

Study Guide
for Students
and
Educators

TARTUFFE

Molière

April 4—May 6, 2007

Directed by Joseph

Hanreddy

Quadracci Powerhouse Theater



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Researched and designed by the Education Department at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, this study guide is intended to prepare you for your visit to the theater. It contains biographical and production information that will aid your understanding and appreciation of the production. We've also included questions and activities for you to explore before and after our performance of

Tartuffe

If you would like to schedule a classroom workshop, or if we can help in some other way, please contact Jenny Kostreva at (414) 290-5370 or jkostreva@milwaukeerep.com

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Synopsis

Act I

The play begins with Madame Pernelle criticizing everyone in her son, Orgon's, house and praising Tartuffe, friend of Orgon, because he is very pious and holy. The others try to explain to her that Tartuffe is a hypocrite because he uses his own holiness to get what he wants, but Madame Pernelle refuses to believe them and tells them that they should follow his example.

Cléante, Orgon's brother-in-law, and Dorine, Mariane's maid, discuss how Tartuffe has fooled Orgon into believing he is a good person. Damis, Orgon's son, asks Cléante to find out if Orgon will let Mariane, Damis' sister, marry Valère because he wants to marry Valère's sister.

Orgon arrives and immediately begins questioning Dorine about how Tartuffe feeling rather than asking how his own wife, Elmire feels. Cléante tries to tell Orgon that he does not trust Tartuffe, but Orgon can only sing Tartuffe's praises. Orgon refuses to answer Cléante's question about Mariane and Valère's marriage.

Act II

When Mariane arrives, Orgon tells her that she must marry Tartuffe to join their houses. Mariane resentfully accepts her father's wishes. When Orgon leaves, Dorine yells at Mariane for agreeing to marry Tartuffe. Valère arrives and he and Mariane get in a fight for the same reason and call off their engagement. Dorine convinces them that they are being silly and vows to help them expose Tartuffe for being a hypocrite.

Act III

Damis, wishing to expose Tartuffe as well, hides in a closet when Tartuffe enters. Tartuffe tries to seduce Elmire, thinking that they are alone. Damis reveals himself and tells Tartuffe that he is going to expose this betrayal to Orgon. Orgon arrives and Damis tells him what he overheard, but Orgon refuses to believe that Tartuffe would do such a thing and disinherits his son for trying to ruin Tartuffe's good name. Orgon then tells Tartuffe that he is going to make him his heir and sign over everything he has to Tartuffe.

Act IV

Cléante confronts Tartuffe for letting Orgon disinherit and banish Damis but Tartuffe simply responds with religious clichés and leaves. Mariane tells Orgon that she would rather die than marry Tartuffe but Orgon will not listen to her. Elmire then offers to show Orgon Tartuffe's treachery by having him hide under a table when Tartuffe returns and to come out when he is convinced. Orgon agrees and Elmire sends for Tartuffe. When Tartuffe arrives, he does indeed try to seduce her and also says insulting remarks about Orgon.

Finally convinced, Orgon comes out from under the table, horrified at Tartuffe and orders him to leave the house. Tartuffe reminds Orgon that the house is legally his now since Orgon signed all of his property over to him. Tartuffe leaves and Orgon tells Elmire that he is nervous because he also trusted Tartuffe with a locked box full of secret documents that could incriminate Orgon's friend.

Act V

Orgon tells Cléante about the box of documents and Damis offers to kill Tartuffe. Madame Pernelle comes back and refuses to believe Tartuffe's betrayal, until Monsieur Loyal enters to evict the entire household. Tartuffe returns with officers to arrest Orgon but the officer arrests Tartuffe instead because the king has seen through Tartuffe's hypocrisy. The king then restores all of Orgon's property.

Molière

Jean Baptiste Molière, actor and playwright, was born on January, 15 1622 in Paris as Jean Baptiste Poquelin. His father was a prosperous upholsterer and furniture maker and his mother was the daughter of an upholsterer. Molière studied classics, philosophy, and law at the Collège de Clémentine, one of the most prestigious schools in Paris.

After school, Molière helped start a theater troupe in 1643 with actress (and girlfriend) Madeline Béjart and eight other actors called Illustre Theatre. It was at this time that Molière changed his name from Poquelin to save his family from embarrassment because theater was not considered a noble profession as his father was a prominent member of the bourgeois class and held a court position.



