**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 fineIntoning 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 keepThe smallest drop from falling on her breast.For courtliness she had a special zest,And she would wipe her upper lip so cleanThat not a trace of grease was to be seenUpon 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 strainingTo 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 solicitousShe used to weep if she but saw a mouseCaught in a trap, if it were dead or bleeding.And she had little dogs she would be feedingWith roasted flesh, or milk, or fine white bread.And bitterly she wept if one were deadOr 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 sheenOn 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

Now I am going to compare La Monaca di Monza and The Prioress. They were written in two different times; although they are very similar.

I am going to start from the description of the Prioress; one of the characters described in the General Prologue of The Canterbury Tales.

The first piece of information the poets gives the reader is about the prioress' social status (*There was also a Nun, a Prioress...And she was known as Madame Eglantyne*): she belongs to the Church and she occupies an important role into the monastery. The poet tells to the reader that she was known as Madame Eglantyne. So this isn't her true name, because he used the expression “she was know”.

Right from the start, the poet creates a parody of the nun: the first piece of information given is about the way she smiles. This is unusual to describe a religious character. In addition, the Prioress does everything in her power to draw people's attention. For example, we can understand this from the way she sings at Church. She also appears to be more interested in table manners than in Church services.

The Prioress occupies a religious position; so the reader expectes her to love men more than animals. However, it is not true. Indeed, the reader understands that she loves animals more than common people.

The poet insists that the Prioress knew French very well in her life; considered the hottest language. Thus, Chaucer wants to underline that she looks and behaves more like a lady that than a nun. He wants to make a parody of her, that she gave more importance at appearance than at the religion. It is important to remember that at the time, many daughters of noble families went into monasteries without having faith. Probably it is the case of the Prioress.

Geoffrey Chaucer uses the strategy of irony when he describes the attention she uses when she eats because she doesn't want any “drop upon her breast”. The intelligent reader understands that the poet used the noun “breast” to refer to the body of women, thus creating an effect of mystery.

The Prioress ate “on roast meat, or on milk and fine white bread”, food that not even the poor could afford. As you can see, she is object of irony in all the text, especially when she makes the reader understand that her charity is mainly for her dogs instead for the people.

Only at the end of the characterisation the poet refers to the physical appearance of the nun. The reader can understand that she don't respect the rules ordered by the church and that she wanted to show her beauty.

At last the poet describes her appearance: he uses lots of colours and at the end he focuses the attention on a particular Latin phrase saying "Amor vincit omnia". In conclusion, the poet build her characterisation using the following strategies: social status, behaviour, language, actions, the way she eats, physical appeareance, behaviour with animals and other people, dressing style and personality.

The Monaca di Monza, instead, is describe in the most famous Manzoni's opera: The Promessi Sposi.

From the description you can understand her social status. She is a nun and she occupies a high position in the hierarchy of the clergy. Manzoni gives us information about her physical appearance and the way she moves: “mosse repentine, irregolari”.

After that, he gives the reader a description of her mainly about how she looks, he tells about her clothes: she is elegant and she takes care of her appearance. She uses only two colours, black and white, which have a symbolic aspect; this may be an allegoric opposition between sin and good or between two different personalities of the character. Then he focuses on the description of the face using body language. The total effect of using all these strategies gives the idea of ​​a mysterious and suffering woman, full of contradictions like the colours she uses. A whole paragraph that speaks of her eyes, whose language is a strategy aimed at making us understand her contrast and the relationship she had with those who looked. Inside her there is the contrast between hatred and the search for affection.

As we already know, her future was decided before she was born because the father wants to give his heritage to the first son. The reader can understand that she is very unhappy, she sounds angry and insecure.

Manzoni creates a lot of suspense arround his character. He focuses besides the attention on a particular aspect of her appearance: a lock of hair comes out from her veil. This is a relevant aspect of the nun, because it highlights that she doesn't respect the rules of the order she belongs to.

The two nuns that we have analysed have some aspects in common: both belong to a high position, both are unhappy and both seem to not care about rules. In conclusion, as the two poets underline La Monaca di Monza and the Prioress doesn't behave like common nuns. The reader can understand this reading what they do: the Prioress pretend to be refine and the Monaca di Monza is always angry. It means that both of them are unhappy. At that time rich families sent their daughters to convents but probably they didn't want that kind of life.