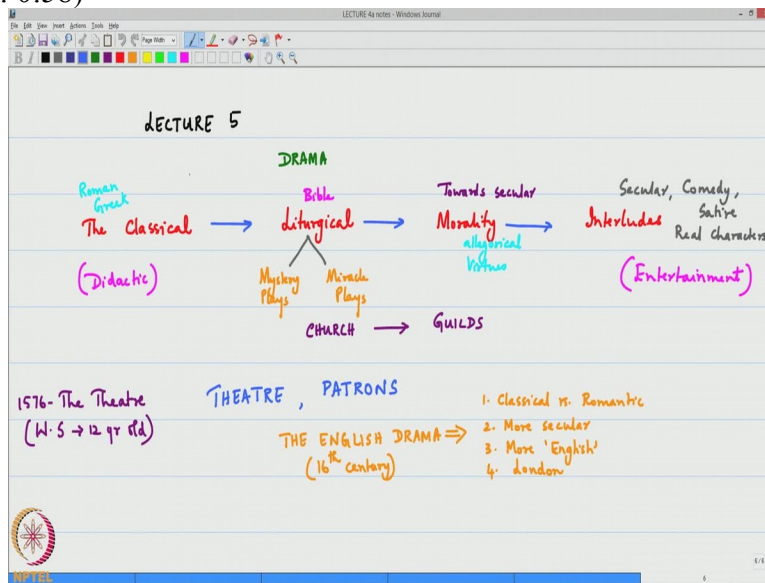


History of English Language and Literature
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Lecture No 5
The University Wits: A Prelude to Shakespeare

Good morning and welcome to today's session on the course on history of English language and literature. In continuation with the previous lectures we will be situating the emergence of English drama. In today's session we will take a look at how a prelude to a certain kind of a prelude to William Shakespeare was being framed along with the drama of a set of people known as the university wits.

Before that at the outside it is very important to provide a brief overview at a quick recap of how the English drama had been progressing from the 11th century onwards. We had already noted some of those things in the previous lectures and this will also help us situate today's lecture in a more historically relevant context.

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As we noted in the previous sessions the drama in general emerged from the classic period onwards but we note that with the emergence of the Norman conquest but we note that with the emergence of the Norman conquest the influence of the classical drama, the influence of the Greek and Roman elements had begun to be mitigated and there was hardly any influence left when the Norman conquest began. And what we have as proper English drama is from the 11th and 12th century onwards with a liturgical a predominant liturgical element built into it.

So the influence as the term implies it was mostly Biblical. Bible was the centre and the source of all kinds of plot structures, stories so on and so forth, they had a very strong didactic element to it because as we noted the plays were primarily staged in order to teach the common people the nuances of the Bible, Biblical stories, Biblical morality, so on and so forth.

So there were two kinds as we noted in the earlier sessions there were Mysteries plays and there were Miracle plays and the control was entirely under the church. Church had dictated what kinds of plays to be staged, where to be staged, what kind of actors to be employed, so on and so forth and by the 12th till the 13th century we find that the structure of the play, the theme of the play it begins to move a little away from the church.

And there is an increased secularization that takes place and at this stage a new kind of play emerges known as the Morality play. This is mostly allegorical in nature, the story line does not exactly stick to the Biblical stories, the characters are placed as particular kinds of virtues and vices and this also had laid a foundational base to the emergence of Elizabethan drama in the centuries to come.

And from there we note that by the 14th century and in the beginning of 15th of the century kind of drama known as the interlude, they began to emerge and this is entirely secular in nature. This is completely divorced from the Biblical themes of the early centuries and there is no kind of adherence to Biblical morality or biblical plot structure. This also had seen the complete moving away of moving away from the control of the church, there is a set of trade guilds there is a set of trade guilds which begin to take a control over these dramas in terms of its execution, in terms of the finances to be arranged, so on and so forth.

And it is with the interludes we note that the drama becomes secular and there is more comedy available for popular consumption. There are also social satires, there is also means that they

were real characters being depicted on stage and this is in fact with the interludes we also know that for the first time drama begins to be staged more for the purpose of entertainment than for didactic purposes as it used to be in the previous centuries.

