**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

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In the use of characterization to introduce their characters Geoffrey Chaucer and Alessandro Manzoni uses different strategies and techniques, even if in some cases the reader can notice some similarities.

For example, if I wanted to compare the characterisation of “The prioress” and “La monaca di Monza”, I would immediately realize that the main strategy used in the characterisation of the prioress is irony, which uses certain information to mean the exactly opposite, while the characterisation of “La monaca di Monza” is a psychological characterisation where the strategy of irony is not present at all.

Firstly, it is important to notice that both the characters are known to the reader by the telling technique, so the reader is influenced by the speaker’s point of view and he is no let free to make up his own idea.

In the characterisation of “**La monaca di Monza**” the narrator creates a climatic effect, which is obtained through a cinematographic technique, the slow up, which allows him to create a horizon of waiting and to increase the reader’s curiosity.

The strategy through which this psychologic portrait is created in the characterisation of “La monaca” is the reference to her dressing style, where the black and white contrast represents both purity and sin, thus showing the contradiction between the expectation the reader has for a nun and “La Monaca” ’s true nature.

Another strategy exploited by the narrator is the use of body language that expresses the presence of something the nun wants to hide, underlined by the “Bellezza sbattuta, sfiorita e, direi quasi, scomposta” that manifests the existence of another reality that appears as a disease through symptoms such as “Ma quella fronte si raggrinzava spesso, come per una contrazione dolorosa” or “Due sopraccigli neri si ravvicinavano, con un rapido movimento” and eventually ”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 addition, there is a contrast of feelings for people she looks: they sometimes see hatred and anger in her eyes, other times a claim of mercy.

As a consequence, the narrator obtains in the reader the effect of a mysterious woman full of contradictions and wants to know more about her.

In the characterisation of “**The prioress”** irony is the most important and frequent strategy adopted by the narrator, who makes fun of the character. The protagonist is a prioress, so has a role inside the convent, unlike the monaca di Monza who is only a nun, so she should deal with religious values. However, she only cares about the way she looks like. Indeed, the poet uses the strategy of the affected appearance to underline her desire to imitate the noble French ladies even if, to tell the truth, the prioress does not even know the French language.

Furthermore, the narrator uses very often references to her eating style, her physical descriptions and even her relationship with animals: all information the reader does not expect to read about a nun, especially a prioress. As a consequence, the reader understands that the poet connotes the prioress like he is looking at a courtesan.

The reason of this choice is surely to make people laugh and perhaps indirectly criticize the church.

In conclusion, I can affirm that both the characters don’t follow the stereotypes of the usual nun, which had to be only interested in religious values, but while the prioress is a negative character, only interested in her appearance , the Monaca di Monza is a complex character that the reader cannot help to like, because of her mysterious air and her desire to independence highlighted by the expression “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.” In this way the character of “La monaca di Monza” conveys novelty and exception for the women of the time who always had to be pure chaste and shy.