

"tartuffe, or the
deceiver" – a comedy
play by moliere



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The principles of the Enlightenment can be found in several of the writings from this time period. There are a small amount of characteristics that are usually associated with the Enlightenment. People at this time started to apply realistic thoughts to make out and recognize nature and to direct their human existence. In Moliere's *Tartuffe*, this is articulated all the way through the character of the king. Eventually, Tartuffe has brought an officer of the king back to take Orgon away. Though, in Tartuffe's endeavour to get Orgon arrested, the king saw through him and explained that Tartuffe was the one to be charged and put to trial.

One more important characteristic in the play is the desire for equality and dignity for all, the notion that all have a set of fundamental human rights. The Enlightenment also confronted several of the former ideologies, and one of such ideologies was unawareness. *Tartuffe* demonstrates these characteristics through the character Dorine, who is Mariane's lady-maid; in other words, she is someone with a low social standing because she is a member of the working class. She is probably ignorant, as most are who have a low social status.

Though, in the story, she is much smarter than Orgon and as well a lot more sensible. This illustrates that it does not matter what social class one comes from to find out their level of intelligence. Her proximity and acceptance by the family, with the exception of Orgon, illustrates that people can be looked at for their own worth and value. Dorine is an important person from a lower social standing than the family, however, she is capable of socializing and making friends with the family she works for.

One more challenge is to false notion, dishonesty, as well as tyrannical traditions. Tartuffe is a character that is associated with the church and so far is a very misleading, deceitful character. He is capable of conning Orgon into letting him into his home. In addition, Orgon is misled into disinheriting his own son and leaving all the heritages to Tartuffe.

Orgon is an example of the repressive person who makes an effort to maintain complete control. His control conventionally extends over his family, particularly his daughter. In the story, she is supposed to get married to the man she loves, however when Tartuffe enters the picture, Orgon withdraws his promise to her fiancé, also tells her she is to marry Tartuffe instead. Despite the fact that, Orgon is challenged by his family, who work to show Tartuffe is a con-artist. This is in straight opposition to the conventional power structure of society and brings into question the right of this structure.

These are just a few instances of how the Enlightenment ideals are depicted in the works of the time, particularly in Tartuffe. Tartuffe as a result enthused up the clergy, with its clever lampoon of religious extremists and hypocrites, that it was banned for 5 years. That was a mild punishment: a number of clerics wanted the playwright burned as a heretic. In its place, he was excommunicated. Regardless of this, the Catholic Encyclopedia asserts Molière as one of the faithful.

What is little known at present is that Molière was a student of science, a devotee of the skeptical Lucretius; he quotes the Roman poet in *The Misanthrope* as well as an individualist in religion. The final scene in Molière's *Don Juan* was illustrated by a contemporary as a school of

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skepticism where, after making a clever Atheist say the most awful immoralities, he commended the cause of God to a valet who says ludicrous things. Don Juan was banned. (Michael Rothberg, 1993)

Talking about of Molière's probity, the Catholic writer said religion has no value near the author of Tartuffe. Molière's Christianity was not as deep as that of Corneille, Racine, Boileau, and almost all the famous writers of his time. Moreover so far, when there was query of his being given Christian interment, and the cure fluctuated, on the ground that the priest had arrived too late to give absolution to the comedian, who, it might almost be said, passed from the stage to the court of God, his widow provided evidence that he had received the sacraments in the last preceding paschal season.

The description in the Catholic Encyclopedia confuses the facts. Molière was performing the leading role in *The Imaginary Invalid* when he collapsed onstage. He died that night, at his Paris home, on February 17, 1673. His wife called the priest, who rejected to come, he was an excommunicate, in any case, whom the learned Catholic work fails to mention, and merely under duress from the king was Molière buried with a priest in attendance. He was buried at night, in grounds held in reserve for suicides. He is at present considered the best comic playwright France has produced. It was Molière who said, " We die only once, and for such a long time". (Mccarthy, 2002).

Work Cited

Gerry Mccarthy, 2002. *The Theatres of Moliere*; Routledge.