And with this Elizabethan drama and with this the English drama begins to assume a very distinct structure and a very distinct stature. We find that there are theaters which come up as physical structures to host these drama and there are also patrons in plays who fund and finance all of these actors, the execution, the other arrangements to be made, so on and so forth. At one point after the ascension of queen Elizabeth we begin to note that from the end of the 16th century onwards the monarch himself or herself begins to patronize the production of these plays as well.

And with these elements we note that the English, a proper English drama emerges from the 16th century onwards particularly from the ascension of queen Elizabeth and queen Elizabeth and for the same reason, this drama gets designated as Elizabethan drama also. There are few distinctive features of English drama or Elizabethan drama as it comes to be known in the later decades.

There is this this tussle between the classical elements and the romantic elements but at the same time we note that Elizabethan drama is a fine blend of the classical and the romantic Elizabethan elements put together. The drama is more secular in nature with a very little interference from the earlier theological or theocentric themes and morals.

At the same time it continues to be at the mercy of the guilds which are funding them and also it always tries to please the monarch who is in place and this is more English as we would see in the later discussions, the dramatic techniques that craft to drama all of that it emerges from the 16th century onwards though they sometimes had a little influence of the classical elements on them, there is a more distinctive Englishness to be kind of drama that begins to emerge.

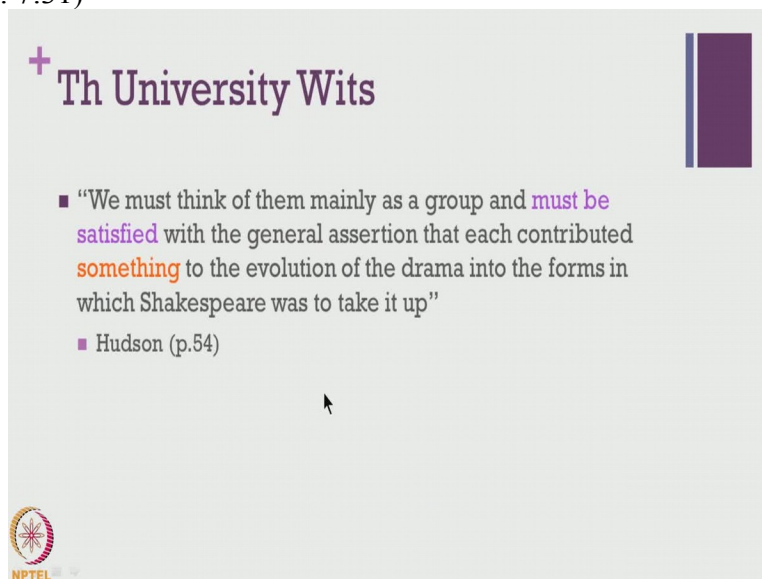
And another very significant fact is that though it gets termed as English drama, the centre of action continues to be in London and London in fact from the 14thth and 15th centuries onward, we noted that it had begun to emerge as the singular most province in the space of England, this was the center of political activity, this was the center of all kinds of all kinds of religious movements which were taking place.

This was also where all kinds of migration from the ruler hinterlands was happening. London was beginning to emerge as the most prominent center in England. So from the 16th century we know that London also emerged as the center of Elizabethan drama and we do find its influence spreading to other parts of England but throughout the discussion of the Elizabethan drama we do not really talk about other the other provinces in England, the action is centered entirely in London.

And we also note that in especially in the discussion of university wits which we would be taking undertaking in today's session we would know that any kind of participation in the dramatic enterprise that had emerged in the Elizabethan times could be made possible when only when one was willing to relocate in the city of London. In the later years there were many other sociological and historical studies also which emerged to try and understand this phenomenon which also led to the emergence of particular kinds of cities and particular kinds of urban centers.

So with this we move on to the main element of today's, the main topic of today's discussion which is the university wits. Let me introduce you to the court from William Henry Hudson's outline of English history.

