

**STUDY MATERIALS for SEM 2 given by Sraddha Nag  
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The Renaissance was a cultural movement that profoundly affected European intellectual life in the early modern period. Beginning in Italy, and spreading to the rest of Europe by the 16th century, its influence was felt in literature, philosophy, art, music, politics, science, religion, and other aspects of intellectual inquiry. Renaissance scholars employed the humanist method in study, and searched for realism and human emotion in art. The English Renaissance was a cultural and artistic movement in England dating from the early 16th century to the early 17th century. It is associated with the pan-European Renaissance that many cultural historians believe originated in northern Italy in the 14th century. This era in English cultural history is sometimes referred to as "the age of Shakespeare" or "the Elizabethan era." Poets such as Edmund Spenser and John Milton produced works that demonstrated an increased interest in understanding English Christian beliefs, such as the allegorical representation of the Tudor Dynasty in *The Faerie Queene* and the retelling of mankind's fall from paradise in *Paradise Lost*; playwrights, such as Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, composed theatrical representations of the English take on life, death, and history. Nearing the end of the Tudor Dynasty, philosophers like Sir Thomas More and Sir Francis Bacon published their own ideas about humanity and the aspects of a perfect society, pushing the limits of metacognition at that time. England came closer to reaching modern science with the Baconian Method, a forerunner of the Scientific Method. The English Renaissance changed the way people think about life and culture.

**1.**

**THE BEGINNINGS OF THE RENAISSANCE**

The dispute about the throne, which culminated in the War of Roses, dissipated the energy and resources of the country and finally destroyed in large measure the noble families. Theatre and literature depended on their patronage. The accession of Henry VII in 1485 brought about a period of quiet and recovery. Henry VII established a strong monarchy and restored social and political order. The country resumed its power among European nations, and began through them to feel the stimulus of the Renaissance. Caxton's press, which was established in 1476 in London, was the earliest forerunner of Renaissance in England. King Henry VIII, who acceded to the throne of England in 1509, began an era of significant and purposeful changes. He ruled in the spirit of modern statecraft. He encouraged trade and manufacturers, and increased the wealth of the country. During his reign England contributed her part to the spread of the new civilization and new learning. Education was popularized. Cardinal's College and Christ Church College at Oxford were founded. The Reign of Henry VIII also expedited the Reformation which had begun in England nearly two centuries before with Wycliffe. The translation of the Bible by William Tyndale and Miles Caverdale is a significant development in English prose. During Henry's reign the court emerged as a great patron of learning, art and literature. The atmosphere of peace and calm which began to prevail after long turmoil and chaos paved the way for extraordinary development of literary activity. Edward VI ruled from 1547 to 1553. The reign of Queen Mary from 1553 to 1558 was marred by religious conflicts. She restored Roman

Catholicism in England. Creative activity was arrested during her time but it was replenished with much greater vigour in the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558 – 1603). The above historical overview is just an introduction to the socio-political and religious conditions leading to the golden period which is called **the Age of Elizabeth**.

The English Renaissance covers a long span of time, which is divided for the sake of convenience into the following three periods:

I) The Beginning of Renaissance (1516 – 1558)

II) The Flowering of Renaissance (1558 – 1603) It is actually called the Age of Elizabeth.

III) The Decline of Renaissance (1603-1625). It is also termed the Jacobean Age.

**2.**

### **THE ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBAN AGES**

Both the Elizabethan and Jacobean Periods in the history of English literature are also known as The Age of Shakespeare. This span of time is the golden age of literature. It extends from the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 to the death of James I in 1625. It was an era of peace, of economic prosperity, of stability, of liberty and of great explorations. It was an age of both contemplation and action. It was an era which was illustrious for the unprecedented development of art, literature and drama. John Milton calls England, during this age, as —a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself, like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.

**2.1**

#### **Some of the main characteristics of these age 2.1.1**

##### **Political Peace and Stability**

Elizabeth brilliantly framed and followed the policy of balance and moderation both inside and outside the country. A working compromise was reached with Scotland. The rebellious northern barons were kept in check. She, therefore, could successfully establish peace in traditionally disturbed border areas. Under her able administration the English national life rapidly and steadily progressed.

**2.1.2**

##### **Social Development**

It was an age of great social contentment. The rapid rise of industrial towns gave employment to thousands. Increasing trade and commerce enriched England. The wealthy were taxed to support the poor. This created the atmosphere for literary activities.

**2.1.3**

##### **Religious Tolerance**

It was an era of religious tolerance of peace. Upon her accession she found the whole nation divided against itself. The north was largely Catholic, and the South was strongly Protestant. Scotland followed the Reformation intensely. Ireland followed its old traditional religion. It was Elizabeth who made the Anglican Church a reality. Anglicanism was a kind of

compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. Both the Protestants and the Catholics accepted the Church. All Englishmen were influenced by the Queen's policy of religious tolerance and were united in a magnificent national enthusiasm. The mind of man, now free from religious fears and persecutions, turned with a great creative impulse to other forms of activity. An atmosphere of all-pervading religious peace gave great stimulus to literary activity.

#### **2.1.4**

#### **Sense and Feeling of Patriotism**

Elizabeth inspired all her people with the unbounded patriotism which exults in Shakespeare and with the personal devotion which finds a voice in the Faery Queen. Under her administration the English national life progressed faster not by slow historical and evolutionary process. English literature reached the very highest point of literary development during her period.

#### **2.1.5**

#### **Discovery, Exploration and Expansion**

This is the most remarkable epoch for the expansion of both mental and geographical horizons. People started to wonder out to the known world with their ships. John Abot explored the northeast coast of North America, 1497. Vasco Da Gama explored the India and the cape of Good Hope, 1498. Balboa crosses Isthmus of Panama and sights the Pacific Ocean. Magellan leads a first expedition to circum-navigate the globe. Hernando Cortes conquers Mexico, destroying Aztec Empire, 1521. British East India company founded for trade with Asia, 1600. First permanent English settlement in North America established at Jamestown, Virginia, 1607, and the Mayflower lands at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, 1620.

#### **2.1.6**

#### **Scientific developments**

Renaissance was a time when people argued facts with the bible. An astronomer name Nicolaus Copernicus published a theory that planets orbit the sun, 1543. This true fact outraged the Church, because they told all the people that earth is the center of the universe and everything else went around. Galileo in 1609, first study the sky with a telescope. He invented a telescope and studied the moon and also argued to the church that sun is the center of the universe. Everyone thought that he is lunatic.

