**ENGLISH WRITTEN TEST II TERM II FORM 2LSCA**

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| **THE PRIORESS**  There also was a Nun, a Prioress,  Her way of smiling very simple and coy.  Her greatest oath was only “By St Loy!”  And she was known as Madam Eglantyne.  And well she sang a service, with a fine  Intoning through her nose, as was most seemly,  And she spoke daintily in French, extremely,  After the school of Stratford-atte-Bowe;  French in the Paris style she did not know.  At meat her manners were well taught withal;  No morsel from her lips did she let fall,  Nor dipped her fingers in the sauce too deep;  But she could carry a morsel up and keep  The smallest drop from falling on her breast.  For courtliness she had a special zest,  And she would wipe her upper lip so clean  That not a trace of grease was to be seen  Upon the cup when she had drunk; to eat,  She reached a band sedately for the meat.  She certainly was very entertaining,  Pleasant and friendly in her ways, and straining  To counterfeit a courtly kind of grace,  A stately bearing fitting to her place,  And to seem dignified in all her dealings.  As for her sympathies and tender feelings,  She was so charitably solicitous  She used to weep if she but saw a mouse  Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bleeding.  And she had little dogs she would be feeding  With roasted flesh, or milk, or fine white bread.  And bitterly she wept if one were dead  Or someone took a stick and made it smart,  She -was all sentiment and tender heart.  Her veil was gathered in a seemly way,  Her nose was elegant, her eyes glass-grey;  Her mouth was very small, but soft and red,  Her forehead, certainly, was fair of spread,  Almost a span across the brows, I own;  She was indeed by no means undergrown.  Her dock, I noticed, had a graceful charm.  She wore a coral trinket on her arm,  A set of beads, the gaudies tricked in green,  Whence hung a golden brooch of brightest sheen  On which there first was graven a crowned A,  And lower, Amor vincit omnia | **LA MONACA DI MONZA**  **….**  e vide una finestra d'una forma singolare, con due grosse e fitte grate di ferro, distanti l'una dall'altra un palmo; e dietro quelle una monaca ritta. Il suo aspetto, che poteva dimostrar venticinque anni, faceva a prima vista un'impressione di bellezza, ma d'una bellezza sbattuta, sfiorita e, direi quasi, scomposta. Un velo nero, sospeso e stirato orizzontalmente sulla testa, cadeva dalle due parti, discosto alquanto dal viso; sotto il velo, una bianchissima benda di lino cingeva, fino al mezzo, una fronte di diversa, ma non d'inferiore bianchezza; un'altra benda a pieghe circondava il viso, e terminava sotto il mento in un soggolo, che si stendeva alquanto sul petto, a coprire lo scollo d'un nero saio. Ma quella fronte si raggrinzava spesso, come per una contrazione dolorosa; e allora due sopraccigli neri si ravvicinavano, con un rapido movimento. Due occhi, neri neri anch'essi, si fissavano talora in viso alle persone, con un'investigazione superba; talora si chinavano in fretta, come per cercare un nascondiglio; in certi momenti, un attento osservatore avrebbe argomentato che chiedessero affetto, corrispondenza, pietà; altre volte avrebbe creduto coglierci la rivelazione istantanea d'un odio inveterato e compresso, un non so che di minaccioso e di feroce: quando restavano immobili e fissi senza attenzione, chi ci avrebbe immaginata una svogliatezza orgogliosa, chi avrebbe potuto sospettarci il travaglio d'un pensiero nascosto, d'una preoccupazione familiare all'animo, e più forte su quello che gli oggetti circostanti. Le gote pallidissime scendevano con un contorno delicato e grazioso, ma alterato e reso mancante da una lenta estenuazione. Le labbra, quantunque appena tinte d'un roseo sbiadito, pure, spiccavano in quel pallore: i loro moti erano, come quelli degli occhi, subitanei, vivi, pieni d'espressione e di mistero. La grandezza ben formata della persona scompariva in un certo abbandono del portamento, o compariva sfigurata in certe mosse repentine, irregolari e troppo risolute per una donna, non che per una monaca. Nel vestire stesso c'era qua e là qualcosa di studiato o di negletto, che annunziava una monaca singolare: la vita era attillata con una certa cura secolaresca, e dalla benda usciva sur una tempia una ciocchettina di neri capelli; cosa che dimostrava o dimenticanza o disprezzo della regola che prescriveva di tenerli sempre corti, da quando erano stati tagliati, nella cerimonia solenne del vestimento. ……. |

**ACTIVITY**: In an argumentative text format, **write a comparative analysis** of the two nuns with reference to the overall effect and the strategies used in the two characterisations.

