

Dangerous corner
written by british
journalist



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The text under the title " Dangerous Corner" was written by British journalist, novelist, playwright, and essayist - John Boynton Priestley (1894-1984).

Priestley's output was vast and varied - he wrote over one hundred novels, plays, and essay. The text under the study is a play. The society of several men and women sitting in a cosy drawing-room and idly discussing the wireless lay they have just heard is described in the plot. Initially the conversation goes around the play but gradually it approaches the theme of truth and lie.

It turns out that only Robert is sure truth has always to be said, the rest come to think that people are likely to lie and often they do so undeliberately. Here we observe the problem of the play - the author assumes mankind applies lies uncautiously and this causes lots of handicaps and troubles in life. Analysis of the play " Dangerous Corner" by J. B. Priestley J. B.

Priestley is one of the outstanding English authors of today. His Time Plays brought him world fame. He was the first one who used time tricks and flashback in his works, which made the break in the means of development of the character. Characters of his plays appear in a new light before our eyes, and the time trick allows us to investigate them in a new, deeper level. The extract I'm going to analyze is taken from the play " Dangerous corner". According to its title we can guess that the play describes some dangerous situation, it implies that " dangerous corner" is a dead end, a difficult situation, which has no way out, like " to be in a tight corner".

But to my mind there can be one more interpretation of the title: "corner" - like a turning point in one's life - some people have courage to turn around it, to face all the difficulties and danger and cope with them, but others haven't, they are afraid to lose their illusions, to lose the aim of life. So we can see that the play deals with mental topic. The situation described in the play deals with the state of affairs in the family of Caplans. From the beginning of the play we can see the development of two plots: wireless play, and the situation on the stage, which are mixed. The wireless play is called "The Sleeping Dog" which is the allusion to the proverb "let the sleeping dog lie". As the characters explain, the sleeping dog is the truth, which you shouldn't disturb.

But not all characters agree with this statement. Robert Caplan starts investigating the trifling facts about his brother's suicide. A big quarrel arisen leads to Robert's suicide. From the stylistic point of view, a play is a stylized dialogue, stylized because of the effect of natural speech: a lot of elliptical structures, interruptions, cases of aposiopesis, and it is the peculiarity of the drama works. One more feature is the language used: I mean a harmonic mixture of bookish and colloquial style, and of course the author's remarks in the brackets. In the structure of the play we can find exposition, which is the incitement for the quarrel; intrigue, which is the quarrel itself, climax - the revolver shot, and the denouement - the second variant of events.

The first part produces the effect of the idle talk mostly thanks to author's remarks: "who doesn't care", "in her best childish manner", or "still fiddling with the wireless" - they imply that the characters pretend to be not so deeply interested in the topic discussed. For example: Miss M. : ...But we

meant something much more serious. Robert: Serious or not. I'm all for it coming out.

It's healthy Stanton: I think telling the truth is about as healthy as skidding round the corner at sixty. - and so on, each one repeats the phrase or word, which was used in order to keep the discussion going. But the idleness of repartees confronts with the seriousness of the topic touched, and it leads to the creation of irony. Irony here is created with the means of syntax and intonation.

" To lie or not to lie - what do you think, Olwen? You're looking terribly wise. This phrase is an allusion to Shakespeare's play " Hamlet" - " to be or not to be" - a question of life and death for Hamlet, it is the first sign of seriousness of the discussion. Then Olwen's meditation about the truth is a philosophical moral of the story, which is a trace of ancient fabliau and cautionary tales. Truth is the first concept of the play; it is created through the thematic field " to lie or not to lie", which consists of such words as: secret, lie, truth, treacherous stuff, God's truth, self-deception, rotten stuff, to cheat, trifling facts. If the first part is rather calm, everyone makes the air that this topic doesn't touch their relations, the atmosphere of the second part changes greatly.