#### **2.1.7**

#### **Influence of Foreign Fashions**

Italy, the home of Renaissance, fascinated the Elizabethans. All liked to visit Italy and stay there for some time. People were not only found of Italian books and literature, but also of Italian manners and morals. Consequently the literature of England was immensely enriched by imitating Italian classics.

#### **3.**

#### **ELIZABETHAN POETRY**

It reflects the spirit of conquest and self-glorification, humanism and vigorous imagination, emotional depth and passionate intensity. Sublimity was considered to be the essential

quality of poverty. Spenser, Shakespeare and Marlowe had the immense power to exalt and sublimate the lovers of poetry. The poetry of his period is remarkable for the spirit of independence. The poets refused to follow set rules of poetic composition. Consequently, new poetic devices and new linguistic modes developed.

All varieties of poetic forms like lyric, elegy, eclogue, ode, sonnet etc. were successfully attempted.

### **3.1 Representatives: Sir Thomas Wyatt**

Wyatt brought to English poetry grace, harmony and nobility. He followed the Italian models and attempted a great variety of metrical experiment- songs, sonnets, madrigals and elegies. He was the first poet, who introduced sonnet, which was a favourite poetical form in England with Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Arnold and many others. He first of all introduced personal or autobiographical note in English poetry.

#### **Earl of Surrey**

Surrey is a disciple of Wyatt rather than an independent poetical force. His sonnets are more effective than those of Wyatt. The former followed the Petrarchan pattern of sonnet, whereas the latter modified it and made it typical English. The Petrarchan form is perhaps more impressive, the modified English form the more expressive. Shakespeare followed the English pattern of sonnet, introduced by Surrey. He was the first poet to use blank verse in his translation of Aeneid.

#### **Edmund Spenser**

Edmund Spenser is rightly called the poet's poet because all great poets of England have been indebted to him. C. Rickett remarks, —Spenser is at once the child of the Renaissance and the Reformation. On one side we may regard him with Milton as —the sage and serious Spenser, on the other he is the humanist, alive to the finger tips with the sensuous beauty of the Southern romance.

#### **William Shakespeare**

Shakespeare composed many beautiful sonnets and two long poems

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Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. In the former the realistic passions are expressed through pictures and episodes. It is remarkable for astonishing linguistic beauty. The latter is a contrast to the former. Having painted the attempts of an amorous woman, Shakespeare now proceeded to represent the rape of a chaste wife.

#### **Christopher Marlowe and George Chapman**

The Hero and Leander

was left incomplete due to Marlowe's untimely death. It was completed by Chapman. This poem is remarkable for felicity of diction and flexibility. The poets show great skill in effectively using words and images. Besides completing Hero and Leander, Chapman also translated Iliad and Odyssey and composed some sonnets.

## **4.**

### **ELIZABETHAN PROSE**

The Age of Elizabeth was also conspicuous for the remarkable development of prose, which was variously written with great stylistic and linguistic excellence. The following prose genres developed during this period.

#### **4.1 Representatives:**

##### **Sir Thomas More**

He was one of the early humanists and the first prose writer of great literary significance. His famous work *Utopia* was written in Latin, but it was translated into English in 1551 by Ralph Robinson. It is the —true prologue of Renaissance.

##### **Sir Thomas Elyot and Sir John Cheke**

Elyot's *The Governor* is a treatise on moral philosophy and education. His prose does not concern the common man but it is restrained and classical. Cheke was a teacher of Greek art at Cambridge. He wrote *The Heart of Seditio* which shows the influence of classicism and antiquity. To him both form and matter were equally important. His prose is vigorous, argumentative, eloquent and humorous.

##### **Sir Francis Bacon**

Bacon occupies a permanent place in English prose due to his *Essays*, ten in number, which appeared in 1597. The second edition and the third edition raised the number to 38 and 58 respectively. They are on familiar subjects and they represent the meditations of trained and learned mind.

##### **Ben Jonson**

Ben Jonson wrote aphoristic essays which are compiled in *The Timber of Discoveries* which was published posthumously about 1641. His essays are moral and critical. Jonson's style is noticeable for lucidity, terseness and strength. He treats a subject in a simple and plain manner.

5.

#### **ELIZABETHAN DRAMA**

The period marks the real beginning of drama. It is the golden age of English drama. The renewed study of classical drama shaped English drama in its formative years. Seneca influenced the development of English tragedy, and Plautus and Terence directed the formation of comedy. The classical drama gave English drama its five acts, its set scenes and many other features. Regular English tragedy, comedy and historical play were successfully written during this period.

#### **5.1 Representatives:**

9

##### **Shakespeare**

William Shakespeare was not of an age but of all ages. He wrote 37 plays, which may be classified as tragedies, comedies, romances or tragic-comedies and historical plays. The period of Shakespeare's dramatic activity spans twenty four years (1588 – 1612). Shakespeare brought perfection to the writing of romantic comedy. His comedy is romantic and not classical. It observes the fundamental requirements of tragedy expounded by Aristotle in *The Poetics*. The historical plays were immensely popular in Elizabethan England. They reflected the spirit of the age. The people were intensely patriotic and were very proud of the achievements of their ancestors or the foreign fields. The newly awakened

spirit of patriotism and nationalism enables the people to take keen interest in the records of bygone struggle against foreign invasion and civil disunion.

### **John Lyly**

Lyly wrote eight comedies, of which the best are Campaspe, Endymion, Gallathea, Midas and Love's Metamorphosis. He wrote for the private theatres. His writing is replete with genuine romantic atmosphere, humour, fancy for romantic comedy, realism, classicism and romanticism.

### **Christopher Marlowe**

He is, indeed, the protagonist of tragic drama in English and the forerunner of Shakespeare and his fellows. Marlow provided big heroic subjects that appealed to human imagination. He for the first time imparted individuality and dignity to the tragic hero.

### **Ben Jonson and the Comedy of Humours**

Ben Jonson was a classicist in Elizabethan England, which was romantic both in character and temper. Jonson was the first great neo-classic. Like Donne, he revolted against the artistic principles of his contemporaries, and he sought a measure for the uncontrolled, romantic exuberance of Elizabethan literature in the classical literature. In all branches of his writings he is the conscious artist and reformer. To him the chief function of literature was to instruct and educate the audience and readers.