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+ The University Wits

- “We must think of them mainly as a group and **must be satisfied** with the general assertion that each contributed **something** to the evolution of the drama into the forms in which Shakespeare was to take it up”
- Hudson (p.54)

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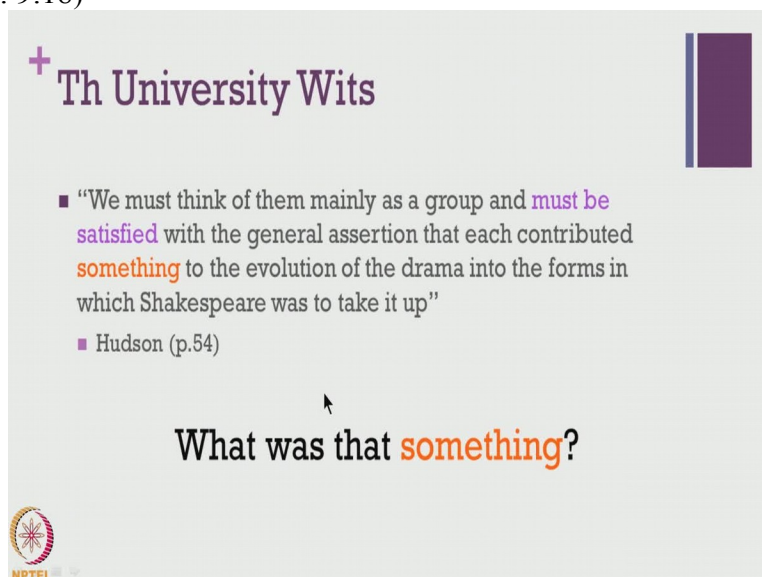
He talks about the university wits in a very gentle sense and says that we must think of them mainly as a group and must be satisfied with the general assertion that each contributed something to the evolution of the drama into the form in which Shakespeare was to take it up.

Here couple of things are very important, even when one is talking about the university wits its important to note that their positioning in history, their positioning in the literary tradition is vis-a-vis the position that Shakespeare was to occupy as a at a later stage. In all dominant histories we note this very strange kind of positioning that the university wits occupy and many of them in fact gloss over the contribution of university wits.

However in this lecture we would be taking a very detailed look at the influence of university Wits primarily because I consider it extremely important to understand Shakespeare's craft and Shakespeare's dramatic technique in the later decades. In fact many recent historians have pointed out that the university wits were not given due attention by the scholars who began to who began to institutionalize the study of the Shakespeare from the 19th century onwards.

So of late there is a lot of attention being given to the fact is which were which were aiding in the production of Shakespeare's drama, the factors which had helped Shakespeare to emerge in a particular fashion during the Elizabethan times. As if you remember the title of this lecture it said a prelude to Shakespeare. So here we begin to talk about some of the factors literary and nonliterary which had enabled Shakespeare to emerge in the later decades.


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+ The University Wits

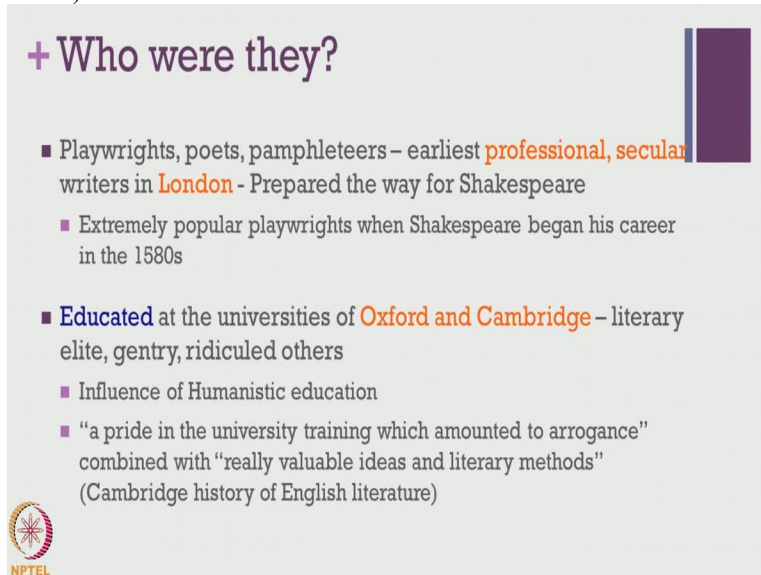
- “We must think of them mainly as a group and **must be satisfied** with the general assertion that each contributed **something** to the evolution of the drama into the forms in which Shakespeare was to take it up”
- Hudson (p.54)

What was that **something**?

