

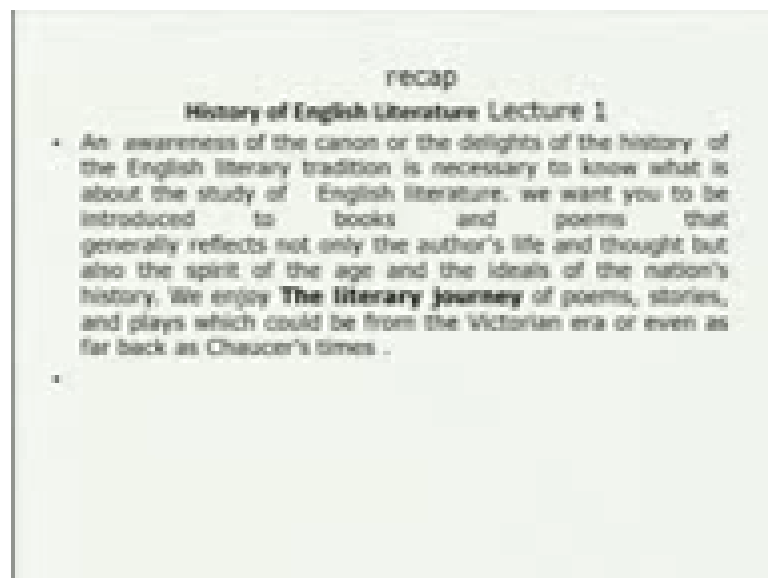
English Language and Literature
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Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Module - 3
History of English Literature
Lecture - 15
Milton and his Times

Hello and welcome back to the National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning; a joint venture by Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institute of Science. These lectures are for students of IITs and other engineering colleges. We, in the department of Humanities and Social sciences, have a very significant role in the curriculum of IIT engineering graduates; we gave an interface between society and literature and different sociological, psychological, philosophical concerns which face the students.

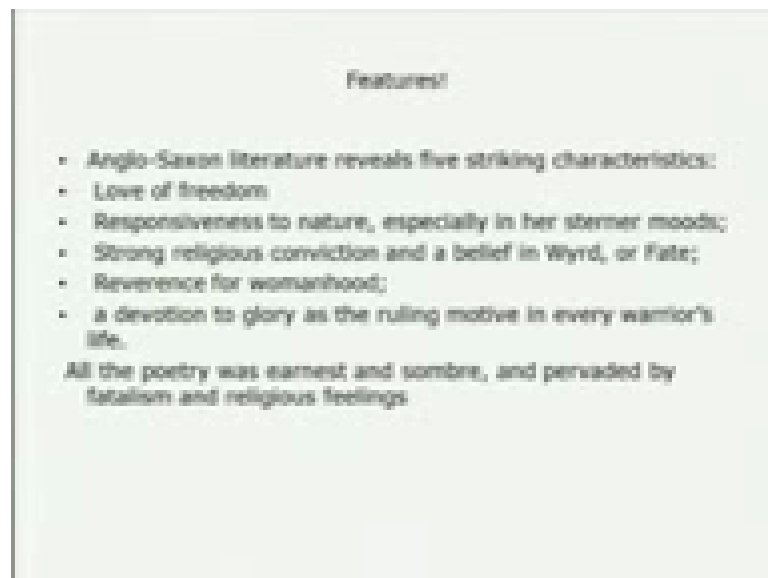
I am Krishna Barua. I have been teaching English literature at IIT Guwahati for more than a decade. I enjoy teaching a literature to engineering students, because they have a definite slant or perception in looking at text and give a different dimension to understanding literature. This lectures; we are in the lecture series in English language and literature and we are in module 3 of this lecture series which is titled history of English literature. And today we are going to do lecture 3; Milton and his times.

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So, let us look back, what we had learnt in lecture 1 in this module; history of English literature. This understanding of the background of English literature is necessary to understand the literary text and unawareness of the canon or the delights of the history of the English literature tradition is necessary to know, what is about the study of English literature. We want you to be introduced to books and poems, that generally reflects not only the author's life and taught, but also the spirit of the age and the ideals of the nation's history; that different changes, the transitions that take place in the ages pertaining. Let us enjoy this literary journey of poems, stories and place which could be from the Victorian era or even as far back as Chaucer's times.

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If, we go in to the very beginning; Anglo-Saxon literature, we find that Anglo-Saxon literature reveals 5 striking characteristics, specially this love for freedom, which we will find again in Milton and his times, the responsiveness to nature which was very a quality, which was the part of Anglo-Saxon literature, strong religious conviction reverence for womanhood, a devotion to glory and all the poetry was earnest and sombre and provided by fatalism and religious feelings.

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Overview of Lecture 1

- 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 Knight** during the Middle Ages. Geoffrey Chaucer marks the brilliant culmination of Middle English literature.

So, when we look at an overview of lecture 1; there were 3 main categories of middle English literature coming from Anglo-Saxon to the time of Chaucer, we found that it was religious, courtly love and Arthurian and William Langland's Piers Plowman, then coming to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales which has been regarded as the first novel, first pearls poem, the first in all literature and sir Gawain and the Green Knight during the middle ages. A Geoffrey Chaucer's mugs the brilliant culmination of Middle English literature.

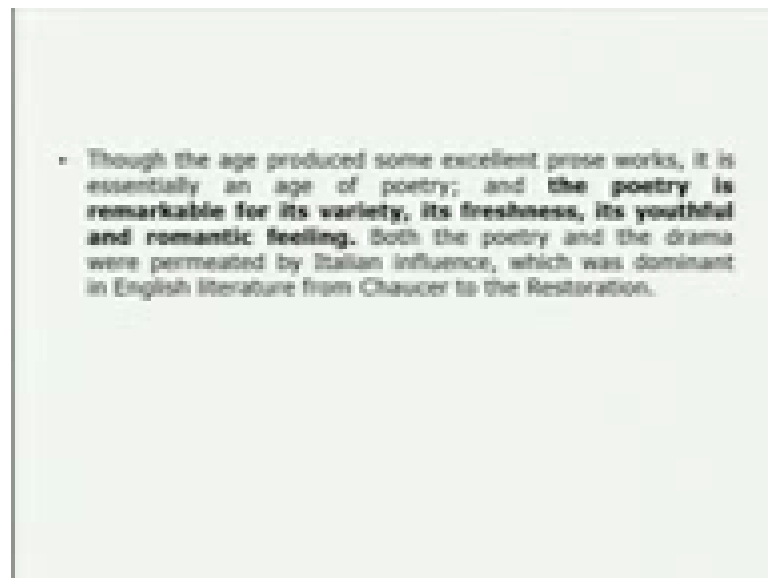
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RECAP
History of English Literature Lecture 2
The Age of Shakespeare

- The greatness of Shakespeare's achievement was largely made possible by the work of his immediate predecessors:
- Spenser and Sidney in the mastery of verse
- by Marlow and the university wits in the theatrical management of character and situation.
- After a long fallow period of dependence on Chaucer and of timid innovation in a language that was changeable and uncertain, there came a moment of mounting confidence in **the power of human reason to interpret Man and Nature**, in the value of literature as an instrument of reason, in the **dignity of modern English as a literary medium**.