### **George Chapman**

George Chapman was a classicist like Jonson. His two comedies All Fools' Day and Eastward Ho are remarkable for Jonsonian humour. His historical plays dealing with nearly contemporary history are The Blind Beggar of Alexandria, Charles, Duke of Byron and The Tragedy of Chabot.

## **Italy – the Birthplace of Renaissance**

The years 1300 to 1600 saw a rebirth of learning and culture in Europe. Called the Renaissance, it spread north from Italy. It began there for three reasons. First, Italy had several important cities, whereas most of northern Europe was still rural. Second, these cities included a class of merchants and bankers who were becoming wealthy and powerful. Third, Italian artists and scholars were inspired by the ruined buildings and other reminders of classical Rome. That new interest in the classical past led to an important value in Renaissance culture—humanism. This was a deep interest in what people have already achieved as well as what they could achieve in the future. Scholars did not try to connect classical writings to Christian teaching but tried to understand them on their own terms. Renaissance thinkers stressed the things of the world. In the Middle Ages, the emphasis had been mostly on spiritual values. One way that powerful or wealthy people showed this interest in worldly things was by paying artists, writers, and musicians to create beautiful works of art. Men tried to show that they could master many fields of study or work. Someone who succeeded in many fields was admired greatly. The artist Leonardo da Vinci was an example of this ideal. He was a painter, a scientist, and an inventor. Men were expected to be charming, witty, well-educated, well-mannered, athletic, and self-controlled. Women were expected not to create art but to inspire artists. Renaissance artists sometimes used new methods. Sculptors made figures more realistic than those from the Middle Ages. Painters used perspective to create the illusion that their paintings were three-dimensional. The subject of artwork changed also. Art in the Middle Ages was mostly religious, but Renaissance artists reproduced other views of life. Michelangelo showed great skill as an architect, a sculptor, and a painter. Renaissance writers reached high achievements as well. Several wrote in their native languages, whereas most writing in the Middle Ages had been in Latin.

Writers also changed their subject matter. They wrote to express their own thoughts and feelings or to portray in detail an individual. Dante and others wrote poetry, letters, and stories that were self-expressive and more realistic. Niccolò Machiavelli took a new approach to understanding government. He focused on telling rulers how to expand their power, even if that meant taking steps that the Church might view as evil.

## **Northern Renaissance**

By 1450, the bubonic plague had ended in northern Europe and the population was recovering. Also, the Hundred Years' War between France and England was ending. The suffering caused by these two events was fading, and the new ideas from Italy spread to northern Europe, where they were quickly adopted. The northern Renaissance had a difference, however. While the educated people there became interested in classical learning, they were more likely to combine that with interest in religious ideas. Major artists appeared in parts of Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The use of oil-based paints became popular. Dürer painted religious subjects and realistic landscapes. Holbein, van Eyck, and Bruegel painted lifelike portraits and scenes of peasant life. They revealed much about the times.

The new ideas of Italian art moved to the north, where artists began to use them. Painters in Flanders were deeply interested in showing life in realistic ways. They painted members of the rising merchant class and peasants, revealing much about life of the period. One pioneered in the use of oil-based paints. Writers of the northern Renaissance combined humanism with deep Christian faith. They urged reforms in the Church and society to try to make people more devoted to God and more just. Thomas More wrote a book about an imaginary ideal society where greed, war, and conflict did not exist. William Shakespeare is widely viewed as the greatest playwright of all time. His plays showed a brilliant command of the English language and a deep understanding of people and how they interact with one another. One reason that learning spread so rapidly during the Renaissance was the invention of movable type. The Chinese had invented the process of carving characters onto wooden blocks. They then arranged them in words, inked the blocks, and pressed them against paper to print pages. In 1440, a German, Johann Gutenberg, adopted this practice. He produced his first book—a Bible—in 1455. The technology then spread rapidly. By 1500, presses in Europe had printed nearly 10 million books. Printing made it easier to make many copies of a book. As a result, written works became available far and wide. Fewer books were printed in Latin, and more books were printed in languages such as English, French, Spanish, Italian, or German. As a result, more people began to read the Bible on their own. Some formed ideas about Christianity that differed from those of the Church.

## **Martin Luther**

By 1500, Renaissance values emphasizing the individual and worldly life weakened the influence of the Church. At the same time, many people sharply criticized the Church for some of its practices. Popes seemed more concerned with luxury and political power than with spiritual matters. Critics resented the fact that they paid taxes to support the Church in Rome. The lower clergy had faults. Many local priests lacked education and couldn't teach people. Others took actions that broke their vows as priests. In the past, reformers had urged that the Church change its ways to become more spiritual and humble. Christian humanists such as Erasmus and More added their voices to calls for change. In the early 1500s, the calls grew louder. In 1517, a German monk and professor named

Martin Luther protested some actions of a Church official. That person was selling what were called indulgences. By paying money to the Church, people thought they could win salvation. Luther challenged this practice and others. He posted a written protest on the door of a castle church. His words were quickly printed and began to spread throughout Germany. Thus, began the Reformation, the movement for reform that led to the founding of new Christian churches. Soon Luther pushed for broader changes. He said that people could win salvation only through faith, not good works. He said that religious beliefs should be based on the Bible alone and that the pope had no real authority. He said that each person was equal before God. He or she did not need a priest to explain the Bible to them. The pope punished Luther for his views, but he refused to take them back. The Holy Roman Emperor, a strong Catholic, called Luther an outlaw. His books were to be burned. No one was to shelter him. Meanwhile, many of his ideas were being put into practice. The Lutheran Church was born around 1522. In 1524, peasants in Germany hoped to use Luther's ideas to change society. They demanded an end to serfdom—a condition like slavery. When it was not granted, they revolted. Luther disagreed with this revolt, and the German princes killed thousands in putting the revolt down. Some nobles supported Luther because they saw a chance to weaken the emperor's power. German princes joined forces against Luther. Some princes protested this. War broke out between Catholics and these Protestant forces in Germany. It finally ended in 1555 with the Peace of Augsburg. That treaty granted each prince the right to decide whether his subjects would be Catholic or Protestant. The Catholic Church faced another challenge to its power in England. Henry VIII, the king, was married to a princess of Spain. She had borne him a daughter, but he wanted a son. This could prevent a civil war erupting when he died. His wife was too old to have another child, but the pope refused to grant him a divorce. In 1534, Henry had the English Parliament pass a number of laws that took England out of the Catholic Church. The laws made the king or queen, not the pope, head of the Church of England. Henry remarried four times, gaining his only son from his third wife. One of Henry's daughters, Elizabeth, became queen in 1558 and completed the task of creating a separate English church. New laws gave the new religion some traits that would appeal to both Protestants and Catholics. In this way, Elizabeth hoped to end religious conflict in England. Elizabeth's England had to face a threat from Spain, too. In 1588, King Philip II of Spain launched a huge invasion of ships to conquer England. This fleet was defeated by a combination of English fighting skill and a terrible storm. Though England survived, Elizabeth's reign was marked by constant money problems.

