English Language and Literature
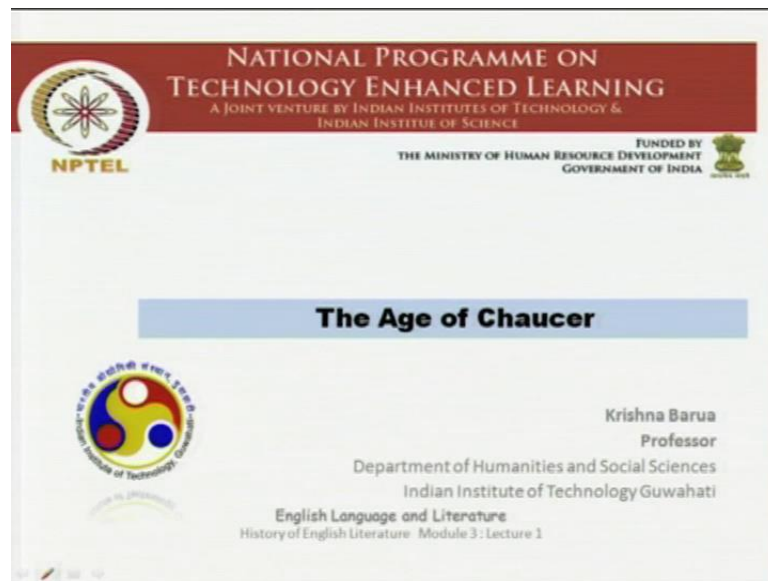**Prof. Krishna Barua**
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Module - 3
History of English Literature
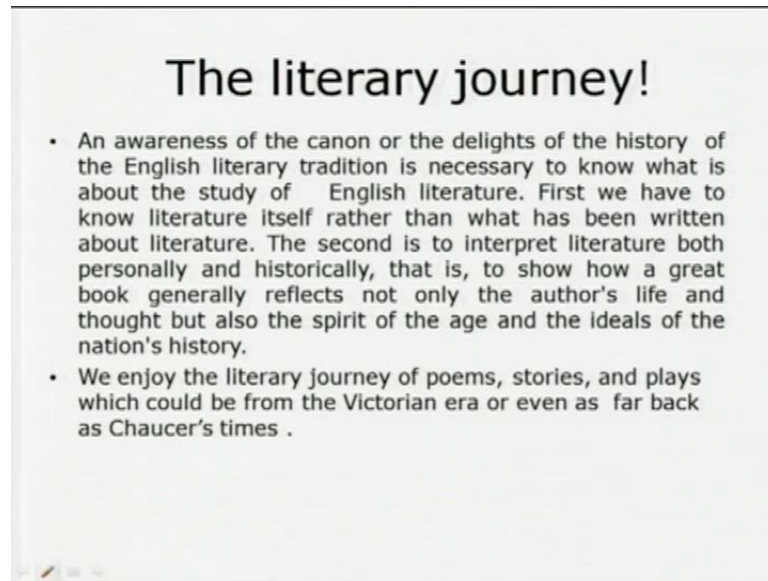**Lecture - 13**
The Age of Chaucer

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Hello and welcome back to NPTEL the national programme of technology institute enhanced learning, a joint venture of Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institute of Science. As you are aware this lectures are intend for students of engineering colleges and IIT's. Humanities and social sciences are electives which are very it has a very lasting influence on technoculam of engineering students. And we do belief while we teach these courses that it will lead to a deeper understanding of life of literature enough values.

I am Krishna Barua, I teach English at the department of humanities and social sciences at IIT Guwahati. As you are all aware that this is a lectures reviews which is emphasizing more on the language and literature modules. Today we are in the module tree of language and literature and title the history of English literature. We have in the first lecture which is the age of Chaucer well.

If we look back into how do we distinguish or classify the history of English literature. It becomes almost like a literary journey. It is an awareness of the canon or the delights of the history of the English literary tradition which is necessary to know what is about the study of English literature.

First we have to know literature by itself rather than, what has been written about literature. We have to know about the profanity of it. The second is to interpret the question of the mine is which we see literature both personally and historically. That is, to show how a great book generally reflects not only the author's life and thought, but also the spirit of the age and the ideals of the nation's history. We enjoying this literary journey do not we a poems, stories and plays which could be from the Victorian era or even as far back as Chaucer's times.

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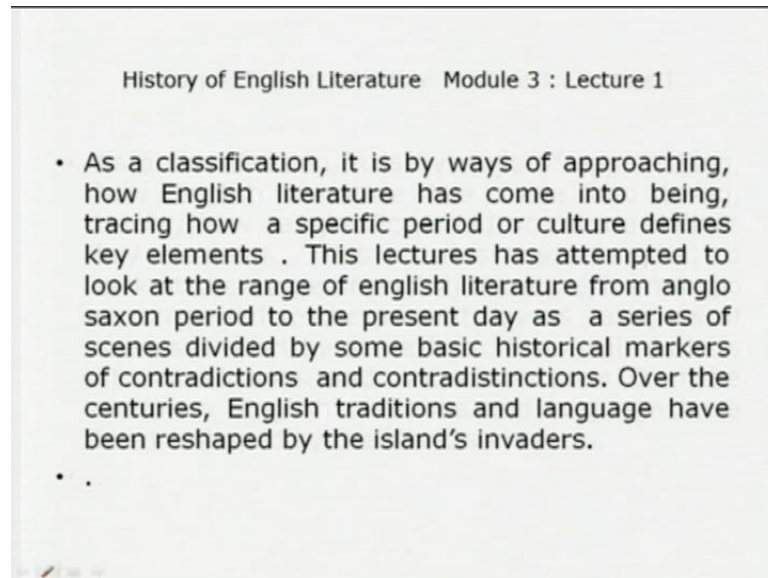
Well, as a classification it is by ways of approaching how English literature has come into being tracing, how a specific period of literature defines key elements. This lecture has attempted to look at the range of English literature from Anglo-Saxon period to the present day as a series of scenes divided by some basic historical markers or contradiction or contradistinctions. Over the centuries English traditions and language have been reshaped by the island's invaders.

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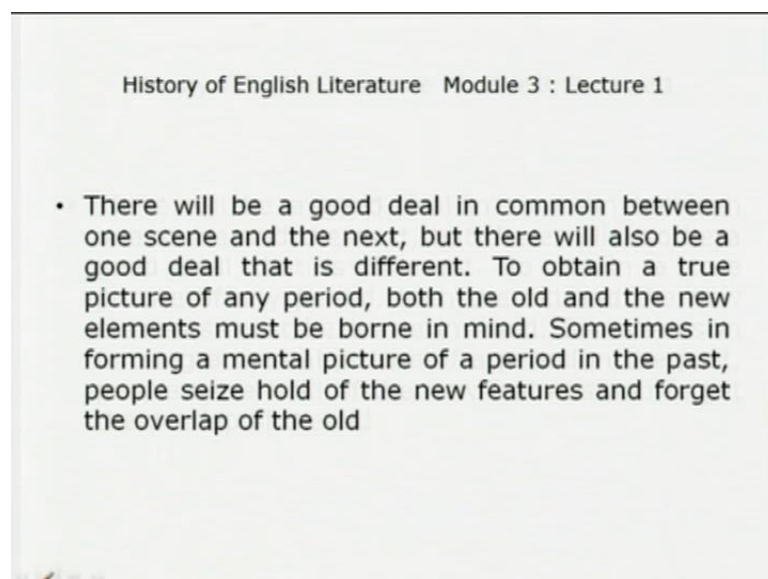
So, there will be a good deal in common between 1 when we divide into pages or we divided dividing into the ages of literature. What we are going to see is to see what is a good deal in common between 1 age and the next or a good deal that is different. To obtain a true picture of any period therefore, both the old and the new elements must be borne in mind. So, how to we seen that is history of English literature? How do we understand and why it is necessary to understand the evolution of the … literature tradition from 1 age to the other. It is for us to see how 1 age goes into the other characteristics of 1 age, what are literary traditions or how one rejects or repeat some of the elements which have gone before. Sometimes in forming a mental picture of a period in the past people seize hold of the new features and forget and the overlap of the old well.

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Anglo-Saxon England was born of warfare

- This relatively small island of Great Britain has been invaded and settled many times: first by ancient people the Iberians, then by the Celts ,by the Romans, by the Angles and Saxons, by the Vikings, and by the Normans. Whatever we think of as "English" today owes something to each of these invaders. Beginning with an invasion led by Julius Caesar in 55 B.C. the Britons were finally conquered by the legions of Rome During Roman rule, In the middle of the fifth century, the invaders, Angles and Saxons from Germany and Jutes from Denmark, crossed the North Sea. They drove out the old Britons before them and eventually settled the greater part of Britain.

So, let us look it is necessary for us in doing the age of Chaucer to go back into the Anglo-Saxon period; the beginnings after we can culture as u can say of English literature. Why do we look into this island of Great Britain? It is relatively small island and it has been invaded and settled many times first by the ancient people the Iberians, then by the Celts, then by the Romans, by the Angles, the Saxons, the Vikings, and by the Normans. We see the successor's u know in ancients which has come place and with that the contact interconnections between the different people who had come in contact. And also that angels between the foreigners as well as the once who are the inhabitants.

Whatever we think of as English today therefore, owes something to each of these invaders. Beginning with an invasion led by Julius Caesar in 55 B. C. the Britons were finally, conquered by the legions of Rome. During roman rule what happen in the middle of the fifth century the invaders Angels Saxons from Germany and Jutes from Denmark crossed the North Sea. All from the northern seas but, back the culture of the seas as well as, of the places where they came from. They drove out the old Britons before them and eventually settled the greater part of Britain well.

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- The language of the Anglo-Saxons became the dominant language in the land which was to take a new **name— Engla land, or England—from the Angles**. *The re emergence of Christianity and the role of Alfred the Great combined to unify Anglo-Saxon England. Alfred and his descendants fought the Danish invaders until the Norman Conquest in 1066.* Therefore It is perhaps difficult to leave out the politics from the history of any people, particularly the English people.