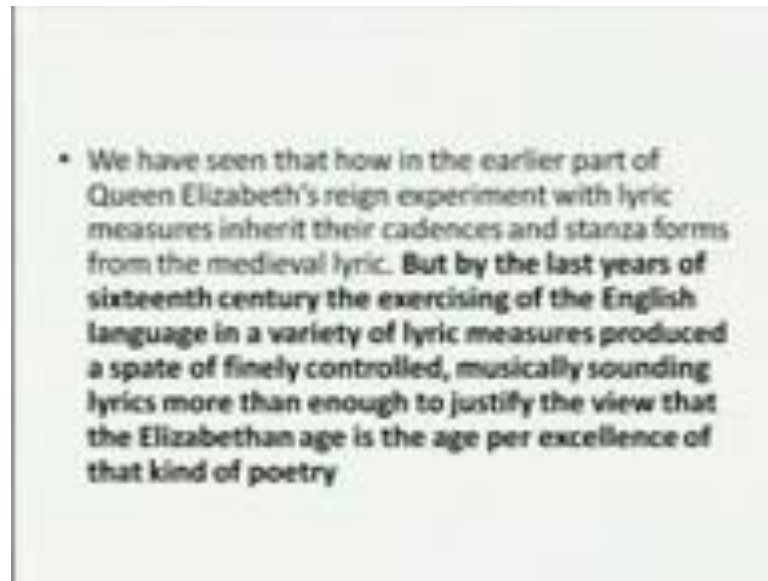
When we do a recap of a lecture 2; the age Shakespeare which was the glorious age of English literature, we have to see how 1 person 1 personality completely determines the age of the period and his achievement was largely made possible by the work of his immediate predecessors: Spenser and Sidney in the mastery of verse. When we mention Spenser, we will be doing this Spenserian tradition even in the Milton's age by mallow and the University with specially in the drama in the context of theatrical production of correct situation and where we have found that, the history of representation of man has change, there was innovations in language, there was innovation in technique, it was changeable and movement of mounting confidence in the power of human reason, the renaissance virtue you can call it; the renaissance emphasis upon man as the sole of the universe in the value of literature as an instrument of reason in the dignity of modern English as a literary medium. This was in the age of Shakespeare

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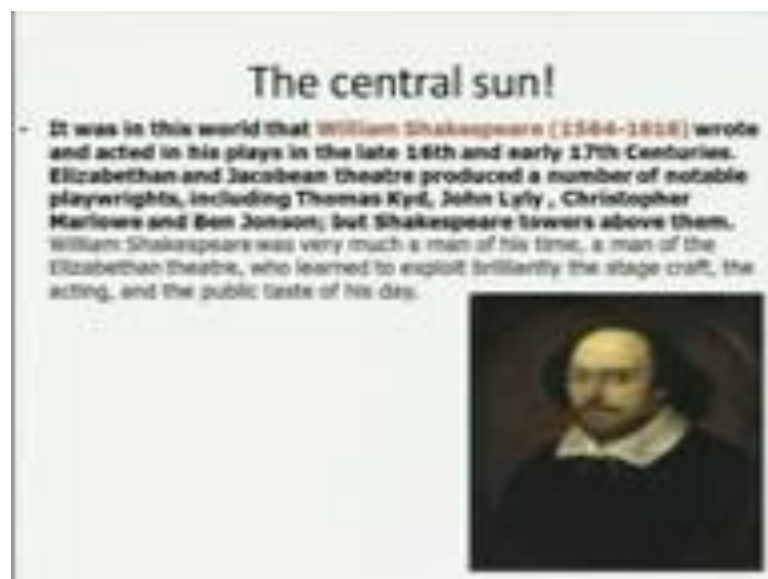
Though the age produce some excellent close work, it is a essentially an age of poetry; the Shakespeare's age and the age of drama and the poetry's remarkable for its variety, its freshness, its youthful and romantic feeling. When we will be coming to Milton and his times in lecture 3, we will see how this poetry has continued or has broken off in the next age.

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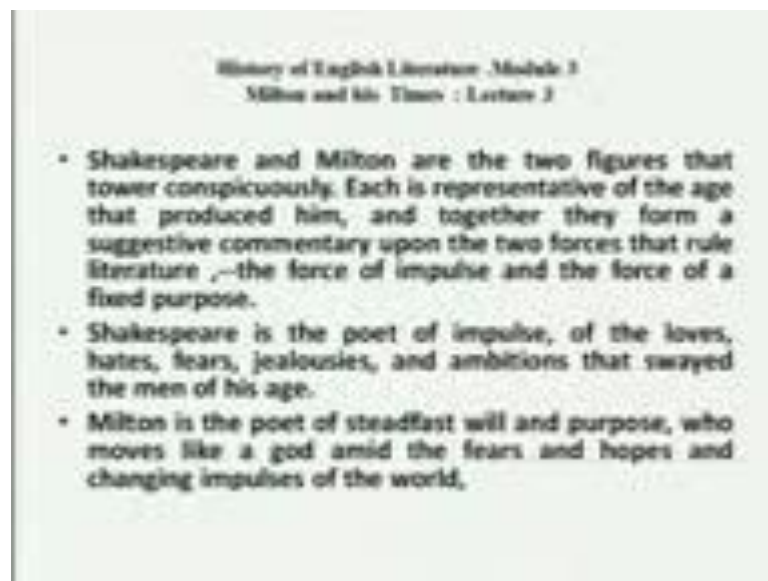
We have that seen that, how in the earlier part of Queen Elisabeth reign experiment with lyric measures inherit their cadencies, so this tradition of the lyric form. And the epic form had not yet come to English literature and stanza forms from the medieval lyric. But by the last years of 16 century, the exercising of the English language in a variety of lyric measures produced a state of family control musically, sounding lyrics more than enough to justify the view that Elizabethan age is the age per excellence of that kind of poetry.

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As we have gone through this, we have seen that it was the central sun's William Shakespeare who wrote and acted in his plays and produced the number of notable playwrights Thomas Kyd, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, but Shakespeare towers above them all. And he was a very a man of his time; a man of the Elizabethan theatre, who learn to exploit brilliantly the stage craft, the acting and the public taste of his day.

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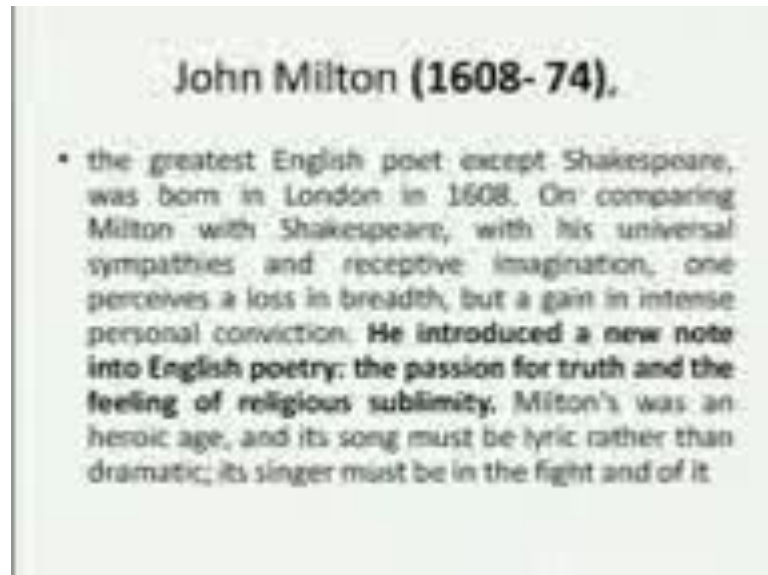


So, now coming to module 3 and lecture 3 of module 3 of the history of English literature, let us see how these 2 percentages determine to separate ages; Shakespeare in the preceding age, which we called age of Shakespeare. And next age from 16, from the beginning of the 17 century, we find that it has been called the age of Milton or Milton and his times. Why So? Shakespeare and Milton are the 2 figures that tower conspicuously. Each is representative of the age reputation and together they form a suggestive commentary upon the 2 forces that rule literature; the force of impulse on 1 hand and the force of a fixed purpose.

Shakespeare is the poet of impulse, if we look at the liberated expression of untrammelled imagination of the loves, hates, fears, jealousies and ambitions that swayed the men of his age, where it been said that age of Shakespeare, man did not talk, they sang. Milton on the other hand, is the poet of steadfast will intellectual depth and

purpose, who moves like a god amid the fears and hopes and changing impulses of the world. So, we find to contradictory science to this 2 ages.

