A **poetic soliloquy** is a speech delivered alone on stage by a character. The speaker may appear to be speaking to himself, or to a specific, usually imaginary audience. In most plays (especially Shakespearean), soliloquies are used to illuminate a character’s inner thoughts to the audience.

The **purpose of a soliloquy** is to reveal the character’s thoughts, motives, feelings, and problems to the audience by using one of the following methods of development:

- **Expressing an inner conflict** — such as when Hamlet describes himself: “That I, son of a dear father murder’d, / Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, / Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words.” (Hamlet 2.2)

- **Pursuing the answer to a rhetorical question; arguing both sides of an internal debate** — such as when Hamlet debates on whether he should end his suffering by committing suicide:

  To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
  Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
  The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
  Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
  And by opposing end them? (Hamlet 3.1)

- **Describing how he views himself** — such as when Hamlet describes himself: “Am I a coward? ... I, / a dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak, / Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, / And can say nothing.” (Hamlet 2.2)

- **Describing how he views the world** — such as when Hamlet says, “How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable/ Seem to me all the uses of this world!” (Hamlet 1.2)

**The Conventions of Shakespearean Soliloquies**

- **Blank verse** — unrhymed verse, usually in iambic pentameter (10 syllables per line, stress on even syllables)
- **First person point of view** — using I, me, my, myself, methinks, etc.
- **Figurative Speech** — such as metaphors, similes, personifications, analogies, allusions to classical mythology or to the Bible, irony, oxymoron, word reversals, sentence reversals, antitheses (opposites), etc. Figures of speech are to use language that is out of the ordinary to be ornamental, and to appeal to the audience through their novelty.
- **Imagery** — the creation of word pictures. Imagery provides a vivid, specific description. Compare, for example, “What you are saying is unpleasant for me to hear,” with “These words are razors to my wounded heart.” (Titus Adronicus 1.1.307)
Personal Soliloquy Assignment
College English 12
Mr. Brennan

Your task is to write a soliloquy of your own. The goal of this assignment will be to retain Shakespeare’s rhythm and structure while creating your own original, thoughtful, creative, and engaging soliloquy. You can choose one of the following two options:

OPTION A:
Write a personal soliloquy in which you express an inner conflict, pursue the answer to a rhetorical question, argue both sides of an internal debate, and/or describe how you view yourself and the world. Feel free to use the soliloquies from *Hamlet* as a model.

OPTION B:
Assume the identity of a character from *Hamlet* other than Hamlet. Your character should be conflicted about something that is going on at a specific point in the play (select a specific event for the character to react to). Write a soliloquy that illuminates the character’s thoughts, feelings, plans, and motives regarding this scene.

In addition to your soliloquy, you will need to write a reflection include the following:

- **Brief Context of the Soliloquy**: explain where it appears in the play, what has just happened before it is said and what the character is feeling when he says it (OPTION B ONLY)
- **Summary of Meaning and Theme**: explain what the character is saying in the soliloquy, what method(s) of development you chose to focus on, and explain the theme(s) your soliloquy addressed
- **Mood and Language**: discuss the atmosphere of the soliloquy and explain how the use of figurative language, imagery, etc. adds to the atmosphere
- **Character**: explain what the soliloquy reveals about you
- **Soliloquy Conventions**: Identify your three examples of *antithesis*, your three high-quality examples of alliteration or assonance, and your *extended metaphor*. Additionally, explain the meaning you were attempting to portray and/or the effect your were attempting to achieve for each.

**Due date**: Your personal/character soliloquy must typed into a Word document using a font appropriate to the tone of your piece. Your completed soliloquy should be save as “firstinitialLastname_soliloquy” (example: mBrennan_soliloquy) and emailed to matthewbrennan1@gmail.com by Monday, February 10

**Point Total**: 50 points

Your project will be graded on the following:

