

In Longwood University's rendition of *No Exit*, written by Jean-Paul Sartre, the main question being asked throughout the production is, what does a person's actions in life say about their character? Cradeau, Estelle, and Inez all come in with some sort facade, but they are all trapped in Hell together due to their actions on Earth, and it is not long before their true colors are revealed. No matter how much they may try to deny it, their behavior while living is what brought them so low, and what defines who they are deep inside.

One of the many well defined aspects of the show that greatly impacted the productions main question was the lighting. Walking in to the show you are greeted with a minimalistic set, shadowed with geometric shapes. These shapes cover everything in sight: the floor, the furniture, the walls, the door, etc. The shapes are rigid and sharp, very much like the horrible people meant to spend eternity in this room. These shadows are also hidden when the other stage lights shine bright. This is similar to how Cradeau, Estelle, and Inez all hide their true character which is revealed as the play continues. As the three spend more and more time together, they let things slip until, finally, they share with their companions what it is that brought them to their eternal suffering. I believe that the lighting designers came up with this idea of geometric shadows as a way to imitate the hidden, harsh, and insensitive characteristics of Cradeau, Estelle, and Inez which were formed by their conduct when living. A person's actions in life are what define who they are inside. After what these three have done, it is clear that their character's are rotten to the core.

The lights in this production set the mood for many an important moment. One example is that throughout the duration of the play, each guest has visions of what is happening on Earth in their absence and, with each vision comes a lighting change. A different color was assigned to each of the three characters: Cradeau's is green, Estelle's is gold, and Inez's is red. This is evident both in the lighting that surrounds them at certain moments throughout the play and in the fabrics used on each of their chairs. Whenever one of the three is to have a vision, the normal lights fade and a light of their specific color shines down upon them, making it apparent that the vision is solely about them and what they left back on Earth. With each vision, the characters learn something new about the life they left behind and their true character becomes clearer. When the lights change, the characters are immediately entranced in the vision; becoming more and more unhinged as the visions continue. These lighting changes, along with the visions, help the audience to see that each character has their own individual flaws that are a result of how they spent their time when they were alive.

Another significant moment within the play where the lights influenced the main question being asked was when Cradeau was going mad and needed to escape his prison. He banged and pounded on the door with all his strength; yelled to be let out and begged for the more traditional forms of torture when, suddenly, the door slowly opened and an eerie green light covered the stage and its three occupants. They finally had a chance to escape each other, but none would dare leave. That light was a reminder that no matter what they told themselves, the things that they did on Earth would remain an unremovable stain on them for eternity. They will never escape what they have done because it is a part of them now, forever defining their character.

While the show contained many other interesting aspects that pushed forth the question of what does a person's actions in life say about their character, the lighting is what stood out the most to me. Assigning different colors of light to each of the characters was helpful when focussing on one character in particular. In addition, the lights constantly highlighted the important moments involving the true nature of each individual character which helped the audience to see who these people were, behind the facade.