

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does Mun consider trade to be?
2. Of what does it consist?
3. What is his chief concern regarding trade?
4. What is the relation of trade to the nation?
5. What are the foundations of successful trade for Mun?
6. Why does he emphasize moral values in a treatise on economic policy?
7. What are the goods to be found in commerce?

JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN (MOLIÈRE)

FROM *The Citizen Who Apes the Nobleman*

Molière (1622–1673) was baptized Jean Baptiste Poquelin. His life might be considered unorthodox from a very early stage. Though educated at the Collège de Clermont, which would number among its alumni such illustrious literati as Voltaire, and clearly intended for a career in royal service, he broke with tradition and joined a traveling company of players in 1643. He adopted his stage name, Molière, the following year and devoted the rest of his life to the stage. His rise to prominence began in 1658, when, playing on an improvised stage in a guardroom of the Louvre, he performed Corneille's *Nicomède* as well as a play of his own, *Le docteur amoureux*, before Louis XIV. *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* appeared at the royal palace at Chambord in 1670. It satirized the ambition of contemporary bourgeois to compete in magnificence with the aristocracy. Yet, it was a double-edged satire. Though the theme must have pleased Molière's noble audience, the figure of Jourdain is no unpleasant, boorish climber but rather a delightfully good-natured soul, foolish but naive, fatuous but genuine. An unwillingness to subordinate his art to his audience may help explain why Molière frequently struggled in his lifetime. His actors often abandoned his company. Pensions went unpaid. His best works were not always well received. His fame spread only slowly. Though considered one of the greatest French writers, Molière was no writer in the strict sense. Little of his work was published; his comedies were written to be performed. Publication occurred only after several texts were pirated by Jean Ribou, and several remained unpublished long after Molière's death. This occurred in 1672, when Molière was taken ill during a performance of *Le malade imaginaire*. He died that same night, without receiving the sacraments or renouncing his stage life, and was buried unceremoniously in a common grave.

From *The Dramatic Words of Molière*, vol. 5 (Barrie, n.d.).

FROM Act I

The overture is played by a great many instruments; and in the middle of the stage, the pupil of the music-master is busy composing a serenade, ordered by M. Jourdain.

SCENE I. A MUSIC-MASTER, A DANCING-MASTER,
THREE MUSICIANS, TWO VIOLIN PLAYERS, FOUR
DANCERS

MUS.-MAS. (*To the musicians*) Come, retire into that room, and rest yourselves until he comes.

DAN.-MAS. (*To the dancers*) And you also, on that side.

MUS.-MAS. (*To his pupil*) Is it done?

PUP. Yes.

MUS.-MAS. Let me look. . . . That is right.

DAN.-MAS. It is something new?

MUS.-MAS. Yes, it is an air for a serenade, which I made him compose here, while waiting till our gentleman is awake.

DAN.-MAS. May one have a look at it?

MUS.-MAS. You shall hear it by-and-by with the dialogue, when he comes; he will not be long.

DAN.-MAS. Our occupations, yours and mine, are no small matter just at present.

MUS.-MAS. True: we have both of us found here the very man whom we want. It is a nice little income for us this Mr. Jourdain, with his notions of nobility and gallantry, which he has taken into his head; and your dancing and my music might wish that everyone were like him.

DAN.-MAS. Not quite; and I should like him to be more of a judge than he is, of the things we provide for him.

MUS.-MAS. It is true that he knows little about them, but he pays well; and that is what our arts require just now above aught else.

DAN.-MAS. As for myself, I confess, I hunger somewhat after glory. I am fond of applause, and I think that, in all the fine arts, it is an annoying torture to have to exhibit before fools, to have one's compositions subjected to the barbarism of a stupid man. Do not argue; there is

a delight in having to work for people who are capable of appreciating the delicacy of an art, who know how to give a sweet reception to the beauties of a work, and who, by approbations which tickle one's fancy, reward one for his labour. Yes, the most pleasant recompense one can receive for the things which one does, is to find them understood, and made much of by applause which does one honour, There is nothing in my opinion, that pays us better for all our troubles; and enlightened praises are exquisitely sweet.

