

**History of English Language and Literature**  
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**Lecture No 4**  
**Introducing the Elizabethan Era: The English Reformation**

Good morning and welcome to the course “History of English language and literature”. In the last couple of sessions, we have been traversing through the Middle Ages, trying to figure out how the political, social, religious and the other economic factors of the period were influencing and reshaping the life of the nation and as well as the literary output of the of the period.

In today’s session, we will be taking a look at a new age. We will be trying to introduce the Shakespearean Age, also known as the Elizabethan Age and also known as the Golden Age in the history of Britain. And before we move on, let us do a quick recap of where we are right now. We have taken a look at how the Middle English period was proving to be not so fruitful in terms of the literary output with only Chaucer being the single literary most figure standing towering over all the other social religious factors.

We also saw how the Middle English period had been designated as a preparatory period in terms of preparing England for greater heights. We also took a look at some of the wars which were shaping and reshaping the history of Britain forever. We also saw how the Hundred Years War and the Wars of the Roses accordingly had defined the fortunes of the nation, so as that life when life in Britain not just the life of the common people but also the life of royalty had not remained the same after that. We saw lot of changes which were taking over.

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**Historical positioning of the Elizabethan period**

- England – trying to carve out a distinct cultural and national identity
- 67 years - From the ascension of Queen Elizabeth I (1558) TO the death of King James I (1625)
  - 21 years – the Queen's reign – a time of preparation
  - 24 years – between the publication of Spenser and Queen's death – full fruition
  - 22 years of James I – decline (Jacobean period)
- A period of stability, settlement and expansion
- “England was economically healthier, more expansive, and more optimistic under the Tudors” than at any time in a thousand years” (John Guy:1988)

OVERLAPS

GOLDEN AGE

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Let us begin by positioning the period in the historical sense. This period is marked by a distinct cultural and national identity what the nation was trying to forge. And historically, the Elizabethan period spans over 67 years from the ascension of Queen Elizabeth from 1558 to the death of King James 1, James I in 1625. In certain sense, this period overlaps, there is an overlapping of one period over the other because even after the death of Queen Elizabeth the first, in certain ways, the traits of the Elizabethan Era lived on, though at later stage of James Ist’s reign, most of the Elizabethan traits were on the decline.

And though the dynasty changes, the rule changes in certain ways, the period of both these monarchs together is termed as the Elizabethan period. And we will see how and why later on later on when we begin to discuss the literary output of the period. And in the first stage, it is 21 years from of the Queen’s reign and this is seen as a time of preparation. The next 24 years which is between the publication of Spenser’s The Faerie Queene and till the period of Queen’s death. This is that period seen as a as a period which saw the full fruition of the Elizabethan period leaving the historians later on to designate this period as the Golden Age of Britain.

And the last 22 years when James the first ruled, there is an increasing decline, the period is also known as the Jacobean period because the monarch had changed. So we will see the nuances of this later on as we progress towards looking at the major literary output of the period. And this period is generally also known as a period of stability, political stability increasingly and also

settlement and expansion. One of the recent historians, John Guy, he has told about in his review of that particular century – he says that England was economically healthier, more expansive and more optimistic under the Tudors than at any time in a thousand years.

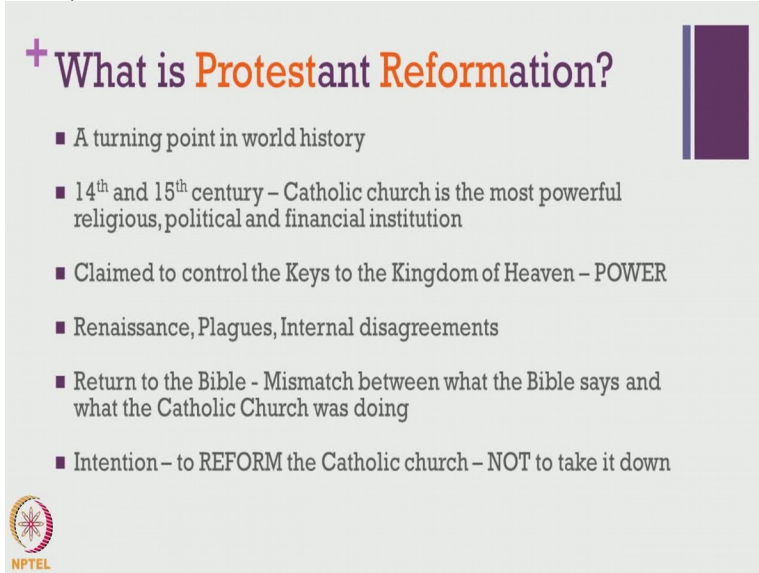
This is also a time for us to take a look at what are the factor different factors that led to the fashioning of the Elizabethan period in such a way. And also we saw that right now we see that Queen Elizabeth takes over the crown of England only in 1558. So we need to also understand what had been happening in England after the Wars of the Roses, after the inauguration of the Tudor dynasty until the period when Elizabeth I took over. Elizabeth I also belongs to a later period of the Tudor dynasty.

So we need to take get an account of the six decades from the early from the beginning of the Tudor dynasty till the moment Britain entered Elizabeth's rule. So in this session, we will be primarily talking about those six decades which do which do act as a period preparing Britain for a for a better period ahead. And as the introductory slide also shows, the the subtitle of this lecture is the English Reformation.

So we will be taking a look at how the event known as the English Reformation was instrumental in shaping the future of England forever. So we need to take a look at the political history basically from 1487 to 1558. And if I could give an alternative title to this lecture, it could be “The story of English Reformation” or “The story of a breakup” or “The big fight between Church of England and Roman Catholic Church”.


On a lighter note, we could even title this as “The marriages of Henry VIII” or “The desperate measures for a male heir”. So moving on, when we are talking about the English Reformation, we need to first know what exactly is the Protestant Reformation which was sweeping over Europe during the Middle Ages.

