**Lumber Room by Saki - A Discussion**

**In this famous short story the author vividly describes interesting childhood of the little boy whose name is Nicholas. It  covers about the one day of the Nicholas life, the day when he was in disgrace. On this day Nicholas was at home with his aunt and he realized his dream and scrape in the unknown land, in the lumber-room. Nicholas saw many beautiful things there. His imagination painted the great pictures in his mind. But his aunt began to search for him, and he went out of the lumber-room. But for all life Nicholas remembered those amazing things.**

The text under analysis is written by an outstanding British novelist and a short – story writer Hector Munro. He was born in 1870 and died in 1916.Also he is better known for his pseudonym Saki.  Owing to the death of his mother and his father’s absence abroad he was brought up during his childhood, with his elder brother and sister by a grandmother and two aunts. It seems probable that their stern and unsympathetic methods account for Munro’s strong dislike of anything that smacks of the conventional and the self-righteous. He satirized things that he hated. H. H. Munro is best known for his humorous and very interesting short stories. He often used black humour language in his stories. It is a form of humor that regards human suffering as absurd rather than pitiable, or that considers human existence as ironic and pointless but somehow comic. He used it in order to deride the human vices and to show inefficiency of actions of moralistic, hypocritical persons. Munro was killed on the French front during the First World War.  His sister in her Biography of Saki writes: “One of Munro’s aunts, Augusta, was a woman of ungovernable temper, of fierce likes and dislikes, imperious, and moral coward, possessing no brains worth speaking of, and a primitive disposition.” Naturally the last person who should have been in charge of children. The character of the aunt in the Lumber – Room is Aunt Augusta to the life.

The text tells us a story about a small boy Nicholas, who was brought up by his tyrannical and ungoverned aunt Augusta. He was "in disgrace" as he had refused to eat his wholesome bread-and-milk that morning. When children were taken to Jagborough sands Nicholas made some attempts to get into the gooseberry garden. As a matter of fact, he had no intention of trying to get into the gooseberry garden, but it was extremely convenient for him that his aunt should believe that he had unsympathetic.  Soon his aunt tried to look for the boy and slipped into the rain-water tank. She asked Nicholas to fetch a ladder but the boy pretended not to understand her, he said that she was the Evil One.  After this accident they both kept silent and everyone has been shipped in their thoughts.

The theme of the text is about the conflict between two generations: a little boy Nickolas and his aunt.

The  whole story can be divided into 2 parts: the Child's world and the Adult' s world. The first part of the plot is the Adult’s world which is dull, unimaginative and misunderstanding. The Adult’s world is full of warped priorities. Adults become obsessed with insignificant trivialities, like the Aunt that is obsessed about punishing and nitpicking on the children. Her methods of  bringing up are rather military and religious. She puts punishment and withholding of enjoyment as more important than getting to know and molding the lives of the children. She keeps all the beautiful and creative things of the house locked away in a lumber-room so as not to spoil them but in doing so, the purpose of the objects which is to beauty the house, is lost, leaving the house dull and colourless. The second part of the plot describes the Child’s world. It is full of fun and imagination. Nickolas is very imaginative. He imagines the whole story behind the tapestry while the aunt comes out with boring stories and ideas like about circus or going to the beach. She tries to convince Nickolas about fun of a trip to the beach but lacks the imagination to sound convincing.

**The story is narrated in the 3d person. The third person point of view is impersonal which fits the impersonal atmosphere of the household.    The text is full of different stylistic devices.**

**The extract may be divided into 4 logically complete parts:**

**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 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.**

**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 desiring 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 who is furious about what happened 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.    The ending of the story reveals the author’s social comment about the differences between the world of the child and adult. Though the aunt is furious, Nicholas is thinking about the hunter tricking the hounds by using the stag as a bait. It shows a great gap of indifference between the aunt and Nicholas.**

**In this text there are many stylistic devises, such as:**

**1.    Epithets (frivolous ground, considerable obstinacy, trivial gardening operation, unauthorized intrusion, grim chuckle, alleged frog, unknown land, stale delight, mere material pleasure, bare and cheerless, thickly growing vegetation)**

**2.    Irony (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) , (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 vocabulary is employed by the author in keeping with the subject-matter. So he frequently uses military and religious words.**