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So at this point we do not nearly gloss over the university wits but we begin to ask this question what was this something that led to the evolution of drama in the later decades.

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+ Who were they?

- Playwrights, poets, pamphleteers – earliest **professional, secular** writers in **London** - Prepared the way for Shakespeare
 - Extremely popular playwrights when Shakespeare began his career in the 1580s
- **Educated** at the universities of **Oxford and Cambridge** – literary elite, gentry, ridiculed others
 - Influence of Humanistic education
 - “a pride in the university training which amounted to arrogance” combined with “really valuable ideas and literary methods” (Cambridge history of English literature)



So we need to understand who these people collectively known as university wits were. They were mostly playwrights, poets and pamphleteers and they were also considered as the earliest professional writers in London. As we have noted earlier, it was very important for any of all of them to move to London to be of any of the noticeable stature and they were they had been recorded in the history right from the beginning as a set of people who paved the way for Shakespeare’s writings and also for the Shakespeare’s personality to emerge in the dramatic scene of London.

And also a very important factor to be noted that they were extremely popular when Shakespeare began his carrier in the 1580s. Their popularity was such that they all were considered, they were very well known figures in London, in the political scenario as well as in the entertainment scenario of England and they were also producing successful plays and they also had a lot of connection with the court, so in many ways they were quite prominent figures who in fact failed to make it really big when later the literary history began to be written.

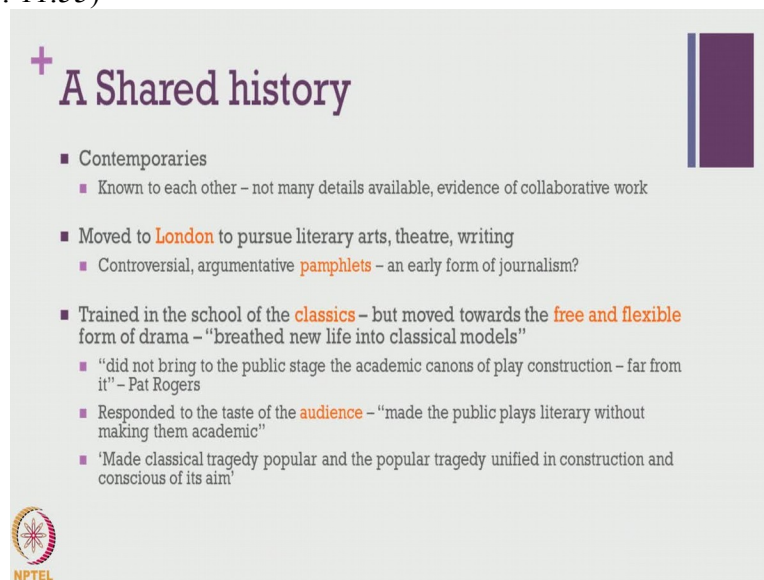
And they were also educated men. They had university education which made them quite distinct from many of the other playwrights of that period. In fact all of them put together they are also called as the university wits because of the kind of university education they received at

Cambridge and Oxford. Only one of them Thomas Kid was not a university educated person some of which we would be taking a look at in a later session.

And they were the literary elite of those times, they were gently of literature and they also, they also there is a evidence they also often ridiculed others who had lesser kind of academic education and many historians now point out that they were all strongly influenced by the humanistic education which also let them to move a little beyond the influence of academic and also engage with a certain human values in general.


And Cambridge history of English literature has a very interesting observation about them that they took a lot of pride in the university training which amounted to arrogance and however this arrogance was considered as a quite ok because they also contributed a lot to the literary methods of those times. So it was a curious combination of intellectual, arrogance plus a genuine kind of artistic merit. And they also had a shared history in terms of the time, location and ideas that they share and they were all contemporaries.