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**+ What is Protestant Reformation?**

- A turning point in world history
- 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century – Catholic church is the most powerful religious, political and financial institution
- Claimed to control the Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven – POWER
- Renaissance, Plagues, Internal disagreements
- Return to the Bible - Mismatch between what the Bible says and what the Catholic Church was doing
- Intention – to REFORM the Catholic church – NOT to take it down



And many historians feel that the Protestant Reformation though it was located in a particular place in history, it is widely recognized as a turning point in world history itself rewriting the ways in which people began to see the effects of religion and politics in common life. It is also important to note that in the 14th and 15th century, we also took a note of these events in the when we were discussing the Middle Ages in detail.

We noted that the Catholic Church was the most powerful religious, political and financial institution of that period. In that sense, they were obviously the Catholic Church was obviously the head of the Church, head of religion. They had a political head of each state and also they were the ones who were controlling the economy of each region, even to the extent of extent of being the largest holder of land, resources and everything.

Because of the same reason in the 13th and 14th century, there were widespread economic scandals; there were lot of controversies about the luxurious life led within the monasteries, so on and so forth. And above all of these things, the Church also claimed to claimed to control the keys to the kingdom of heaven and that is may be the whole lot of power to talk about. So in that sense, they were not claiming the powers of the earthly kingdom alone, they were also claiming the power of how the heavenly kingdoms worked.

So this was the situation in the during the Middle Ages so much so that the common people were quite, either they were scared to go against the Church or they were not equipped enough to think

in any forms against the Church. And alongside, we find that even before the Protestant Reformation began to sweep over Europe and other related parts, in many ways, the sociopolitical conditions were already turning a little unfavorable against the Church.

the Renaissance was one such event which fostered a spirit of critical enquiring and the other instance were the Black Death, that the series of plagues that swept over Europe leading the people to a life of dissolution and also also forcing them to question the ways in which they were leading their life, the questions about after death, so on and so forth. And to top all of these, there were lot of internal disagreements within this power structure of Catholic Church.

In fact, we find that in the 13th to the 14th century, there were almost three popes who were getting replaced one after the other because they could not arrive at an agreement as to who should hold the power within the institution of the Church. And also there was they were getting increasingly – many of the even the clergy were getting increasingly disappointed with the way the Church was functioning. And there was a call to return to the Bible which also forms one of the key principles around which the Reformation is framed.

So there was call to return to the Bible. And many thinking people, the clergy and also the ones who had access to the Word of God, they began to realize that there is a huge mismatch between what the Bible says and what the Catholic Church was doing. And in that sense, the intention to begin with the Protestant Reformation began with an intention to reform the Catholic Church and there was no objective at the beginning to take it down.

But eventually, we do find that in many parts of the world it, Protestant Reformation ended up replacing Catholic faith with a Protestant faith.

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**+ The Intellectual trajectory of Protestant Reformation**

- John Wycliffe – declared a heretic after his death – 1415
  - Died - 1384
- Martin Luther – a German monk, Luther's *95 theses against the sale of papal indulgences (1517)* – Reformation and excommunication
  - Bible – forgiveness through Faith, Grace
  - Church – forgiveness through the Sale of Indulgences
  - Condemned this contradictory teaching and corruption
- William Tyndale – burned to death – 1535
  - Bible translations from original Hebrew and Greek
  - Influenced the later translations
- Erasmus (Dutch) – rejected Catholic monasticism, condemned corruption – return to the values and habits of the early church

England was slow to question the established church – when it finally did, it broke away from the church!

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And if we trace intellectual trajectory of Protestant Reformation, and this list of names do not include an exhaustive list, this is only to give a bare outline of what were the different intellectual forces shaping the thoughts of Britain during this Reformation period. We had John Wycliff in England itself questioning the ways in which the Church was working. He was seen as the controversial figure. We did notice about some of his works in the earlier period. In fact, he dies in 1384 and much to the horror of the common people and the many other people who were getting worried about the ways in which the Church was working, much to the horror of them, John Wycliff was declared as a heretic much after his death in 1415.

That was the kind of power that Church held over the lives and even the after lives of people. But people were quite unhappy with this turn of event because John Wycliff was someone who had brought the Bible closer to their own language and he was also the one who had set a series of controversial controversial thinking patterns on the rise. And then we have Martin Luther who becomes the key figure in Protestant Reformation.

He was the one who actually spearheaded this revolution if we could say that. And also he was the one who became an inspiration to many in Europe and as well as later within Britain. And he was actually a German monk and he was He was increasingly increasingly getting unhappy about the sale of indulgences which was happening within the Catholic Church. This was, the sale of indulgence was basically a way in which the Church was telling the common people that

your sins could be forgiven if you purchase an indulgence from the Church by paying a certain amount of money.

This was also in certain ways the Church interfering with the act of forgiveness that the Bible and God had professed and also trying to convince the people that we not only hold earthly authorities but we also have the power to forgive sins provided you provide provided you pay a spirit. So many clergy were also increasingly unhappy about it but no one really had the power to question this and also this kind of corruption since it had involved a lot of money, it had begun to grow out of proportion that no one could really contain it or reform it from within.

Martin Luther, he was very avid Christian trying to understand Bible through and through. So what he began to do was he began to find that there is a contradiction in the teaching. He realized that the Bible taught, the Bible began to teach forgiveness through faith and (11:37) on the contrary, there was the Church who was selling forgiveness in return for money. So this had forced him to act quite provocatively. What he does was he pasted a 95 theses against the sale of papal indulgences.

This happens in 1517 and this becomes inaugural moment of Protestant Reformation, also leading people to think about the ridiculousness of this whole act and also forcing them to think about the ways in which the common people had been suffering this misconduct of the Church. And we do find that Luther ends up inspiring lot of people in and out of Europe. And later we also have William Tyndale who was burned to death.