It is already the beginning of the quarrel, and the devices used there are aimed to show the growth of the tension. Where epifora " I agree. - You agree! " or anadiplosis " You'll get no sympathy from me, Caplan. - Sympathy from you! " with an exclamation mark at the end and addressing

raise the tone of the speech to the level of mutual insults: “ You are a thief, a cheat, a liar, and a dirty cheap seducer.

- And you are a fool, Caplan. , where we can see such a device as anty-climax. Then, with the help of antithesis: “ a fool’s paradise” - “ a fool’s hell” - the author draws our attention to the second concept - the world of illusions. “ A fool’s paradise” stands for the world of illusions, a world, which Robert has built for himself, because he didn’t want to face up the reality, and searching for the truth he ruined his world. In the third part we can follow step-by-step Robert’s perception of his new situation.

As the situation became clearer in his mind he became more and more desperate because of losing his illusions. We can see it even by repetitions of different kind, ellipsis, parallel syntax that breaks the monotonousness of natural speech. Intonational structure, harsh words like “ bloody glands”, “ fool”, anty-climax “ damned silly little squable” and authors remarks in the brackets “ terribly excited now”, “ in a frenzy”, “ crazy now” let us feel Robert’s pain because of his loss. And what is even more painfull for him is the fact that he broke his own world with his own hands: “ I had to meddle, like a child with a fire. I began this evening with something that kept me going.

I’d good memories of Martin. I’d a wife who didn’t love me, but at least seemed too good for me. I’d two partners I liked and respected. There was a girl I could idealise. And now - “ And now he has lost everything, he even doesn’t have the faith in tomorrow: “ There can’t be a tomorrow! ”.

The indefinite article is used here to show the loss of every little faith in life. The main character of the play is Robert. As I have felt, J. B. Priestly has a dual attitude towards his main character. On the one hand he distinguishes Robert, as an honest man among the liars.

Robert was the only one who insisted upon telling the truth: " Serious or not. I'm all for it coming out. It's healthy. " But on the other hand, Robert was the only one who lived in " a fool's paradise", in the illusions where he tried to hide from the truth of life. What we can read between the lines is as follows: Robert had a split personality.

One part of him was tired of all the falsehood and hypocrisy around him. For only a couple of hours it won over the weak half and started to investigate all the trifling facts about his brother's suicide, as if he felt that there were something bigger behind it. And Robert himself understood that there was something " that kept him going". But then the weak one triumphed over the strong one, and Robert started regretting the loss of his illusions: "...I've lived among illusions - well, what if I have? They've given me hope and courage. They've helped me to live. I suppose we ought to get all that from faith in life.

But I haven't got any. No religion or anything. Just this damned farmyard to live in. That's all...

But it didn't look too bad. I'd my little illusions, you see. It was his last step towards the abyss, where he fell after he had shot himself. At this point we can understand his state of emotions, his despair that led him to suicide, at least I feel sympathy towards a rebellion against the world of liars. Having

<https://assignbuster.com/dangerous-corner-written-by-british-journalist/>

read the play up to the end the perception of the character changes greatly, what a reader feels is disappointment. Disappointment, because in the second variant of the events after the revolver shot in the wireless play there is no such a rebellion, Robert prefers to go on hiding in his illusions.

I couldn't call the suicide a strong deed – it is the intention to hide from the violence of the reality, from the tough truth of life somewhere, where you won't be found, but hiding from it in real life is even weaker... To lie or not to lie is a question for everyone to decide for himself. As for me I agree with Olwen: " The real truth – that is, every single little thing, with nothing missing at all, wouldn't be dangerous. " But something that we usually call " truth" in our everyday life is only half of real truth. " It doesn't tell you all that went on inside everybody". And if we don't hide anything from the people we care of there won't be a reason to call the truth a " treacherous stuff", it won't hurt anyone.

A man should be realistic; he should know all the dangers of the real world, because knowledge of the world, the ability to learn it, is the only weapon given us by nature. It helped us to survive in the tough world of dinosaurs, and today's world is even tougher, that's why a man who can't cope with the reality won't reach anything in life. I hope that I don't look at the world through the pink glasses; at least I try not to.