

Idea against Others Ideas: Caligula – History of Supreme Suicide

*Tsiklauri Khatuna,
The University of Georgia*

French writer Albert Camus (1913-1960) is known for the readers as wise but controversial writer who created novels, stories, plays, philosophical and literary essays. His early literary creations as well as his world outlook were prepared with the characteristics of European philosophic traditions and literary development.

Camus is one of the important representatives of French existentialism though he was always objected being called an existentialist or even a philosopher: The former – possibly because that in the evolution of his viewpoints time after time he used to separate its chief statements; and the latter because he did not have the system of philosophical conception.

Caligula is the History of Supreme Suicide. Caligula is the killer not by nature but by philosophic principles. He is paradoxical, he thinks that he is right but in fact he is wrong. Caligula refused to escape from genuineness and to hide behind illusions. Human beings' attitude towards death is metaphysical, mysterious and inevitable. The fears of death, mysterious experience and human weakness are the components of Camus' works. The death dominates over the life thus life becomes pointless. The beautiful world is just a glimpse.

According to the existential philosophy, fear and death are the definition of human life. Caligula cannot understand that it is impossible to destroy everything without self destruction. It is the most tragic, cruelest truth. The Emperor demands impossible thing. He tries to establish abnormal freedom but he fails.

This play gives us a clear picture of the author's esthetic attitude as well as about his viewpoint, his artistic method and thus it is easier for us to understand Camus. The author makes the right sign: "I am not afraid to call my works essays and novels about absurd; this is negative and the period that is hard to overcome and that will distinguish all the rest."

The first note "about Caligula" "appeared in 1937: If you gain power, if you like life, you have heart, then you will see how the monster or the angel will cut out it from your body."

Dostoevsky wrote in *The Writer's Diary* that if trust of immorality is so essential for the human being and he commits suicide without it thus this belief is normal condition of a human. Therefore if it is this way, then immortality really exists.

It is widely accepted that before Camus R. Roland tried to create Caligula's character in one of his essays but it did not have influence on Camus' Caligula. Both of the plays are focused on the central idea that manipulates the main character – this is the power of death that shadows the essence of life. Camus wanted his play to have the general importance that would exceed the époque borders that is described in the *Twelve Caesars'* life and Camus discovered this by the assistance of the professor Jean Grenier.

He uses Suetonius, the author of the *Twelve Caesars*, by his way. Here Caligula is not only sick, unreasonable and crazy but – Nietzsche – barbarous, for whom God died and he proves the poverty of a superman.

Monterlan is amazed with neurasthenic king eccentric character that is both an angel and a savage. Camus deliberately avoids anachronism. He tries to transfer the tragedy on the stage that will be adequate of epoch. At the center of the tragedy appears the emperor's metaphysical rebellion that coincides with Dostoevsky's characters, which according to Camus are most modern. But according to Dostoevsky, life is worthy if God exists.

In November 1939 Camus was 26. World War II was in progress in Europe but for many French this was a strange war and Camus imagined it as the absurd event that led us to death.

The controversial movement appeared in France, occupied by Hitler. Its active members were Sartre and Camus. They did not believe in God. But time passed and they became the witnesses and then participants of the tragedy in which "million Caligulas" killed people and collapsed the world. Camus and Sartre established a new "order" in Europe compared with which both Nietzsche's revaluation of the values and Caligula became like innocent babies.

France as well as the whole Europe was facing the danger. This was an epoch, a national catastrophe that influenced a certain wise man and they accelerate dawning.

When Caligula was first performed in 1945, in France, the public identified him with Hitler. Caligula consists of 4 acts. The first act is separated from the rest with three years and this allows us the play to be better performed.

The tragedy actions, characters and key points are developing expressionally. The action takes place in 38 AD. The spiritual defeat of the young Roman emperor Caligula is sudden and the main reason of his fall is meeting with the death. Standing in front of his dead sister and beloved Rozila, Caligula discovers a genuine truth. "People die and they are unhappy". They are dying and they find out that it is impossible to establish justice in the world.