Jean Baptiste Molière



Molière Reading to his Servant "La Foret," by Carl Schloesser

The Illustre Theatre did not succeed in Paris, so in 1646 the troupe traveled around France for the next twelve years and focused their work on mime and Commedia dell'Arte, a popular physical theater style from Italy. Molière became the head of the troupe in 1651 and began writing plays. In 1658, Molière and his troupe returned to Paris, where they were invited to perform the play *Le Docteur Amoureux* (The Doctor in Love) in King Louis XIV's court. The King became a great fan of Molière and allowed the troupe to settle in Paris and supported Molière's work for the rest of his career, even though his plays often caused controversy, commenting on religion and medical practices of the day. Molière directed his own plays and many times played the lead character himself. Molière died in 1673 of a pulmonary disease at the age of 51.

Molière's most famous plays include; *The Imaginary Cuckold* (1660), *The School for Wives* (1663), *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* (1666), *Tartuffe* (1669), *The Misanthrope* (1667), *The Miser* (1668), *The Tricks of Scapin* (1670), *The Learned Ladies* (1672), and *The Imaginary Invalid* (1673).

The verse of Molière and Richard Wilbur

Considering that *Tartuffe* was originally written in French, Milwaukee Repertory Theater chose to use the script that was translated into English by Richard Wilbur. Joe Hanreddy, the director of the production, chose this translation because he feels that this "cute and clever" translation "is a work of art in it's self." Wilbur translated the play staying true to Molière's rhyming verse. The play is written in **rhyming couplets**, which are pairs of lines where the final syllable of each line rhymes. Also, each line of the text is **decasyllabic**; meaning each line of verse has ten syllables.

Here are the first four lines of the Wilbur translation of *Tartuffe*. Notice the **rhyme scheme** and count each line's **syllables**.

Madame Pernelle— Come. Come, Flipote; it's time I left this place
 Elmire— I can't keep up, you walk at such a pace.
 Madame Pernelle— Don't trouble, child; no need to show me out.
 It's not your manners I'm concerned about.



Reading from Molière, by Jean-François de Troy (1728)



Louis XIV as
The Sun King



Louis XIV's House
of Versailles



Louis XIV (Louis the Fourteenth) The Sun King

Louis XIV was the king of France from 1643–1715 and is often considered one of France's greatest kings. During the long reign of Louis XIV, called the Golden Age of France, France became one of the strongest powers in Europe.

Louis XIV was born on September 5, 1638 and took the throne a few months before his fifth birthday. During his reign, Louis XIV put much effort in to the cultural state of France, shifting the country into a more refined way of living. He built the famous House of Versailles, known for its lavish beauty. Louis XIV was a ballet dancer and acquired the name "The Sun King" after he danced the role of The Sun King in a ballet called *La Nuit*, or Night. Louis XIV was also a great lover of art, music and theater, and helped many famous artists, such as Molière, flourish during his reign.

In 1648 there was a violent civil war in France called The Fronde. In *Tartuffe*, Orgon's friend was involved in The Fronde and he gave his papers, which proved he was a part of the war, to Orgon in a locked box to keep safe. Orgon, in turn, gave the box to Tartuffe to keep safe. At the end of the play, those incriminating papers almost caused the arrest of Orgon, when Tartuffe turns them over to Louis XIV.

Louis XIV loved Molière's satires (plays that are known to mock people or situations), as long as they didn't make fun of the King. Molière's choice to have the King "save the day" at the end of the play was due partly in fact that the King could decide which plays were allowed to be performed in public. Molière wanted to stay in King Louis XIV's good favor, so he chose to make him a hero at the end of *Tartuffe*.

Unscramble the tiles to spell out the style of theater that greatly influenced Molière's work

R T E M E D C O M D E L L ' A I A

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Terms

- Demure:** Modest or shy in a playful way. Madame Pernelle implies that Mariane acts *demure* but she is actually keeping secrets from her father.
- Fripperies:** Things that are showy and trivial. Madame Pernelle accuses Elmire of wasting money on *fripperies*.
- Pious:** Having or showing great respect or love for religion; can be genuine or fake. Wealthy French citizens were supposed to be *pious* during this time period and Orgon considers Tartuffe the model of *piousness*.
- Fervor:** Passion or intensity of emotion. Madame Pernelle says that she has criticized everyone in Orgon's house because of her righteous *fervor*.
- Usurp:** To seize and hold the power or rights of another illegally and by force. Dorine accuses Tartuffe of *usurping* Orgon's house.
- Besmirch:** To stain or tarnish. Dorine makes a comment that people who are guilty of wrongdoing are usually the first people to *besmirch* their neighbor's good name.
- Din:** A jumble of loud sounds. Cléante comments that Madame Pernelle created a scene and a *din* when she arrived in the first scene.
- Semblance:** The appearance of something, whether it is really present or not. In regards to Tartuffe, Cléante asks Orgon why he cannot tell reality and *semblance* apart.
- Charlatan:** A person who deceives others by falsely claiming to have expert knowledge or skill; a quack. Cléante implies that Tartuffe is a *charlatan* because of the way he pretends to be holy to get what he wants.
- Dissenting:** Disagreeable. Dorine asks Mariane why she does not "utter a *dissenting* word" when her father tells her she is to marry Tartuffe instead of Valère.
- Astutely:** Having or showing keen judgment. When Mariane tells Valère she is marrying Tartuffe, Valère gets angry and tells her she could not have chosen more *astutely*.