### **Reformation Continues**

Protestantism arose elsewhere in the 1530s under the leadership of John Calvin. Calvin wrote an important book that gave structure to Protestant beliefs. He taught that people are sinful by nature and only those God chooses—"the elect"—will be saved. He said that God knew from the beginning which people would be saved and which would not. Calvin created a government run by religious leaders in a city in Switzerland. The city had strict rules of behavior that urged people to live deeply religious lives. Anyone who preached different religious ideas might be burned at the stake. A preacher named John Knox was impressed by Calvin's high moral ideals. Knox put these ideas into practice in Scotland. This was the beginning of the Presbyterian Church. Others in Switzerland, Holland, and France adopted Calvin's ideas as well. In France, his followers were called Huguenots. Conflict between them and Catholics often turned to violence. In 1572, mobs killed about 12,000 Huguenots. Another Protestant church that arose was the Anabaptists. They preached that people should be baptized into the faith as adults. They influenced some later groups.



Protestant churches grew, but millions remained true to the Catholic faith. Still, the Catholic Church took steps to reform itself. A Spanish noble named Ignatius founded a new group in the Church based on deep devotion to Jesus. Members started schools across Europe. They tried to convert people to Catholicism who were not Christians. In addition, they tried to stop the spread of Protestant faiths in Europe. Two popes of the 1500s helped bring about changes in the Church. Paul III took several steps, including calling a great council of church leaders at Trent, in northern Italy. The council, which met in 1545, passed these doctrines:

- the Church's interpretation of the Bible was final;
- Christians needed good works as well as faith to win salvation;
- the Bible and the Church had equal authority in setting out Christian beliefs; and
- indulgences could be sold. Paul also put in action a kind of court called the Inquisition. It was charged with finding, trying, and punishing people who broke the rules of the Church. His successor, Paul IV, put these policies into practice. These actions helped revive the Church and allowed it to survive the challenge of the Protestants.

[Home / Literature](#) / Soliloquies in Macbeth: An Analysis

## Soliloquies in Macbeth: An Analysis

The soliloquies in Macbeth are not only of utmost importance because of its apparent lyrical quality, but they interweave the narrative beautifully and reveal the dilemma and motivation of the characters.

### Soliloquies in Act I

#### Scene iii – Macbeth's first soliloquy after meeting the witches

**“This supernatural soliciting cannot be ill; cannot be good.....And nothing is, but what is not.”**

This soliloquy comes at a critical point in the play. The witches have prophesied that Macbeth will be Thane of Cawdor and eventually the King. Following the prophecy, Ross and Angus come with the news that Macbeth has been made the new Thane of Cawdor for his martial prowess in suppressing the revolt that the former Thane had initiated. Such brisk fulfillment of the witches' prophecy fills Macbeth's mind with apprehensions and expectations.

The conflict that will tear Macbeth apart in subsequent scenes reveals itself as he fails to comprehend the nature of the prophecies as they cannot be profitless because they have shown him a glimpse of greatness. On the other hand, the realization of the prophecies will lead him through an unnatural series of events which perturbs Macbeth. That the conception of the murder was on Macbeth's mind even before the witches appeared is clear from his musings. The supposition of the things to come is disturbing the whole microcosm of Macbeth's body.

## **Scene v – Lady Macbeth’s soliloquy on reading Macbeth’s letter**

**“Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be.....To cry, ‘Hold, hold!’”**

Lady Macbeth learns about the witches’ prophecies from Macbeth’s letter. In this soliloquy, Lady Macbeth reveals to the audience her perception about her husband, and in turn, shows her character. She believes that her husband has high ambitions but lacks the menace to achieve it. She brands Macbeth’s moral compunctions as weakness and assumes the responsibility of leading him to the throne by her aggressive rhetoric, which she believes destiny has secured for Macbeth. Lady Macbeth invokes the evil spirits to stifle all her feminine qualities and replace her milk with poison so that no feeble pangs of age-old morality can thwart her objective. Almost in a trance, she calls upon the dark forces to envelop the world in darkness so that neither can she see her deadly knife nor can Heaven’s instruments dampen her resolve.

## **Scene vii – Macbeth reflects on the impending murder**

**“If it were done, when ‘tis done, then ‘twere well...And falls on th’other-”**

Duncan has come to pay a royal visit in Inverness. Macbeth, influenced by the Lady Macbeth’s chastisement has finally decided to take up the knife to realize the third prophecy of the witches of being the “king thereafter.” Yet, this soliloquy reveals that Macbeth has not been able to harden himself completely. He wishes that the deed is done fast and is afraid of the consequences of his evil act. A point to note here is that Macbeth fully comprehends the sin that he is about to commit and the judgement that he may have to face not only on earth but in the afterlife as ordained by the even-handed Justice.

Shakespeare shows the efficacy of his art as through Macbeth’s lines he underlines the grave act of betrayal that Macbeth has planned as he is both a soldier and a subject of Duncan. Moreover, Duncan has been so benevolent in the discharge of his royal duties that the macrocosm will revolt against Macbeth with Pity, in the image of a new-born baby, and Cherubins of Heaven, exclaiming about the evil deed to all beings. In almost a desperate confession, Macbeth compares himself to an overambitious horse rider who in an attempt to jump upon the saddle will overleap and fall on the other side of the horse.

The premonitions are two-fold here: one, the impending murder of Duncan, two, the disintegration of Macbeth’s self.

## **Soliloquies in Act II**

## **Scene i – Hallucinations that Macbeth faces before killing Duncan**

**“Is this a dagger, which I see before me.....That summons thee to Heaven or Hell.”**

This much famous soliloquy filled with literary devices, popularly known as the dagger speech, indicates to the audience the range of Macbeth’s imagination that will be the cause of his mental torment throughout the play. Ridden in guilt, Macbeth’s imagination conjures up an impalpable image of a bloody dagger which directs him to Duncan’s sleeping chamber. The disintegration of his body and mind has started as he thinks his eyes are deceiving other senses.