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over the life thus life becomes pointless. The beautiful world is just glimpse.

In the beginning of the play the main character does not appear. By the end of the second act everything becomes clear – Caligula returns. Now the epoch, place of action and characters are on the stage. Camus used to say about Caligula: “This was a tragedy of wisdom” (“tragedie de l’intelligence”).

The author tries to show the complex picture of reality but he discovers that the reality is ambiguous and creates illusion.

Caligula trusts himself. During the whole play the main characteristics of Caligula are: cruelty, nihilism, hatred towards values, life, feelings and God.

This is the logical philosophy of suicide and this reveals the existential points in Camus literature. The character fights against himself, with his weakness and wants to change the world, which displays the lack of supreme mind. Life is false. People try not to recognize absurd, God, and immortal traditions, rituals as well and they behave as they love their close persons.

But in reality they are lacking the prospects of immortality. They are indifferent to each other. The author thinks that the essence of life is in solving death problem. Caligula is extremely powerful and tries to use his power to conquer the world. “I am not crazy but on the contrary I have never been so clever.” He refuses to obey his destiny, he wants to create a new trial and he even does not bother himself to explain why he sentences this or that person.

“Now and forever my freedom is endless” and he adds “the freedom can be gained on the expense of others, unfortunately it is reality.” Why did Caligula need all this flattery? Because to establish false and unreasonable steps in the world.

The Emperor’s freedom is unlimited. Caligula regards that to be free means to kill. He humiliates, mocks people and concludes: “this is happiness.” In *Caligula*, Camus acts the same way as in Dostoevsky’s novels with – the idea. Courageous Carea, who used to be Caligulas best friend now confronts the emperor. Carea has different ideas about human beings. He hates when a strange idea comes true in a very short period of time “like a lunge in the breast.”

Camus thinks much about Dostoevsky’s response towards his supreme suicide. The author analyzed Dostoevsky’s supreme idea and expressed it in the play with the character of Carea.

Carea knows that Caligula rejects the human being and the world as well. He understands that we should not disunite the world but on the contrary we must take care of it if we want to live there. Though in the drama Carea’s truth is suspicious. In the struggle he is unable to overcome Caligula’s crazy ideas but at the same time he dreams of killing him. This murder is a symbol of Carea’s freedom from the evil.

In 1939, the manuscript of *Caligula's Competitor* is paradoxical. He shares the "passion" of his former student but he is afraid of its realization. Because this passion threatens his "individual security." The play was staged in 1945.

In the beginning, the French critics envisioned Carea as a prototype against totalitarianism. Those persons that fight for their happiness are always against Caligula. It is impossible for the emperor to stay in former "frames" because he acknowledged his own and public limitations. Caligula as the member of utopian world is alone with himself and from this stage begins his spiritual loneliness. But this is not his topic. "And what is loneliness? Isolation from the poets and disabled people? Nobody leaves an abandoned person alone. People feel for each other. Every meeting in every person awakes a new personality. My freedom failed, says Caligula in the final act.

In 1958, in the introductions of the plays published by American publishers Camus used to write: "Caligula, this is the story of supreme, self killer, who is extremely tragic. Caligula is ready to die when he understands that nobody can survive alone and it is impossible to be free against other people. The freedom directed against people will always fail."

"If Caligula's truth is in his rebellion – his mistake is in rejecting people, it is impossible to destroy and abandon everything without destroying yourself," wrote Camus in 1958. This stupid play is performed to prove that the truth of the world is that "it is not." There exists neither evilness nor kindness. Everybody should do the thing they like.

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Fear and death – according to the existential philosophy this is the definition of human life. Caligula cannot understand that it is an impossible to destroy everything without self restraint. It is the most tragic, cruelest truth. The Emperor demands impossible thing. He tries to establish abnormal freedom but he fails.

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