All of these vocabulary words are taken from the first half of the play. There are many other difficult words in *Tartuffe*. Look through the script and find vocabulary words that are unfamiliar to you. Try to use context clues to find each word's meaning then check your work with a dictionary.

Commedia dell'Arte

Molière was greatly influenced by the Italian theater style Commedia dell'Arte. Commedia dell'Arte, meaning comedy of players, is a style of improvised theater with an unwritten play. This style originated in Italy in the mid-sixteenth century and lasted across Europe until the end of the eighteenth century. The commedia plays were performed by troupes of ten to twelve actors; both men and women. The productions were supervised by the troupe leader (the most respected member of the troupe). The leader explained the scenario to the actors and acquired the props needed. The troupes traveled around and had to be granted permission to perform in each town. They performed in large rooms, outdoor stages, or indoor court stages.



Commedia Dell'Arte
by Andre Rouillard
(1991)

Here are the characteristics of a Commedia dell'Arte play:

Scenario: An outline of the plot points of the play was mapped out before the performance. The Scenario was broken into acts and scenes with a prologue and had the outcome of the play predetermined. It was then up to the actors to fill out the scenario and heighten or embellish the situations. Scenarios were passed down from troupe to troupe and over 1,000 are still in existence. Popular themes for scenarios were love, tricking someone out of money, and disguises.

Stock Characters: The characters and their relationships to each other were the same in most Commedia plays and performers played the same character throughout their career. There were two main types of characters: straight and exaggerated. The young lovers were usually the straight characters because their role in the play was to act out the love story. The exaggerated characters were either masters or servants (called *zanni*) and they were known to be funny and larger than life. Most commedia plays had at least two *zanni*, one smart and one stupid. The exaggerated characters wore masks that helped the audience decipher which character they were.

Improvisation: The actors created the dialogue and action based on the scenario. Since the actors played the same stock character in each play, they often reused dialogue, bits, or jokes that the audience liked. The comic bits or gags were called *lazzi*. The actors probably had preplanned *lazzi*, but since they didn't know what other actors were going to say, they were not guaranteed they could use them. This required the actors to concentrate on unfolding the action of the play as they were acting.

Commedia dell'Arte STOCK CHARACTERS

<p>YOUNG LOVERS - Innamorato (the young man) and Inamorata (the young woman)</p>	<p>Pretty and well-educated, yet naive. They dressed in fashionable contemporary costumes and did not wear masks. An older man usually tried to oppose the young man and court the young woman.</p>
<p>CAPITANO</p>	<p>A coward who bragged about his powers in love and battle. He wore a sword, a cape, and a feathered headdress. He was often an unwanted suitor of young women and was known to be awkward and embarrassing</p>
<p>PANTALONE</p>	<p>Middle-aged or older merchant from Venice. He was rich and retired, mean and miserly. He often pretended to be a young man and courted young women. He often wore a tight fitting red vest, pants, and stockings, soft slippers, a black, ankle-length coat, a soft brimless cap with trailing wisps of hair, a brown mask with a large hooked nose, and a straggling gray beard.</p>
<p>DOTTORE</p>	<p>Either Pantalone's friend or rival and was usually either a Lawyer or Doctor. He liked to show off how smart he was but was often tricked by others. He wore a graduation cap and gown.</p>
<p>ARLECCHINO (or HARLEQUIN)</p>	<p>The most popular character. He was both cunning and stupid and was an acrobat and a dancer. He wore a costume with red, blue and green diamond shaped patches, a big stylish hat, a black cat-like mask and carried a wooden sword called a slapstick.</p>
<p>BRIGHELLA (sometimes named SCAPINO, BUFFETTO, FLAUTINO, MEZZETINO)</p>	<p>Harlequin's companion or crony. He was cruel, driven by lust, cynically witty, and would do anything for money. His mask has a hooked nose and moustache.</p>
<p>PULCINELLO</p>	<p>Was either a servant, a merchant, or host of an inn, and his personality was a mixture of foolishness, shrewdness, villainy, love, wit, and dullness. He had an enormous hooked nose, a humpback, and wore a long pointed cap. He was the ancestor of the famous English puppet character, Punch</p>
<p>SCARRAMUCCIA</p>	<p>Was a Robin Hood type character who dressed in black and carried a pointed sword.</p>





