm Down, Dear', pp. 88–89). The second holds that social factors can at most prevent hearers recognizing particular kinds of speech act from some speakers (Alexander Bird, 'Illocutionary Silencing', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 83 (2002), 1–15). The third holds that social factors can cause a speaker to perform a speech act other than the one they intend to perform (Rebecca Kukla, 'Performative Force, Convention, and Discursive Injustice', *Hypatia*, 29 (2014), 440–57). Sartre presents Freud as accepting that women are reporting sexual abuse, then later theorizing those speech acts as expressions of fantasy. Freud's theory could not retroactively prevent those women from having performed the speech act of reporting. Thus, the example seems to require a fourth analysis: social factors cause hearers to misidentify particular kinds of speech act from some speakers.

was even longer. The two men then spent an absurd week in a manor house in Ireland failing to write an agreed version. Huston went on to make a film from a severely edited version of Sartre's work, in which the only mention of possible childhood sexual abuse is immediately classified as fantasy. Sartre's exploration of the roles of epistemic injustice in facilitating sexual assault was thereby excised completely.⁴⁵

Perhaps aided by Huston's exasperation at the experience of working with him, Sartre succeeded in ensuring his name was not on this film, though it is based far more substantially on his work than Allégret's *Les Orgueilleux*, which was attributed to him. These two films have in common that they began life as screenplays analysing structures of patriarchy and ended up with that analysis entirely removed. Film producers effectively prevented these ideas from reaching their intended audiences. This is specifically a problem with writing for the cinema rather than the theatre. Every production of a play is an interpretation of the script, but there will be many such interpretations in different times and places. Any proposed production might be refused a performance licence in jurisdictions where one is needed, but future productions might be allowed even in those same places.⁴⁶

Ultimately, however, the same norms of masculinity and femininity that Sartre designed these plays and screenplays to critique helped to prevent that critique from reaching or being recognized by his audiences. These norms seem to have influenced the audience reception of *Huis clos*, *Les Jeux sont faits*, *La Putain respectueuse*, and *Les Sorcières de Salem* in such a way as to obscure their feminist themes. The same norms seem to have led film producers to excise those themes from *Typhus* and *Le Scénario Freud* altogether, either because they did not understand or did not approve of them, or because they thought their audiences would not understand or approve. The same attitudes, therefore, may well have influenced the reception of Sartre's other works of fiction. If we are not to inherit such distortions, we need to read and watch Sartre's fictional works with fresh eyes.

⁴⁵ Sartre's screenplay was posthumously published as *Le Scénario Freud* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984). Huston's film *Freud* was released in 1962, with screenplay credited to Charles Kaufman and Wolfgang Reinhardt and story credited to Charles Kaufman: see *Freud*, IMDB, <<https://www.imdb.com>>. For the story of how the script was commissioned and then cannibalized, see Cohen-Solal, *Sartre*, pp. 384–87.

⁴⁶ *Huis clos* was banned from public performance in the UK from the first application for a licence in 1946 up until 1959, on the basis of a report stating: 'I don't suppose anyone would bat an eyelid over in Paris, but here we bar Lesbians on the stage'; cited in Jamie Andrews, "'Existentialist Hu-ha'?: Censoring the Existentialists in the British Theater', in *Sartre and the International Impact of Existentialism*, ed. by Betschart and Werner, pp. 129–49 (p. 140). Productions of *La Putain respectueuse* were allowed in the UK during this time, though with some edits to the script and some policing to ensure there were no departures from the approved version (Andrews, 'Existentialist Hu-ha?', pp. 142–46). Over in Chicago, by contrast, productions of *La Putain respectueuse* had been prohibited by order of the police (van den Hoven, 'The Reception of Sartre's Plays', p. 47).

Abstract

Jean-Paul Sartre developed a sophisticated and insightful feminist critique of western society through two plays and two screenplays written between 1944 and 1946 — *Huis clos*, *Les Jeux sont faits*, *Typhus*, and *La Putain respectueuse*. In these works, Sartre explores the relations between economic oppression, epistemic injustice, and misogynistic violence, diagnoses their root cause as the patriarchal norms of femininity and masculinity, and ascribes the power of those norms to bad faith and internalized oppression. This social critique, which includes a racial dimension, informs some of his subsequent fictional and philosophical writings. Sartre's analysis of patriarchy has not been noted in writings about these famous dramatic works, a distortion which seems partly due to those same patriarchal norms.

Résumé

Jean-Paul Sartre développe une critique féministe sophistiquée et perspicace de la société occidentale à travers deux pièces et deux scénarios écrits entre 1944 et 1946 — *Huis clos*, *Les Jeux sont faits*, *Typhus* et *La Putain respectueuse*. Dans ces drames, Sartre analyse les relations entre l'oppression économique, l'injustice épistémique et la violence misogyne; postule comme cause profonde de ces phénomènes les normes patriarcales de la féminité et de la masculinité; et attribue le pouvoir de ces normes à la mauvaise foi et à l'oppression intériorisée. Cette critique sociale, qui inclut une dimension raciale, informe quelques unes de ses œuvres de fiction et de philosophie ultérieures. Cette analyse du patriarcat n'est pas relevée dans les écrits sur ces œuvres dramatiques célèbres, omission qui semble attribuable en partie à ces mêmes normes patriarcales.