Taking recourse to his sense of sin, Macbeth creates a sense of foreboding with images like dead Nature and Hecate’s rituals which vivify his state of mind. Murder is personified as a stealthy man walking with his wolf towards his desired victim. Macbeth compares Murder to Tarquin who secretly entered Lucrece’s chamber to rape her. He entreats the Earth to ignore his footsteps as he fears that the very ground on which he is walking will speak about his intentions. As he hears the bell, Macbeth proceeds to murder Duncan, but in a trance created by his innate dilemma and unnatural ambition.

## **Soliloquies in Act III**

### **Scene i – Macbeth ponders on Banquo’s murder**

**“To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus:.....And champion me to th’utterance!**

Macbeth has changed from the conflicted man of Act I and II to a shrewd criminal by this act. He has planned Banquo’s murder and this soliloquy underlines the reason why Macbeth fears him. The courage of Banquo, his firmness and wisdom make him a threat as Mark Antony was to Caesar. Macbeth remembers how the witches prophesied that Banquo would be the father of a line of kings. Macbeth, therefore, wonders that did he bear the brunt of evil on his shoulders to see Banquo’s sons succeeding the throne and not his lineage. Macbeth will not let Banquo’s sons rule, hence, as the soliloquy ends he appoints assassins to murder Banquo and his son, Fleance.

In the context of the play, this soliloquy is vital as it marks the point of Macbeth’s complete moral downfall.

## **Soliloquies in Act iv**

### **Scene i – Macbeth plans the murder of Macduff’s family**

**“Time, thou anticipat’st my dread exploits.....But no more sights!”**

Lennox brings the news that Macduff has left for England. Macbeth repents that he missed the chance to murder him because of his procrastination. Macbeth resolves from that moment that he will execute an idea as soon as it occurs to him. Macbeth plans to send his troops to Macduff's castle in Fife to kill his wife and son so that he can eliminate any threat from Macduff's successors.

From this point on, the tides will start to turn as Macbeth in his insecurity realizes that his days on the throne are numbered. Macbeth has reached the nadir of cruelty, and only death awaits him.

## **Soliloquies in Act V**

### **Scene v – Macbeth's final soliloquy on the futility of life**

**“Tomorrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow.....Signifying nothing.”**

Here we see Macbeth as a man who has reached philosophical transcendence above mundane trivialities and mortality. As he learns about Lady Macbeth's death, he feels it would have been better to mourn her death at a later date-tomorrow. It leads him to a reflection of the futility of human life and how all of our past leads to the termination of the present, thus, leading to death. This soliloquy creates sympathy in the audience for Macbeth. In one of the best soliloquies of literature, Macbeth compares life to an actor who engages in elaborate histrionics on the stage of life, but then never returns. He compares life to a story narrated by an idiot, who deceitfully portrays it as vital but which is actually meaningless.

A titanic play like *Macbeth* would never have been so effective on stage without the magnificent soliloquies. Through them, Shakespeare highlights his mastery over the art of dialogue under the facade of a random chronicle play to entertain the Elizabethans.

### **The Presence of the Supernatural in *Macbeth***

A person familiar with the works of William Shakespeare lacks surprise when confronted with the English writer's frequent usage of supernatural elements. Fairies, ghosts, and witches contribute strongly toward the definition of themes and characters. In *Macbeth*, the characterization of the protagonist relates closely to the supernatural fixations of the play. One garners an encompassing aura of sinister dubiousness from the likes of these odd forces. We observe as Macbeth encounter mystical beings and therefore receive insight on how his

subconscious mind functions and how his thoughts spiral into ones of malice. The medium of the supernatural provides the play with its main source of moral struggle. By capitalizing on crucial plot points through the inclusion of otherworldly entities, Shakespeare succeeds in attuning readers to the tragedy brought on by Macbeth's choices.

The three eccentric witches, or "weird sisters", and their associations present to the tale a sense of eerie omniscience. Firstly, there exists no ambiguity in regards to the powers and motivations of the witches. The First Witch plans to get revenge on a woman who refused to relinquish her chestnuts by going after her husband, who "shall live a man forbid" (Act 1, Scene 3, line 21). This willingness to destroy another's life because of a petty spat demonstrates the evil nature of the weird sisters. As a result, the reader knows to view these odd characters with trepidation. Banquo discusses his wariness with Macbeth following the delivering of the witches' prophecy:

But 'tis strange:

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,

The instruments of darkness tell us truths

Win us with honest trifles, to betray's

In deepest consequence" (I, iii, 122-126).

These murmured lines to Macbeth reveal the mysterious women with their equally mysterious words as embodiments of evil and possessors of wily tricks. In later surrendering to his deadly ambitions and murdering good King Duncan, Macbeth therefore cements his position as one tainted by the paranormal darkness. Later, when we arrive at the witches' haunt, the anxious Macbeth faces three apparitions. In hindsight, this visit to Hecate's minions sets in motion the demise of our "hero". Now fearing the interference of Macduff,

Macbeth makes a vow to kill the other man and further secure his own well-being. Notably, he writes off his death being brought about by an army consisting of tree-warriors — “who can impress the forest, bid the tree/ Unfix his earth-bound root?” (IV, i, 95-96). This being the only supernatural force Macbeth does not take seriously shows the irony of him believing heavily in prophecies and being ruined by one he deems silly, though he converses with apparitions and witches and witch-queens. Shakespeare’s weird sisters necessarily initiate the play, symbolize evil, and strike the keynote for the entire work.

The appearance of the dagger tainted with blood that startles a scheming, murderous Macbeth proves extremely unnerving. This particular supernatural vision accurately conveys the pure savagery of the attack he prepares to launch upon his lord. Macbeth wonders if it exists as “a false creation,/ Proceeding from the heat-obsessed brain” (II, i, 38-39). By suggesting that the Macbeth’s overloaded mind produced this image, an element of intensity is touched upon. His attitude of surprise and terror feeds into the aforementioned development. It seems like how the bloodied weapon “marshal’st [him] the way that [he] was going” (II, i, 42) bestows upon us a feeling of purpose. However, the ethereal dagger also horrifies Macbeth, representing a rapidly diminishing inner impulse to walk away from his dire task and avoid damnation. We know that the blade emerges victorious from the mental battle.

