

# Tartuffe: truth and religious teachings

Life



Dana Epstein Professor Morris ENG 2850 TR54C October 13, 2009 The Illusions That Define Us: Appearance versus Reality “ Men in general judge more from appearances than from reality. All men have eyes, but few have the gift of penetration. ” That quote by Nicollo Machiavelli is simply defined as, what you see is not always what you get and few men have the gift of being able to see through an appearance. In Tartuffe and Monkey, appearances are far from reality in many instances. Even though both texts were written in different milieus both societies focus strongly on religion and material value.

Both characters are deceived by power, desires and the need to prove themselves. Spiritually is used to enlighten and religious teachings help Monkey to see the truth. However, Orgon needs to trust his senses because spirituality is used to deceive. The realization that is difficult for the audience to distinguish the difference between appearance and reality in both stories is very evident. In Tartuffe, Orgon is deceived by the holy zealous Tartuffe solely based on his false piety of religion. His need for power and prestige blinds his ability to see the truth about Tartuffe. He is so enthralled by Tartuffe because he enriches Orgon with power by appealing to his desires.

Tartuffe is claiming to be a traditional figure of authority by presenting himself as a holy man and Orgon foolishly goes against everyone's feeling towards Tartuffe and falls for his act. The audience is not told that Tartuffe is a liar or hypocrite but, through his words and the actions that follow, it allows the audience to differentiate between the lying Tartuffe and the honest family. In the first scene, Dorine states her feelings toward Tartuffe. You see him as a saint. I'm far less awed; In fact, I see right through him.

He's a fraud. " Tartuffe, the hypocritical fraud, does not appear until act three, allowing the audience to see the other characters as honest witnesses to Tartuffe lies.

As soon as he arrives, he over zealously informs Dorine that she is showing too much cleavage. His actions are seen as forced rather than genuine. Orgon is so blinded by Tartuffe that he does not even believe his own son when he tells him that Tartuffe is trying to seduce his wife Elmire. Orgon responds with " Ah, you deceitful boy, how dare you try to stain his purity with so foul a lie? " Orgon finally needs to perform a scientific experiment by hiding under the table to actually hear Tartuffe try and seduce his wife. Orgon's mistake is that he needed to trust his senses rather than his spirituality and need to prove himself. His desire to be all powerful Orgon and control his children's lives ended him in a bind where all his belongings were in the hands of Tartuffe. Orgon was deceived by religion and his desires to be all knowing and all powerful.

The appearance of a " holy man" that Tartuffe presented completely blinded the reality that he was a con artist. Orgon chose to go against the intuitions of those he loves and trusts and is left struggling to define his own reality and truth in what spirituality means to him. The religious teachings and spirituality in Tartuffe leave Orgon to pick up the pieces of his fallen life and proves that trusting his senses was the key to defining reality. On the contrary, the religious teachings in Monkey help him to see the truth and define reality. Monkey's journey consisted of many encounters where appearance is deceiving. The evil wizard is one of the most deceiving characters throughout the story. Through changing his appearance, he is <https://assignbuster.com/tartuffe-truth-and-religious-teachings/>

able to disguise his true self as a lion of the gods to complete his task in teaching the king a lesson for being unkind to a beggar who was asking for help.

The evil wizard pretended to help the king of the Crow-Cock Kingdom but instead shifts his form into the king and steals his throne. When Monkey confronts the evil wizard about this change he then again shifts his form into Tripitaka so that Monkey cannot attack him. Through these appearances, the evil wizard was able to hide the reality that he was truly a lion on a mission. Though the evil wizard was one of the most manipulative characters, Pigsy and the Dragon both deceived reality with their appearances. Pigsy fooled those of the woman he married into believing he was a hard working young man, but once his true identity of a pig was known they soon became fearful of him. Another instance was when the white dragon was punished for eating the white horse so he was then transformed into Tripitaka's white horse for the journey. The appearances that deceived were all to complete their own missions and ultimately teach a lesson.

Throughout the stories *Monkey* by Wu Ch`eng-en and *Tartuffe* by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Moliere, appearance versus reality is a key theme. The audience can see the demise that Tartuffe had in store for Orgon all along. As for *Monkey*, the reality throughout the story is layered between illusions and the supernatural, reality and truth. Both characters were deceived by opposite forces in which the quest for power and to meet their desires blinded their inability to decipher truth from false.