- **Soliloquy Content (20 points)**: You have 25-40 lines in which you express an inner conflict, pursue the answer to a rhetorical question, argue both sides of an internal debate, and/or describe how you view yourself and the world. (Character soliloquies will also be graded on the ability to stay true to the character’s voice.)
- **Soliloquy Conventions (10 points)**: Your soliloquy is written in blank verse, in first person point of view, and included an abundance of figurative speech and imagery. Your soliloquy contains at least three examples of antithesis (this will help demonstrate the inner conflict), three high-quality examples of alliteration or assonance (the repeated sound should show up three or more times per example), and at least one extended metaphor.
- **Reflection (10 points)**: Your reflection is insightful, thoughtful, and answers all of the above listed questions (minimum of 200 words).
- **Creativity/Language (5 points)**: You use words in a creative, interesting way. You also demonstrate an attempt in using Shakespearean language to the best of your ability. (No, I don’t expect you to master Shakespearean dialect overnight, but you should, however, make some effort, such as: avoiding contemporary slang, using blank verse, and attempting to pick up on some of the Shakespearean words you’ve seen thus far. For example, you can use words such as fie, ne’er, anon (soon), ere (before), prithee (I pray thee), wherefore (for what reason/as a result of which), thee, thou, doth, etc.
- **Mechanics and Format (5 points)**: Your work is proofread and format, spelling, and grammar are accurate.
To acquaint or to foe
Thy shall slay the slithering snake
Prender
The words thou spews of his intentions
why does thou converse thy actions?

A lifting of the face or sunken cheeks?
’Tis much easier to smile than to frown,
But to commit such an action is like
Deceiving those outside of what’s inside.

What shall I do? To endure or to leave?
To leave, I’ll have the temporary peace,
The heart, mind will sleep but not infinite.
Consequences is the fear that troubles,
What lies in the future with no prediction.

I am sheltered now, but soon I’ll be off
And what then, what will she think of me?
That’s puppet master who tugs at the strings of my life
Disregarding me as a being capable of determining my own purpose
Alas it in inevitable that she cut those strings, giving me my life
And upon receiving my freedom, how would I act?
TO SNOOZE or NOT TO SNOOZE

To snooze or not to snooze – that is the question:
Whether ’tis easier to rise on time
And face the harsh light of early day,
Or to stay huddled under the quilt,
And, by hiding, avoid the rays.
To rise, to hit the snooze button—
No more – and by rising to say I face
The early-morning preparations for the events
That each day holds—’Tis a situation
I do not wish to face. To snooze, to sleep—
To sleep, perhaps too long. Ay, there’s the problem,
For in oversleeping what events may come about
When we are hiding from the alarm’s harsh call
Must make us stop and think. That’s the idea
That makes disaster of sleeping in.
For who really wants to face the 6 a.m. sun,
Here I stand, as I am in what such solitude
I still remain in plain sight. Thy thoughts instill
Such a vibe of rebellion and anarchy, and yet, tremble in constructive
Organization with the need to conjoin thyself within the
Social mosaic of intellectual impotence. My mind forever lingers
Around the past in which I have been cursed by thou malevolent
Savior to endure, wherefore thy soul, everlastingly enshrouded in darkness
With in doubt fear of eternal damnation. However, in spite of such, I should
Ne’er speak in vain of thy father and spiritual liberator, for in such action
The evil in thy heart shall wherefore lead to thine own destruction,
And thou shall forever more be submerged in the flames
Of undying punishment for thy iniquity. Blasphemy!
Tis is not my true concern at some moments, for thy ill will
Has bestowed a perhaps even darker, repulsive, yet alluring, and somewhat
Attractive fantasy, to end, what has not yet begun. To extinguish,
What has yet to ignite. Thy collective anguish, hatred, pain.
They shall all be no more, exist ne’er to pose as troublesome demons to Thyself any longer.
Quite simple. However, is such in all summarized,
Quite that simple? For if thy such existence was truly so undemanding, why? In His Holy name,
why would we as His people, falsely enlightened to believe that this so corrupt world is a lively a
paradise where one can flourish in thy own greatest desire, When in truth it is but a
Dark and by hollowed shell, fie, ruled by the most shallow and small minded of our kind, be
subjugated to carry on such life? Slaves, I call thee,
For one to place but every bit of trust in such an omnipotent
Being who only wishes to watch, as the evil incarnation of his own creation,
Wreaks sheer havoc amongst his people. Surely there can be no such being.
For this, Heavenly Father, is supposed to love us, not? I doth think of it too much.