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+ A Shared history

- Contemporaries
 - Known to each other – not many details available, evidence of collaborative work
- Moved to **London** to pursue literary arts, theatre, writing
 - Controversial, argumentative **pamphlets** – an early form of journalism?
- Trained in the school of the **classics** – but moved towards the **free and flexible** form of drama – “breathed new life into classical models”
 - “did not bring to the public stage the academic canons of play construction – far from it” – Pat Rogers
 - Responded to the taste of the **audience** – “made the public plays literary without making them academic”
 - ‘Made classical tragedy popular and the popular tragedy unified in construction and conscious of its aim’

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But there is a lot of evidence to show that they had lot of familiarity with each other. They were known to each other but the details of the relationship that they share with each other or the extent which they collaborated its much not evident but there is certainly an evidence of some collaborative work done which we will be taking a look at in detail in this session.

They all had moved from different parts of different parts of England to the city of London to pursue literary arts theatre and writing and writing included not just the writing of the dramatic plays. It also included a kind of pamphlet hearing which was a prototype of journalism then. And they all were famous and quite notorious also at often times for their controversial arguments into pamphlets they had brought forth.

The fact that makes them very distinctive is that they deliberately choose not to pursue an academic reputable career but they wanted to be in London, primarily to engage with the idea of drama and to produce drama, to act in drama and so that kind of passionate interest was evident throughout in the way they lived their lives and also the way they composed their plays. And they were all trained, very well trained in fact in the school of classics but they also knew what the audience really wanted.

So they were willing to move towards free and flexible kind of drama. It is said about them that they breathe a new life into classical model. One of the reasons historians Pat Rogers has got this thing to say about them- They did not bring to the public stage the academic canons of play constructions - far from it. In that sense they were quite enduring to the common people as well because they did not their model of drama was not restrictive or constricted in any way but they knew how to play to the gallow in multiple ways.

And they were one of the first set of dramatists who knew that it was very important to respond to the audience that the audience reception was important in the staging of their play and as well as in the composition. And its said about them that they made the public plays literary without making them academic, that was a rare combination in the mid-16th century because until then the plays were seen as classical models or they had to be didactic in place, a combination of their literary, the academic and the popular conception of play that was a very rare combination during those times.

They also were are credited as one of those set of people who made classical tragedy popular and the popular tragedy unified in construction and conscience of its aim. So they played a very important role in laying the foundations of Elizabethan drama and also as we noted earlier for making it a little easier for Shakespeare to take off from them. So in that sense the university wits may be considered as a launchpad for Shakespeare's craft and romantic technique.

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+ Pamphleteers

- Pamphlets – 16th century equivalent of **modern magazines**
 - Mostly the work of a single author
- Broad **range** – including prose and poetry
- **Cheaper** than books
 - mid-way between bound books and cheap single sheets (forerunners of newspapers)
 - Produced quickly in short press runs

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And its also important to take a look at what pamphleteering meant in the mid-16th century. Pamphlets were the equivalent of modern magazines and they were mostly unlike their present one, they were mostly the work of the single author and sometimes one or two together collaborated to bring out the single pamphlet and this was some of the historians even considered them as a prototype of the modern journalism because they always responded to contemporary affairs, political affairs and some of them to stay safe even restrained from even giving their own names while voicing certain controversial controversial views.

The range was very broad in these pamphlets. They included pros and poetry and there was no particular format in which this was getting published. So all of these university wits apart from their interest in drama they also had a very active interest in pursuing pamphleteering and in in writing in contributing to these pamphlets and making their views known to the public in general.

They were also more affordable to the common people. If you remember printing had made its way to England in 1476 and Books continued to be as a quite and expensive affair but pamphlets were comparatively cheaper than Books. In fact we tried to place them in scale of publication they were somewhere in the middle between bound books and cheap single sheets. As an aside cheap single sheets were seen as a fore runner of the contemporary newspaper form.

And these were also easy to publish and produce. They were generally produced very quickly in short press runs. So in general it was cheaper, it was affordable, the mode of publication was less complicated as well.