So, the language of the Anglo-Saxons, if we go and look into it became the dominant language in the land which was to take a new name; which is was called Engla land or England from the angels. The reemergence of Christianity with emergence of Christianity and the role of Alfred the great who was 1 of the greatest kings of that time combines to unify Anglo-Saxon England. Alfred and his descendants fought the Danish invaders until the Norman Conquest in 1066. Therefore, it is perhaps difficult to leave out the politics from the history of any people.

So, when we are talking about its political influences; the social influences it is difficult to leave it out. When we do the literary history or the social history of any people, particularly the English people well.

The Anglo-Saxon or Old English period

- The Anglo-Saxon or Old English period goes from the invasion of Celtic England by the Germanic tribes **Angles, Saxons and Jutes** in the first half of the fifth century up till the conquest in 1066 by William of Normandy. The word Anglo- Saxon was first used by **Camden** in his book *History of Britain.* They had no writing (except runes, used as charms) until they learned the Latin alphabet from Roman missionaries.
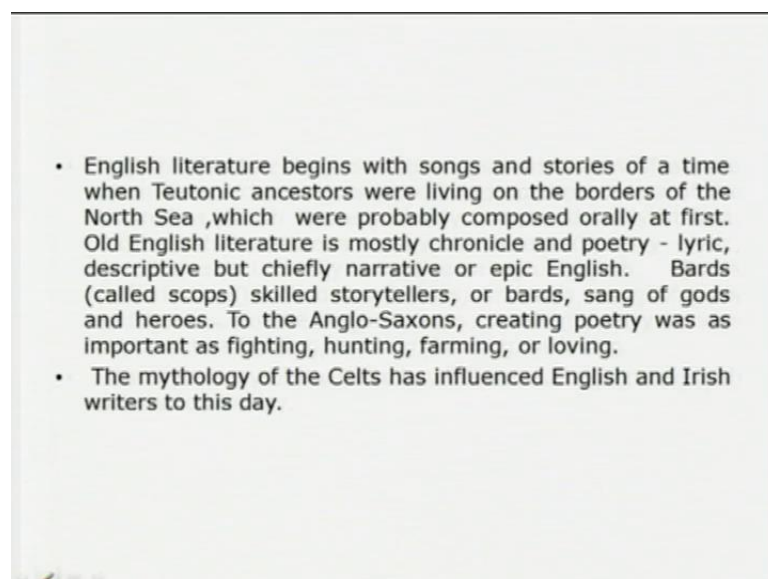
So, if we look into this literature of this period the Anglo-Saxon or English period goes from the invasion of Celtic England by the Germanic tribes, Angles Saxons and Jutes in the first half of the fifth century up till the conquest in 1066 by William of Normandy. We will do it a later and will see that this invasion ah after Norman Conquest. I mean in 1066 becomes a landmark in the history of English literature the word Anglo-Saxon was first use used by came Camden, in his book history of Britain. They had no writing except runes used as charms until they learned the Latin alphabet from roman missionaries.

- English literature begins with songs and stories of a time when Teutonic ancestors were living on the borders of the North Sea ,which were probably composed orally at first. Old English literature is mostly chronicle and poetry - lyric, descriptive but chiefly narrative or epic English. Bards (called scops) skilled storytellers, or bards, sang of gods and heroes. To the Anglo-Saxons, creating poetry was as important as fighting, hunting, farming, or loving.
- The mythology of the Celts has influenced English and Irish writers to this day.
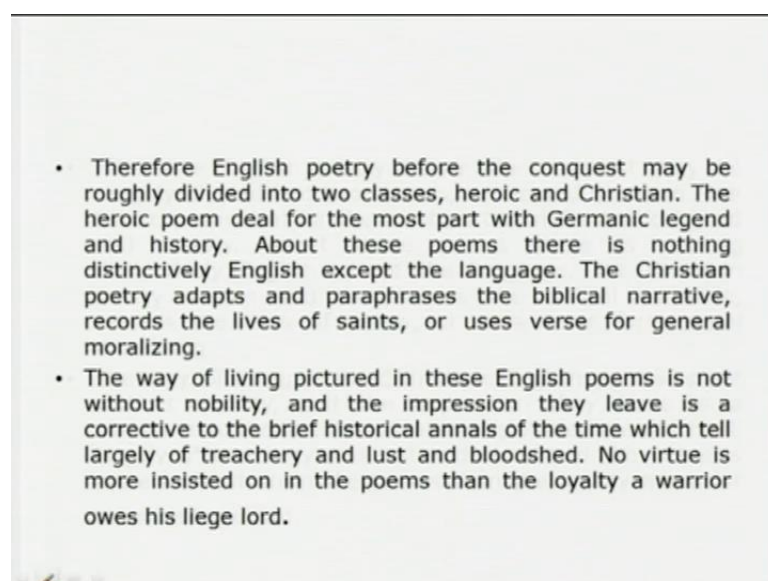
So, English literature began begins with songs and stories of a time when Teutonic ancestors basically are all literature beginnings or RL. You have to remember that when you go into different literatures of the world we will find that the beginnings were always the RL tradition.

So, the emphasis on the RL tradition is very necessary for us to see how a literature has developed and they were living in the North Sea. And they were probably composed orally at first old English literature is mostly chronicle and poetry. So, mostly it is chronicle and poetry nothing after prose because people send. If it is a RL tradition naturally people were seen to communicate lyric descriptive, but chiefly narrative or epic English bards they may call the scops; skilled story tellers they would go from 1 place to another or bards sang of gods and heroes. To the Anglo-Saxons creating poetry was as important as fighting hunting farming or loving.

So, this is a very unique ah characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon period that 1 who sing or 1 who was a poet or 1 who created was a creator in the real sense was as important as fighting, hunting, farming or loving. The mythology of the Celts if you look into the modern literature of that, Celt myths and the peripheral switches gone in from the RL literature terms region literature of a times has influenced English and Irish writers to this date well.

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- Therefore English poetry before the conquest may be roughly divided into two classes, heroic and Christian. The heroic poem deal for the most part with Germanic legend and history. About these poems there is nothing distinctively English except the language. The Christian poetry adapts and paraphrases the biblical narrative, records the lives of saints, or uses verse for general moralizing.
- The way of living pictured in these English poems is not without nobility, and the impression they leave is a corrective to the brief historical annals of the time which tell largely of treachery and lust and bloodshed. No virtue is more insisted on in the poems than the loyalty a warrior owes his liege lord.

Therefore English poetry before the conquest may be roughly divided into 2 classes: 1 is the heroic and the 1 is Christian. The heroic poems deal for the most part with Germanic legend and history naturally, of adventures of beautiful places beautiful themselves. About these poems there is nothing distinctively English except the language. The Christian poetry adapts and paraphrases; the biblical narrative records the lives of saints mostly or uses verse for general moralizing; more or less the addictive more or less moralizing. The way of living pictured in these English poems now, if we look into the way that this was shown the life is not without nobility there was a grinder, there was a adventure and a expender u call that.

An impression they leave is a corrective to the brief historical annals of the time which tells largely of treachery and lust and bloodshed. No virtue is more insisted on the poems than the loyalty a warrior owes his liege lord.

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- The earliest Anglo- Saxon poetry known is **Widsith** or *The Far Wanderer*. Another early poem of the similar type is **Complaint of Deor.** The most remarkable work in Anglo- Saxon heroic poetry is **Beowulf.** This poem of nearly tree thousand lines is looked upon as the oldest surviving epic of the Teutonic people. Besides the heroic poems, there are some elegiac poems and riddles in Anglo- Saxon literature. **Caedmon** and **Cynewulf** were the poets who wrote on biblical and religious themes but most writing is anonymous. Besides these religious poetry also seemed to flourish during Anglo- Saxon period, mainly in northern England- Northumbria- throughout the eight century.

The earliest Anglo-Saxon poetry known is Widsith or the far wanderer another early poem of the similar type is complaint of Deor. The most remarkable work; however, in Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry is Beowulf. It is a classic by itself a landmark by itself it tells a part by itself. This poem of nearly 3000 lines is looked upon as the oldest surviving epic of the Teutonic tribe.

It is written in England the story is of Scandinavia besides the heroic poems there are some elegiac poems and riddles. In Anglo-Saxon literature lots of riddles were there

Caedmon's and Cynewulf were the poets who wrote on biblical and religious themes. But most writing is anonymous most may be, because even they all was written by an unknown Anglo-Saxon poet many people think that it has come from RL tradition which has already there and how it has been put it into writing. Besides, this religious poetry also seemed to flourish during Anglo-Saxon period mainly, in northern England northumbria throughout the eighth century well.

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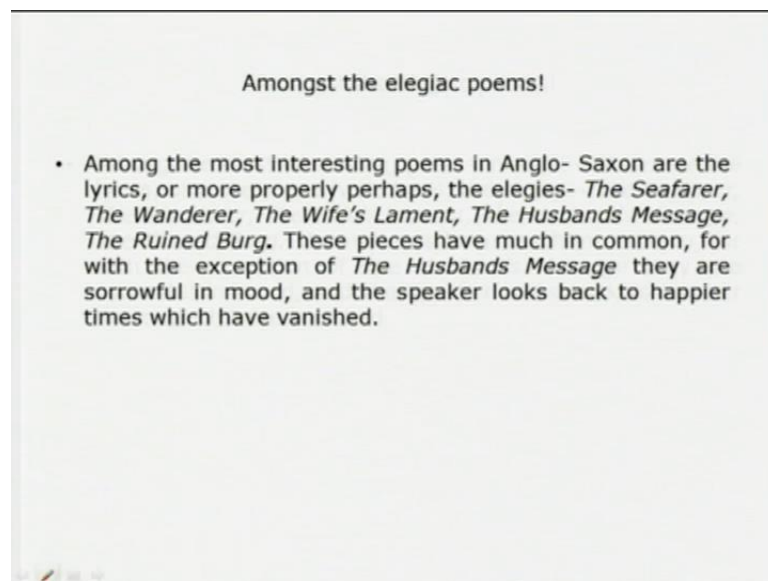
So, when we look into all these poems the among; the most elegiate poems were the lyrics or more properly perhaps the elegies, name of them some of the important 1 is the seafarer, the wanderer, the wife's lament, the husbands message, the ruined burg. These pieces have much in common for with the exception of the husband's message, they are sorrowful in mood and is a king tone and looks back to happier times which have vanished.