MUS.-MAS. I quite agree with you, and I enjoy them as much as you do. Assuredly, there is nothing that tickles our fancy more than the applause you speak of; but such incense does not give us our livelihood. Praise pure and simple does not provide for a rainy day: there must be something solid mixed withal; and the best way to praise is to put one's hand in one's pocket. M. Jourdain is a man, it is true, whose knowledge is very small, who discourses at random upon all things, and never applauds but at the wrong time; but his money makes up for his bad judgment; he has discernment in his purse; his praises are minted, and this ignorant citizen is of more value to us, as you see, than the great lord who introduced us here.

DAN.-MAS. There is some truth in what you say; but I think you make a little too much of money; and the interest in it is something so grovelling, that no gentleman ought ever to show any attachment to it.

MUS.-MAS. You are glad enough, however, to receive the money which our gentleman gives you.

DAN.-MAS. Assuredly; but I do not make it my whole happiness; and I could wish that with all his wealth he had also some good taste.

MUS.-MAS. I could wish the same; and that is what we are aiming at both of us. But, in any case, he gives us the means of becoming known in the world; and he shall pay for others, and others shall applaud for him.

DAN.-MAS. Here he comes.

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SCENE III. MRS. JOURDAIN,
M. JOURDAIN, TWO LACQUEYS

MRS. JOUR. Ha! ha! this is something new again! What is the meaning of this curious get-up, husband? Are you setting the world at nought to deck yourself out in this fashion? and do you wish to become a laughing-stock everywhere?

M. JOUR. None but he-fools and she-fools will make a laughing-stock of me, wife.

MRS. JOUR. In truth, they have not waited until now; and all the world has been laughing for a long while already at your vagaries.

M. JOUR. Who is all this world, pray?

MRS. JOUR. All this world is a world which is right, and which has more sense than you have. As for myself, I am disgusted with the life which you lead. I do not know whether this is our own house or not. One would think it is Shrove Tuesday every day; and from early morn, for fear of being too late, one hears nothing but the noise of fiddles and singers disturbing the whole neighbourhood.

NIC. The mistress is right. I shall never see the ship-shape again with this heap of people that you bring to your house. They have feet that pick up the mud in every quarter of the town to bring it in here afterwards; and poor Françoise is almost worked off her legs, with rubbing the floors which your pretty tutors come to dirty again regularly every day.

M. JOUR. Good gracious! Miss Nicole, your tongue is sharp enough for a country-lass!

MRS. JOUR. Nicole is right; and she has more sense than you have. I should much like to know what you want with a dancing-master, at your age.

NIC. And with a great hulking fencing-master, who shakes the whole house with his stamping, and uproots all the floor-tiles in our big room.

M. JOUR. Hold your tongues, you girl and my wife.

MRS. JOUR. Do you wish to learn dancing against the time when you shall have no longer any legs?

NIC. Do you want to kill any one?

M. JOUR. Hold your tongues, I tell you: you are ignorant women, both of you; and you do not know the benefits of all this.

MRS. JOUR. You ought rather to think of seeing your daughter married, who is of an age to be provided for.

M. JOUR. I shall think of seeing my daughter married when a suitable party shall present himself for her; but I shall also think of acquiring some polite learning.

NIC. I have also heard, Mistress, that for fear of shortcoming, he has taken a philosophy-master to-day.

M. JOUR. Very good. I wish to improve my mind, and to know how to argue about things amongst gentle-folks.

MRS. JOUR. Shall you not go, one of these days, to school, to get the birch, at your age?

M. JOUR. Why not? Would to heaven I could have the birch at this hour before everybody, and that I could know all that they teach at school!

NIC. Yes, indeed! that would improve your legs.

M. JOUR. No doubt it would.

MRS. JOUR. All this is highly necessary to manage your house!

M. JOUR. Assuredly. You both talk like fools, and I am ashamed at your ignorance. (*To Mrs. Jourdain.*) For instance, do you know what you are saying at this moment?

MRS. JOUR. Yes. I know that what I say is very well said, and that you ought to think of leading a different life.

M. JOUR. I am not speaking of that. I am asking you what these words are which you are speaking just now.

MRS. JOUR. They are very sensible words, and your conduct is scarcely so.