Michael Rothberg, 1993. Marketing Power: The Seduction of Rhetoric in 'Dom Juan.' Journal article; The Romanic Review, Vol. 84

Research Paper Outline

I. Thesis: The principles of the Enlightenment can be found in several of the writings from this time period.

II. Topic Sentence: This was the age of motive.

III. Supporting Details:

People at this time started to apply realistic thoughts to make out and recognize nature and to direct their human existence.

Ideology of the Enlightenment

Dishonesty and deceptions

d. Tartouffe

IV. Moliere: Life Productions Religion

V. Conclusion:

The description in the Catholic Encyclopedia confuses the facts. Molière was performing the leading role in The Imaginary Invalid when he collapsed onstage. He died that night, at his Paris home, on February 17, 1673. His wife called the priest, who rejected to come, he was an excommunicate, in any case, whom the learned Catholic work fails to mention, and merely under duress from the king was Molière buried with a priest in attendance. He was buried at night, in grounds held in reserve for suicides. He is at present considered the best comic playwright France has produced. It was

Molière who said, " We die only once, and for such a long time". (Gerry Mccarthy, 2002).

I reviewed your comments on my proposal and realized that my topic and research paper required a lot of revision. I decided that it would probably be best for me narrow my topic and start over. Here's my first proposal with the comments attached.

During the Enlightenment Period, religion greatly impacted the lives of most Europeans. The predominant religion was Christianity. Although most Europeans shared the same religion, there were still divisions among them. Everyone had their own viewpoints on what it meant to be a Christian or how a Christian should live his or her life. So was the case in France. Such diverse ways of practicing religion caused many conflicts here. Similarly, this play too, highlights such conflicts.

I chose to write about religion during the Enlightenment Period because it's exemplified in Moliere's Tartouffe. So far Tartouffe is my favorite reading assignment this semester. I think that I will be able to find a lot of information on religion during the Enlightenment Period. I also think there may be several available sources to find information about how Christianity impacted the lives of individuals who lived in that time period. I am also more familiar with this subject. I still can't grasp your exact topic here.

This sounds very general and broad. The reader needs a clear direction.

***Which aspects of Christianity during Moliere's time shed light on the actual text Tartuffe? What problems did these present? Which characters will you examine (select only one or two from the play to keep this focused and

clear). This is a question you might ask yourself before crafting a focused thesis statement.

In my research paper I will be highlighting the similarities of the "Devots" of the Enlightenment Period and characters in *Tartuffe*. I hope to show how certain ideas or perspectives have the ability to both dominate and blind individuals regarding religion.

I will be using *The American Century Dictionary*, *The American Journey* by Goldfield that discusses French culture and several internet articles to support my points in the research paper. During the Enlightenment Period, religion greatly impacted the lives of most Europeans. The predominant religion was Christianity. Although most Europeans shared the same religion, there were still divisions among them. Everyone had their own viewpoints on what it meant to be a Christian or how a Christian should live his or her life.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Moliere, a European writer, noted the behavior of his fellow countrymen and decided to write a comical play about it. The "Devots" made up a large portion of the Christian religion during the Enlightenment Period. The "Devots" were self-proclaimed righteous people. They were hypocrites who condemned anyone who didn't think like them.

Inspired by the "Devots", Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Moliere wrote a comical play making fun of their behavior. The name of Moliere's play is *Tartuffe*. Madame Pernelle, a character in *Tartuffe*, most identifies with the "Devots" from the Enlightenment. She sees herself as a devout Christian Women. However, every one in her family except her son Orgon sees her as she truly is; a hypocrite. She is one who is quick to judge and tries to justify her harsh words by insinuating that she only says what God tells her to say.

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When she was rude to her daughter-in-laws brother Cleante she tried to justify her behavior by saying " it behooves us not to mince words when righteous fervor moves us."

Like Madame Pernelle in Tartouffe, the " Devots" of the Enlightenment Period were self righteous hypocrites proclaiming to be ideal Christians. They had a negative impact on the lives of those who chose not to follow them.