

# Tartuffe by moliere analysis essay



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The play Tartuffe written by Moliere depicts two fundamental themes, Hypocrisy and Deception. Tartuffe is a satire of the religious fanaticism and hypocrisy and deception were the major ideas that Moliere was trying to point out. Hypocrisy is one claiming to have moral or religious beliefs, but doesn't really possess it. It's the act of not practicing what one preaches. Moliere was trying to get across this point to the people through the play "Tartuffe". Throughout the play Moliere has run into difficulties with religion. He uses Tartuffe as a character that represents the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church, where they used religion for their own desires. In this play, Tartuffe tries to mask himself with his pious theories of God and heaven. Most of the characters in the play are able to see through his mask, however Orgon and his mom have fallen for Tartuffe's illusion. This is what Damis says about Tartuffe, " Good God! Do you expect me to submit to the tyranny of that carping hypocrite?

Must we forgo all joys and satisfactions because that bigot censures all our actions? " (Moliere, 21). From what Damis said, it is clear that he was able to see through Tartuffe's mask and understand who he truly is. Although most of Orgon's family was able to see through Tartuffe and know who he truly is, Orgon was completely devoted to him, he was blinded and brainwashed by Tartuffe and his acts. Orgon's family really wanted to open his eyes and be able to see who Tartuffe really is, so Elmire, Orgon's wife, came up with a plan.

Tartuffe loved Elmire and wanted to have a sexual relationship with her, these were his words about her, " A love of heavenly beauty does not

preclude a proper love for earthly pulchritude; our senses are quite rightly captivated by perfect works our Maker has created. Some glory clings to all that Heaven has made; In you, all Heaven's marvels are displayed. On that fair face, such beauties have been lavished, the eyes are dazzled and the heart is ravished; how could I look on you, O flawless creature, and not adore the author of all nature, feeling a love so passionate and pure for you, his triumph of self-portraiture?

At first, I trembled lest that love should be a subtle snare that hell had laid for me; I vowed to flee the sight of you, eschewing a rapture that might prove my soul's undoing; but soon, fair being, I became aware that my deep passion could be made to square with rectitude, and with my bounden duty, I thereupon surrender to your beauty. It is, I know, presumptuous on my part to bring you this poor offering of my heart, and it is not my merit, Heaven knows, but your compassion on which my hopes repose.

You are are my peace, my solace, my salvation; on you depends my bliss- or desolation; I bide your judgment and, as you may think best, I shall either be miserable or blest. " (Moliere, 45). This quote provides the readers evidence of his character and his love for Elmire. Claiming to be a pious man and talking such insolent remarks is definitely hypocrisy. So Elmire decided to lead him into her own trap by making Orgon hide underneath a table while she asked Tartuffe to come in.

Elmire and Tartuffe locked themselves in the room as Elmire started to flirt with him. Tartuffe not knowing what was really happening believed Elmire's words. Orgon who was watching all this said, " That man's a perfect monster,

I must admit! I'm simply stunned. I can't get over it" (Moliere, 58). From what he said it is understood that he finally came to the light and saw the monster in Tartuffe. Orgon becomes nervous now because he had given Tartuffe his will in the past and now he had all the rights to Orgon's house.

Tartuffe becomes mad and goes to the prince with this matter. The prince sends an officer along with Tartuffe to meet with Orgon and his family to tell them to get out of the house and legally hand everything over to Tartuffe, if not it would be taken by force. It is in this very scene that the biggest twist happens. This is what the officer says to Orgon, " We serve a Prince to whom all sham is hateful, a Prince who sees into our inmost hearts, and can't be fooled by any trickster's arts.

His royal soul, though generous and human, views all things with discernment and acumen; his sovereign reason is not lightly swayed, and all his judgments are discreetly weighed He honors righteous men of every kind, and yet his zeal for virtue is not blind, nor does his love of piety numb his wits and make him tolerant of hypocrites. " (Moliere, 67). The wise prince saw the hypocrisy in Tartuffe and came to realize that he was the one doing wrong. Eventually Tartuffe is caught and Orgon and his family are happy again. In this play, Tartuffe's hypocrisy brought him his own doom.

Moliere wants to point out the Church's fault through this play. He feels that Church itself doesn't practice what they preach. An important theme that can be inferred from this play is that, one must always try to live out what he or she preaches and not just do lip service by saying certain things, that he or she must show it in their own actions first before telling the world what to

do. If you live a hypocritical life, you would eventually be found out and later bring down your doom like Tartuffe. This play was only attacking hypocrisy though not religion.

Tartuffe by Moliere also depicts the theme deception. Moliere also wanted to show the people how easily they were fooled by the Catholic Church and their hypocrisy. He used Orgon as a classical character to get his point through. Before the action of the play, Orgon saved Tartuffe from dying from hunger. Thereafter Tartuffe has brainwashed Orgon in his theories and his hypocrisy. Orgon considered Tartuffe as a very holy and religious man and considered him almost next to God. He cared for Tartuffe more than he did for his entire family.

He was blinded by Tartuffe's fake mask and couldn't see who Tartuffe really was. In scene 4 in the play, Orgon asks Dorine how Tartuffe was doing and regardless of how much ever Dorine tried to explain what was wrong with Elmire, he wouldn't listen, all he cared about was Tartuffe. This is what he thinks about Tartuffe, " Ah, when you meet him, you two will be like brothers! There's no loftier soul since time began. He is a man... a man who... an excellent man. To keep his precepts is to be reborn, and view this dunghill of a world with scorn. Yes, thanks to him I'm a changed man indeed.

Under his tutelage my soul's been freed from earthly loves, and every human tie: my mother, children, brother, and wife could die, and I'd not feel a single moment's pain. "(Moliere, 27). This one quote by Orgon shows how much devoted he is to Tartuffe. Later on in the play, Orgon wishes to give Mariane's hand in marriage to Tartuffe. Like that wasn't enough he also goes

on to give Tartuffe the papers to property and everything he owns. He also loved Taruffe so much that he drove Damis, his own son, out of the house. Orgon only later in the play become enlightened and begins to see who Tartuffe really is thanks to Elmires clever plan.

Now Orgon realized he was in grave danger as Tartuffe held all the papers to his property and everything he owned and was also heartbroken to know that somebody he loved so much would cheat him this way. Moliere wants to get across the readers how easily one can get tricked into believing something. People can be easily deceived based on looks, false character, etc. Moliere wishes that the readers will understand that there are many hypocrites like Tartuffe out there and wants us to be wise and insightful. Fortunately for Orgon, Tartuffe was caught and later sent to prison, but that doesn't have to happen always.