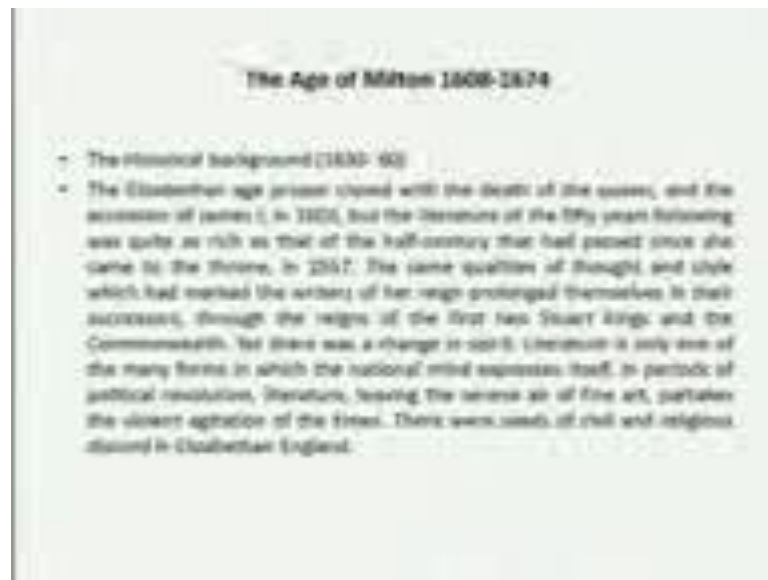
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If we look at John Milton from 1608 to 74, he has been considered the greatest English poet except Shakespeare. He was born in London in 1608. On comparing Milton with Shakespeare, this comparison automatically arises always it arises, which is universal sympathies and receptive imagination, 1 perceives a loss in breadth, but gain in intense personal conviction. So, day or Saturday, their glory or separate in their own perspective frills because, the comparison would be in adequate, if we compare them one in imagination the other in conviction.

He introduced a new note into English poetry Milton and the passion for truth and the filling of religious sublimating. Milton's was a heroic age, and his song must be lyric rather than dramatic; its singer must be in the fight and of it.

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So, drama you find does not become the medium of expression, it is more the close more the epic poems, more the different ways of intellectual representation, which ultimately determines expression. Let us go into the historical background of this age; 1630 to 1660 the beginning of 17 century. So, the Elizabethan age proper closed with the death of the Queen Elizabeth and the accession of James 1 in 1603. But, a literature of the 50 years following was quite as rich as that, of the half century that had passed since she came to the throne.

The same qualities of thought and style which had marked the writers of her reign, prolonged themselves in the successors, through the reigns of the first 2 towards kings and the common wealth. So, this is what we have to understand that, when we are doing overview of the different ages of literature; history of English literature, it is known that there is a fine there is a definite line which marks one age from the other. There are many transitions which go on; there are many convergences which go on from one age to the other.

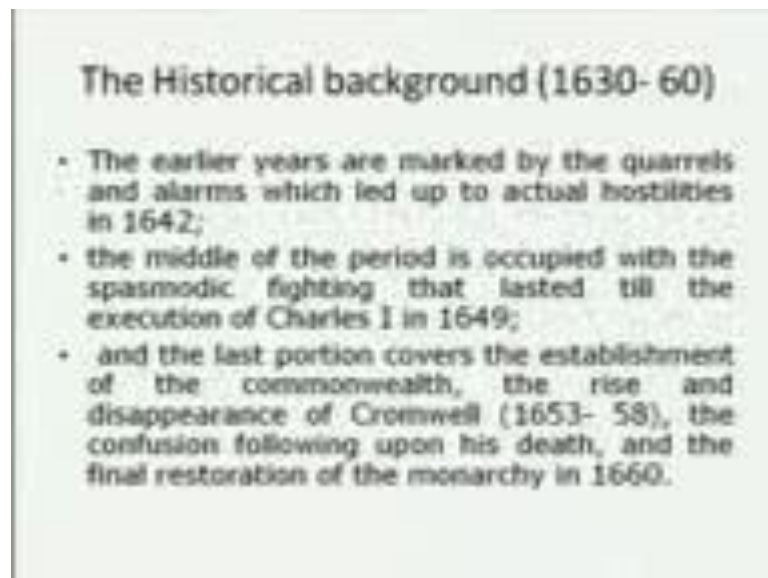
The important thing is to find out what was the difference, what was the transition or what was the new thing which had came up with the change of times. Yet there was a change in spirit in these times, what was that? Literature is only one of the many forms in which, the national mind expresses itself.

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In periods of political revolution, in change literature living the serene air of fine art partakes the violent agitation of the times. There were seeds of civil and religious discord in Elizabethan England, which was almost being represented in Spenser's poems' The Faerie Queene.

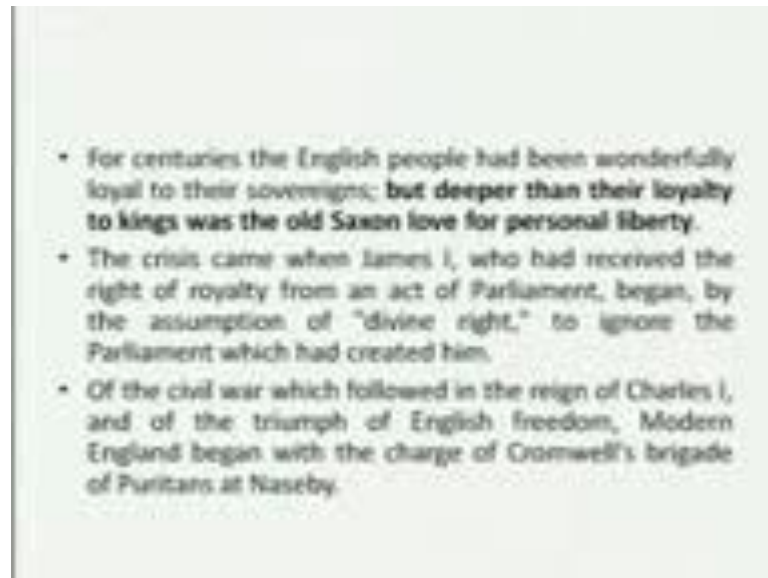
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But it had come out in this historical back ground. The earlier years are marked by the quarrels and alarms which led up to an actual hostilities in 1642; that is quite which was in the political arena. This is very important because, we are coming to the Puritanism;

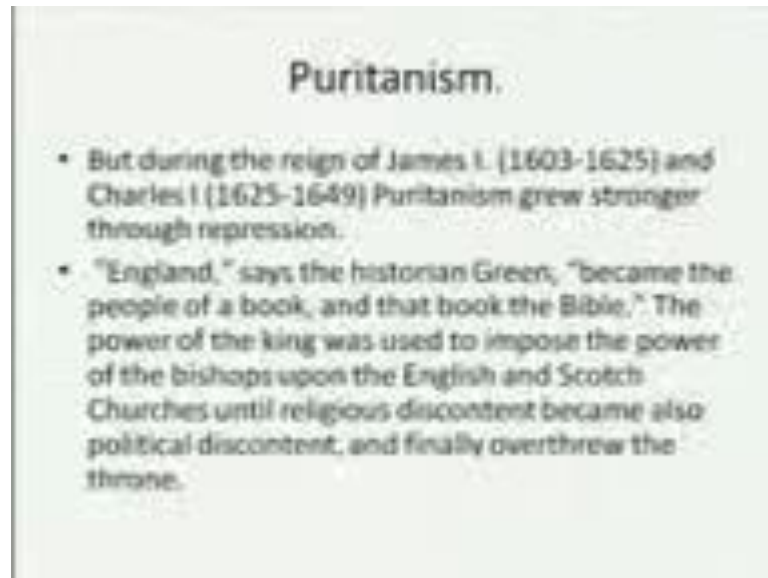
the meaning of the puritan age, which covers Milton and his times. The middle of the period is occupied with the spasmodic fighting that lasted till the execution of Charles first in 1649 and the last portion covers the establishment of the commonwealth, the rise and disappearance of Cromwell that is from 1653 to 1658, and confusion following upon his death and the final restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