M. JOUR. I am not speaking of that, I tell you. I ask you, what I am speaking with you, what I am saying to you at this moment, what that is?

MRS. JOUR. Nonsense.

M. JOUR. He, no, that is not it. What we are saying

- both of us, the language we are speaking at this moment?
- MRS. JOUR. Well?
- M. JOUR. What is it called?
- MRS. JOUR. It is called whatever you like.
- M. JOUR. It is prose, you stupid.
- MRS. JOUR. Prose?
- M. JOUR. Yes, prose. Whatever is prose is not verse, and whatever is not verse is prose. Eh? that comes from studying. (*To Nicole.*) And do you know what you are to do to say U?
- NIC. How?
- M. JOUR. Yes. What do you do when you say U?
- NIC. What?
- M. JOUR. Say U, just to see.
- NIC. Well! U.
- M. JOUR. What do you do?
- NIC. I say U.
- M. JOUR. Yes; but when you say U what do you do?
- NIC. I do what you tell me to do.
- M. JOUR. Oh! what a strange thing to have to do with fools? You pout the lips outwards, and bring the upper jaw near the lower one; U, do you see? I make a mouth, U.
- NIC. Yes: that is fine.
- MRS. JOUR. That is admirable!
- M. JOUR. It is quite another thing, if you had seen O, and DA, DA, and FA, FA.
- MRS. JOUR. But what is all this gibberish?
- NIC. What are we the better for all this?
- M. JOUR. It drives me mad when I see ignorant women.
- MRS. JOUR. Go, you should send all these people about their business, with their silly stuff.
- NIC. And above all, this great lout of a fencing-master, who fills the whole of my place with dust.
- M. JOUR. Lord! this fencing-master sticks strangely in your gizzard! I will let you see your impertinence directly. (*After having had the foils brought, and giving one of them to Nicole.*) Stay, reason demonstrative. The line of the body. When one thrusts in carte, one has but to do so, and when one thrusts in tierce, one has but to do so. This is the way never to be killed; and is it not very fine to be sure of one's game when one has to fight somebody? There, just thrust at me, to see.
- (*Nicole thrusts several times at M. Jourdain.*)
- NIC. Well, what!
- M. JOUR. Gently! Hullo! ho! Softly! The devil take the hussy!
- NIC. You tell me to thrust at you.
- M. JOUR. Yes; but you thrust in tierce, before thrusting at me in carte, and you do not wait for me to parry.
- MRS. JOUR. You are mad, husband, with all your fancies; and this has come to you only since you have taken it in your head to frequent the nobility.
- M. JOUR. When I frequent the nobility, I show my judgment; and it is better than to frequent your citizens.
- MRS. JOUR. Indeed! really there is much to gain by frequenting your nobles; and you have done a great deal of good with this beautiful count, with whom you are so smitten!
- M. JOUR. Peace; take care what you say. Do you know, wife, that you do not know of whom you are speaking, when you speak of him? He is a personage of greater importance than you think, a nobleman who is held in great consideration at court, and who speaks to the King just as I speak to you. Is it not a great honour to me to see a person of such standing come so frequently to my house, who calls me his dear friend, and who treats me as if I were his equal? He has more kindness for me than one would ever imagine, and, before all the world, shows me such affection, that I am perfectly confused by it.
- MRS. JOUR. Yes, he shows you kindness and affection; but he borrows your money.
- M. JOUR. Well, is it not an honour to lend money to a man of that condition? and can I do less for a nobleman who calls me his dear friend?
- MRS. JOUR. And this nobleman, what does he do for you?
- M. JOUR. Things you would be astonished at, if you knew them.

MRS. JOUR. But what?

M. JOUR. That will do! I cannot explain myself. It is enough that if I have lent him money, he will return it to me, and before long.

MRS. JOUR. Yes, you had better wait for it.

M. JOUR. Assuredly. Has he not said so?

MRS. JOUR. Yes, yes, he will be sure not to fail in it.

M. JOUR. He has given me his word as a nobleman.

MRS. JOUR. Stuff!

M. JOUR. Good gracious, you are very obstinate, wife! I tell you that he will keep his word; I am sure of it.

MRS. JOUR. And I, I am sure that he will not, and that all the caresses he loads you with are only so much cajoling.