Pre-Show Questions

1. Define the word hypocrite. Have you ever known anyone that was a hypocrite? What actions made that person hypocritical?
2. The title character, Tartuffe is known as a hypocrite. Tartuffe is a man who pretends to be a good person in order to get money and power.
 - ◆ Name a few people that you know from contemporary times that are similar to Tartuffe.
 - ◆ Name a few contemporary people who have received positive attention because of their genuine good deeds

Pre-Show Activities

Read the descriptions of the stock characters on page seven then create your own Commedia dell'Arte character.

- ◆ What is your character's name?
- ◆ What relation is it to the other stock characters you learned about?

Draw a picture of what your character looks like

- ◆ Does your character wear a mask?
- ◆ What are his/her facial features?
- ◆ What does his/her costume look like? (colors, shape, etc.)

What are your character's personality traits?

How does your character move around the stage?

What other characteristics belong to your stock character?



Read the quote and answer the questions that follow.

"And just as those whose courage shines the most
In battle, are the least inclined to boast
So those whose hearts are truly pure and lowly
Don't make a flashy show of being holy."



Cléante to Orgon in Act 1 scene 5

- ◆ Who do you think Cléante is referring to with this quote?
- ◆ What does this quote mean?
- ◆ Make up a few lines of your own verse. Try to make each line have ten syllables and every other line rhyme.

Wordsearch

Find the words from the terms section on page five in the puzzle below

F	F	A	P	P	G	J	I	E	K	A	S	K	T	M	G	G	H	W	P
B	T	M	T	I	P	K	C	Q	T	I	L	A	A	C	D	N	H	G	R
N	U	X	B	J	Q	N	G	J	T	A	X	L	N	X	A	I	Y	S	U
Q	A	R	N	M	A	L	J	H	Y	P	V	O	M	I	V	T	H	I	S
N	A	I	O	L	I	J	G	V	W	F	T	O	E	W	J	N	D	F	U
B	D	W	B	S	A	C	H	A	R	L	A	T	A	N	J	E	D	T	Y
F	E	M	X	S	U	R	M	T	B	A	E	Q	U	B	M	S	U	X	A
T	E	S	Z	W	E	O	T	T	G	H	U	U	E	U	W	S	H	Y	V
S	Q	C	M	S	N	I	I	A	V	T	Q	B	R	U	I	I	B	N	J
T	L	V	N	I	E	W	R	P	V	W	N	E	B	W	G	D	X	H	H
U	Z	A	B	S	R	Y	P	E	P	T	E	A	Y	U	X	L	F	S	K
J	C	H	C	A	M	C	Y	T	P	C	M	S	D	A	O	M	K	B	M
Z	D	Y	O	S	S	G	H	Z	N	P	U	I	F	S	N	L	C	O	A
L	B	E	A	T	B	P	N	D	P	S	I	K	D	C	C	R	O	G	V
E	B	E	B	U	V	M	X	H	G	H	V	R	V	U	E	P	J	U	N
B	Z	J	T	T	M	G	B	L	G	T	K	D	F	R	O	V	R	E	F
K	V	S	V	E	V	M	J	L	K	N	C	V	Q	D	U	P	G	N	B
S	L	W	T	L	U	W	M	C	F	M	K	L	Z	Y	Y	D	D	Y	T
Q	J	I	W	Y	Y	T	N	J	F	X	O	Z	P	I	U	Z	N	W	L
N	Y	S	V	Y	C	H	K	P	G	S	P	T	Z	K	D	S	N	S	P

ASTUTELY
BESMIRCH
CHARLATAN
DEMURE
DIN
DISSENTING
FERVOR
FRIPPERIES
PIOUS
SEMBLANCE
USURP



Post-Show Questions

1. Why do you think Orgon is so obsessed with Tartuffe? Why is Orgon fooled by him?
2. How do the other members of Orgon's family feel about Tartuffe's presence in the home?
3. Is Molière making fun of religion in the play or is he making fun of people that practice religion in the wrong way?
4. Who has the most power in the play? Why?
5. Why does Mariane agree to marry Tartuffe at first?
6. Why do Mariane and Valère get in a fight in act II?
7. Why do you think Orgon waits so long to come out from under the table when Elmire is letting Tartuffe seduce her?
8. Why do you think Dorine's character is in the play? Why does she try to make Orgon lose his temper? Why do you think she is so sarcastic? How might the play be different if Dorine was not in the play?
9. Why might Molière have chosen to not have Tartuffe appear until act III?
10. Do any characters change for the better in the play? Explain your answers.