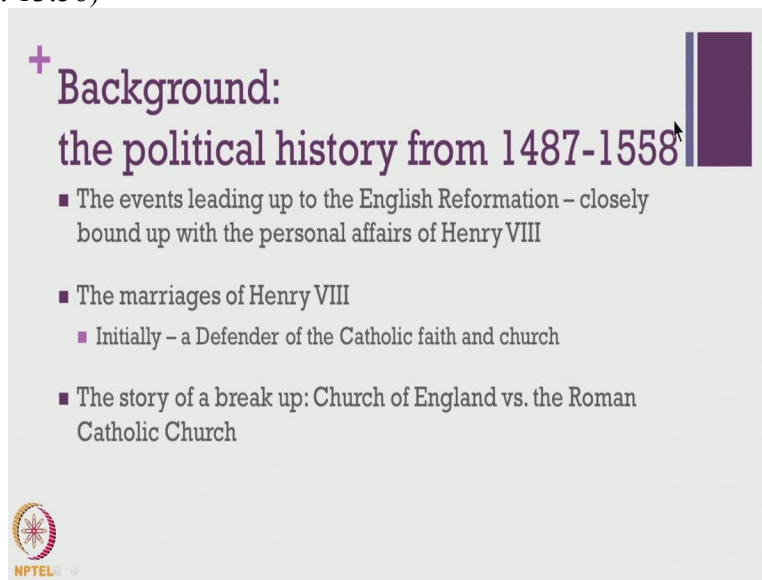
He was burned at stake for being a Protestant , for being quite controversial about Catholic faith and for being quite proactive in the ways in which he was critiquing the Church. We find that he was burned to death in 1535. He was also the one who had translated Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek by paying a lot of attention to the nuances of the old text itself.

And many of the later translations we find that were influenced by the Tyndale, by Tyndale's translations. So all of these figures had together influenced the thinking pattern of Britain during those times and he had given them a lot of reasons to move away from the Catholic Church. And there was also Erasmus, a Dutch monk who had rejected Catholic monasticism though he was not directly influential in the sociopolitical history of Europe.

His writing in the sociopolitical history of Britain, his writings and his thoughts began to turn the ways in which the Church was getting fashioned and refashioned within within Britain. There is a saying about the English Reformation that England was very slow to question the established Church but when it finally did it, it broke away from the Church.


And we are soon going to see how and why the Church of England broke away from the Church of Rome.

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**+** Background:  
the political history from 1487-1558

- The events leading up to the English Reformation – closely bound up with the personal affairs of Henry VIII
- The marriages of Henry VIII
  - Initially – a Defender of the Catholic faith and church
- The story of a break up: Church of England vs. the Roman Catholic Church

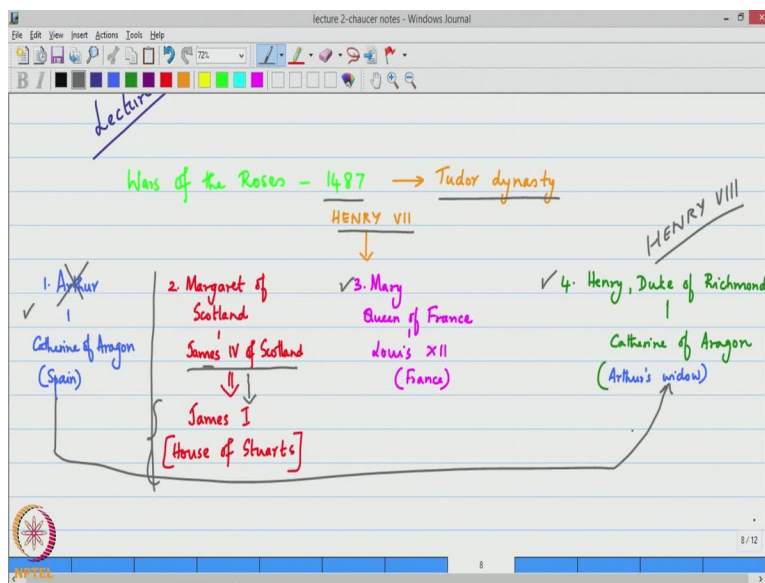
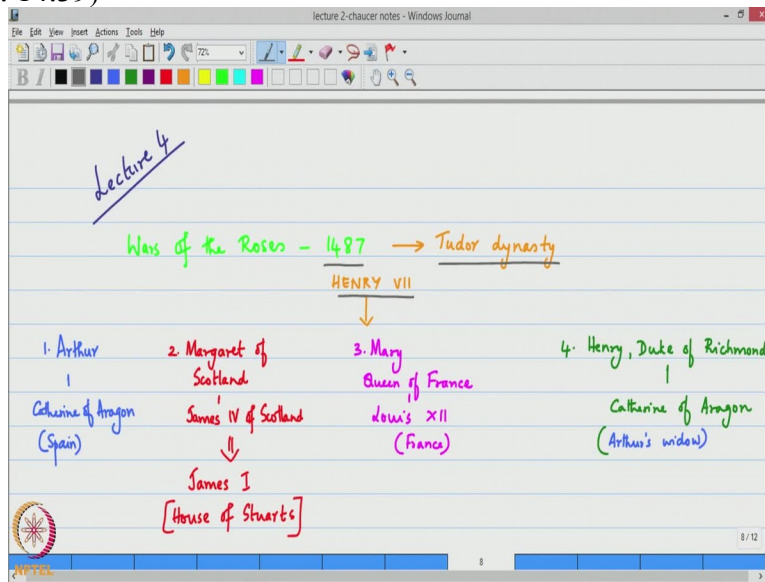
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So in fact, the English Reformation if we could give the history of it in a one line perhaps, we need to very importantly state that it is closely bound up with the personal affairs of Henry VIII. This is also an instance, the English Reformation is also an instance where we see that the political history of the nation is getting intricately connected with not just the personal whims and fancies and affairs of a king but also with the religions reformation of the period. And Henry VIII to begin with, he was a defender of the Catholic faith and Church.

And in order to see how his reign came into being and what were the things that worked in the background, we need to take a look at the political history from the end of the Wars of Roses onwards which is to state from the inaugural moment of the Tudor dynasty.



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So moving on, this is what we had noted in one of the earlier sessions itself. We have with 1487, we find that the Wars of the Roses come to an end, and also inaugurating the Tudor dynasty. The wars between the House of Lancaster and the House of York come to an end with the marriage of Henry with one of the descendants of the York family, and this inaugurates the Tudor dynasty. And Henry VII is the first king of Tudor dynasty.