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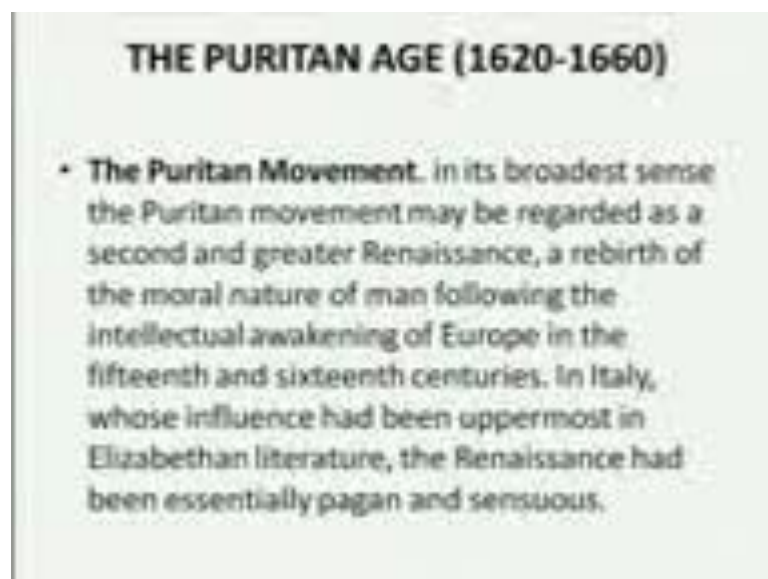
For centuries, the English people have been wonderfully loyal to their sovereigns, and thus done a recap of Anglo-Saxon poetry. We have seen this love of freedom, at the same the loyalty to the kings which was seen in most of the tables and in the tales that were told. But deeper than the loyalty to kings was the old Saxon love for personal liberty. The crisis came when James 1, who had received the right of royalty from an act of parliament, began by the assumption of divine right. Student of history may have been acquainted with this, when we try to exercise this divine right of the kings to ignore the parliament which had created him. Of the civil work which followed in the reign of Charles 1 and of the triumph of English freedom, modern England began with the charge of Cromwell's brigade of puritans at Naseby.

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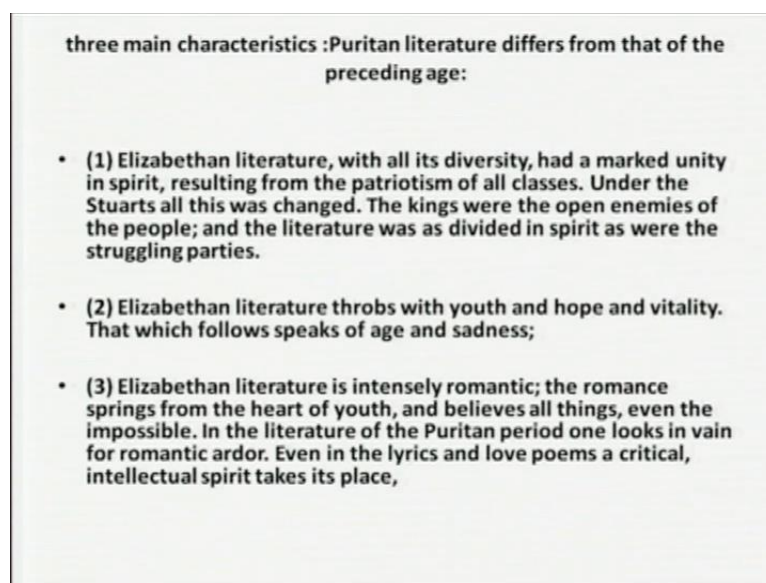
So, Puritanism as a concept; during the reigns it started from the reign of James 1 and Charles 1 and Puritanism grew stronger through literature. And as historian green had said; England became the people of a book and that book the Bible. The power of the king was used to impose the power of the bishop's upon the English and Scotch Churches, until religious discontent became also political discontent and finally, overthrew the throne.

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And which was again represented in different literary representations of the time. Therefore, the puritan movement is very important in understanding this, very significant part of the history of English literature. In his body sense, the puritan movement may be regarded as the second and greater renaissance, a rebirth of the moral nature of man. This emphasis upon the ethical nature of the modern nature of the man, the surge for truth, the surge for purpose, the surge for something which was untrammelled by any other imagination in the 15 and 16 centuries. In Italy whose influence had been uppermost in Elizabethan literature, the renaissance had been essentially taken and sensuous.

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three main characteristics :Puritan literature differs from that of the preceding age:

- (1) Elizabethan literature, with all its diversity, had a marked unity in spirit, resulting from the patriotism of all classes. Under the Stuarts all this was changed. The kings were the open enemies of the people; and the literature was as divided in spirit as were the struggling parties.
- (2) Elizabethan literature throbs with youth and hope and vitality. That which follows speaks of age and sadness;
- (3) Elizabethan literature is intensely romantic; the romance springs from the heart of youth, and believes all things, even the impossible. In the literature of the Puritan period one looks in vain for romantic ardor. Even in the lyrics and love poems a critical, intellectual spirit takes its place,

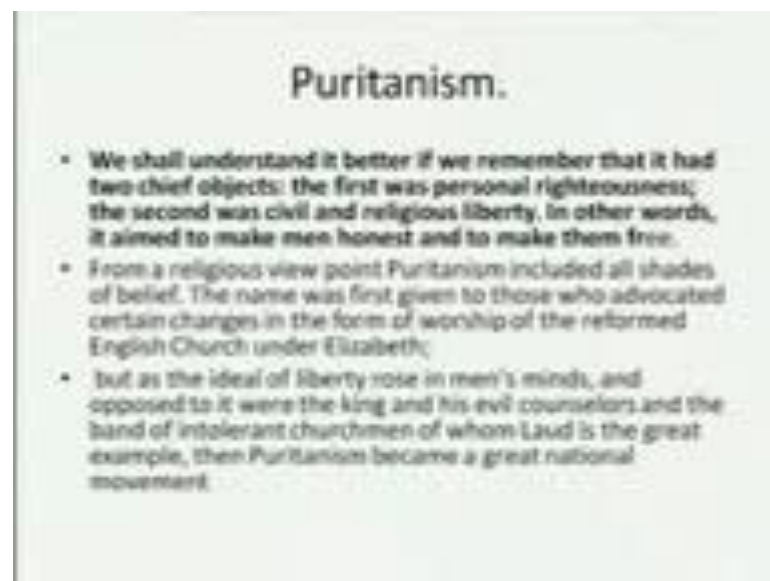
So, while we are doing this, this complete change in the political arena, we find that there are 3 main characteristics, which will mark puritan literature from that of the preceding age; the age of Shakespeare or the Elizabethan age, whatever you can name it. Elizabethan literature with all its diversity, we have seen drama at poetry had which its upper most in different form of lyric dimensions, had a marked unity in spirit, resulting from the patriotism of all classes. There was a national fob, there was herb to go forward and there was this urge, where we find that people were proud to be English. Under this towards all this was changed, the kings were the open enemies of the people and the literature was divided in spirit as were the struggling parties.