Beowulf

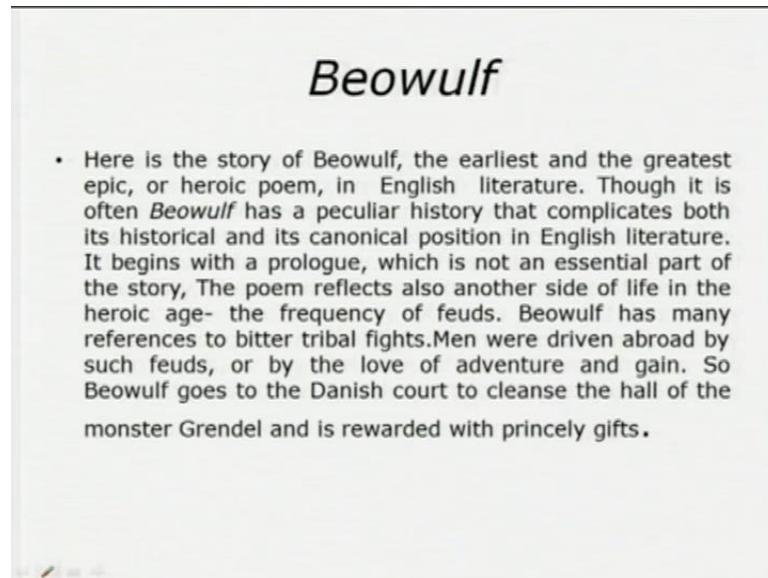- Viewed both as the archetypal Anglo-Saxon literary work and as a cornerstone of modern literature, it consists of 3182 alliterative long lines ,The question of whether *Beowulf* was passed down through oral tradition has been the subject of much debate . By the time the story of *Beowulf* was composed by an unknown Anglo-Saxon poet around 700 A.D, much of its material had been in circulation in oral narrative for many years .

So, when we come again to Beowulf which tells a part as I told you as one of the most significant influences in Anglo-Saxon poetry, viewed both as the archetypal Anglo-Saxon literary work and as a cornerstone of modern literature. When you people say that, many of the modern epics have come with the features which have been put over there. The dark venture, the way the adventure came in the way of narration it consists of 3182 alliterative long lines.

Let me remind you that Anglo-Saxon poetry mostly is based on alliteration. Alliteration is a figure of speech of era durical device which is based on repetition of the same constant words. The question of whether Beowulf was passed down through oral tradition has been the subject of much debate. By the time the story of Beowulf was composed by an unknown Anglo-Saxon poet around 700 A. D. Much of its material had already been in circulation in oral relative narrative for many years as I have told u.
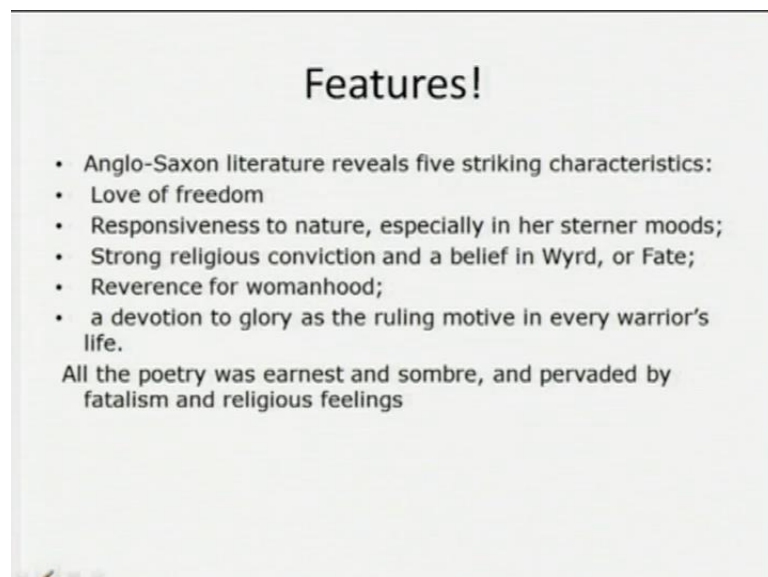
Beowulf

- Here is the story of Beowulf, the earliest and the greatest epic, or heroic poem, in English literature. Though it is often *Beowulf* has a peculiar history that complicates both its historical and its canonical position in English literature. It begins with a prologue, which is not an essential part of the story, The poem reflects also another side of life in the heroic age- the frequency of feuds. Beowulf has many references to bitter tribal fights.Men were driven abroad by such feuds, or by the love of adventure and gain. So Beowulf goes to the Danish court to cleanse the hall of the monster Grendel and is rewarded with princely gifts.

So, here is the story of Beowulf; the earliest and the greatest epic or heroic poem in English literature era 700 A. D. Though it is often Beowulf has a peculiar history that complicates both its historical and its canonical position in English literature. It begins with a prologue which is not an essential part of the story. Poem reflects also another side of life in the heroic age the frequency of feuds in tribal voice well.

Features!

- Anglo-Saxon literature reveals five striking characteristics:
- Love of freedom
- Responsiveness to nature, especially in her sterner moods;
- Strong religious conviction and a belief in Wyrd, or Fate;
- Reverence for womanhood;
- a devotion to glory as the ruling motive in every warrior's life.

All the poetry was earnest and sombre, and pervaded by fatalism and religious feelings

So, what are the features a poet do quickly look over the Anglo-Saxon period and because we are going into the age of Chaucer in a few minutes. We will see that Anglo-

Saxon literature reveals 5 striking characteristics: one is this love of freedom and responsiveness to nature, nature is very much coexistence with how a man lives specially in a her sterner moods in his dark venture. And there is strong religious conviction to and a belief in fate fatalistic reverence for womanhood, which was a special place in there a respect for woman. A devotion to glory as the ruling motive in every warrior's life all the poetry was you can say severlic was earnest and sombre and pervaded by fatalism and religious feelings.

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- Up to the twelfth century, writing in the western vernaculars dealt almost exclusively with religious, historical and factual themes, all of which were understood to convey the truth. The second half of the twelfth century saw the emergence of a **new genre--the romance--**which was consciously conceived as fictional and therefore allowed to break free from traditional presuppositions. the genesis of medieval fiction.
- it is clear and accessible account of **early Germanic alliterative verse** that explains how such verse was treated by the Beowulf poet. There are differences of poetic style between Beowulf and the otherwise similar verse of ancient Scandinavia and continental Europe.

So, now after the twelfth century therefore, writing in the western vernaculars dealt almost exclusively with religious historical and factual themes. So, we are coming to twelfth century A. D. all of which were understood to convey the truth. The second half of the twelfth century saw the emergence of a new genre which was the romance; which was consciously conceived as fictional. And therefore, allowed to break free from traditional presuppositions the genesis of medieval fiction.

So, here is this emergence of the romance and it is clear and accessible account of early Germanic alliterative verse which I had stated earlier. That alliteration which was the form of the technique which was used in the poetry that, explains how such verse was treated by the Beowulf poet. There are differences of poetic style between Beowulf and the otherwise similar verse of ancient Scandinavia and continental Europe. So, you find

that there is a slight difference which is going on between that of Beowulf and of other Scandinavian narrative poems well.

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- In October 1066, began the Norman Conquest, an event that radically affected English history, the English character, and the English language. Unlike 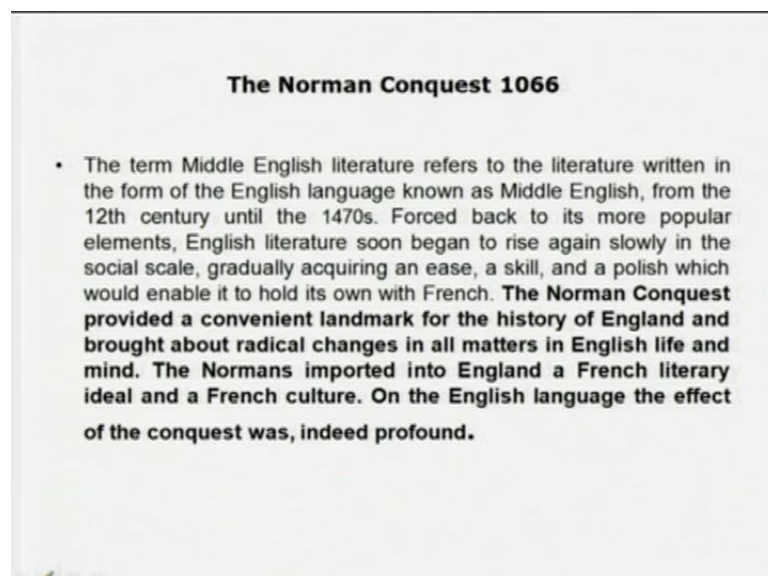the Romans, the Normans never withdrew from England. *The Anglo-Norman entity that resulted from the Norman Conquest brought England into mainstream European civilization, which included feudalism.*
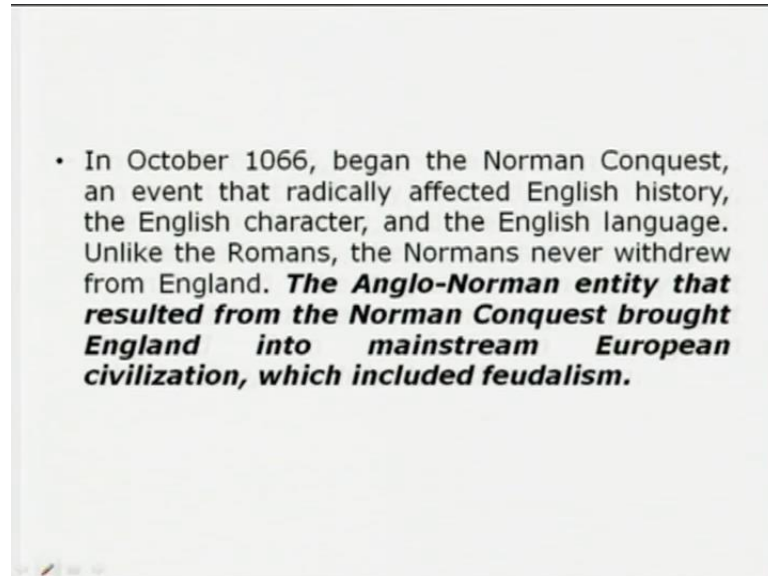
So, now we come to that date which is so important 1066 began the Norman conquest an event that radically affected English history; the English character and the English language. Unlike the Romans the Normans never withdrew from England the Anglo Norman entity that resulted from the Norman Conquest brought England into mainstream European civilization, which included feudalism well.

