

The lumber room



The text under analysis is written by an outstanding British novelist and short story writer Hector Munro. Hector Hugh Munro was a British writer, whose witty stories satirized Edwardian society and culture. The author's style of writing is satirical in a humorous way. He uses a witty tone to mimic characters in order to subtly criticize them. The criticism is done in a subtle way that is humorous. The excerpt is homogeneous. The story is narrated in the 3rd person. This allows the reader to access the situation and the characters in an objective manner, because the characters are having both positive and negative viewpoints.

The third person point of view is impersonal which fits the impersonal atmosphere of the household. The plot of the story revolves around a little orphan Nicholas who was trusted to his tyrannical and dull-witted aunt. One day Nicholas was "in disgrace", so he made his Aunt believe that he was somehow trying to get into the gooseberry garden, but instead had no intention of doing so but did sneak into the Lumber Room. There a tremendous picture of a hunter and a stag opened to him. Soon his aunt tried to look for the boy and slipped into the rain-water tank.

She asked Nicholas to fetch her a ladder but the boy pretended not to understand her, he said that she was the Evil One (This metaphor shows author's irony and essential clue to the character). The plot is ordered chronologically, each episode is given with more and more emphasis. The author's choice of vocabulary and stylistic devices in this story emphasize a deep dissension between generations, to convey a thrilling power of child's creative mind. The author uses a large variety of stylistic devices, such as

epithets to show us the great difference between the Child's and Grown-up's world.

Such epithets from Child's world (grim chuckle, alleged frog, unknown land, stale delight, mere material pleasure, bare and cheerless, thickly growing vegetation) and the one from Grown-up's world (frivolous ground, considerable obstinacy, trivial gardening operation, unauthorized intrusion) help the author to emphasize all the beauty of the childhood's mind and the commonness of the adult's mind. The text can be divided into several parts according to the change of the general slant:

- The exposition, in which we learn about little Nicholas, his cousins and his strict aunt.

Nicholas got into his aunt's disgrace. So his cousins were to be taken to Jagborough sands that afternoon and he was to stay at home. The Aunt was absolutely sure that the boy was determined to get into the gooseberry garden because "I have told him he is not to". The author uses irony and witty tone throughout the story. For example, Aunt's condescending tone in describing Nicholas' prank: disgrace, sin, fell from grace. The author is obviously using the Aunt's own word choice to reveal her self-righteous attitude. This is a subtle criticism of her arrogance which she is blind to. To lay stress on the Aunt's narrow-mindedness Munro uses such metaphors as "a circus of unrivalled merit" and "uncounted elephants"

- The complication, when Nicholas got into an unknown land of lumber-room.

Forbidden fruit is sweet and truly the lumber-room is described as a storehouse of unimagined treasure. Every single item brings life and imagination to Nicholas and is symbolic of what the adult of real world lacks. He often pictured to himself what the lumber-room was like, since that was the region that was so carefully sealed from youthful eyes.

The tapestry brings to life imagination and fantasy within Nicholas, the interesting pots and candlesticks bring an aesthetic quality, visual beauty which stirs up his creative mind; and lastly a large square book full of coloured pictures of birds. And such birds! They allow Nicholas to learn in a fun and exciting way. The author uses irony to poke fun and criticize the Aunt. For instance, trip to Jagborough which is meant to spite Nicholas fails. Instead of being a punishment for the child, it became a treat for him whereas it became a torture to those who went. The Aunt's conception of "the paradise". The real paradise is the Lumber-room not the garden. This reveals the irony that the ideal world of an adult is dull and boring to that of a child.

The climax of the text.

While the boy was admiring the colouring of a mandarin duck, the voice of his aunt came from the gooseberry garden. She got slipped into the rain-water tank and couldn't go out. She demanded from the boy to bring her a ladder, but he said her voice didn't sound like his aunt's. "You may be the Evil One tempting me to be disobedient" – said a little boy desiding the Justice must be done. The Aunt tasted the fruit of her own punishment on the children. She is accused of falling from grace, of lying to Nicholas about jam and thus termed the Evil One. She feels what it is like to be condemned.

The denouncement.

The Aunt is furious and enforces in the house. She maintained the frozen muteness of one who has suffered undignified and unmerited detention in a rain-water tank for thirty-five minutes. Nicholas was also silent, in the absorption of an enchanting picture of a hunter and a stag.