Significantly, Shakespeare’s description of the ghost of the wronged Banquo at Macbeth’s feast offers a deep look into the frighteningly unpredictable mind of the false king. The latter mentions the missing man; Banquo’s phantom figure appears as if on cue, suggesting that Macbeth unwittingly summoned it. When he lays eyes upon the ghost, the tortured Macbeth immediately proclaims his innocence: “Thou canst not say I did it” (III, iv, 50). His potent reactions to Banquo sitting in his place at the table worry the other guests and draw the ire of Lady Macbeth, once again demonstrating his susceptibility to the numerous

supernatural aspects of his environment. Thusly, the second manifestation of the dead Banquo during the feast emphasizes what may be a sort of demonic obsession within Macbeth. By slyly talking up his “dear friend Banquo” (III, iv, 90), we watch Macbeth flaunt his knowledge of the supernatural prophecies and his actions to fulfill — or ruin — them. It seems like his ego yearns to engage in this behavior, but a more compassionate side of him, here portrayed as the friend he ordered dead, occasionally makes itself known. The murder of Banquo signals an even further abandonment of the pangs of morality, and the respective ghost is a fleeting symbol of a guilty conscience.

Contrary to what one would expect, the prominent supernatural elements in *Macbeth* appeal to the vulnerability of the titular character. Macbeth’s mental state suffers numerous blows as the amount of paranormal happenings mounts. Indeed, we come to see the supernatural as his weakness. The sinister witches coax hidden desires out of Macbeth that he acts on again and again, despite a few inklings of reluctance. The “other” universe is impertinent to the one we see operating during the play. It instigates action, triggers fear and deception, and remains shrouded in typical ambiguity. Through apparitions and the weird sisters trio, Shakespeare puts forward a medium of pandemonium and mayhem that is essential to the reader’s apprehension of Macbeth.

## *Macbeth In-depth Character Analysis*

### **Main characters**

- Macbeth
- Lady Macbeth

## Secondary characters

- Banquo
- Macduff
- The Witches

## Minor characters

- Duncan
- Malcolm
- Donalbain
- Fleance
- Seyton
- Lady Macduff
- The porter
- Hecate

## *Macbeth*

Macbeth is a complex character who changes throughout the course of the play. He is clearly a brave warrior and leader at the start of the drama but he falls victim to the Witches' predictions. It is unclear whether they plant ideas in his mind or whether they simply highlight thoughts that he has already had. In a series of soliloquies he repeatedly questions himself about his motives for killing the King but is eventually persuaded to continue by his forceful wife.

Having committed murder he finds himself caught in a spiral of evil from which he can see no escape. His actions become less heroic and more cowardly as he continues to murder and terrorise others in order to hold on to his power. Towards the end of the play, when he realises that he is doomed, he briefly returns to his old heroic self.



<p><b>Ambitious</b></p>	<p>At the start of the play, Macbeth is Thane of Glamis. He quickly becomes the more powerful Thane of Cawdor and then <b>murders his way to become and remain King of Scotland</b>. The Witches' predictions seem to waken the ambition already in him and he is spurred on by his wife.</p>	<p><i>The prince of Cumberland: That is a step / On which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap, / For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires; / Let not light see my black and deep desires, / The eye wink at the hand. Yet let that be, / Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. (Act 1 Scene 4)</i></p>	<p>Macbeth is clearly worried by the strength of his own ambition which he refers to as <i>black and deep desires</i>. <b>He knows there will be obstacles in his way but is determined to get round them</b>. He just hopes that nobody will see what he is up to which is why he wants the stars to stop shining.</p>
<p><b>Brave</b></p>	<p>At the start of the play, Macbeth shows that he is <b>a mighty warrior</b> when he leads the Scottish troops to victory over an invading force. Duncan, the King, rewards him by making him Thane of Cawdor. At the end of the play, when he knows he is about to die, <b>Macbeth regains some of his old bravery</b>, as he faces Macduff in single combat.</p>	<p><i>For brave Macbeth-- well he deserves that name -- / Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel, / Which smoked with bloody execution, / Like Valour's minion carved out his passage / Till he faced the slave, Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, / Till he unseamed him from the nave to th'chaps, / And fixed his head upon our battlements.(Act 1 Scene 2)</i></p>	<p>The Captain describes Macbeth's actions on the battlefield particularly when he seeks out and kills the traitor Macdonwald. The Captain uses a number of <b>strong verbs and adjectives</b> to show how brave Macbeth has been: 'brandished', 'smoked', 'carved', 'unseamed', 'fixed'.</p>
<p><b>Changeable</b></p>	<p><b>Macbeth keeps changing his mind about whether to murder Duncan or not</b>. This is particularly so in the early part of the play. His ambition conflicts with his sense of loyalty and morality. Lady Macbeth is key to persuading him and keeping him determined.</p>	<p><i>We will proceed no further in this business. / He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought / Golden opinions from all sorts of people, / Which would be worn now in their newest gloss, / Not cast aside so soon. I am settled and bend up / Each corporeal agent to this terrible feat. (Act 1 Scene 7)</i></p>	<p>Macbeth has just spent a difficult time convincing himself that killing the King is wrong. He tells Lady Macbeth that he will not carry out the deed. Within the space of a couple of minutes she argues the case for Duncan's death and Macbeth is, once again, set on murder.</p>
<p><b>Guilty conscience</b></p>	<p>Throughout the play, <b>Macbeth is tormented by thoughts of the evil things he has done</b>. However, <b>he is caught in a spiral of</b></p>	<p>(seeing the GHOST) <i>Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee! / Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold; / Thou hast no</i></p>	<p>Banquo's ghost appears to Macbeth alone, showing his <b>overactive imagination triggered by a guilty conscience</b>. Although he is now a</p>

	evil and does not seem able to stop himself.	<i>speculation in those eyes / Which thou dost glare with.</i> (Act 3 Scene 4)	king, <b>Macbeth cannot command his own emotions</b> and feels irrevocably set on this course of action. The court thinks he is going mad.
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## *Lady Macbeth*

Lady Macbeth is even more ambitious and ruthless than her husband. As soon as an opportunity to gain power presents itself, she has a plan in mind. She uses her influence to persuade Macbeth that they are taking the right course of action and even takes part in the crime herself.

For a while she is able to suppress her actions but eventually she becomes unable to deal with the guilt of what she has done. She becomes unable to sleep, and mentally unstable, eventually dying in tragic circumstances.