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**COMPETENCES**

**L4 - Utilizzare una lingua straniera per scopi comunicativi ed operativi**

L4c. Descrivere in maniera semplice esperienze ed eventi, relativi all’ambito personale e sociale

L4d. Utilizzare in modo adeguato le strutture grammaticali

L4f. Scrivere brevi testi di interesse personale, sociale o professionale

In the following argumentative text I’m going to discuss how both the characterization of “La monaca di Monza” and “The Prioress” reveal some common elements.

Both of them are indirect characterizations by means of a third-narrator thanks to the technique of telling: the reader learns about the character from the narrator’s point of view. However, the characterizations represent different examples of how the technique of telling can affect the reader.

La monaca di Monza is an interesting example of a psychological characterization by means of a climatic suspense that elicits the reader’s curiosity around a mysterious and complex character, while the Prioress an ironic characterization of a typical medieval character to criticize and ridicule the attitude of some members of the clergy.

The idea of La Monaca di Monza comes in direct speech from the point of view of  the boatman.

La monaca di Monza is a psychological characterization where the effect is mystery and it is supported by the narrator so the reader gets more and more curious. The effect is realized  by means of a climatic suspense. In the previous paragraph the narrator uses a cinematic technique: slow-up which is a strategy used to elicit the reader’s curiosity.

The strategies used to build the psychological characterization highlight the contrast  between the reader’s expectation of an ordinary nun and the her uniqueness.

The characterization of the setting is juxtaposed to the characterization of the nun. The decadence of the place conveys the idea of the decadence of the people’s power inhabiting it**.** In doing so,  the narrator is anticipating some features of the nun: ‘bellezza sbattuta, sfiorita e … scomposta’.

Moving on with the narration, the speaking voice focuses on  her dressing style, where the contrast between colors black (evil) and white (good) mirrors the contrast between appearance and reality. Her body language expresses the inner nature she is trying to hide: “qua e là qualcosa di studiato o di negletto, che annunziava una monaca singolare: la vita attillata… una ciocchettina di neri capelli… dimenticanza o disprezzo della regola”. The  climatic suspense is kept thanks to different characterization strategies: her appearance, her eyes (conflict), her face looks white, showing some suffering, her lips, even if pale rose,  stand out from her white face,  her beauty looks worn out although she is very young: all these elements are used to underline that under the appearance a deeper nature is hiding which is revealed.

The Prioress is an ironic characterization in order to criticize the ambiguous attitude of the clergy. The narrator wants to reduce the importance of the nun amusing the reader and to ridicule her behavior who is expected to be concerned with religious values (poverty, humility, prayer…) instead she looks only interested in her manners and appearance.

The most important strategy in this text is irony, which is spread all over other strategies. The other strategies used to characterize the prioress are reputation, social status, way of speaking, actions, eating style, attitudes, relationship to animals. The use of language is used to highlight her behavior by making large references to her eating habits and actions. In so doing the narrator wants to underline that she gives more importance to her appearance rather than to her inner qualities and values. Everything reported about her is appropriated for a courtesan not for a nun who has a hierarchic role.

The whole characterization is built to ridicule the prioress who has an important hierarchy role unlike the monaca di Monza who is a nun.

The intelligent reader may infer that the woman may have become a nun unwittingly, forced by her family as it was the rule in some situations in medieval times like la monaca di Monza.  Both the Monaca di Monza and the Prioress may have been forced by their families to join monastery life. They  both look  unusual as nuns giving the reader the idea to be out of place in the monastery.

All the features analysed contribute to build a coherent portrait of both the characters  justifying the reaction on the reader’s mind.