And Henry VII who was raised in exile in France. He comes over to take control of the crown of England. And we had seen all of these things in detail when we had taken a look at the Wars of

the Roses and how it had ended a time of internal rivalry within the nation. And here when we take a look at the life of Henry VII, it is again quite interesting and eventful just like all the other histories of monarchs were.

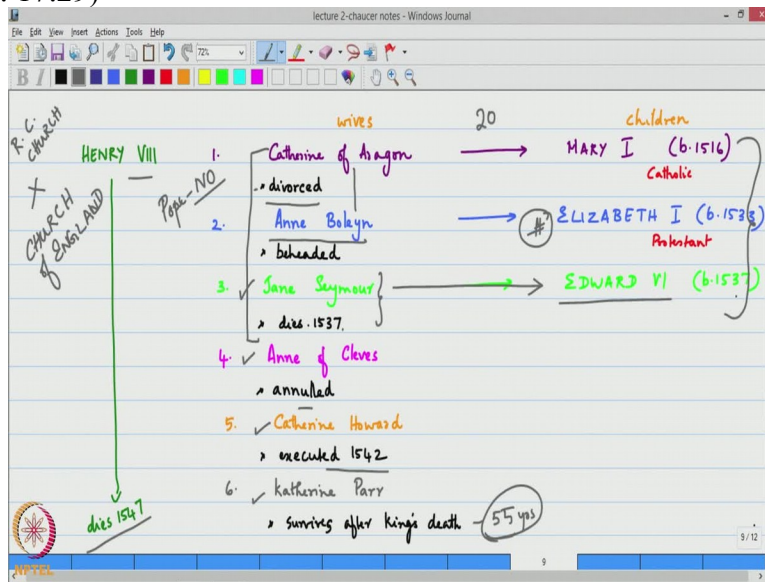
And here also, just like the Wars of the Roses, we have a series of events which are shaped around human emotions. There is a lot of politics involved. There is a lot of drama involved in this and a lot of intrigue as well. And the British history continues to be as interesting as ever even in this series. So the first, Henry VII had four children. The first one was Arthur who dies a little early. The second is a daughter Margaret, Margaret of Scotland who gets married to the King James IV of Scotland.

Right now, we will not be dealing a lot with the line of descendants from the Margaret of Scotland. But later on, this continues to be of quite importance to us because it was James I who later inaugurates the House of Stuarts in England. And he is also the same James I who takes on the throne after the death of Elizabeth I.

So this line is quite important for us, though right now we are not engaging with it in detail. The third child is Mary, the Queen of France who got who gets married to Louis XII of France. And the fourth son is a person who is of most importance for us in this lecture, he is Henry, Duke of Richmond. He is the one who later takes on the crown as Henry VIII, right.

And what happens was Arthur dies quite early in life and under the instruction of the father, King Henry VII, Henry VIII, Henry Duke of Richmond marries Catherine of Aragon, that is his brother's widow. So this marriage proves to be quite eventful and it entirely changed the life and shape of the political history of Britain in the following years.

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Here we begin to see that Henry VIII is married to Catherine of Aragon for about 20 years and what happens is they have a daughter, Mary I and she was born in 1516. But even after 20 years of marriage the fact that Catherine of Aragon was not able to produce a male heir, she also had a series of events where she lost her children one after the other through miscarriages.

She had she had couple of still born babies. And there was also one son who was born in between but he died after 52 days. So we find that Henry VIII, he gets increasingly upset and he gets quite disillusioned by the fact that Catherine of Aragon has not been able to provide a male heir for him. And during that period, one needed a male heir to make sure that the successor is right in place and also to make sure that the genealogy get get gets continued.

So Henry VIII was quite worried in that sense. And we find that it is this desperation for a male heir that sets the turn of events to follow. And he also thought that he should get a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, particularly when he began to get interested in Ann Boleyn who was then the lady of waiting of Catherine of Aragon. So she was a little lowly in profile in that sense.

But Henry VIII was quite adamant in getting married to her because of two reasons; one, she was he already had grown out of love for Catherine of Aragon; and secondly, he was under the impression that maybe Ann Boleyn would be able to give a son to him so that he can keep his bloodline going on. But there was a problem at this point of time. He wanted a divorce and this was a term that the Catholic Church of the period, they did not agree with at all.

So from the pope, it was a very big 'No.' Henry VIII could not take 'No' for an answer and he thought that there has to be some way around. He tried many different ways to convince the Church. He even gave this rather biblical reason that because he had married his brother's widow, he was God had decided not to bless him and because of that he was not getting any male offspring.

But the Church was definitely not convinced by any of these reasons. The pope would not move his stand and obviously Henry VIII had to look out for other reasons. And meanwhile, Ann Boleyn also comes into the picture. And at this point, with the counsel of others and with the implications of the growing Protestant Reformation, King Henry VIII finds a very convenient way-out. He decides to completely break away with the Catholic Church.

This was a very definite and a very significant move at that point of time when individuals and certain rulers were trying to struggle to take a stance against the Catholic Church, against the Roman Catholic Church. Here was this King Henry VIII who wanted to break away from the Church and form his own Church, the Church of England. And this is how the Church of England is getting established. And it is radically in opposition with Roman Catholic Church.

We find that the king primarily wanted to break away to suit his own whims and fancies. And also all the Protestant Reformation thoughts come in handy so that it could help him to give a more reliable kind of and more creditable kind of excuses to begin with. We find that the Church of England gets formed and also he gets to marry Ann Boleyn.

But that is not the end of it, the even after the English Reformation with the formation of Church of England, the Protestant Reformation or the various pursuits of Henry VIII does not come to an end over here. It is only the beginning as we can note. He gets married to Ann Boleyn but over a period of a very brief period of three years, the king gets increasingly upset about the life of Ann Boleyn. He even accuses her of adultery, incest and eventually she is beheaded accusing her of high treason.