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The Norman Conquest 1066

- The term Middle English literature refers to the literature written in the form of the English language known as Middle English, from the 12th century until the 1470s. Forced back to its more popular elements, English literature soon began to rise again slowly in the social scale, gradually acquiring an ease, a skill, and a polish which would enable it to hold its own with French. **The Norman Conquest provided a convenient landmark for the history of England and brought about radical changes in all matters in English life and mind. The Normans imported into England a French literary ideal and a French culture. On the English language the effect of the conquest was, indeed profound.**
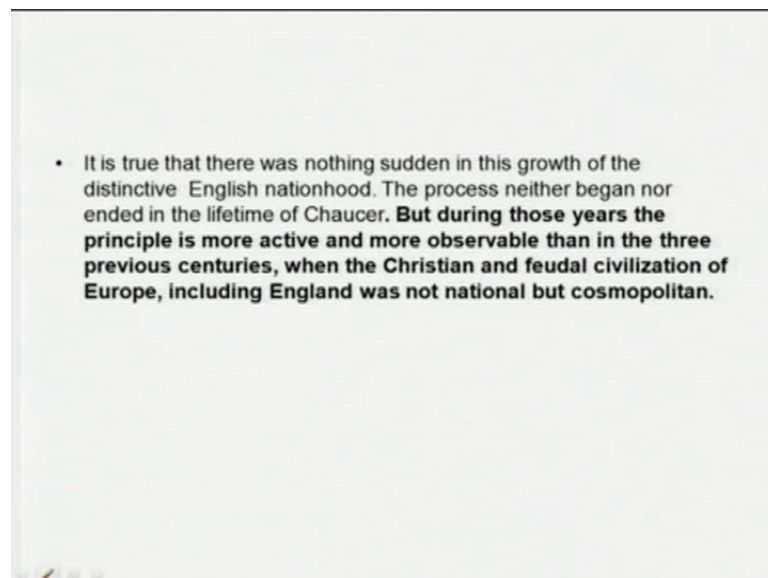
So, this Norman Conquest 1066 we now term it as the Middle English, this term refers to the literature written in the form of the English language known as Middle English from the twelfth century until the 1470s. Forced back to it is more popular elements English literature soon began to rise again slowly in the social scale gradually acquiring an ease. So, you have to understand what were the are the European ah literatures which is going on at the same time right. And polish which would enable it to hold its own with French.
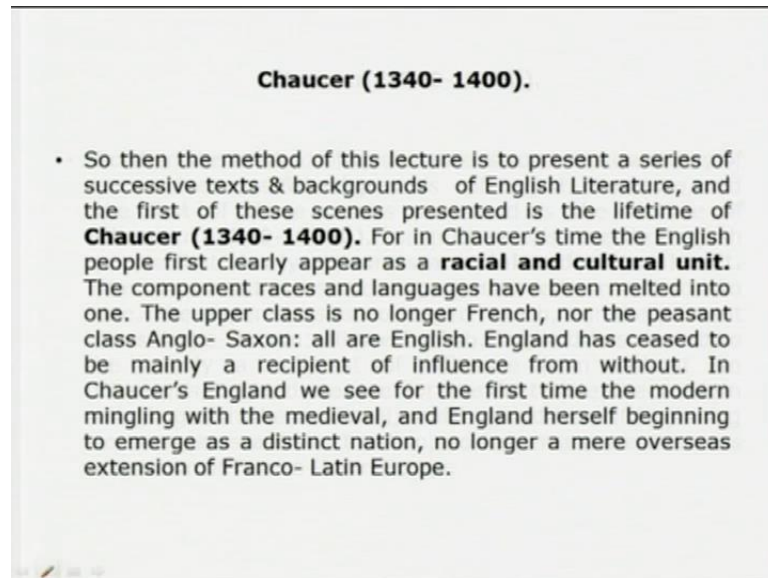
The Norman conquest provided a convenient landmark for the history of England and brought about radical changes in all matters in English life and mind. They no doubt they imported into England a French literary ideal and French culture on the English language the effect of the conquest was indeed profound.

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- It is true that there was nothing sudden in this growth of the distinctive English nationhood. The process neither began nor ended in the lifetime of Chaucer. **But during those years the principle is more active and more observable than in the three previous centuries, when the Christian and feudal civilization of Europe, including England was not national but cosmopolitan.**

It is true that there was nothing sudden in this growth of the distinctly distinctive English nationhood and distinctive English literary tradition. The process neither began nor ended in the lifetime of Chaucer. But, during those years the principle is more active and more observable than in the 3 previous centuries when the Christian and feudal civilization of Europe including England was not national, but cosmopolitan.
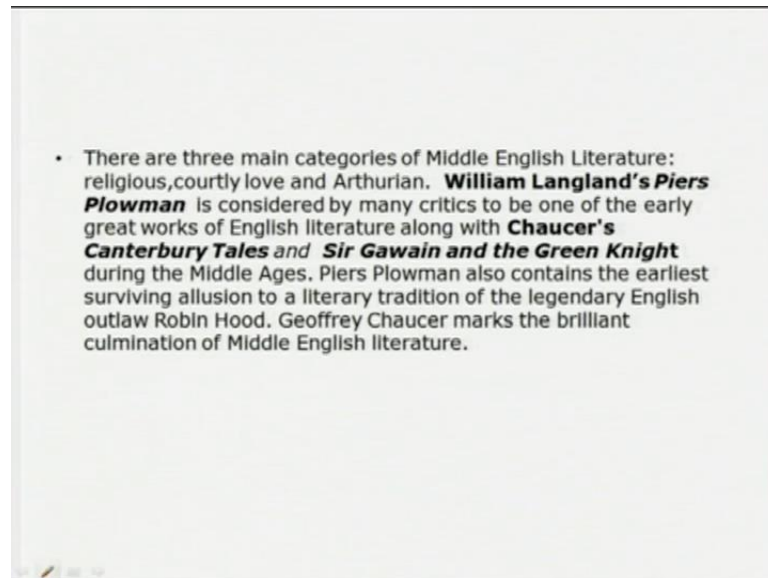
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Chaucer (1340- 1400).

- So then the method of this lecture is to present a series of successive texts & backgrounds of English Literature, and the first of these scenes presented is the lifetime of **Chaucer (1340- 1400).** For in Chaucer's time the English people first clearly appear as a **racial and cultural unit.** The component races and languages have been melted into one. The upper class is no longer French, nor the peasant class Anglo- Saxon: all are English. England has ceased to be mainly a recipient of influence from without. In Chaucer's England we see for the first time the modern mingling with the medieval, and England herself beginning to emerge as a distinct nation, no longer a mere overseas extension of Franco- Latin Europe.

So, Chaucer Geoffrey Chaucer 1340 to 1400. So, then the method of this lecture is to present a series of successive texts and backgrounds of English literature and the first of these scenes presented is the lifetime of Chaucer. So, single poet or a single writer dominates the age as Shakespeare will do in the next. For in Chaucer's time the English people first clearly appear as a racial and cultural unit, just what I had mentioned earlier.
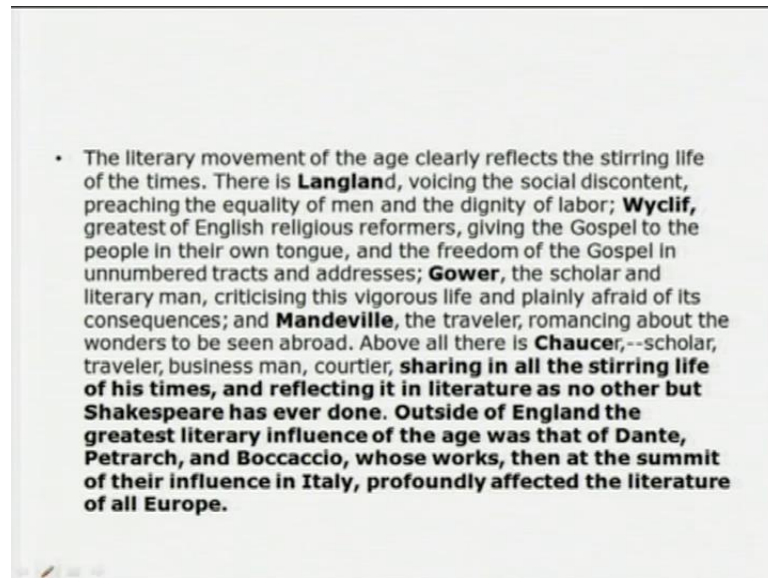
The component races and languages have been melted into 1 from the cosmopolitan you have become 1 who is a national encavity. Upper class is no longer French nor the peasant class Anglo-Saxon all are English. England has ceased to be mainly a recipient of influence from without. In Chaucer's England we see for the first time when you look into the social history when we look into the national history when we look into the literary history that, the modern mingling with the medieval and England herself was beginning to emerge as a distinct nation. No longer a mere overseas extension of France Latin Europe.

