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Assignment for a Sophomore World Literature course at Clark Atlanta University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in Atlanta, GA.

### ***Tartuffe* Group Project**

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Because *Tartuffe* will be featured prominently on your exit examination, I wanted to make sure that it stuck in your mind.

One way to do that is to engage you in some “translation” of the work.

As you know, *Tartuffe* was originally written in French.

The version we are reading for class has been translated into English, but it is not necessarily up-to-date in its language or context.

I want your group to “translate” a short scene from *Tartuffe* from the English in your textbook to the English of a modern CAU student—then present it to the class.

When you update the scene, you should not only update the language, you should also update the references and the action. For example, where do you think your scene might take place on the CAU campus? How might the relationships or professions of those portrayed in the play be adapted to CAU life?

You will have a very short time to do this assignment, so I don’t expect a perfect production. I just want to know that you really understand this play.

**Step 1:** Group chooses a short scene from *Tartuffe*. I don't want two groups to choose the same scene. We will coordinate this in class.

**Step 2:** Group rewrites the scene.

**Step 3:** Group posts their rewritten scene, and credits (names of actors and who they play, name of director, name of writer) on the WIKI Page for Group Credit.

**Step 3:** Group practices performing that scene (You can have scripts in hand, no problem!) Not everyone will need to perform. Some of you may serve as the narrator, the writer, or the director, for example.

**Step 4:** Group performs that scene (5-7 min) in front of class. It is also OK if you want to pre-record the scene and play the video in class.

**Step 5:** Write a short paper (1-2 pages) about how you were involved in the presentation, and how this presentation gave you a new understanding of the work. This is just a reflective paper, so you don't have to be very formal (i.e. you don't need a full "Works Cited" page or anything like that. I do expect you to abide by college-level grammar and spelling, etc.) Please use "I."

(A sample rewrite from a student group follows below).

## Traditional Translation\*

**Mme. Pernelle.**

Let's go, Flipote, let's go. I hate this place.

**Elmire.**

I can't keep up, you rush at such a pace.

**Mme. Pernelle.**

Peace, my dear, peace; come no farther.  
I don't wish to cause you any bother.

**Elmire.**

What duty demands, I insist on giving.  
But, mother, what has caused your hasty leaving?

**Mme. Pernelle.**

I just can't stand the way your household runs . . .  
And no one cares what I wish to have done.  
Oh, yes, I leave your household quite dissatisfied  
For all my wise advice has been defied  
. . .  
And nobody respects me, and everybody shouts,  
And truly this is a home for the king of louts!

**Dorine.** If . . .

## CAU Student Translation

### **Group Members and parts/responsibilities**

Tara - Madame Pernelle

Natajah -Dorine

Diamond -Damis

Jovanna-Elmire

Vernique - Cleante

### **Revised Script:**

**MP:** I'm bout to leave the cafe! I'm done with ya'll!

**El:** Can you wait a sec, I'm bout to come with you.

**MP:** You don't have to come with me. I can leave by myself.

**El:** We have the same class so I might as well go with you.

**MP:** I can't stand coming to the cafe with ya'll. The conversation is always the same. It's obvious ya'll retarded!

**Do:** But..

**MP:** See? A freshman with an

**Mme. Pernelle.**

You, my dearie, are a bold lassy,  
A little brazen and very sassy,  
You butt into everything to speak your  
mind.

**Damis.**

But . . .

**Mme. Pernelle.**

You, grandson, are a fool of the worst  
kind.  
It is I, your grandmother, that  
pronounce this edict  
And to my son, your father, I have oft  
predicted  
That you'll turn out to be a worthless  
wastrel,  
And give him in life a foretaste of Hell.

**Mariane.**

I think . . .

**Mme. Pernelle.**

My lord, his sister! You seem so  
discreet  
And so untainted, so very sweet,  
But the stillest waters are filled with  
scum,  
And your sly ways earn my revulsion.

**Elmire.**

But . . .

**Mme. Pernelle.**

Daughter, my views may make you  
mad,  
But your conduct in all things is all bad.  
In your family's eyes you should be an  
example-setter;  
In that respect their late mother did far  
better.  
You are extravagant, and it wounds  
me, I guess,  
To see you sashay about dressed like a  
princess.  
A woman who wishes only to please

**opinion? Why do we even hang out  
with you?**

**DA: If...**

**MP: You (points to her) be quiet!**

**EL: But girl..**

**MP: Please don't take this the wrong  
way, but I can't take you seriously.  
You spend money like crazy and you  
dress like you RATCHET!**

her mate,  
Dear daughter, need not primp and  
undulate.

**Cleante.** Madam, after all . . .

**Mme. Pernelle.**

And her brother, as for you,  
I respect you, love you, and revere  
you, too,  
But finally, if I were my son, her  
spouse,  
I would at once beg you to leave this  
house.  
Without cease you teach your rules and  
mottos  
Which decent people should never  
follow.  
I now speak frankly, but it is my part;  
I never spare the words that stir my  
heart.

**Damis.**

Your man Tartuffe is satisfied, no fear .  
. . .

**Mme. Pernelle.**

He is a holy man whom all should hear,  
And I cannot bear, without great rue,  
To hear him mocked by a fool like you.

**Damis.**

What? Am I myself to bear a carping  
critic,  
A base usurper with a power tyrannic,  
Such that we can do nothing for  
diversion  
Without hearing about that creep's  
aversion?

**Cleante:** Calm down.

**MP:** Now what do you have to say?  
You always think your saying  
something smart, but you sound  
stupid!

**DA:** T's the same way.

**MP:** Now here you go. You should  
listen to T.

**DA:** T is a liar. He tells you what you  
want to hear, then does the complete  
opposite. He says it's bad to go out,  
but he's stay posted at Thirsty  
Thursday.

\* Jeffrey D. Hoeper translation, available on Google Books:  
<http://tinyurl.com/pu6qsmr>