We find at this point that Thomas Cromwell is also quite an assistant to instigate the king against Ann Boleyn. And Ann Boleyn before her death, she had produced a daughter, Elizabeth I whom we note had changed the future and life of England forever. Ironically, a point we noted at this point is that though the king ended up doing many things in pursuit of a male heir, it was a

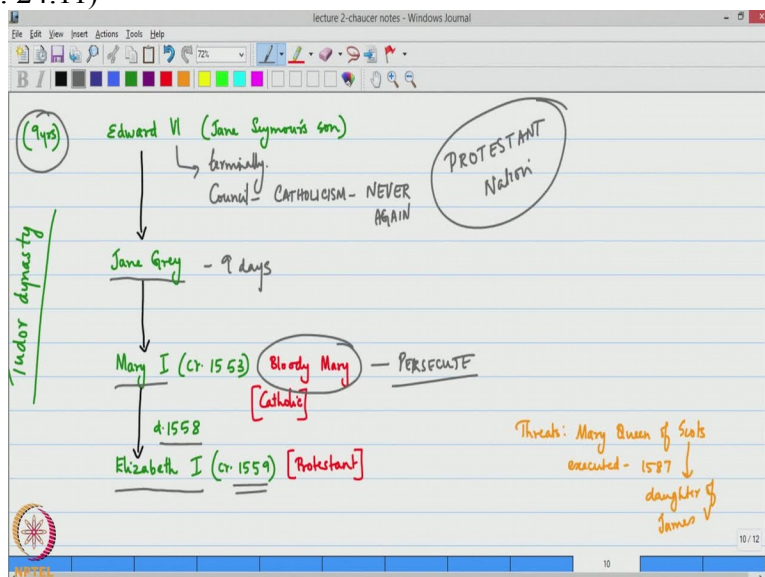
daughter, it was a female heir which have who had brought England to the state where it went on to become the the world leader and also witnessed a golden period in, not just in British history but also in the European history itself. Yeah.

And with Ann Boleyn beheaded, let us move on very quickly. There is Jane Seymour who takes on soon after and she dies in 1537 after having produced a son who becomes the king later on as Edward VI. And Jane Seymour incidentally is the only one who was not beheaded, who did not fall out of favor with the king; she died much before that soon after childbirth. Then we have Anne of Cleves, the king also gets grows out of love for her and marriage is thereafter annulled.

Then there is Catherine of Howard who is also accused of high treason and executed in 1542. And we also have Katherine Parr, she also it was not that king was quite happy with the marriage but at the age of 55, we find that the king is the king dies at the age of 55 in the year 1547 and Katherine Parr survives the king.

So in many ways, only the first three marriages are of supreme importance because these three marriages and the offsprings, they went on to shape and reshape the history of Britain in many different ways. And this is how the the the line of kings follow. We have Henry VIII who dies in 1547 and soon after Edward VI who is also the third wife's son, Jane Seymour's son, Edward VI who was born in 1537, he takes charge of the crown of England when he was only nine years old.

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So when an infant or a child was taking control of a kingdom during those periods, there were lot of people giving counsel to him as to how to run the kingdom and there were lot of other influences which would also come in. We had also seen this in briefly in the case of one of the earlier kings, Richard. And here also we find that there are lot of influences in King Edward VI's life. But alongside, he also falls terminally ill which does not allow him to continue forever.

During this time, the counsel who was in charge of the ruling affairs alongside the king, it also decided that Catholicism should never come back to England again. So England by and large, by this time had become a Protestant nation. Though the reason for this were varied like we saw it was one of the reasons was Henry's desire for a male heir or his marriages. So the the land of Britain breaks away from the Roman Catholic Church for various reasons but we find that the nation continues to be Protestant in many ways from this period onwards.

So King Edward II falls terminally ill and he also names Jane Grey, one of his cousins as the next successor but her reign is very short-lived. She is in power barely for nine days. And soon after Mary I, yeah, we had seen the life of Mary I here, she is the first daughter of Henry VIII born from Catherine of Aragon. Mary I was raised as a Catholic because Catherine of Aragon was also Catholic. She was born in 1516 and she succeeds Edward VI and Jane Grey.

And she was a fervent Catholic and she wanted to reinstate Catholicism within England and completely do away with Protestantism. It is important for us to understand that Protestant Reformation was not an easy kind of a thing. There was an ongoing struggle between Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant faith for a very long time. And in fact, not just Britain but many of the other European nations also went through this dilemma and there was this ongoing tussle, ongoing political tussle to figure out who would win over the other.

So Mary I wanted to restore Catholic faith in Britain and this was not taken very kindly by the counsel and even the common people because in spite of with the whims and fancies of Henry VIII through which Protestant Reformation came to England, the people were also highly unhappy about the ways in which the Catholic Church had been ruling over them for centuries.

They were also very unhappy with the way the Church and the monks had been interpreting the Bible in the wrong way, pursuing a life of luxury and not taking care of the people in a proper way. So there were lot of these reasons which made British people convinced that Catholicism

need not come back to England. Also, politically it seemed quite viable option to continue with the Protestant faith.

And we find that Mary I was getting increasingly popular because of this. And in addition, she began to persecute the she began to persecute those who were pursuing the Protestant faith. With this, she also gained this sobriquet, Bloody Mary. And we find that her life was quite turbulent in that sense. She alienated most of her supporters. He...She was highly unpopular. And she led a very lonely and bitter life, that is what we hear from history. And she dies in 1558.

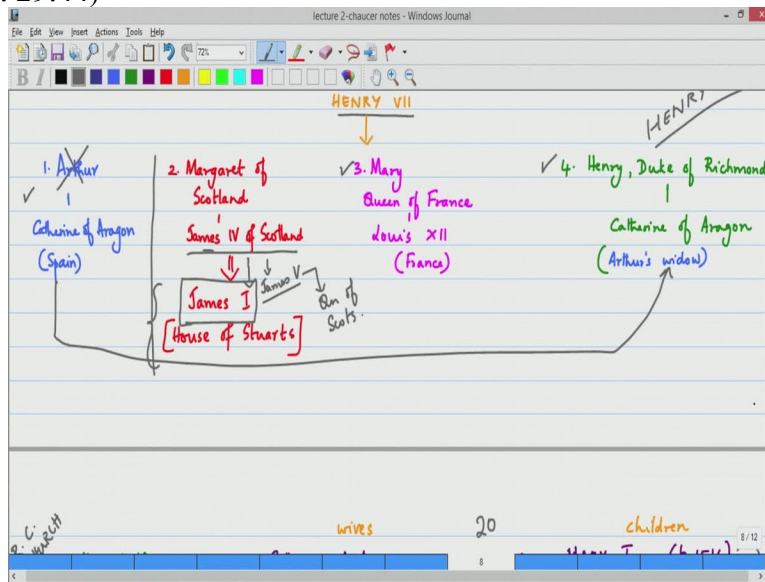
And through a series of events, there is again a struggle for power within Britain but however we find that Elizabeth I who was the next in line in terms of being the legitimate heir of Henry VIII, she becomes the queen of England in 1559. And from 1559 onwards, basically it is 1558-1559 around this period, through a series of political turmoils and struggles, the Queen Elizabeth I becomes the queen of England.