The first king that we marked, from the preceding age was this; literature becomes divided. When we look into this age of Milton, we find that literature we cannot judge

give over writing concept and say that Milton's and his times and the age of Milton followed some of the very well known characteristics of the preceding age or uniform characteristics not so at all.

So, therefore, we find that there were divergent and there was no unity in the way that it could be represented. Elizabethan in literature throbs with youth and hope and vitality, while that which follow speaks of age and sadness. There is a strain of you can call it; intellectual, interspection, philosophic, speculation, scientific intervention, whatever way that we can see in. Elizabethan literature was intensely romantic; the romance springs from the heart of youth and believes all things even in impossible. In the literature of the puritan period, one looks in vain for romantic ardour, somewhere this is missing, but yet we find that romantic ardour, it comes up sips in Milton's Paradise lost. Even in the lyrics and love poems a critical intellectual spirit takes its place.

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So, we shall understand Puritanism therefore, better if we remember that it had 2chief objects. What was 2 chief objects? The first was personal righteousness; dealing with right, wrong, dealing with ethics, dealing with truth and the second was civil and religious liberty, that is; political freedom, your responsibility towards society, your responsibility towards the nation. In other words, it aimed to make man honest and to make them free at the same time.

So, from a religious view point Puritanism included all shades of belief. It was not that it was only something dealing with the protest against the Roman Catholic surge. The name was first given to those who had advocated certain changes in the form of worship of the reform English surge under the Elizabeth, but as the ideal of liberty grows in mans mind. Therefore, this concept of liberty becomes very important and oppose to it where the king and his evil comes in of intolerance has been is the great example.

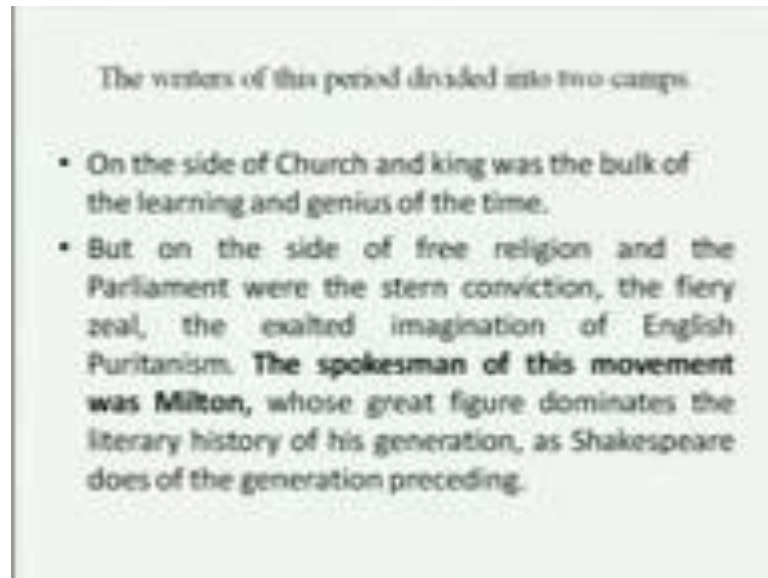
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- In the triumph of Puritanism under Cromwell severe laws were passed, many simple pleasures were forbidden, and an austere standard of living was forced upon an unwilling people.
- So the criticism is made that the wild outbreak of immorality which followed the restoration of Charles was partly due to the unnatural restrictions of the Puritan era.
- Changing Ideals. The political upheaval of the period is summed up in the terrible struggle between the king and Parliament, which resulted in the death of Charles at the block and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Cromwell

In the triumph of Puritanism under Cromwell severe laws were passed, many simple pleasures were forbidden and an austere standard of living was forced upon an unwilling people. Theatres were closed; you had to do exactly as it was the dictated. So, the criticism is made that a, while outbreak of immorality which followed the restoration of Charles thus after the common wealth, was partly due to the unnatural restriction of the puritan era. So, this is a point to ponder.

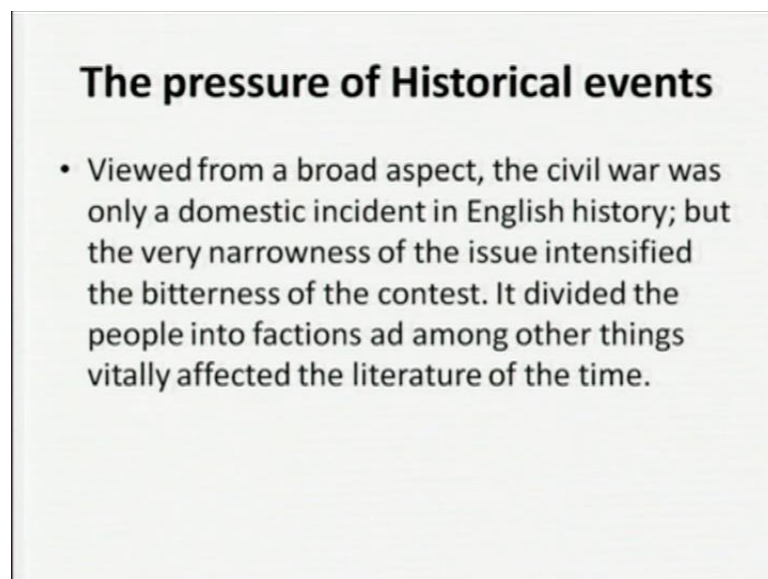
So, when we look into the age which will follow after this, will have that there will be another outbreak of immorality. At the changing ideas, the political appeal of the period is summed up in the terrible struggle, between the king and the parliament, which resulted in the death of Charles at the block and establishment of the common wealth.

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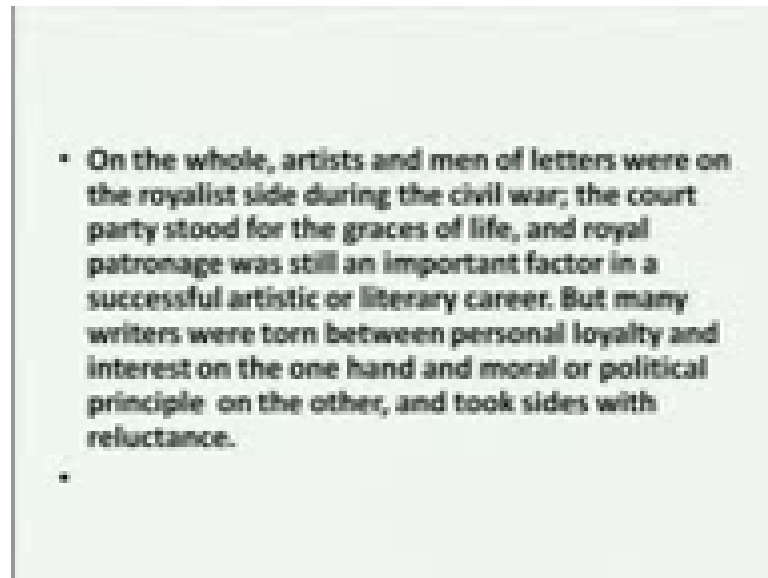
So, when we look at the writers of this period, they are divided into 2 camps; one who were the royalists and one who went against the surge against the king and the surge, what is the bulk of the learning and genius of the time. But on the side of free religion and the parliament were stern conviction, the fiery zeal and exalted imagination of English Puritanism. The spokesman of this movement was naturally Milton, whose great figure dominates the literary history of his generation as Shakespeare does of the generation preceding.