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The slide features a purple plus sign icon and a vertical purple bar on the right side. The title 'The University Wits' is in a purple serif font. Below the title is a list of playwrights with their dates, each preceded by a small purple square bullet point. At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a starburst pattern and the text 'NPTEL' below it.

- Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)
- John Lyly (1554-1606)
- George Peele (1558-1597)
- Thomas Lodge (1558-1626)
- Robert Greene (1560-1592)
- Thomas Nashe (1576-1601)
- Thomas Kyd (1557-1595) - 'his connection with the universities is certainly not known' (Saintsbury)

So who were these university wits? Yeah. I will list down names and no particular order but there are different ways in which these playwrights are being talked about. Some have arranged them in a chronologically fashion, some arranges them in in a way in which a hierarchy is in place but in this lecture I have taken a special care not to arrange them in a particular fashion because its very difficult to hierarchically place them or to state which one was more influential that the others.

So in no particular order there was Christopher Marlowe, John Lyly, George Peele, Thomas Lodge, Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe and Thomas Kyd. These are the set of people who are generally understood as the university wits. Among these only Thomas Kyd had a very little connection with universities. The recent historians George saints pretty points out that his connections to the university is certainly not known.

So he certainly did not go to any of the universities like Cambridge and Oxford but he did have a sense of education which was perhaps not as good as the ones considered from Cambridge and Oxford. So there is a general assumption that Marlowe and Lyly had a very direct influence on Shakespeare but historians do vary on this and a detailed analysis of some of Shakespeare's plays

also show that all of these had one kind or the other influence on Shakespeare. So we will just leave it at that and we will not pursue much on what kind of influence each one of them had.

And if we try to differentiate them Marlowe Green and Nashe mainly went to Cambridge and Lyly, Lodge and Kyd were Oxford graduates. So all of these people together after their education had completed they had moved to London in for pursuing a career or pursuing a passion in drama and other related techniques and if we note their life time was also note that they were more or less contemporaries with perhaps three or four years of difference between them.

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+ Common literary features

Drawn from Edward Albert's critiques

- Fondness for **heroic themes**
 - Lives of great figures
- Heroic **treatment**
 - Fullness, variety, long speeches, spectacles, violence
 - Often led to loudness and disorder
- Heroic **style**
 - Magnificent epithets, powerful declamations, strong and sounding lines
 - Also led to abuse, bombast, mouthing and even nonsense!
- Predominance of **tragedy**
 - Comedy considered to be a 'lower species'
 - General lack of real humour; coarse and immature humour
 - (John Lyly – the only exception?)

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These are some of the common literary features which allows later critic or later historians historian to put them together and this analysis largely drawn from Edward Alberts critics of the university wits. They all had a fondness for heroic themes in the sense that they loved to talk and write about the lives of great figures, great kings, great personalities, so on and so forth. And since heroic themes require a heroic treatment they also made sure that their plays were full of vitality, a long speeches, spectacles, instances of violence.

But the flip side of this was that and some of the times this over arching ambition for heroic treatment often led to a loudness and disorder in their themes. But however we can certainly give them certain allowances for them, they being the pioneers of these kinds of drama in the mid-16th century. So any kind of heroic theme which any kind of heroic theme which deserves a heroic treatment also needs to be written in a heroic style.


So there were magnificent epithets, powerful declamations, a strong and sounding lines to make make it look all the more spectacular but again the flip side of this was that it also had led to an extensive kind of abuse, bombast, mouthing and sometimes some of those scenes even relapsed into a certain kind of nonsense. In spite of these there their kind of drama was very popular and the public really enjoyed watching them and we find that in terms of (()) (19:59) throughout the writings of Elizabethan throughout the writings of the university wits we find that there is a predominance of tragedy.

In fact comedy during those times was considered as a lowest species of drama. If you remember all of these writers they also had university education. So there was still some kind of arrogance and some kind of hierarchy about what constituted superior art and what constituted inferior arts. So also in general during those times not pertaining just university wits, there was a general lack of humor and whatever humor was available was mostly coarse and immature.