Post Show Activities

1. Think about what happens after the play when the family's legal issues are cleared up and they get their house back. What do you think becomes of the family? Consider how Orgon did not believe his own family, disowned his own son, and gave everything belonging to the family to Tartuffe.

Write a scene between Orgon and Damis, Orgon and Elmire, or Mariane and Valère, describing what happened to their relationship because of Tartuffe's disturbance on the family.

2. Write a journal entry from Tartuffe's point of view describing what happened to him after the play.
3. In act II scene 3, Molière (translated by Wilbur) includes the word *tartuffified*.

Dorine (to Mariane): You deserve to be *tartuffified*.

Considering this word, which is not in the dictionary and has been created from Tartuffe's name, create a definition for the term.

4. After reading the section on Commedia dell'Arte on pages six and seven, write a paragraph about how Molière was influenced by Commedia dell'Arte when writing *Tartuffe*

Identify which stock character each character from *Tartuffe* reminds you of.

Name three Lazzi (comic bits) you remember from the production.

Resources

Books

- The History of Theatre; Seventh Edition*, by Oscar Brockett (1995)
- Molière and the Italian Theatrical Tradition*, by Philip A. Wadsworth (1987)
- Men and Masks; A study of Molière*, by Lionel Gossman (1963)
- Harlequin on the Moon: Commedia Dell'arte and the Visual Arts*, by Lynne Lawner (1998)
- Commedia dell'Arte; An Actor's Handbook*, by John Rudlin (1994)

Internet

- http://www.marintheatre.org/main_stage/main_stage_06-07/tartuffepix/Prog_guide_Tartuffe.pdf
- <http://faculty.gvsu.edu/websterm/Tartuffe.htm>
- <http://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/eng252/tartuffestudy.htm>
- <http://fajardo-acosta.com/worldlit/moliere/tartuffe.htm#issues>
- <http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides2/Tartuffe.html>
- http://www.theatrehistory.com/italian/commedia_dell_arte_001.html
- <http://italian.about.com/library/weekly/aa110800b.htm>
- <http://www.louis-xiv.de/index.php?t=start&a=start>



We couldn't do it without you...

Theater is often described as a collaborative art form. This means that a lot of people's talents are needed to put on a show: playwrights, directors, designers, technicians, actors - and the audience. No kidding...we couldn't do it without you.

Plays require audiences to give a whole, new life to performances through their careful attention and enthusiastic reactions. Silence, laughter and even tears can tell us a lot about how the work is reaching out to you. Through your considerate observation of sets, costumes, lighting and the work of the actors, you'll be better able to follow the story and enjoy its live presentation.

Of course, theater is very different from movies and television since you are sitting in the same room with the actors. These performers spend weeks in rehearsal practicing how to move precisely and learning how to time the lines and reactions carefully. When inappropriate movement or conversation in the audience distracts the actors, they are not able to give you the fine performance that they rehearsed for you. Your attention literally helps them to succeed.

So, we hope you will understand how important you are to this collaboration and help the actors by watching and listening carefully. Those seated around you will either learn from your example or appreciate your thoughtful attention. Enjoy the show!

Special thanks to The Kennedy Center for a model provided by their "Cue Sheet for Students"



Visiting The Rep ...

Milwaukee Repertory Theater is housed in the Milwaukee Center at the corner of Wells and Water Streets, downtown. Our building was formerly the home of Electric Railway & Light Company. This name is still carved on the wall outside.

You'll enter on the Wells Street side into a large, open space. Our box office will be visible on your left as you come through the front doors. The large space is the main hub for the businesses that share this building: a bank, an office tower, the Pabst Theater and the Intercontinental Hotel. If you walk into the center of this area, you'll see a staircase on your left. You will take this staircase to the Quadracci Powerhouse Theater lobby.



Inside the lobby are restrooms, water fountains and a coat check. If you decide to bring a snack, please know that food and drink are NOT permitted in the theater. However, you can leave things (at your own risk) in the coat check room, and enjoy them outside the theater during the intermission. Most plays have one intermission that is about 20 minutes long. You might also want to look for signs in the lobby which give the full "running time" of the play.

If you arrive forty-five minutes before the show, you can participate in a FREE pre-show talk called Rep In Depth. An actor from the show usually leads this discussion. This person will tell you a little about the play, the playwright, and the period in which the show is set. Often, they will also share stories about the design and rehearsal process. You can ask questions too!

For information on our education programs and our productions, visit our website at www.milwaukeeep.com