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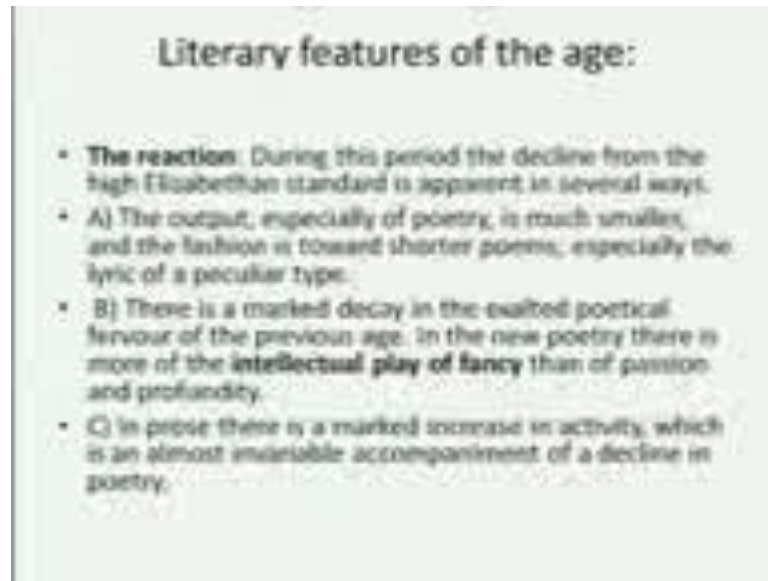
So, the pressure of this historical events, nowhere in the history of English literature has this been so strong as during this age, this pressure of historical events, viewed from abroad aspect. The civil war was only a domestic incident in English history, but the very narrowness of the issue intensified the bitterness of the contest. It divided the people into factions and among other things vitally affected the literature of the time.

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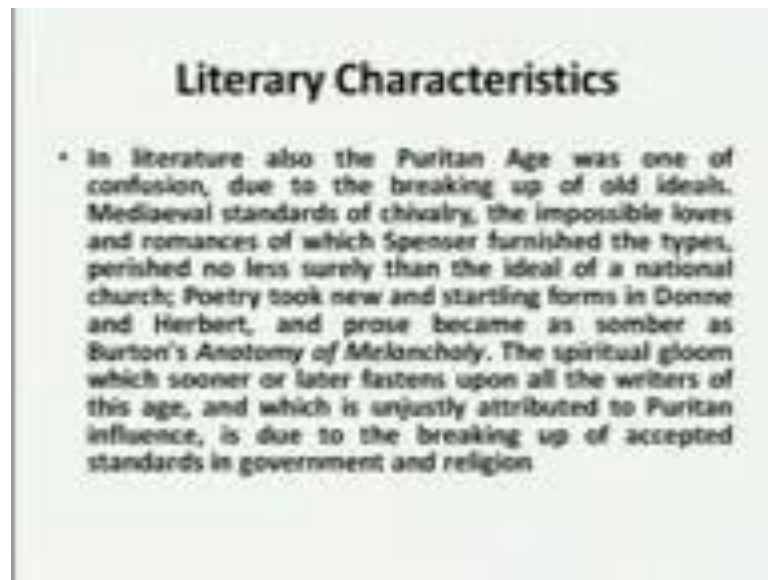
On the whole, so artists and men of letters were on the royalist side during the civil war; the court party stood for the graces of life and royal patronage was still an important factor in a successful artistic carrier. But many writers were torn between personal loyalty and interest and look sides with reluctance. So, in this triumph of Puritanism under Cromwell, severe laws were passed, many simple pleasures were forbidden.

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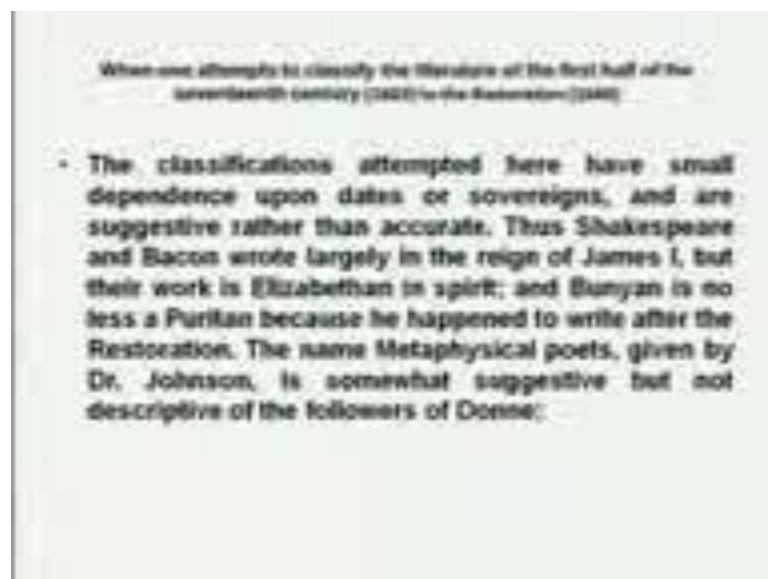
And the literary features of the age we find the reaction. Therefore, during this period the decline from the high Elizabethans standard is apparent in several ways. What was that number one? The output; especially of poetry is much smaller and the fashion is towards shorter poems especially the lyric of a peculiar type. We will be going in to the the Carolyn age as we call it Carolyn poetry, where there is the experimentation which sort of poems are different from all together. There is a marked decay in the exalted poetical fervour of the previous place; so there is more of the intellectual play of fancy. And in prose there is a marked increase in activity, many have said the 17 century was the age of prose, which is an almost invariable accompaniment of a decline in poetry.

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In literature also the puritan age was one of confusion, due to the breaking up of old ideas. Mediaeval standards of chivalry, the impossible loves and romances of Spenser furnished the types, perished no less surely than the ideal of a national side; poetry took new and startling forms in Donne. People were shocked into realization what type of poems that he wrote, spiritual gloom which sooner or later fastens upon all the writers of this age and which is unjustly attributed to puritan influence is to the breaking up of accepted standards in government and religion.

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So, there was a shock inter realization break with the parts somewhere or the other. When I who attempts to classify the literature of the first half of the 17 century 1603 to the restoration, we find that a classification attempted here has small dependence upon dates or sovereigns and I have already told you that when we try to divide the ages into different faces of English literature, that this are not the lines are not absolute, but they are somewhere that, they are flexible they dependence upon dates or sovereigns and are suggested rather than accurate.

Thus Shakespeare and beckon wrote largely in the reign of James first, but their work is a Elizabethan spirit and Bunyan is no less a puritan because, he happened to write after the restoration. The name metaphysical poets given by Dr Johnson, is somewhat suggestive, but not descriptive of the followers of Donne.

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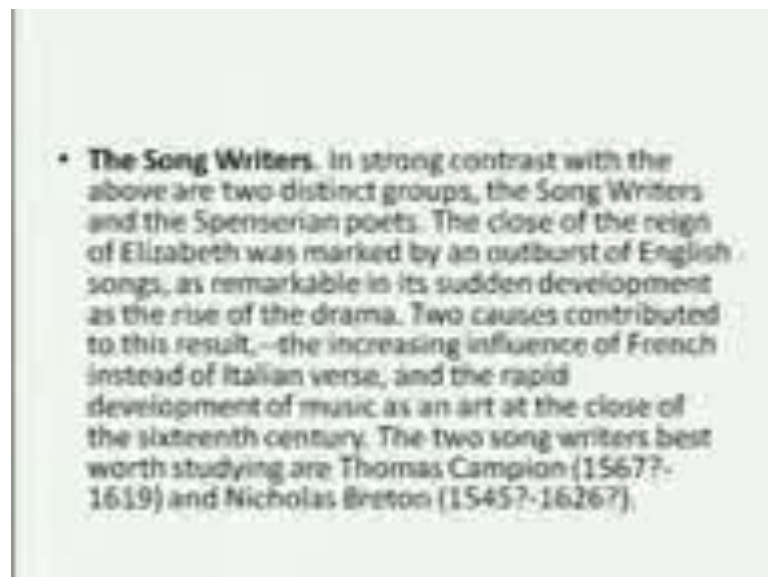
So, in a study therefore, what we are going to cover today, is the transition poets of whom Daniel is the chief, then the song writers Campion and Breton, then the Spenserian poets wither and Giles Fletcher, the cavalier poets Herrick Carew Lovelace Suckling, John Bunyan his extraordinary life and his chief work the pilgrim's progress, minor prose writers, then Metaphysical poets Donne and Herbert and John Milton, his life, his early poems, his militant prose and his last great poetical works. So, this is what we will cover today in this lecture.

