

# Should We Be Afraid of New Life? Fear and Moral Dilemmas in 21st-Century Georgian and Turkish Drama

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## **Abstract**

The present paper investigates the socio-psychological aspects of society raised in contemporary drama. Specifically, attention is focused on the phenomenon where fear dictates the "rules of the game," turning morality and the instinct for self-preservation into a destructive force. The research is based on a comparative analysis of two significant plays of the 21st century: *The Little Giant* (Tsitskna Goliati) by Georgian playwright Irakli Samsonadze and *Avalanche* (Çığ) by Turkish playwright Tuncer Cücenöğlü. In these plays, it is evident that both cultures await tomorrow not as survival, but as a verdict.

The main objective of the research is to demonstrate how fear transforms the birth of a child—traditionally a symbol of hope—into a death sentence. The paper attempts to answer the question: why has silence become the only means of survival, and why is the "new generation" perceived as a threat rather than a continuation of life?

In Cücenöğlü's *Avalanche*, the community is forced to maintain silence to avert catastrophe, where an infant's cry is equated with destruction. Similarly, in Samsonadze's *The Little Giant*, parents fear that their child's existence will betray their hiding place. The analysis reveals that in both narratives, paranoia compels parents to view their child not as an heir, but as a "prosecutor" who threatens their safety and comfort.

The research concludes that when society is ruled by fear, moral degradation is inevitable. Parents are willing to sacrifice the child—the symbol of the future—to maintain "safe" and "silent" present. This reflects a modern tragedy where an instinct for physical survival suppresses moral humanity.

## **Introduction**

Hello. I am Basa Janikashvili — a playwright and writer from Georgia. To put it simply, my job is inventing conflicts and bringing them to life on stage. I have published three novels and four collections of plays. More than ten of my plays have been staged both in Georgia and abroad — in France, Germany, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. At the same time, I am a doctoral student at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University.

It might seem strange to some to see a playwright at a symposium, but in reality, this state is completely natural for me. Writing any new play is, in itself, research — a study of human nature, its fears, and passions. Therefore, today I am here not as an outside observer, but as a researcher who has stepped from the stage into the auditorium.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice my thoughts from this tribune. Theatre is a place where society looks at itself in a mirror, even if that mirror is sometimes distorted. The plays under discussion paint a world where the word is simultaneously a shield and a weapon. Contemporary Georgian and Turkish dramaturgy reminds us: as long as we speak, as long as we have the capacity for dialogue, we are searching for a way toward ourselves and toward each other. And this path inevitably passes through the theatre.

I have selected two plays for discussion: 'The Tiny Giant' by Georgian playwright Irakli Samsonadze and 'Avalanche' by Turkish playwright Tuncer Cücenoglu. Both texts were written at the beginning of the new century (in 2001 and 2007). There is an interesting paradox here: we awaited the new millennium with hope, yet these playwrights saw danger there.

## **2. Fear as a Director**

My goal is to show you how fear has become the main director of our existence. How it happens that a new life — a child — is perceived not as salvation, but as a verdict.

In these plays, we constantly see two poles. On one hand — real life: a specific family, a locked room, and the instinct for physical survival. On the other hand — a metaphorical space, where this 'room' is the entire country, and 'fear' is the only form of governance.

Here I would like to cite the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, who says that in the modern world, 'the map precedes the territory.' What does this mean for us? It means that artificial rules dictated by fear (the map) become more real and 'supreme' than the living people themselves (the territory).

Our characters live not in the real world, but on a map drawn by fear. And on this map, a child's cry is not a sign of life, but a signal of the system's collapse.

## **3. Anatomy of Two Plays**

Before moving on to the analysis, let me briefly remind you of the plot of both plays.

Tuncer Cücenoglu's 'Avalanche' tells the story of a village where life is divided into seasons: there are 'loud' months and 'silent' months. In winter, when the danger of avalanches peaks,

the village falls silent. Shouting, laughing, and loud conversation are forbidden. Even giving birth is a crime during this time. And then, a young woman goes into premature labor. The Council of Elders faces a dilemma: the child's cry might trigger an avalanche. The solution? The woman must be buried alive before the child is born.

In Irakli Samsonadze's 'The Tiny Giant', the situation is even more absurd. The action takes place in a single room. A husband and wife are servants of the system — their 'job' is blowing up houses in the city. Their fear is not of an external enemy, but of their own crime being exposed. They have a young child — the 'Tiny Giant' — who is not an heir to them, but a 'prosecutor' and a 'witness'. Even the child's cough is perceived as treason. The parents are ready to kill their child with their own hands so that 'order' is not disturbed.

