

# Tartuffe analysis essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

This is a well-known comedy. Jean Baptiste Poquelin, popularly known as Moliere, authors it. Tartuffe is first presented as a pious man and of great religious fervor. His zeal has a great convincing power and can make someone believe in his teachings. On the contrary, Tartuffe is a great schemer. His schemes are not the schemes to benefit any one, so in that case a big hypocrite.

Orgon lives in his house with his wife Elmire, his son Damis, his daughter Mariane, Cleante his brother in law, Valere who is in love with Mariane, Dorine Mariane's maid. Other characters were M. Loyal who is a bailiff a police officer and Flipotte madam Pernelles's daughter.

The focus of the play is how Tartuffe the hypocrite makes his way to control Orgon a well-off man and the master of a big household. Tartuffe does not lie to Orgon but through his fake devoutness, he makes Orgon let all his powers rest in Tartuffe. Tartuffe is in Orgon's household as a teacher of morality and a guide to religious issues. In that case, Orgon reveres Tartuffe, honors him and loves him more than anyone in his household. He trusts him in all matters even more than he trusts his wife. Orgon worships Tartuffe as if he is a saint.

#### Plot summary

Madame Pernelle announces to rest of the household that she is parting with them. She says she will find another place to live. She says that the way the entire household (except Orgon) is criticizing Tartuffe abhors her. The rest rejects his advice to accept Tartuffe's teaching because they see nothing wrong with them. In this act, Orgon has just returned from a two days outing.

He went out to the countryside. In his bid to know how everyone was, he gets full information about his wife's sickness. For this, he does not take much interest. However, he turns his concern to Tartuffe; he explains to Cleante that he found Tartuffe in church, and was impressed by his devoutness, so he brought him into his household. Cleante tells him that it is not so, for Tartuffe is a big pretender. He explains that Tartuffe only wants to gain from him.

In the second act, Orgon trusts Tartuffe more. He is now giving his daughter in marriage to Tartuffe. This act was not so appealing to the rest that is the Dorine, Mariane and Valere (Cummings, par 9).. Mariane confesses that if her father forces her to marry Tartuffe she would kill herself. Dorine however assures Mariane and Valarie that they devise a plan to convince the father to accept the fast engagement.

In the next act Tartuffe makes a sexual advance towards Elmire Orgon's wife. Unfortunately Damis her son overheard their conversation. Elmire declines to accept his advances. She however tells Tartuffe to accept Valere to marry Mariane, so as not to report his advances. Damis however insists on reporting the whole matter. He did it but the father did not trust him. In that case, he chases Damis away completely and turns his inheritance to Tartuffe. Tartuffe accepts that Mariane and Valere continue with their marriage plans.

In this act Elmire plots away to expose Tartuffe, so she advises Orgon to hide under the table to see the reality about what his son was telling him. Tartuffe follows her advice. Elmire stages a conversation with Tartuffe, which leads to

his exposure. Orgon therefore chases him out of his household but it was too late. He had made him the heir of his house.

In the last act, Tartuffe betrays Orgon, and claims his house. The betrayal is the fact that Orgon was keeping documents that concealed the crimes of a man who fled the country long time ago. Orgon had trusted Tartuffe as one who would keep it safely. When he was just about to be arrested and his house turned over to Tartuffe, his rescue came from the king who arrested Tartuffe instead of Orgon.

### Themes

Hypocrisy is the first explicit theme in the story of Tartuffe. He passes as a great pious man who has religious zeal and passion (Cummings, par 17). The truth is that he was a terrible schemer who was out to gain from his sheep's skin. We can say that he is a scoundrel. Absurdity is the other theme that shows itself subtly in the play. This is seen by the fact that the church embraced extreme piety that on the other hand could fool other people. This absurdity is common with the zealotry. The third theme is Gullibility. This is common with people who go to church and accept all things that zealots tell them. They do this without finding out the reality behind the scenes. Orgon portrays this part clearly. We also get to know that underdogs can bite. This is the fourth theme. Dorine is a humble maid but from the advice she gives Mariane to protest against her father's plan that she marries Tartuffe, we see that she can stir the fire.

### Styles

The setting of the play is in a wealthy household in France in the 17th century. This was in the time of King Louis XIV. The play takes place in the home of Orgon, hence showing the effect of such a person as Tartuffe on the family unit. The setting of the play in that time in history was to focus people's attention to certain societal issues (Tartuffe (style), par 1). The one clearly addressed in the play is the controversy seen in the church. This leads us to the style we may term as dramatic irony. The author of the play uses this style effectively. He uses this style to show Orgon's unintelligent appreciation of Tartuffe. He was the only one who was supporting Tartuffe. All the rest of the household was against Tartuffe. Finally, the play is very comic. This is a style used to keep the audience interested through the play.

### Critical review

In his days Moliere the author, enjoyed popularity in his country and both abroad. He got favors from the king those days. On the other hand, he was highly censured by the clergy. His play was staged in England, Holland, and Germany (Tartuffe, par 47). This was despite the fact that he had suffered the banning of some of his great works.