- There are three main categories of Middle English Literature: religious, courtly love and Arthurian. **William Langland's** *Piers Plowman* is considered by many critics to be one of the early great works of English literature along with **Chaucer's** *Canterbury Tales* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knigh*t during the Middle Ages. Piers Plowman also contains the earliest surviving allusion to a literary tradition of the legendary English outlaw Robin Hood. Geoffrey Chaucer marks the brilliant culmination of Middle English literature.

This is very important very important assessment. There are 3 main categories therefore, of Middle English literature. The module on the history of English literature and for it is important for us to be aware that tells we are doing the ages of literature, let us see what are the main components, of the all these ages which have been presented here in every page. So, the main categories of Middle English literature is religious, courtly love and Arthurian. William Langland's Piers Plowman is considered by many critics to be 1 of the early great works of English literature, which is first in this period, along with Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and Sir Gawain and Green Knight, they think during the middle Ages. Piers Plowman also contains the earliest surviving allusion to a literary tradition of the legendary English outlaw robin hood which must be very familiar to all of you students. Geoffrey Chaucer; however, marks the brilliant culmination of Middle English literature, well.
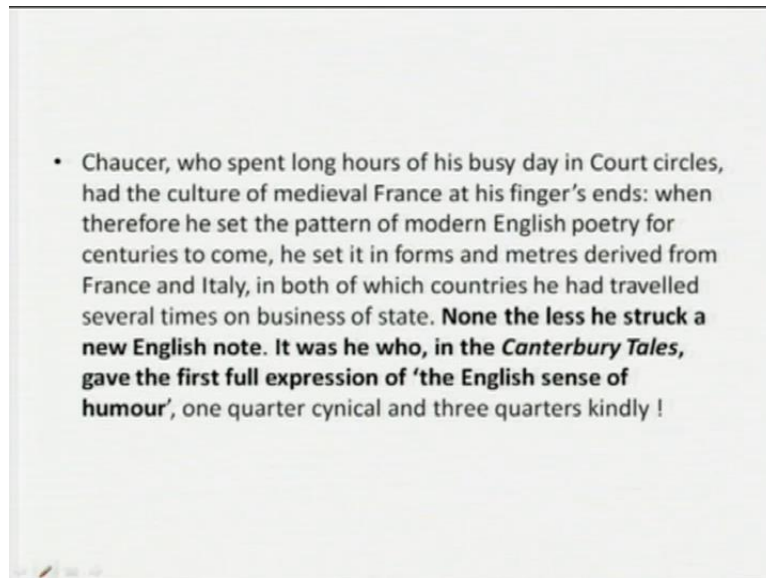
- The literary movement of the age clearly reflects the stirring life of the times. There is **Langlan**d, voicing the social discontent, preaching the equality of men and the dignity of labor; **Wyclif,** greatest of English religious reformers, giving the Gospel to the people in their own tongue, and the freedom of the Gospel in unnumbered tracts and addresses; **Gower**, the scholar and literary man, criticising this vigorous life and plainly afraid of its consequences; and **Mandeville**, the traveler, romancing about the wonders to be seen abroad. Above all there is **Chauce**r,--scholar, traveler, business man, courtier, **sharing in all the stirring life of his times, and reflecting it in literature as no other but Shakespeare has ever done. Outside of England the greatest literary influence of the age was that of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, whose works, then at the summit of their influence in Italy, profoundly affected the literature of all Europe.**

So, the literary movement of the age clearly reflects the stirring life of the times. There is Langland voicing the social discontent, will just see just past through all these writers and text preaching the equality of men and the dignity of labor.

We have Wycliffe, greatest of English, religious reformers, giving the gospel in people in their own tongue; we have Gower, the scholar and literary man criticizing this vigorous life; and Mandeville, the traveler who talks about a beauty of caval narratives sharing in all the stirring life of his times reflecting it in literature as no other, but Shakespeare has ever done. Outside of England you have to remember what was the parallel going on parallel out points of creativity we have the ah age was that of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio whose works, then at the summit of their influence in Italy, profoundly affected the literature of all Europe all the great which were there in your opinion literature.
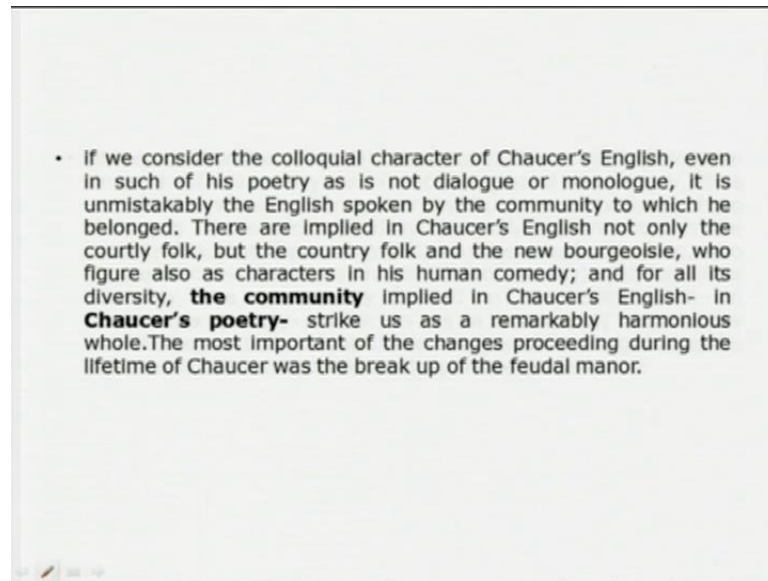
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- Chaucer, who spent long hours of his busy day in Court circles, had the culture of medieval France at his finger's ends: when therefore he set the pattern of modern English poetry for centuries to come, he set it in forms and metres derived from France and Italy, in both of which countries he had travelled several times on business of state. **None the less he struck a new English note. It was he who, in the *Canterbury Tales*, gave the first full expression of 'the English sense of humour'**, one quarter cynical and three quarters kindly !

Now, Chaucer who spent long hours of his busy day in court circles had the culture of medieval France at his finger's ends, note down. So, you can divide his work into 3 periods first is the French, then the Italian, then the English. When therefore, he set the pattern of modern English poetry for centuries to come, he set it in forms and meters derived from France and Italy note down. In both of his countries he had travelled several times on business of state.

No doubt this is true, but he brought in that ethnic labor and that that national characteristic which was one of his most important contribution. None the less, he struck a new English note it was he who in the Canterbury Tales gave the first full expression of the English sense of humour 1 quarter cynical and 3 quarters cut down.

- if we consider the colloquial character of Chaucer's English, even in such of his poetry as is not dialogue or monologue, it is unmistakably the English spoken by the community to which he belonged. There are implied in Chaucer's English not only the courtly folk, but the country folk and the new bourgeoisie, who figure also as characters in his human comedy; and for all its diversity, **the community** implied in Chaucer's English- in **Chaucer's poetry-** strike us as a remarkably harmonious whole.The most important of the changes proceeding during the lifetime of Chaucer was the break up of the feudal manor.

Now, if we consider this colloquial character which is so much close to the Chaucer which so much close to affidavit of every one of the people living there of Chaucer's English. Even in such of his poetry as is not dialogue or monologue it is unmistakably it was the English spoken by the community to which he belonged. There are implied in Chaucer's English not only the courtly folk, but the country folk and the new bourgeoisie who figure also as characters in his human comedy.

Then, for all its diversity the therefore, the community implied in Chaucer's English in Chaucer's poetry strike us as a remarkably harmonious whole. It becomes almost not only literary document social document and an anthropological document. The most important of the changes proceeding during the lifetime of Chaucer was the breakup of the feudal manor well.

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Geoffrey Chaucer **(1340- 1400).**
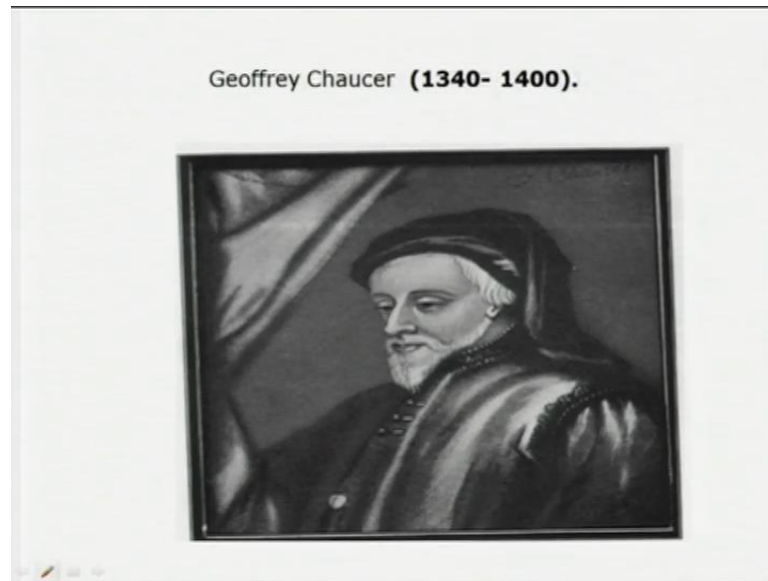
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Geoffrey Chaucer **(1340- 1400).**

- Often regarded as **"the Father of English Literature,"** Chaucer is widely credited as the first author to demonstrate the artistic legitimacy **of the vernacular English language** rather than French or Latin. **With Chaucer, the English language and English literature grew up.** His first works were love- lyrics.
- His earliest work was possibly the translation of a long love poem in French, the *Roman de la Rose*.
- Chaucer's first major work, *The Book of the Duchess*, was an elegy for Blanche of Lancaster.
- Two other early works by Chaucer were *Anelida and Arcite* and *The House of Fame*. Chaucer wrote many of his major works in a prolific period when he held the job of customs comptroller for London (1374 to 1386). His *Parlement of Foules*, *The Legend of Good Women* and *Troilus and Criseyde* all date from this time. Also it is believed that he started work on *The Canterbury Tales* in the early 1380s.