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So, the transition poet which were there from the Elizabethan age to this age, confusion of ideals expressed in literature, we note the few writers who are generally known as the Jacobean poets, but whom we have called because, with the later dramatists, they show clearly the changing standards of the date.

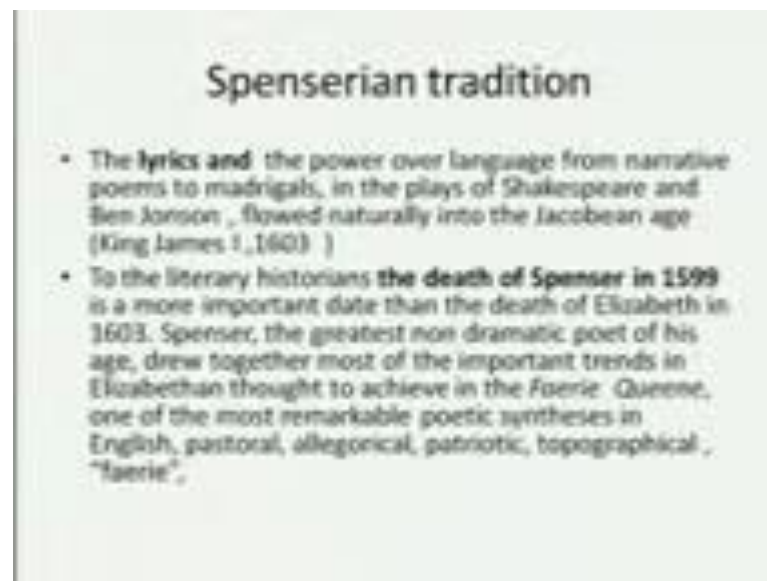
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Then, we have the song writers. In song strong contrast with the above are 2 distinct groups, the song writers and the Spenserian poets. The close of reign of Elizabeth was marked by an outburst of English songs, as remarkable in its sudden development of the

rise of the drama. So, we have seen that they end in the age of Shakespeare and its marked ending of that age was also ended with songs and madrigals. 2 causes contributed to this result; the increasing influence of French instead of Italian verse and the rapid development of music as an art at the close of the 16th century, the influence of music as a form of representation. The 2 song writers best worth studying way; Thomas Campion and Nicholas Breton.

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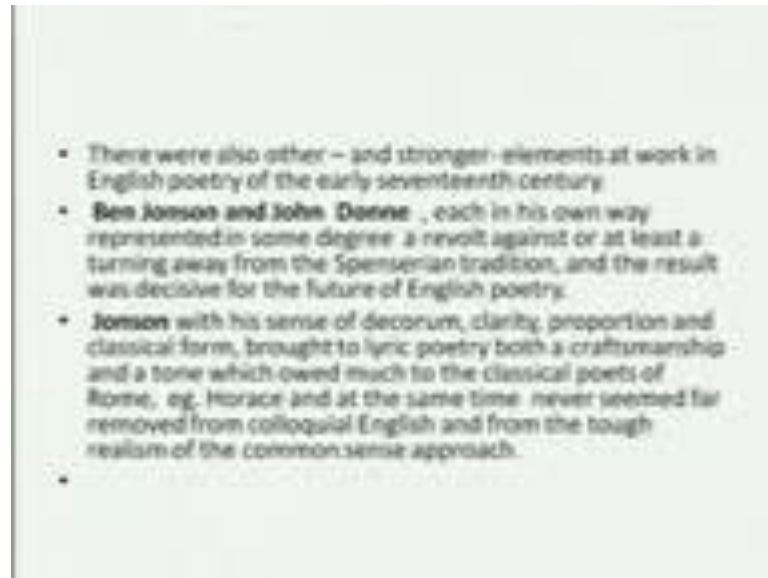


Thus Spenserian tradition, we had mentioned that this was a strong tradition in the age of Shakespeare and how Spenser innovated and brought a new way of writing poetry and specially in the lyric. The lyrics in a power language from narrated poems to metrical in the place of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson flowed naturally into the Jacobean age. To the literary historians, the death of Spenser in 1599 is very significant because, they think it is more important than the death of Elizabeth in 1603 because, Spenser was the greatest non-dramatic poet of his age, drew together most of important trends in Elizabethan thought to achieve in the *faerie queen*. We had already done that in the previous lecture.

And one of the most remarkable poetics synthesis that he and achieved in English literature; the synthesis of the pastoral, the allegorical, the patriotic, the topographical, the influence of the *faerie* everything brought together. So, this poetic map of England therefore, immediately after Spenser, is most clearly described in terms of the ways, in which the Spenserian tradition was continued and ways of revolting against it. We have

seen that no single poet had the stature continue the Spenserian tradition, but aspects the tradition are carried on by Drayton and the most interesting inheritors of the moral and allegorical side of Spenser are the brothers Giles Fletcher and Phineas Fletcher.

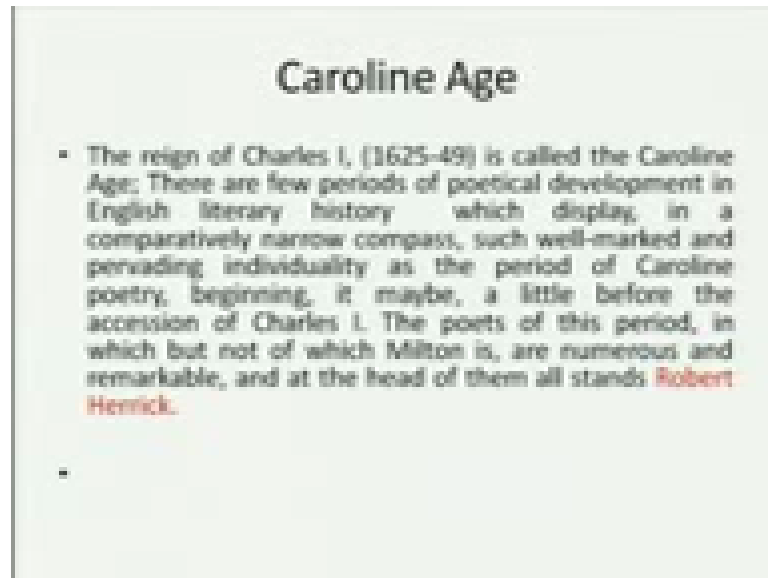
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There were also other stronger elements at work in English poetry of the early 17 century. So, we see Ben Johnson who the pair of Shakespeare and John Donne, each in his own way represented in some degree a revolt against or at least turning away from the Spenserian tradition and a result was decisive for the future of English poetry right. So, Johnson with his sense of decorum, clarity and a classical sense of style, proportion and classical form, brought to lyric poetry both a craftsmanship and a tone which owed much to the classical poets of Rome example, Horace and at the same time never seemed far removed from colloquial English and from the tough realism of the common sense approach.

So, Ben Johnson's attribute or the way the followers of Ben Johnson had a different divergent way going away from the Spenserian tradition of the allegorical, metaphorical the pastoral form.