In both plays, fear shapes the social structure. Here I want to cite the German philosopher Byung-Chul Han, who says: 'The victim and the executioner merge into a single subject.' Our characters are exactly that — executioners of themselves.

What does fear do to a person? For a society infected with fear, everything new is automatically dangerous. And the biggest novelty is a child. That is why everything is turned upside down in these plays: the child is a danger, not hope.

What is the result? In order to survive today, we kill tomorrow. We sacrifice the child to preserve ourselves. This is the entire philosophy of fear.

#### **4. Problems Raised in the Plays and Their Interpretation**

These plays are not just stories about fear; they are a clinical diagnosis. Society behaves like a closed immune system that perceives everything 'foreign' — in this case, the newborn — as a virus.

##### **a) The Child as a "Foreign Body" and the Immune Reaction**

The philosopher Byung-Chul Han, a researcher of the psychopathologies of modern society, gives an exact diagnosis in his book 'The Burnout Society': 'The foreign body must be destroyed simply because it is Other.'

In 'Avalanche', the child is 'Other' because it makes noise. In 'The Tiny Giant', the child is 'Other' because it demands an answer. In both cases, the system screams: 'Get rid of it, silence it, hide it!'

##### **b) The Voice of Society**

Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, known for his sharp critique of modern ideologies, speaks in his book 'Welcome to the Desert of the Real' about the 'decaf coffee' effect. We want coffee without caffeine, beer without alcohol... and in these plays, parents want a 'decaf child'. That is, a child who is safe, noiseless, merely a 'picture'.

But as soon as the child raises its voice, meaning it reveals its reality, it becomes an enemy. To use Žižek's language, the child is that 'Hard Kernel of the Real' which shatters the

parents' virtual, invented peace. And because they cannot accept this reality, they try to destroy it.

Society here is not just a passive victim; it is an active censor. In 'Avalanche', the elders determine when one can give birth and when one cannot. They cite the danger of the avalanche as the reason. This is a classic example of totalitarianism, where power controls the body and biological processes. The characters think they are choosing safety, but in reality, they are choosing slavery imposed upon them as a 'necessity'.

### **c) The Fate of New Life and the Voice of the New Generation**

French philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard, considered one of the main theorists of postmodernism, writes about hyperreality in his work 'Simulacra and Simulation'.

Samsonadze's characters live in precisely this hyperreality, where their own child is perceived not as a continuation of life, but as an impending catastrophe. Their fear is simulated — they fear not a real punishment, but their own imagination. The child is dangerous to them because it is the future — the only real, uncontrollable element that destroys their artificial world.

## **5. Dilemma: Stable Fear or Dangerous Freedom?**

In both plays, the child has a voice. This voice is not merely acoustic; it is a political act.

Here arises the main dilemma: who is right?

On one side stands society, living in 'stable fear'. Their argument is: 'At least we are alive.'

On the other side stands the new generation, demanding change.

We see a stagnant, frightened society that has comfortably settled into its own fear. This society has its rhythm, its 'laws of silence', and suddenly, a new life appears in this swamp. How does society react? It opposes the future.

Parents want their child to be 'the Same' as they are: silent, obedient, frightened. But the child is 'Other'. And this 'Other' destroys their peace.

Thus, the Turkish playwright tells us: the new generation is right. Because, in the finale, the woman in labor screams, the child is born and cries, and... the avalanche does not come. It turns out that the so-called 'stable fear' was a lie, a myth that served to maintain power. The author tells us: the risk is justified. Life is impossible without a voice.

Georgian playwright Irakli Samsonadze paints a heavier picture, but the message is the same. In 'The Tiny Giant', the parents try to maintain the illusion to the very end, but this world collapses anyway. Their attempt to get rid of the 'Other' (the child/the future) leads not to peace, but to total moral and physical collapse. Samsonadze warns us: killing the future cannot save the present.

## **6. Comfortable Apocalypse**

What awaits us? Our main mistake is the illusion that we can 'insure' life. We want changes without risks and freedom without responsibility. But this is impossible.

Jean Baudrillard says: 'Security is a form of death.' If we try to walk the path of history 'safely and comfortably', we will get not life, but a 'simulation' — an existence where neither the avalanche comes nor the sun rises.

What should we fear? Not the avalanche and not the child's cry. We should fear that 'stable silence' which convinces us that life is merely breathing.

The authors' message is clear: comfortable survival does not exist. The future belongs to those who dare to scream, even if that scream triggers an avalanche.

The conclusion is unequivocal: a society that chooses 'stable fear' is already dead. The one who brings change is right. The future cannot be 'safe'; the future is a leap into the unknown. And if we forbid this leap, we forbid life.