Picture of Chaucer, Geoffrey Chaucer often regarded as the father of English literature, father of English poetry, father of English novel. You can name it and he will be always leading it. Chaucer is widely credited as the author to demonstrate the artistic legitimacy of the vernacular English language rather than, French or Latin. With Chaucer therefore, the English language and English literature grew up.

So, when we try to access the age will have to see how Chaucer was the 1 who are who use the initial building blocks to make the literature grow up. His first works were love

lyrics his earliest work as I as said falls in the French period a translation. And the 2 other early works by Chaucer were Annelid and Arcite and The House of Fame. And he wrote many of his major works in the prolific period his Parlement of Foules, The Legend of Good W omen and Troilus and Criseyde all date from this time. Also it is believed that he started work on the Canterbury Tales in the early 1380.

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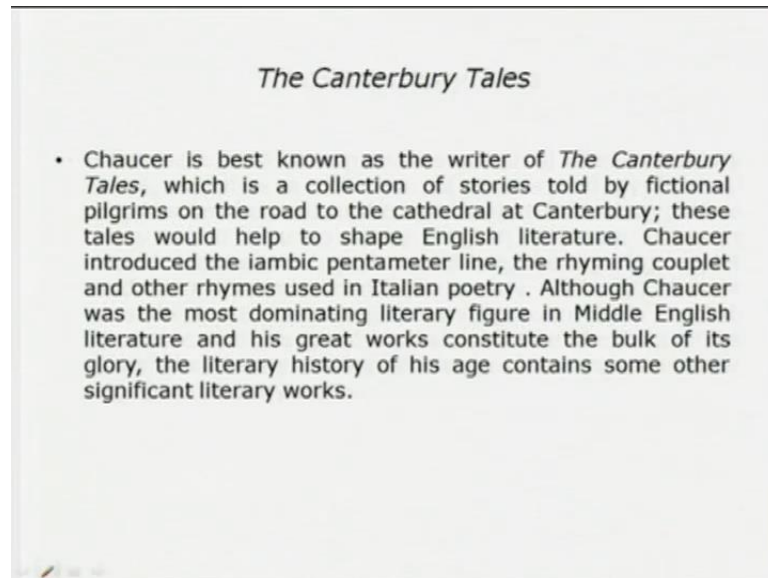
But we come to his megnam opus that is the Canterbury Tales. Chaucer is best known as the writer of the Canterbury Tales which is a collection of stories told by fictional pilgrims on the road to the cathedral at Canterbury. These tales would help to shape English literature a lot, because as I told you he was a precursor of modern narration, he was a precursor of modern poetry and so many other precursors.

Chaucer introduced the iambic pentameter line the rhyming couplet and other rhymes used in Italian poetry for the first time. Although Chaucer was the most dominating literary figure in Middle English literature and his great works constitute the bulk of its glory. The literary history of his age contains some other significant literary works.

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- Chaucer, like Boccaccio in Italy, tells many folktales. Only in the seventeenth century did such literature come to be regarded as 'low'. And even style, however enriched it might be by writing or by a learned poet, was of the same sort at high and low levels. Even the elaboration of medieval rhetoric were no more, and no less than a rationalization of traditional style, with word- play (e.g. pun), exaggeration, sententiousness (e.g. proverbs), and repetition with variation. Such is the basis of the style of medieval romance and lyric, of the great fourteenth century poets, of the Book of Common Prayer and Shakespeare, and of much folk literature even today.

This is the church of Canterbury. Chaucer like Boccaccio in Italy tells many folktales only in the seventeenth century did such literature come to be regarded as low. And even style; however, enriched it might be by writing or by a learned poet was of the same sort at high and low levels. Even the elaborations of medieval rhetoric were no more and no less than a rationalization of traditional style tradition traditional style. Such is the basis of the style of medieval romance and lyric of the great fourteenth century poets of the Book of Common Prayer and Shakespeare and of much folk literature even today.

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- If we ask why we are justified in saying that Chaucer, like Shakespeare, is for all time, one partial answer is perhaps that the greatness of his poetry- particularly as a presentation of human comedy- depends on an inexhaustible 'source' in the life and speech of a whole varied community. There is no doubt about Chaucer, at least since Dryden he has been established, for our assent or dissent, as the first great classic of English Literature.

They influences that it you 1 had this were the pilgrims were going to Canterbury. If we ask why we are justified in saying that Chaucer like Shakespeare is for all time 1 partial answer is perhaps that, the greatness of his poetry. Particularly, as a presentation of human comedy everyone is shown in his own colours, his own community, in his own type depends on an inexhaustible source which is very close to life. There is no doubt about Chaucer at least since Dryden he has been established for our assent or dissent as the first great classic of English literature.
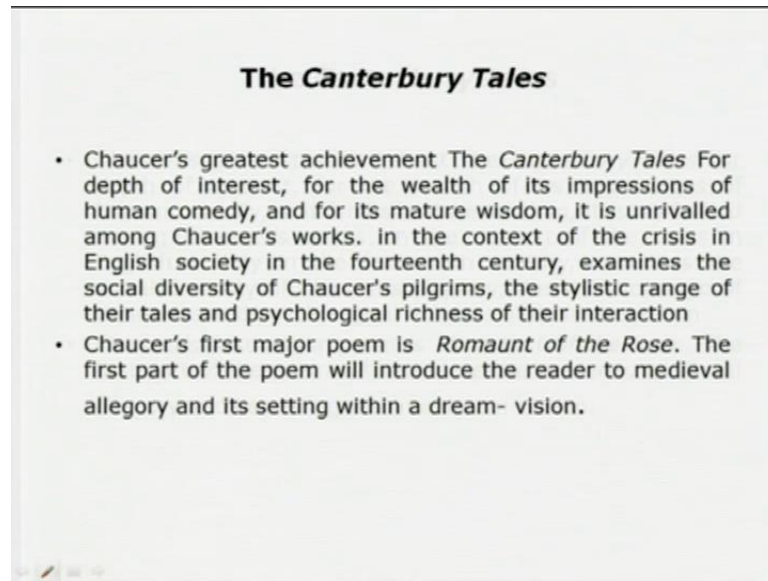
So, when we look into the Canterbury Tales for depth of interest we see that, it has the wealth of its impressions of human comedy, and for its wisdom, for its observation, for its unrivalled among Chaucer's works. In the context of the crisis in English society in the fourteenth century it examines the social diversity of Chaucer's pilgrims. And the stylistic range of their tales and psychological richness of their interaction.

So, this are the absolute anticipation of what modern narratives is going to be. He wrote his first major poem is Romaunt of the rose. And the first part of the poem will introduce the reader to medieval allegory and its setting within a dream vision.

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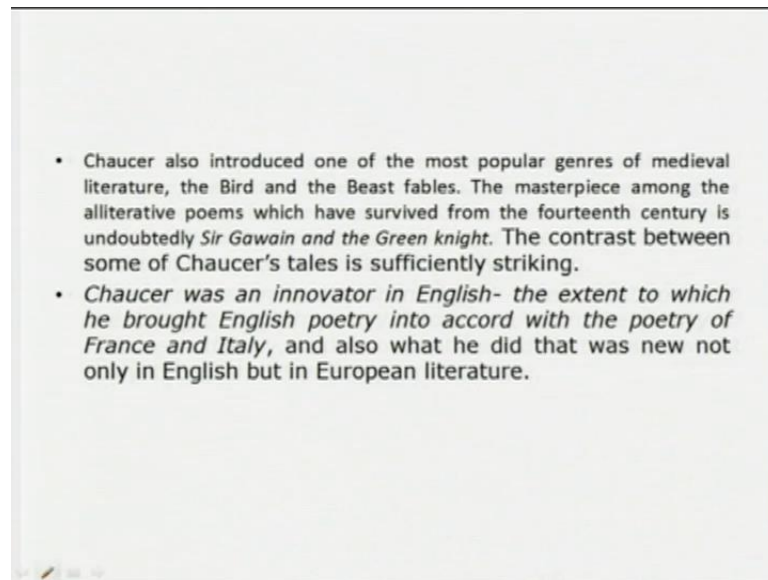

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allegory

- Although Chaucer' poetry not only grows out of but away from **allegory** towards a larger, freer realism, allegory still underlies even the Canterbury Tales. **Allegory was the way the medieval mind characteristically worked**. The medieval allegorical habit modified the language itself. The English of English medieval literature is full of **personifications** or of words and phrases that are on the point of becoming so; **and personifications are a feature of allegory**. As in Dante, so in Chaucer frequent similes promote the distinct visualization which is an essential aspect of allegory and is still an aspect of the 'realism' of the Canterbury Tales.

This is the Debaute in because mention in the Canterbury Tales yes. So, now, we come to another metrical device the allegory it is an extended metropolis yes at … Although Chaucer poetry not only grows out of, but away from allegory towards a larger freer realism yet allegory still underlies even the Canterbury Tales. Allegory was the way the medieval mind characteristically worked. So, what you understand by allegory personifications which falls under different levels mostly telling about a morel mostly going about a religious view.