From this time onwards, we find it is a time of prosperity, it is a time of ongoing growth for England though the initial period was not without much trouble either. There were lot of threats to the crown because the because Elizabeth also had a lot of contenders from Henry VIII's bloodline and also there were others in line from the Tudor, from the Tudor dynasty also waiting to claim, lay a claim on the crown.

One of the major threats of this period was from Mary, Queen of Scots and she was executed after after giving her a waiting time of about 20 plus years. Initially, Elizabeth I was very hesitant to execute her in spite of the counsel that she was getting from her allies to get rid of Mary I in order to completely take, completely outdo her claim. But Elizabeth I was quite concerned about the consequences that would follow and she also thought that killing a somebody who is next in line would set an unhealthy precedent in the history of Britain.

However, Mary, Queen of Scots is executed in 1587 and she was a daughter of James V.

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And we need to go back little in time, she was the daughter of James I who had descended from James IV. This is Queen of Scots here who gets executed, yeah. So James I is a later descendent who assumes the throne of Britain after the death of Elizabeth I.

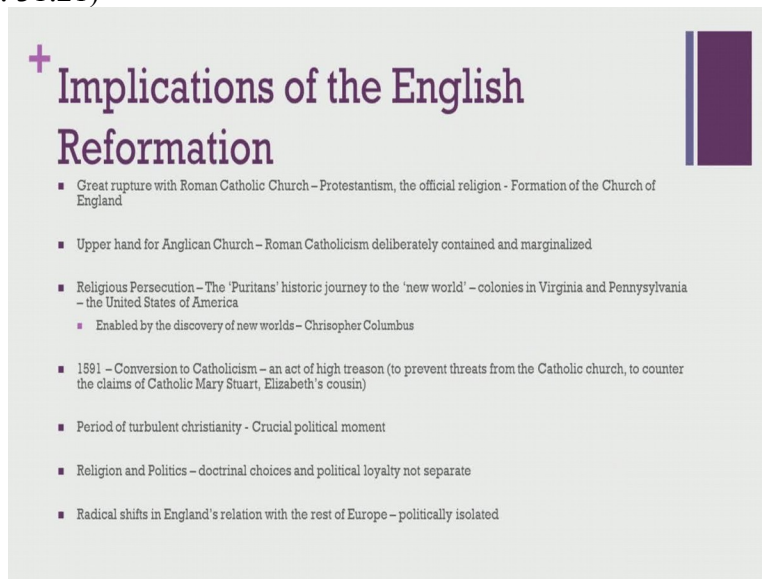
So in many ways, it is quite an intricate history and let me give you a moment for all of these for you to sink in. It is quite a bloody history, it is an eventful history. There is a lot of political drama, there are a lot of human emotions getting connected. It is a web of relationships over here. So, British history in many different ways is framed by all of these together.

But what takes the cake at the end of the day is that in spite of these turbulent events going on in the nation's history, England also succeeds in becoming the world power by the end of the Middle Ages and with the inauguration of the Elizabethan age we find that England becomes a leader in most of the world affairs, in world trade, in the economy, in terms of their maritime travels, in terms of their art and literature, in terms of the ways in which they were proselytizing the world.

So in many different ways England becomes a leader from the time of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. And this is the age which we would be closely monitoring in terms of the literary and social activity. Moving on to the main objective, we also need to take a closer look at the implications of the English Reformation.



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## + Implications of the English Reformation

- Great rupture with Roman Catholic Church – Protestantism, the official religion - Formation of the Church of England
- Upper hand for Anglican Church – Roman Catholicism deliberately contained and marginalized
- Religious Persecution – The 'Puritans' historic journey to the 'new world' – colonies in Virginia and Pennsylvania – the United States of America
  - Enabled by the discovery of new worlds – Christopher Columbus
- 1591 – Conversion to Catholicism – an act of high treason (to prevent threats from the Catholic church, to counter the claims of Catholic Mary Stuart, Elizabeth's cousin)
- Period of turbulent christianity - Crucial political moment
- Religion and Politics – doctrinal choices and political loyalty not separate
- Radical shifts in England's relation with the rest of Europe – politically isolated

First of all, there was a great rupture with the Catholic Church and the emergence of Protestantism as the official religion. And we also find that the Church of England gets formed during this period. This leads to an obvious way in which the Anglican Church or the Church of England gains an upper hand over the Catholic faith. And for a while we even find that the believers of the Catholic faith were completely ignored from many of the official polls.

And there as a way in which the Anglican Church gains an upper hand over the Catholic Church so much so that even the believers get to have get to enjoy some of the sociopolitical, and economic benefits of the same. And Roman Catholicism is deliberately contained and marginalized, so are the followers. The Church and the state actively discouraged any practice of the Catholic order within Britain during that period.

And we find that eventually the nation entirely becomes Protestant in nature with the Catholic faith taking a back seat. And alongside the land, the property of Catholic Church, everything is getting confiscated by the Church and by the Church of England and by the state in fact. One of the historians at a later point remarked that the English Reformation was an event where the greatest land grab in Britain took place after the Norman Conquest. So in that sense, it was also an economic affair, the details of which we will not delve into at this point.

It was also a period of religious persecution. In fact, we also need to remember the historic journey that the Puritans undertook from the land of Britain to the new found colonies in

America. This is also thanks to the new discovery of new worlds inaugurated by the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. This instance was also important not just in terms of political event but also it led the other nations to explore unknown worlds.