	How is Lady Macbeth like this?	Evidence	Analysis
<b>Ambitious</b>	Lady Macbeth is, perhaps, even more determined than her husband. She can only be Queen if he becomes King so <b>when he hesitates she displays enough ambition for both of them.</b> Once she has worked out a plan, nothing will turn her from that course until her ambition is fulfilled.	<i>Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be / What thou art promised; yet do I fear thy nature, / It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness / To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great, / Art not without ambition, but without / The illness should attend it.</i> (Act 1	Lady Macbeth's <b>determination to succeed</b> is clear here. She is insistent that Macbeth will become King ('shalt be what thou art promised') However, she recognises that he is 'too full o'th'milk of human kindness' and that this could stand in their way. It is interesting that she describes the necessary <b>ruthless streak</b> as an 'illness'. This suggests that even at this stage she knows what she is doing is wrong.

	How is Lady Macbeth like this?	Evidence	Analysis
		Scene 5)	
<b>Cunning</b>	To the outside world, Lady Macbeth seems like the ideal supportive wife but this is part of her ability to be deceptive. <b>When Macbeth expresses doubts, she uses every trick she can think of to make sure he carries out their plan to murder Duncan.</b> When he hesitates, she is there to urge Macbeth on.	<i>All our service, / In every point twice done and then done double, / Were poor and single business to contend / Against those honours deep and broad wherewith / Your majesty loads our house.</i> (Act 1 Scene 6)	Lady Macbeth welcomes Duncan to her home and flatters him so that he will not suspect a thing. She almost overdoes it when she <b>exaggerates 'In every point twice done and then done double'</b> . The word 'double' also links Lady Macbeth to the evil of the witches - they use the word repeatedly in one of their spells.
<b>Conscience-stricken</b>	Lady Macbeth seems to go from being someone with no conscience at all to someone who is overwhelmed by feelings of guilt. <b>She cannot bear to think of what she has done and eventually dies</b> alone and unmourned even by her husband.	<i>Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One, two. Why then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie, a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear? Who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?</i> (Act 5 Scene 1)	<b>As the guilt-stricken Lady Macbeth sleepwalks, she remembers all the evil things she and her husband have done and tries to wash imaginary blood from her hands</b> (Out, damned spot: out, I say!). In particular, she recalls the night of Duncan's murder and the part she played in persuading her husband to act. She is also aware that she will be going to hell for her sins.

## *Banquo*

Banquo is another general in King Duncan's army and Macbeth's best friend. While both men have ambitious thoughts, Banquo is more cautious and does not resort to murder to get what he wants.

Banquo is aware that the Witches' predictions may be tricking Macbeth into evil actions and is the first to suspect Macbeth of murder. He dies while protecting his son, Fleance, and comes back as a ghost to haunt Macbeth.

	How is Banquo like this?	Evidence	Analysis
<b>Noble</b>	Banquo is in many ways Macbeth's opposite. <b>He is kind and caring, loyal and trustworthy.</b> Like Macbeth he fights bravely for King Duncan but does not involve himself with the murder plot. When he and Fleance are attacked his first thought is to keep his son safe. Banquo displays all the character traits that go to make up someone who would be regarded as a truly noble person.	<i>Our fears in Banquo / Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature / Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares, / And to that dauntless temper of his mind, / He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour / To act in safety. There is none but he / Whose being I do fear.</i> (Act 3 Scene 1)	Macbeth considers what it is about Banquo that gives him cause for concern. He states that Banquo has a 'royalty of nature' or nobility about him which actually makes Macbeth afraid of him. He also acknowledges that Banquo has 'valour' (bravery) and 'wisdom' without feeling the need to take unnecessary risks.
<b>Questioning</b>	Banquo seems far less ready to believe the Witches than Macbeth and is suspicious of their motives. He realises that the things they predict/suggest may cause his friend to come to harm. Although, <b>like Macbeth, he is ambitious, he thinks more carefully about the consequences of any action.</b>	<i>That, trusted home, / Might yet enkindle you unto the crown, / Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange, / And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of darkness tell us truths; / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence.</i> (Act 1 Scene 3)	Having listened to the Witches' predictions, Banquo recognises that Macbeth has been given the spark that will have lit up his ambitious streak ('enkindle'). He also realises that the predictions are temptations which only reveal part of the truth ('honest trifles'). This is in order to set a trap for something of greater significance ('to betray's in deepest consequence').

## *Macduff*

Macduff, the Thane of Fife, is Macbeth's deadly enemy. He discovers Duncan's body and becomes Malcolm's chief supporter, following him to England to support him in raising an army against Macbeth. When he learns of the murders of his wife and family, Macduff feels guilty about leaving them and driven by a need for revenge.

According to the Witches' prediction, Macduff is the only one who can stop Macbeth. The two men meet face-to-face on the battlefield and Macduff kills Macbeth.

	How is Macduff like this?	Evidence	Analysis
<b>Loyal</b>	<b>Macduff's first loyalty is to his king and country.</b> It is he who discovers Duncan's body and reveals the full horror of the murder. He follows Malcolm (the rightful king) to England and becomes his right-hand man supporting him in his bid to regain the throne.	<i>Macduff, this noble passion, / Child of &gt;integrity, hath from my soul / Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts / To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth / By many of these trains hath sought to win me / Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me / From over-credulous haste; but God above / Deal between thee and me, for even now / I put myself to thy direction (Act 4 Scene 3)</i>	Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty by pretending to be a worse human being than Macbeth himself. Macduff refuses to give up his loyalty to the Scottish royal family. Malcolm reveals his deception and contrasts the 'integrity' and 'good truth and honour' of Macduff with that of 'Devilish Macbeth'. He finishes by saying that he completely trusts Macduff - 'I put myself to thy direction'.
<b>Revengeful</b>	Macduff wants to rid his country of the tyrant Macbeth and vows to help Malcolm achieve this. When he learns of the murder of	<i>O, I could play the woman with mine eyes / And braggart with my tongue! But gentle heavens, / Cut short all</i>	Macduff is actually <b>a man of few words preferring to get on with things.</b> He could sit around crying about his loss ('I could

	How is Macduff like this?	Evidence	Analysis
	his family he becomes even more <b>determined to take revenge</b> . He and Macbeth come face-to-face on the battlefield and Macduff is victorious.	<i>intermission. Front to front / Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself; / Within my sword's length set him; if he scape, / Heaven forgive him too.</i> (Act 4 Scene 3)	play the woman with mine eyes') or making great speeches about his intentions ('braggart with my tongue'). Instead he cannot wait for the moment ('cut short all intermission') when he and Macbeth come face-to-face and he can be avenged.