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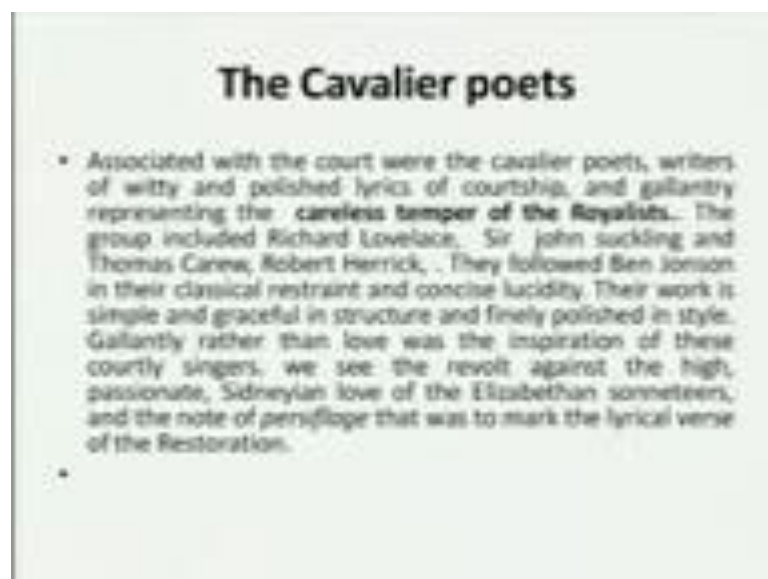


Caroline Age

- The reign of Charles I, (1625-49) is called the Caroline Age; There are few periods of poetical development in English literary history which display, in a comparatively narrow compass, such well-marked and pervading individuality as the period of Caroline poetry, beginning, it maybe, a little before the accession of Charles I. The poets of this period, in which but not of which Milton is, are numerous and remarkable, and at the head of them all stands **Robert Herrick**.
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So, when we look into this age which has been also called a Caroline age because, the reign of Charles one is called the Caroline age and there are few periods of poetical development in English literature history, which display such well marked and pervading individuality as the period of Caroline poetry, we find here significance. At the same time, we find new innovations. The poets of this period in which, but not of which Milton, are numerous and remarkable and at the head of them all stands Robert Herrick.

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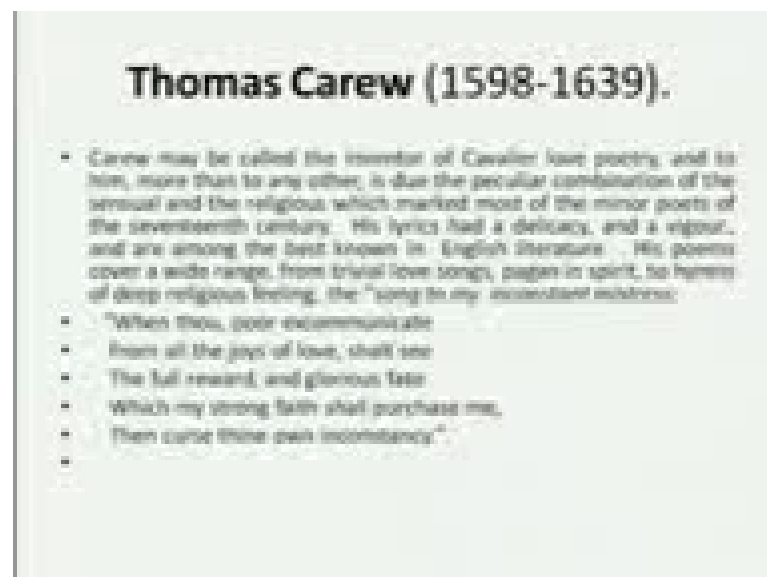


The Cavalier poets

- Associated with the court were the cavalier poets, writers of witty and polished lyrics of courtship, and gallantry representing the **careless temper of the Royalists**. The group included Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling and Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick, . They followed Ben Jonson in their classical restraint and concise lucidity. Their work is simple and graceful in structure and finely polished in style. Gallantly rather than love was the inspiration of these courtly singers. We see the revolt against the high, passionate, Sidneyan love of the Elizabethan sonneteers, and the note of perijfoge that was to mark the lyrical verse of the Restoration.
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The Cavalier poets associated with a court were that Cavalier poets. These were on the side of the royalists, on the side of the side of the change, writers witty and polished lyrics of courtship and gallantry representing the careless temper of the royalist. The group included Richard Lovelace, Sir. John Suckling, Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick. They followed Ben Johnson in the classical restraint, in the form in the lucidity. Their work is simple graceful in structure and finely polished in style. There was this attention to detail. Gallantly rather than love was the inspiration of these courtly singers, we see the revolt against high passionate, Sidneyian love of the Elizabethan sonneteers and the note of persiflage which was the lyrical verse of the restoration.

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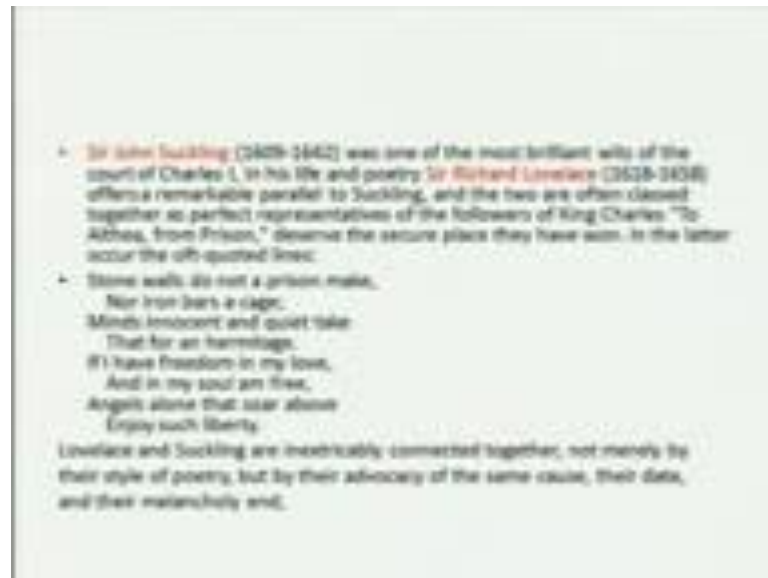


Thomas Carew (1598-1639).

- Carew may be called the inventor of Cavalier love poetry, and to him, more than to any other, is due the peculiar combination of the sensual and the religious which marked most of the minor poets of the seventeenth century. His lyrics had a delicacy, and a vigour, and are among the best known in English literature. His poems cover a wide range, from trivial love songs, pagan in spirit, to hymns of deep religious feeling, the "song to my inconstant mistress".
- "When thou, poor excommunicate
- From all the joys of love, shall see
- The full reward, and glorious fate
- Which my strong faith shall purchase me,
- Then curse thine own inconstancy."
-

Thomas Carew one of the main poets of his time was called inventor of cavalier love poetry and to him more than to any other is due the peculiar combination of sensual and a religious which mark most of the minor poets of the 17 century. So, if you find the sacred and the profane together going side by side, his lyrics had a delicacy and a vigour and are among the best known in English literature, his poems cover a wide range from trivial love songs, which essences pagan in spirit to him some very deep religious feeling, especially the poem; the song to my inconstant mistress have been famous for the grand opening, when thou poor excommunicate from all the joys of love shall see the full reward and glorious fate.

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And then comes Sir. John Suckling who was one of the most brilliant wits of the court of Charles first in his life and poetry again Richard loveable offers a remarkable parallel to suckling and the 2 are often classed together as perfect representatives of the followers of King Charles to Althea from prison deserve the secure place. They have won in the latter occur the oft-quoted lines; stone walls do not a prison make. I think most of you students must, have come across this lines nor iron bars a cage, minds innocent and quite take that form and hermitage.

If I have freedom in my love and in my soul am free, angles alone that soar above enjoy such liberty. This is a famous lines, many people are forgotten the poet, but remember the lines. Lovelace and Suckling are inextricably connected together, not merely by their style of poetry, but by the advocacy of the same cause.