And also this was the beginning of maritime travels, beginning of extensive overseas trade and also more significantly the beginning of colonization. And in 1591, since there was a continuous threat from the Catholic Church in terms of coming back to Britain and also various threats from that of similar to that of the Queen Scots of Mary trying to catholicize England in some form or the other, the counsel in fact issued a statute in 1591 which even made any conversion to Catholicism a high act of treason.

It is also important for us to remember that treason was considered as an offense which is punishable by execution and also it entirely depended upon the monarch as well as the the royal counsel to decide upon which activity could be designated as treason or not. So by making the conversion to Catholicism an act of treason, it also actively dissuaded the people from converting to Catholicism and also from encouraging anyone to move back from Protestantism to Catholicism.

And we also find that this was not a smooth period in terms of religion. It was a period of very turbulent Christianity and also this becomes a crucial political moment which inaugurated a different era in the history of British politics. And this is also the instance which over and again assured that religion and politics were quite interconnected in the Middle Ages. And even in the earlier periods we saw the kind of power that the Church wielded over the common people over the socioeconomic and political affairs of each state.

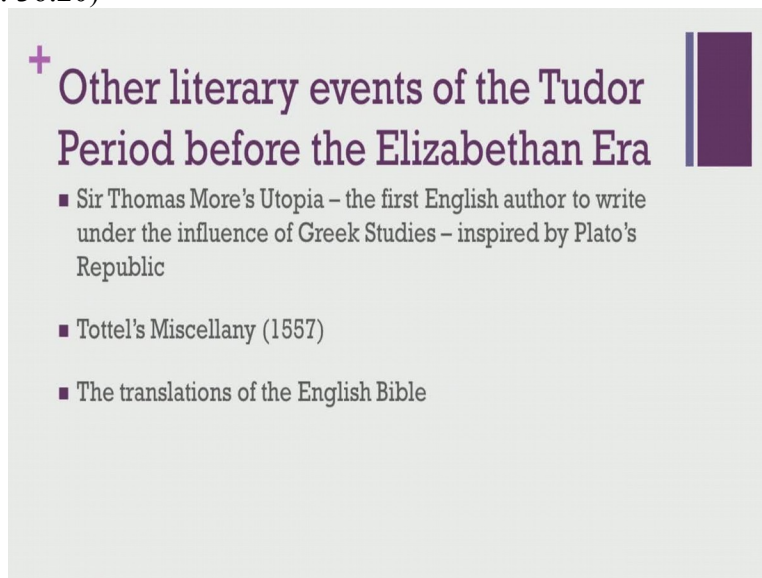
And later on, also we find that though maybe the Church did not enjoy that kind of power over the affairs of the state, but they continued to be quite intricately woven, the one was interwoven into the other. Politics and religion even in the contemporary we see that in different parts of the world, they continued to define each other, to inform each other and also shaping the lives and futures of different nations and different communities.

And this radical shift in the choice that Britain made to break away from the Roman Catholic Church and to form its own Church of England, this actuality had a lot of political implication in the sense that Britain became quite politically isolated from the rest of Europe. But this did not

affect Britain much except for the initial few decades and later on we find that Britain quite gradually but quite successfully emerges as the world leader in many different things though they were a little late entrant in the colonizing race also.

We find that they become the forerunners of almost everything that the world was going through right from the beginning of the Elizabethan period onwards. So with this, we come back to take a very quick look at the brief literary output of the period as well.

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+ Other literary events of the Tudor Period before the Elizabethan Era

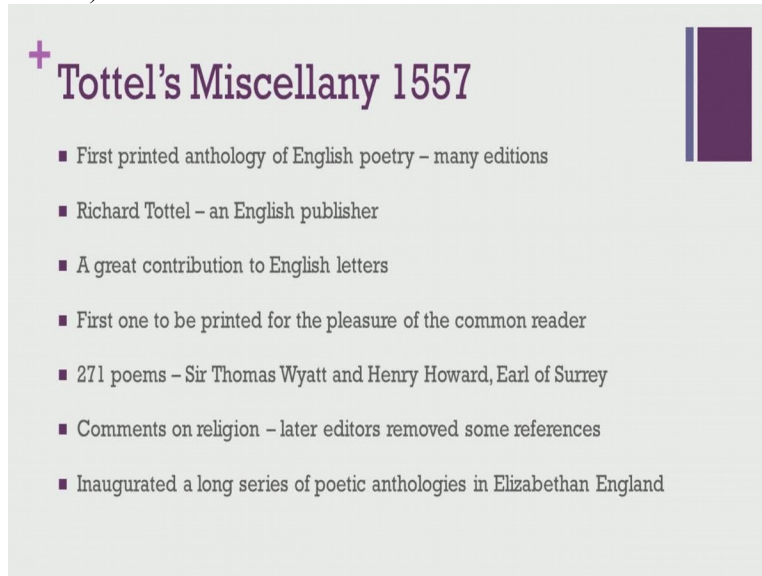
- Sir Thomas More's Utopia – the first English author to write under the influence of Greek Studies – inspired by Plato's Republic
- Tottel's Miscellany (1557)
- The translations of the English Bible

As we have noted multiple times by now that Chaucer was the single most important figure before the emergence of the Elizabethan era. But there were also other literary events towards the end of Middle Ages and also in the Tudor period before the Elizabethan era. So Thomas More's Utopia is considered as a significant writing of the times. He was inspired by Plato's Republic. This also show us that Renaissance was riding really high in England during this period.

And later on, when we take a closer look at the Elizabethan period, we will also see how English Renaissance was sweeping Britain throughout the Elizabethan period. And whereas there are two important events at this juncture that we need to take a look at with which we shall be winding up this session. We are we know that Tottel's Miscellany was published in 1557 and Caxton's printing press had given a wide currency to this work.

This work was very significant not just in terms of an event in literary history but it also had changed the ways in which people began to approach literary writings. This is in fact the first printed anthology of English poetry.