M. JOUR. Hold your tongue. Here he comes.

MRS. JOUR. It wanted nothing but this. He comes perhaps to ask you for another loan; and the very sight of him spoils my dinner.

M. JOUR. Hold your tongue, I tell you.

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SCÈNE XII. CLÉONTE, M. JOURDAIN,
MRS. JOURDAIN, LUCILE, COVIELLE, NICOLE

CLE. Sir, I did not wish to depute any one else to prefer a request which I have long meditated. It concerns me sufficiently to undertake it in person; and without farther ado, I will tell you that the honour of being your son-in-law is a glorious favour which I beg of you to grant me.

M. JOUR. Before giving you your answer, Sir, I pray you to tell me whether you are a nobleman.

CLE. Sir, most people, on this question, do not hesitate much; the word is easily spoken. There is no scruple in assuming that name, and present custom seems to authorize the theft. As for me, I confess to you, my feelings on this point are rather more delicate. I think that all imposture is unworthy of an honest man, and that it is cowardice to disguise what Heaven has made

us, to deck ourselves in the eyes of the world with a stolen title, and to wish to pass for what we are not. I am born of parents who, no doubt, have filled honourable offices; I have acquitted myself with honour in the army, where I served for six years; and I am sufficiently well to do to hold a middling rank in society; but with all this, I will not assume what others, in my position, might think they had the right to pretend to; and I will tell you frankly that I am not a nobleman.

M. JOUR. Your hand, Sir; my daughter is not for you.

CLE. How.

M. JOUR. You are not a nobleman: you shall not have my daughter.

MRS. JOUR. What is it you mean by your nobleman? Is it that we ourselves are descended from Saint Louis?

M. JOUR. Hold your tongue, wife; I see what you are driving at.

MRS. JOUR. Are we two descended from aught else than from plain citizens?

M. JOUR. If that is not a slander?

MRS. JOUR. And was your father not a tradesman as well as mine?

M. JOUR. Plague take the woman, she always harps upon that. If your father was a tradesman, so much the worse for him; but as for mine, they are impertinent fellows who say so. All that I have to say to you, is that I will have a nobleman for a son-in-law.

MRS. JOUR. Your daughter wants a husband who is suited to her; and it is much better for her that she should have a respectable man, rich and handsome, than a beggarly and deformed nobleman.

NIC. That is true; we have the son of our village squire, who is the greatest lout and the most stupid nincompoop that I have ever seen.

M. JOUR. (*To Nicole*). Hold your tongue, Miss Impertinence; you always thrust yourself into the conversation. I have sufficient wealth to give my daughter; I wish only for honours, and I will make her a marchioness.

MRS. JOUR. Marchioness?

M. JOUR. Yes, marchioness.

MRS. JOUR. Alas! Heaven preserve me from it!

M. JOUR. It is a thing I am determined on.

MRS. JOUR. It is a thing to which I shall never consent. Matches with people above one's own position are always subject to the most grievous inconvenience. I do not wish a son-in-law of mine to be able to reproach my daughter with her parents, or that she should have children who would be ashamed to call me their grandmother. If she were to come and visit me with the equipage of a grand lady, and that, through inadvertency, she should miss curtsying to one of the neighbourhood, people would not fail to say a hundred silly things immediately. Do you see this lady marchioness, they would say, who is giving herself such airs? She is the daughter of M. Jourdain, who was only too glad, when she was a child, to play at ladyship with us. She has not always been so high up in the world, and her two grandfathers sold cloth near the St. Innocent gate. They amassed great wealth for their children, for which they are probably paying very dearly in the other world; for people can scarcely become so rich by remaining hon-

est folks. I will not have all this tittle-tattle, and in one word, I wish for a man who shall be grateful to me for my daughter, and to whom I shall be able to say: Sit down there, son-in-law, and dine with me.

M. JOUR. These are the sentiments of a narrow mind, to wish to remain for ever in a mean condition. Do not answer me any more: my daughter shall be a marchioness in spite of all the world; and, if you put me in a passion, I shall make her a duchess.

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REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are servants and masters, who operated in separate worlds, interdependent in Molière's comedy?
2. What is the relation between nobility and judgment?
3. Do women judge differently or according to different standards?