## *The Witches*

Although there is clearly more than one of them, the Witches may be seen as seem as a single character; they are often referred to as "The Weird Sisters".

Their predictions drive matters forward though they never actually suggest direct action. Rather, they plant ideas in Macbeth's mind and let his ambition do the rest. Many of their predictions are ambiguous.

	How are the Witches like this?	Evidence	Analysis
<b>Supernatural</b>	The Witches are clearly <b>unlike any other characters in the play</b> . Their physical appearance, their style of speech, their actions and their	<i>Round about the cauldron go; / In, the poisoned entrails throw. / Toad, that under cold stone / Days and nights hast thirty-one / Sweltered venom sleeping got, / Boil thou first i'th'charmèd pot. / Double,</i>	The Witches meet around one of the most well-known symbols of witchcraft - a cauldron. Into this they throw all manner of foul and evil objects ('poisoned

	How are the Witches like this?	Evidence	Analysis
	apparent ability to predict the future sets them apart from the humans they seek to control.	<i>double, toil and trouble; / Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.</i> (Act 4 Scene 1)	entrails') and cast a spell. Although it is not clear what the spell is for, it is obvious they are up to no good. The Witches' chant is in a different rhythm to the way the other characters speak - this also suggests their supernatural nature.
<b>Ambiguous</b>	When the Witches make their predictions, they only say <b>what</b> will happen and not <b>how</b> it will happen. Macbeth falls into their trap and believes that he is safer than he actually is.	THIRD APPARITION: <i>Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care / Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are. / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him.</i> MACBETH: <i>That will never be.</i> (Act 4 Scene 1)	The Witches have conjured up three <b>ghostly visions that make ambiguous predictions</b> . Macbeth is told that he need not fear anything ('take no care who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are') until a forest of trees uproots itself and moves. As this seems to be a physical impossibility Macbeth instantly dismisses it ever happening ('That will never be'). <b>The prediction will come true - but not quite in the way Macbeth expects.</b>

## *Duncan*

The king of Scotland should be a figurehead of order and orderliness, and Duncan is the epitome, or supreme example, of this. His language is formal and his speeches full of grace and graciousness, whether on the battlefield in Act I, Scene 2, where his talk concerns matters of honor, or when greeting his

kind hostess Lady Macbeth in Act I, Scene 6. Duncan also expresses humility (a feature that Macbeth lacks) when he admits his failure in spotting the previous Thane of Cawdor's treachery: "There's no art to find the mind's construction in the face" (I: 4,11).

Most importantly, Duncan is the representative of God on earth, ruling by divine right (ordained by God), a feature of kingship strongly endorsed by King James I, for whom the play was performed in 1606. This "divinity" of the king is made clear on several occasions in the play, most notably when Macbeth talks of the murdered Duncan as having "silver skin lac'd with . . . golden blood" (Act II, Scene 3). The importance of royal blood, that is, the inheritance of the divine right to rule, is emphasized when, in the final scene, Duncan's son Malcolm takes the title of king, with the words "by the grace of Grace / We will perform."



Every work of art that a writer creates or writes actually carries some germ of the writer's life. There by any attempt to say something about a poem or any piece of literature is actually an attempt to say something about one's own self. Kamala Das in her autobiography *My Story* asserts that "... a poet's raw material is not stone or clay; it is her personality." This assertion confirms the presence of autobiographical elements in Kamala Das' poem. Following the precedence of the romantic poets Kamala Das makes her poem an outcry of her personal feelings, experience and reaction to situation.

Uncategorized as the name suggests *An Introduction*, gives an introduction to Kamala Das not only as a human being but also as a poet. This poem is not merely an autobiographical poem but also a confessional poem. In a confession a person talks not only about himself/herself but also about his or her deepest and darkest aspects of life. The poem is a kind of bildungsroman where Kamala Das gives a vivid representation of her childhood, her coming of age, her puberty and her adulthood. Kamala Das not only gave a detailed picture of her ego but also a catalogical detail of her existence. She mentions her nationality, her complexion, her place of birth and her political orientation within a few lines. Then she goes to talk about her linguistic preference where she mentions: "... I speak three languages, write in Two, dream in one." Like any other poet she had to struggle with her choice of language which was English. Here she is one with many poets who faced the same kind of dilemma. In this section it can be said that drifting away from telling her own story to tell the story of every poet who struggles to write poetry. Again, she goes on talking about the value of individual freedom in writing poetry and comments on the difficult question of nativisation of English language. Then she continues telling the story of her childhood as to how the enlargement of the limbs came to signify mental maturity. She boldly speaks about her pubic hair as another signifier of growth and maturity. Even when she was not mature enough to understand the complex equation of marriage, she was forced into one, instead of getting love all she got was marital rape. This creates a wound in her psyche which alters her personality forever. She holds herself in contempt. She starts hating her womanhood and starts behaving as a man. Here to she was restricted by the ever imposing and restrictive society. She was asked to behave like a woman. Very aptly Kamala Das creates the identity of a woman with such markers as: "... dress in saress, be girl Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook Be a quarreller with servants . . .". Here too we see the poem not to be an autobiography of a single person but all of the rebels who ever resist the conforming attitude of the conservative society. The choice of names which are offered to Kamala Das makes the poem appear to be more personal. It resets the phase of identity crisis that everybody and especially a woman has to face. She recalls all the abuses that have been hurled against her when she tried to be free of the stereotypes. In her search for love she always went to the wrong person and talks of her bitter experience in lines of her poem. Kamala Das confesses that she used to drink, indulged in illicit sexual relationship and felt ashamed at her behaviour. Ultimately, she realizes it is useless to be somebody and she settles for an identity of nothing. What is praiseworthy is that the autobiographical elements in the poem do not remain merely as the raw materials of life. The autobiographical facts in her poem, undergo poetic transformation some of the autobiographical elements enliven poetic curiosity. We are curious to know whether she really peeped through the windows of other people or whether she really was a nymphomaniac. Moreover, the language that Kamala Das uses, suits well autobiographical voice. Even the imagery, tone, style and syntax combined to produce good poetic effect out of the raw autobiographical details in the poem.

