Lispeth – Textual analysis

In the present text I’m going to do a textual analysis about *Lispeth*, written by Rudyard Kipling.

Reading the title, the intelligent reader creates some expectations: the noun Lisbeth enable you to understand that the text may be focused on a female character. The reader’s expectations are satisfied right form the first sequences of the story, whose function is to introduce the protagonist, Lisbeth, and to make the reader understand that the story is set in the hills of the Northern India.

Concerning to Lispeth’s characterisation, the narrator exploits lots of categories to create the image of the girl. The first one is her family background and origins: Lispeth is a native Indian girl and she lose her parents because of cholera when she was a child. They were mountaineers of Himalaya but, after her parents’ death, the girl moved and became the servant of an English family. So, there is a contrast between two cultures: the Indian one and the European one, and from this piece of information the intelligent reader can understand that Lisbeth is an indefinite character. The second category that the narrator exploits is her name; the use of Lispeth instead of the Christian name Elizabeth suggests that even if the girl received the baptism to be accepted from the colonizators, she is not seen as an equal of an English men or woman. Going on with the analysis, the reader can understand that Lispeth’s characterisation is also made up through her religious beliefs: Lispeth is Christianised when she was very young and grows up in a Christian family. The reader understands something about the protagonist of the short story also by means of actions: even if she is a servant, Lisbeth only takes care of non-manual jobs for example taking care of children and keeping Chaplain’s wife company. Also, the narrator provides some personal judgments about the girl and that’s why you can understand that the image of Lisbeth comes to life from Kipling’s point of view too. He makes some comparison between the Indian girl and other female character of the traditional literature such as Diana. The narrator enables the reader to visualize Lisbeth thanks the physical description of the girl; he focus the reader attention on her face, her eyes and her height, which is compared whit the natives’ one.

As regard the narrative and lessical choiches, the short story presents a third person narrator which is an omniscient one, because he knows everything about the story, the characters and the setting. He gives to the reader lots of details about the girl but also about the setting, and thanks to the use of the narrative technique of telling he makes the reader visualize the atmosphere and the characters. The bnarrator uses lots of adjectives and superlatives (“wonderful eyes”) making value judgments that makes the reader belief in all the narrator says. The narrator, in the last sequences of the short story, focus the reader attention also on Lispeth’s emotion: this is the reason why the reader can easly identify himself or herself with the protagonist.