

GENRE—A CONDITIONAL NOTION

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Illustrations: p.80

There was a time when theatrical genres were strictly separated (tragedy, comedy, drama). As years went by, this situation began to change. From the second half of the 20th century, many experiments were done in this direction around the world. It became more important for directors to clarify what they wanted to express and say, rather than just follow the rules of a certain genre. Gradually, the lines between the genres were erased in plays. This process also took place in Georgia.

Director Robert Sturua is known for his open and free-spirited approach when it comes literature before staging it. He often adds or removes certain scenes from the original text, and changes the order of events differently, in a way he prefers.

As an illustration, I will discuss two of his plays. The first will be *The Broken Jug* by German author Heinrich von Kleist, who had created it as a comedy. But, in Sturua's play, it changes into satire. The performance premiered in Telavi State Theater in 2015. Sturua focuses on social and political problems, actively using the methods of grotesque. This is how the genre changed in the play.

One of the main characters is judge Adam (Vano Iantbelidze) who has already passed middle age. He is quite a dishonest, corrupt, and deceptive man. He often drinks, takes bribes, and flirts with women. But, when the townspeople try to lynch him, the viewer still feels pity and sympathy for Adam, since the people who are planning to punish him are no better than the judge himself.

In the final part, the director added a scene missing from the original text by Kleist: Adam is sitting in the judge's chair when a trapdoor beneath it opens and he falls in. The play ends with an ironic scene: The judge comes back up and turns to the audience, speaking to them grotesquely: "We will meet each other in Hague!" Besides Sturua, this play was directed by Nikoloz Heine-Shvelidze.

In 2015, Sturua also directed William Shake-

spere's *Julius Caesar*, in Rustaveli State Theater. Shakespeare wrote a historical tragedy, while Sturua's play is a political farce. *Julius Caesar* consists of five parts, but the director uses only two of them onstage. The performance ends with the death of Julius Caesar. Sturua does not care about what happened to his murderers afterwards. His main subject of interest is which will win in the country: dictatorship or democracy? What will the politicians bring to their people: slavery or freedom?

In Shakespeare's original text, Marcus Brutus is an honest man who is simply fighting for an idea. In Sturua's play, Brutus (Beso Zanguri) seems to be completely different, deceptive and double-faced. He is irritated by and jealous of Julius Caesar's (David Uflisashvili) success.

This Caesar is also different from the one in Shakespeare's play. The actor is portraying an aged man, who is ill and does not trust anyone around him anymore. It is clear that this fight for power and the throne has made him feel tired, worn-out. Caesar is very sensitive and tears up on even the simplest things. This man is not the classical tyrant shown in the original text.

In this play, the conspirators are not good people either. They are not dressed in Roman clothes which would be appropriate for the time period where these events take place. The director made them look more like American gangsters with their outfits. Cassius (Levan Khurtsia) is their leader. He is an ambitious man who wants to take Caesar's place. Casca (Paata Guliashvili) is a drug addict and loves living rich. No one from these conspirators is fighting for an actual idea. They are participating in this battle for personal gain.

On the stage we see a few loges on both sides, in which Julius sometimes sits to watch the play, as others plan a conspiracy against him. On the opposite side, we see a mannequin of William Shakespeare in the loge. This ironic detail was planned by the director, as if Shakespeare were watching his own play.

Shakespeare's historical tragedy was transformed

into a political tragic farce by the director. This was done because, as we know from history, by killing the Caesar, Rome did not restore the republic, but instead, became an empire.

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