Therefore, it is a extended metaphor it can be an extended metaphor and it is full of personifications or of words and phrases that are on the point of becoming so. As in Dante, so in Chaucer frequent similes promote the distinct visualization which is an essential aspect of allegory. And is still an aspect of the realism of the Canterbury Tale.
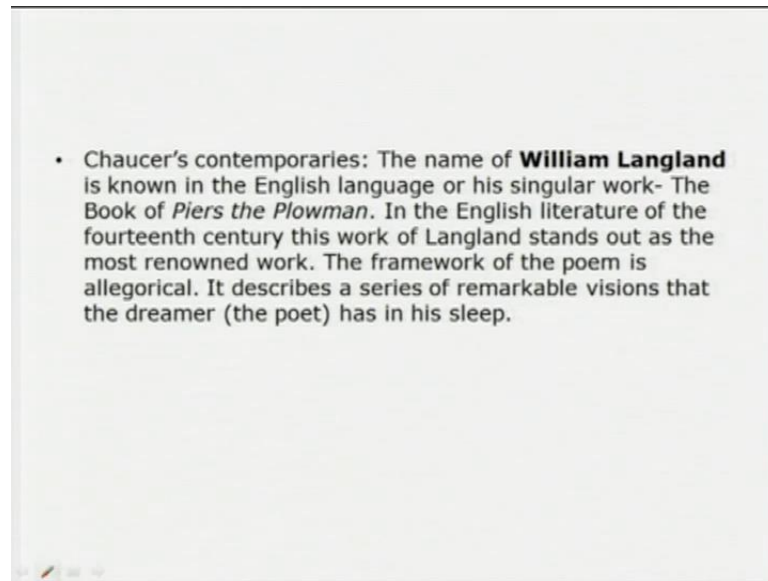
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- Chaucer also introduced one of the most popular genres of medieval literature, the Bird and the Beast fables. The masterpiece among the alliterative poems which have survived from the fourteenth century is undoubtedly *Sir Gawain and the Green knight*. The contrast between some of Chaucer's tales is sufficiently striking.
- *Chaucer was an innovator in English- the extent to which he brought English poetry into accord with the poetry of France and Italy*, and also what he did that was new not only in English but in European literature.

Another contribution of Chaucer in medieval literature was how he introduced the bird and the beast fables. The masterpiece among the alliterative poems which have survived from the fourteenth century of course, apart from Chaucer is Sir Gawain and the Green knight. The contrast between some of Chaucer's tales is sufficiently striking.
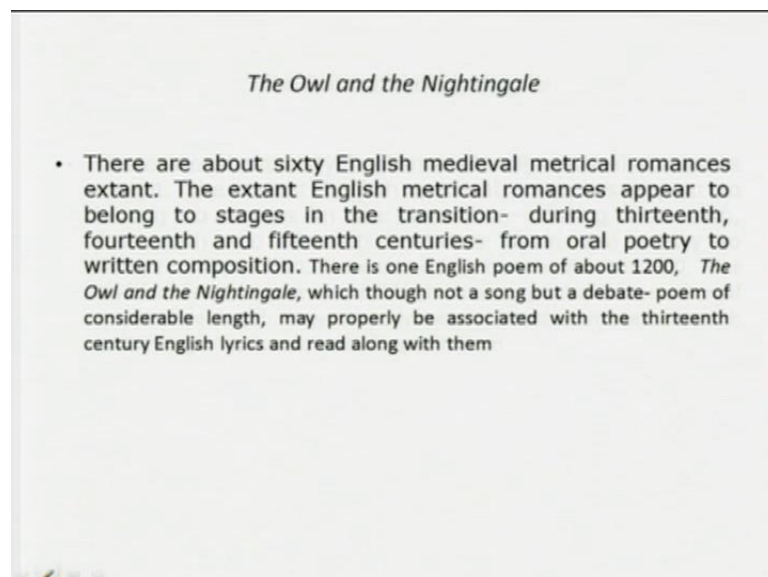
Therefore, what do we examine after this Chaucer was an innovator in English the extent to which, he brought English poetry into accord with the poetry of France and Italy, number 1. And also what he did that was new not only in English, but in European literature.

- Chaucer's contemporaries: The name of **William Langland** is known in the English language or his singular work- The Book of *Piers the Plowman*. In the English literature of the fourteenth century this work of Langland stands out as the most renowned work. The framework of the poem is allegorical. It describes a series of remarkable visions that the dreamer (the poet) has in his sleep.

So, when we look at Chaucer's contemporaries the name of William Langland is known in the English language or on his singular work the book of Piers the Plowman. In the English literature of the fourteenth century this work of Langland stands out as the most renowned work. And the framework of the poem is again allegorical, it describes a series of remarkable visions that the dreamer has in his sleep.
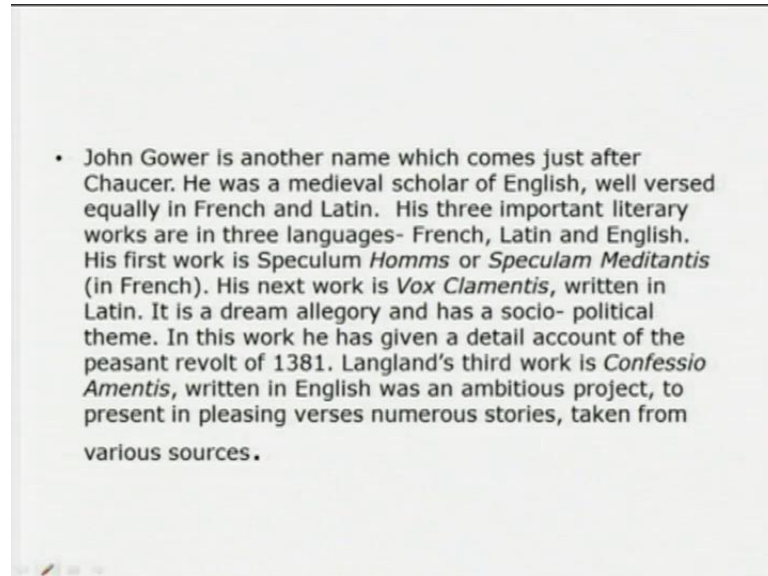
The Owl and the Nightingale

- There are about sixty English medieval metrical romances extant. The extant English metrical romances appear to belong to stages in the transition- during thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries- from oral poetry to written composition. There is one English poem of about 1200, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, which though not a song but a debate- poem of considerable length, may properly be associated with the thirteenth century English lyrics and read along with them

Then before that we know that there are about 60 English medieval metrical romances extant. The extant English metrical romances appear to belong to stages in the transition

of medieval literature during thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from oral poetry to written composition. There is 1 English poem of about 1200 The Owl and the Nightingale which though not a song, but a debate is a poem of considerable length, may properly be associated with the thirteenth century English lyrics and read along with them.

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- John Gower is another name which comes just after Chaucer. He was a medieval scholar of English, well versed equally in French and Latin. His three important literary works are in three languages- French, Latin and English. His first work is Speculum *Homms* or *Speculam Meditantis* (in French). His next work is *Vox Clamentis*, written in Latin. It is a dream allegory and has a socio- political theme. In this work he has given a detail account of the peasant revolt of 1381. Langland's third work is *Confessio Amentis*, written in English was an ambitious project, to present in pleasing verses numerous stories, taken from various sources.

John Gower is another name which comes just after Chaucer he was a medieval scholar of English well versed equally in French and Latin. He was linguist you can say and what he wrote was in 3 languages French, English and Latin. And in his dream allegory in what he had written in English and Vox Clamentis. His third work is Confessio Amentis written in English was an ambitious project to present in pleasing verses numerous stories taken from different sources.
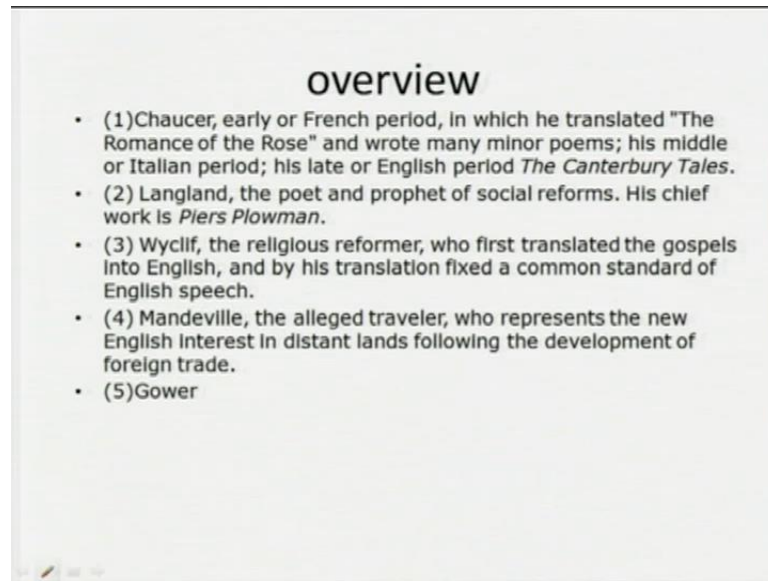
So, in the overview that we have of the age of Chaucer, what have we come to see? Chaucer early or French period we have seen how he translated the romance of the rose and wrote many minor poems, then his middle or Italian period and his late or English period of the Canterbury Tales submitted by the Canterbury Tales. Then we have Langland the poet and prophet of social reforms, his chief work is Piers Plowman, Wycliffe, the religious reformer who first translated the gospels into English; Mandeville, the alleged traveler who represents the new English interest in distant lands.

We go into there a NASA in the next lecture and will see how most of these writers had influence the out pouring of different avenues in different ways of creativity. Development of foreign trade and also an very truly John Gower.