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**+ Tottel's Miscellany 1557**

- First printed anthology of English poetry – many editions
- Richard Tottel – an English publisher
- A great contribution to English letters
- First one to be printed for the pleasure of the common reader
- 271 poems – Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
- Comments on religion – later editors removed some references
- Inaugurated a long series of poetic anthologies in Elizabethan England

It had many editions even as early as the 16th century onwards. People were quite interested in buying and securing a copy of the Tottel's Miscellany for themselves. This was published by Richard Tottel who was an English publisher. And this is seen as a great contribution to English letters not just for the the content or the literary value of it, but this was in fact the first one to be printed and circulated purely for the pleasure of the common reader. This did not have any other intention or any other objective.

Like many other works, the intention was not to instruct, was not to engage in a religious debate, was not to inform the people of something or the other but the intention was purely to circulate a series of poems for the pleasure of the common reader. And this began a different history of English literature or even history of literature itself. In a certain way that people began to approach writings merely for their own pleasure or merely for their own feel good factor. And this Tottel's Miscellany comprised of 271 poems, majority of them written by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey and this in fact was on a range of topics.

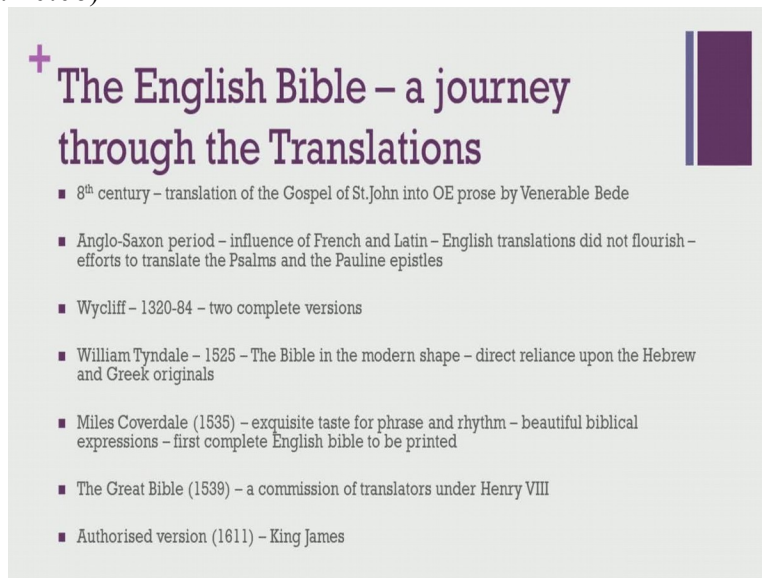
It was not just about the kings and queens and the landscape of the period. This also had comments on religion which fearing certain other controversial factors, some of the later editors

removed as well. So it was quite thought provoking though it was intended mainly at mainly at the objective of pleasure. And this in fact was in important event because it also inaugurated a series of poetic anthologies in Elizabethan England.

In the sense that this is how we begin to differentiate this, until Tottel's Miscellany there was each work authored by an individual author or sometimes the author even remained as anonymous. But this was inauguration of a the kind of publication which could bring together a range of writings, a range of authors within a single bound book.

We do know that even in the contemporary, anthologies are quite popular and it is an easy way of bringing to our midst a plethora of different things. So this Tottel's Miscellany in that sense becomes an important moment in the history of literature itself. And we also need to take a look at the journey through which the translations of English Bible were going through. Bible emerges as one of the significant literature of the period. It also becomes not just a religious text but also a text in which we can see the effects and evolution of English language.

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**+ The English Bible – a journey through the Translations**

- 8<sup>th</sup> century – translation of the Gospel of St. John into OE prose by Venerable Bede
- Anglo-Saxon period – influence of French and Latin – English translations did not flourish – efforts to translate the Psalms and the Pauline epistles
- Wycliff – 1320-84 – two complete versions
- William Tyndale – 1525 – The Bible in the modern shape – direct reliance upon the Hebrew and Greek originals
- Miles Coverdale (1535) – exquisite taste for phrase and rhythm – beautiful biblical expressions – first complete English bible to be printed
- The Great Bible (1539) – a commission of translators under Henry VIII
- Authorised version (1611) – King James

In the 8th century, we have the translation of the Gospel of St. John into Old English prose by Venerable Bede. This is the beginning of a move which wanted to bring religion and religious text closer to language of common man. During the Anglo-Saxon period though there is a profound influence of French and Latin, we do find that there are efforts to translate some of the works from the Bible, mainly the Psalms and Pauline epistles.

But since the languages were dominated by French and Latin, most of the English translations of the period did not flourish. There is a completely different change seen in the later centuries. John Wycliff, he undertook the translation of two complete versions and both of them were quite seminal in nature. And William Tyndale led the foundation of the translation works of Bible from the root languages of Hebrew and Latin to modern English. and we also find that this is the translation on which later on King James's translations also had relied heavily upon.

There is Myles Coverdale of 1535 who brought in a different kind of energy into the Biblical translations. There was an exquisite taste for phrase and rhythm in his version. There were also beautiful biblical expressions getting coined which were later on added to the idiomatic usages of English language itself. And we find that this was also Myles Coverdale's translation in 1535 was also the first complete English Bible to be printed.

And throughout this journey, it is very significant to remember that the printing press played a very important role, though a technical one, it ended up revolutionizing the ways in which text were produced, disseminated and preserved for a very long time to come. And in 1539, the Great Bible was commissioned by Henry VIII. After his Protestant Reformation, we find that he begins a series of translation works. He commissions in fact a series of translation works to translate the Protestant Bible and make it available to the common the common people.

And this is also a part of the move of Protestant Reformation to get back to the Bible and to bring the Bible closer to common man and not rely on the intermediaries of the Church or the clergy. And finally in 1611 which we shall be taking a look at in detail later on, King James I commissions the translation of Bible into a proper authorized and standardized version.

And this is the Bible, this is the King James's beginning of the King James's version as we go as we know now. We also know that all of these were made possible only because of the

sociopolitical support of the period as well. So in many different ways the different intricate institutions of the society coming together to produce the fruition of Elizabethan age.

So with this, we come to an end of this session and we shall be taking a greater look at, a detailed look at the various factors of Elizabethan age and also the life of Shakespeare and the beginning of drama and so many more interesting literary things in the coming sessions. Thank you for listening.