OLIVER WANTS SOME MORE

The text is an extract from the novel “Oliver Twist”, by Charles Dickens.

 It is a narrative text divided into two sequences: in the first one the external narrator, with the techinque of telling, sets the scene. The setting is created exploiting the adjective “large” and the name “stone”, which conveys the idea of a large and cold place. In addition the narrator calls the attention on “copper” referring to the metal which the contenitor of the soup is made: it is a metonomy whose function is draw the attention on what is vital to the children. Furthemore the character called “master” anticipates the divide between the man who gives the soup and children: right from the introduction the master is a very important person whose role is assisted by women, less important than him. There is an exaggerate use of the language so that the master sounds ridiculous and funny, indeed novels had the purpose to entertain the readers. However Dickens made a very complex use of syntax that adds a sense of heaviness to the setting, also conveyed by intelligent semantic choices like: “the master”, “for the purpose”, “assisted by”, “festive composition”. In addition Dickens uses references to quantity like “one porringer” and “no more” when there is a cery little soup to be distributed and only on special public occasions the children were given “two onces and a quarter”. The bowls became animated: “the bowls never wanted washing” because they were licked of every drop of soup. In telling the reader about the daily routine at the workhouse the third person external narrator compares the children’s behaviour to little animals dying of hunger and this seems grotex and ridiculous.

In the second sequence the narrator uses the technique of showing: the scene in based on a dialogue. The simple reuqest of more food is here descirbed as a dangerous and important action:”advancing to the master, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity”. This exaggeration is the beginning of the irony which characterized this sequence, indeed also the master’s reaction id hyperbolic and so grotex. The moment of highest tension in when the protaginists asks: “Please sir, I want some more”. After Oliver’s request everyone is shocked and to underline the atmosphere the narrator insists on the word “more”, as it was forbidden to pronouce it.

The irony of the narrator is clear, so his purpose is to denounce children’s social condition in order to solve a problem that is really close to Dicknes who was froced as a child to live in a workhouse too.