The Miracle Cycles:

- Four versions of the complete **English Mystery (or Miracle) Cycle** have been preserved- the York, Chester, Towneley M S (probably Wakefield) and N- town (probably East Anglican) Cycles. Certain of these plays will seem to stand out from the rest of the Cycle as being more what we think of as plays- comedy or tragedy- presented to an audience.
- The Mystery cycle represents or reproduces what might perhaps be called a history of the world- of mankind in relation to God- from the creation to the last judgement. The historical origin of the plays that have come to form the Mystery Cycle can, we know, **be traced back to the embryo Latin plays** which appeared first as intrinsic parts of the **Church services** at Easter and at Christmas. The first of these **formal liturgical plays** seems to have been the representation of the resurrection. **The mystery cycle is a truly communal or national drama.**
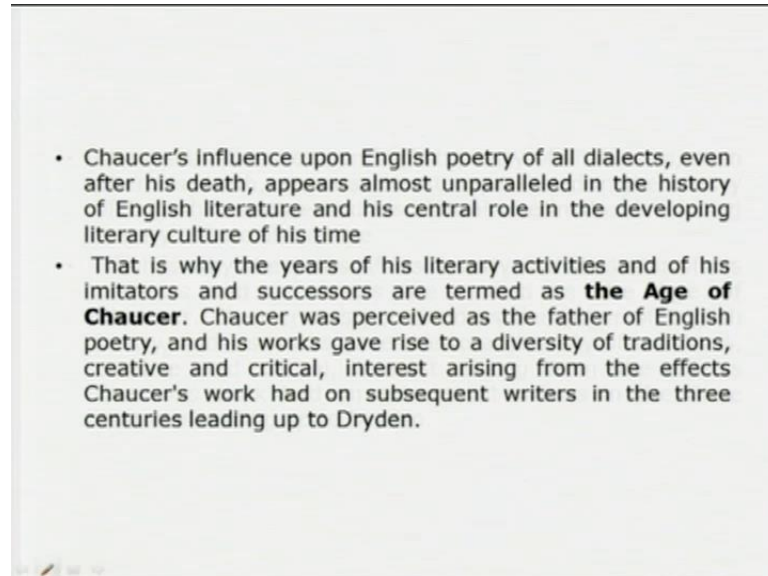
Well this whole lecture on the age of Chaucer will not be complete without mentioning of the miracle cycles what had happen in drama right. And what was happening as the beginnings of drama you can call in the in a English literature. 4 versions of the complete English mystery or miracle cycle have been preserved which was going on during this time the York, the Chester, Towneley and M S probably Wakefield and N-town probably east Anglican cycles. Certain of these plays will seem to stand out from the rest of the cycle as being more what we think of as plays comedy or tragedy presented to an audience.

So, when we look into the history of drama as such we find that it became intersect mostly as a liturgical place very true yes. But, we find that the beginning was there that these were the English mystery cycles or miracle cycle that can be said. And that represents or reproduced what might perhaps be called a history of the world of mankind in relation to god of values of ethics from creation to the last judgment. The historical origin of the plays that have come to form the mystery cycle can we know be traced back to the embryo Latin plays, which appeared first as intrinsic part of the church services at Easter and at Christmas.

The first of these formal liturgical plays seems to have been the representation of the resurrection. The mystery cycle is a truly communal or national drama in the making of

course, later the search conduct handle most of the teams which were be if represent it. And therefore, it came out of the search and form the cycle of the Rome well.

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- Chaucer's influence upon English poetry of all dialects, even after his death, appears almost unparalleled in the history of English literature and his central role in the developing literary culture of his time
- That is why the years of his literary activities and of his imitators and successors are termed as **the Age of Chaucer**. Chaucer was perceived as the father of English poetry, and his works gave rise to a diversity of traditions, creative and critical, interest arising from the effects Chaucer's work had on subsequent writers in the three centuries leading up to Dryden.
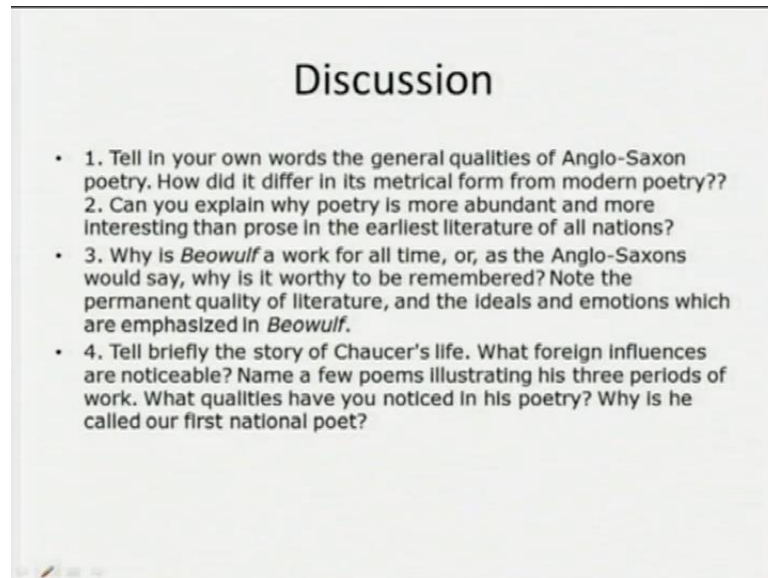
So, in summing up why do we say that, this is the age of Chaucer right. Chaucer's influence upon English poetry of a literature of all dialects even after his death appears almost unparalleled in the history of English literature and his central role, in the developing literary culture of his time.

When we look at Chaucer we find that he was intended also to the also Anglo-Saxon period Anglo-Saxon period. And in that Anglo-Saxon period which I have said for the alliterative tradition not only of that many of the techniques of writing a poem and also of narrating an episode or of representing nature at influenced later poetry and literature in the different ages. We have Dryden Manley Hopkins with his strong rhythm which he had got from Anglo-Saxon poetry. We have W B Age who had gone to the caletic myths and the legends to represent his ideas in his poetry.

We have so many people we have talked about a ranger of the natural landscapes of English poetry. That is why the years of his literary activities and of his imitators and successors are termed as the age of Chaucer. Chaucer was perceived as the father of English poetry and his works gave rise to a diversity of traditions. Creative and critical both interest arising from the effects of Chaucer's work had on subsequent writers in the three centuries even leading up to Dryden.

So, in our discussion let us see how do we look into this age can we tell in our own words the general qualities of Anglo-Saxon poetry right. How did it differ in its metrical form from modern poetry just now, I had mentioned. That, modern poetry may be the same in many aspects intended to some of the elements which we find metrical innovations which were there in the alliterative first of Anglo-Saxon period.
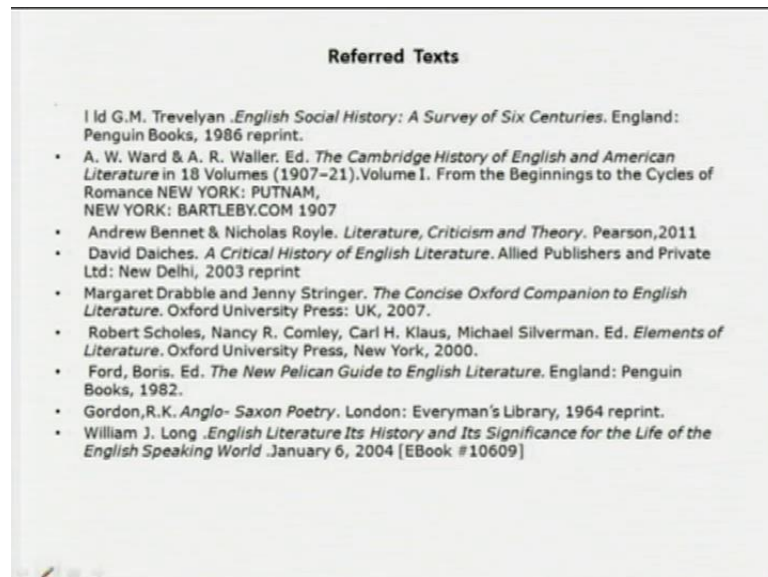
Can you explain why poetry is more abundant and more interesting than prose in the earliest literature of all nations? And this is an analysis that we should observe this is something that you have to see. Because, almost all if you go into the cultural history of all nations you will find that most of them communicated or exchange notes through song. And songs, and folk songs and the way that they relate to things was something which was the binding force.

Well, why is Beowulf a work for all time or as the Anglo-Saxons would say why is it worthy to be remembered. So, you have to look into this and when you read this story of Beowulf you see some this adventure of the way he goes and tries to believe the evil. I mean the good from the evil all this are allegorical devices which the unknown writer had written during the time.

There is something very permanent quality in literature and ideals and emotions which are emphasized in Beowulf. Tell briefly the story of Chaucer's life it would be good if you are interested to read the life of Chaucer, who had a very great in experience as a

host, which life as a pilgrim what foreign influences are noticeable. And you have to see how you also went to the different techniques experimented with a different techniques which he has seen. From the European tradition and the way that he illustrated his 3 periods of work. And why he is called the English national first English poet?

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Referred Texts

I Id G.M. Trevelyan .*English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries.* England: Penguin Books, 1986 reprint.

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- Ford, Boris. Ed. *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.* England: Penguin Books, 1982.
- Gordon,R.K. *Anglo- Saxon Poetry.* London: Everyman's Library, 1964 reprint.
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So, for the refer texts, if you want to know about the social English social history I would want to read G. M. Trevelyan's English social history a survey of 6 centuries. A interesting account how social history is being reflected by the English poets of the time from the say from the time of Chaucer to the time of Textron to the time of Shakespeare to the moderns. Then we have a very interesting Cambridge history of English and American literature in 18 volumes by A. W. Ward. Then w have Andrew Bennett's literature criticism and theory.

If you look into the theoretical aspect of Anglo-Saxon period David Daiches who has been regarded as almost the a tool of English literature students. A critical history of English literature when you look into each page and you go into the detail into how each page has contributed to that age. Then we have Robert Scholes elements of literature how you study literature. I had a book which you should have or all literatures students should have in all volumes it has it is about 6 volumes.

The new pelican guide to English literature and then Anglo-Saxon poetry by R. K. Gordon and William J Long which is available in the net English literature its history and

its significance for the life of the English speaking world. This is a eBook by project Richard Burg and you will find most of the references which we have dealt here has been mentioned there in much detail.