And we can see that John Lyly was exception, he was the only one who at least for a way in a very minimal way encased with a humor in a more serious sense. Though most historians literary critics have glossed over the universities wits and have not taken much care to talk about them in individual terms, in this lecture we will be talking a detailed look at what the contributions of each of these dramatists were.


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+ John Lyly



- The Leader of University Wits? – most talented, extremely popular
 - “most neglected, underappreciated and misunderstood Elizabethan playwright”
- Seven (or eight?) **comedies** – *Alexander, Campaspe, Endymion, Gallathea, Sapho and Phao, Midas, The Woman in the Moon* – written for performance at the court
 - Performed for private audiences and the **court**
- Rendered an **intellectual** tone to comedy
 - Clever repartee, continual use of puns, conceits and all sorts of verbal fireworks – anticipated **Shakespeare**?

Prose Romance: *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*



We begin with John Lyly maybe because he was considered as the leader of the university wits. He is also considered as the most talented and extremely popular one among all of those put together but at the same time the recent critics have also realised that he was the most neglected, underappreciated and misunderstood Elizabethan playwright. So in that sense we do not find him occupying any kind of stature in main stream military history so much so that like Hudson they all prefer to gloss over all of them in a single stroke.

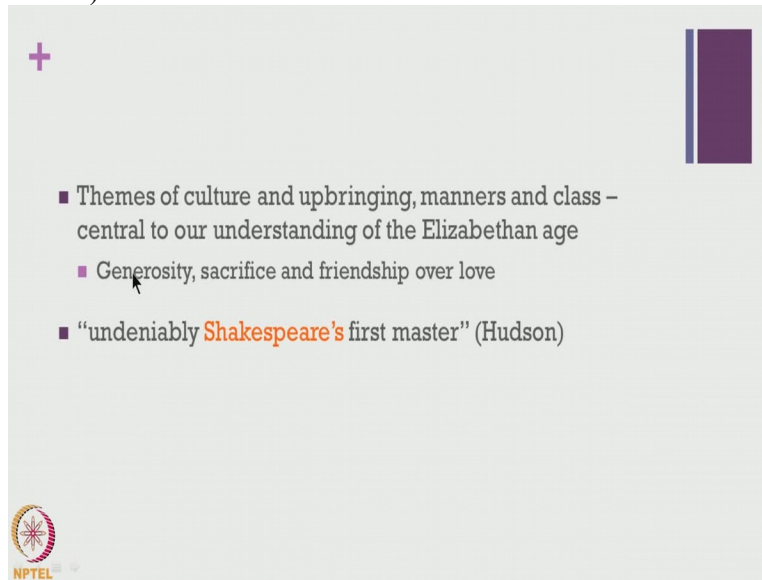
And as far as his literary output is concerned, he had 7 and some of them feel 8 comedies and there were mostly of very high stature in the sense that most of his work Alexander, Campaspe, Endymion, Gallathea, so on they all had performances scheduled within the court. And it is said that for some of these performances the queen herself used to be the queen herself used to attend. So that was the kind of stature that he enjoyed in the Elizabethan circles during at that time and he had mostly performed for private audience and the court.

If you remember in one of the earlier sessions we mentioned about how there were two different kinds of theatres that prevailed during that time. One were the public houses the public playhouses which were erected outside the city of London and there were these private playhouses which cater to a select wealthier and courtly audience. So John Lyly was a favorite of those courtly, wealthy audience, and he was the first one to render an intellectual tone to comedy because otherwise comedy was largely coarse, it was slapstick, it also even had the risk of falling into vulgarity.

So he was the one who laid use of Clever repartee. He used puns, conceits and all kinds of verbal fireworks and he in that sense had influenced Shakespeare a lot and some of them even felt that John Lyly anticipated Shakespeare as far as history of drama is concerned and there is a significant pros romance works Euphious the anatomy of wit which is credited to John Lyly.

In fact much of his fame in the later years rests on this single wopr known as Euphious which we will be taking a closer look at when we begin to talk about Elizabethan pros.

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- Themes of culture and upbringing, manners and class – central to our understanding of the Elizabethan age
 - Generosity, sacrifice and friendship over love
- “undeniably **Shakespeare's** first master” (Hudson)

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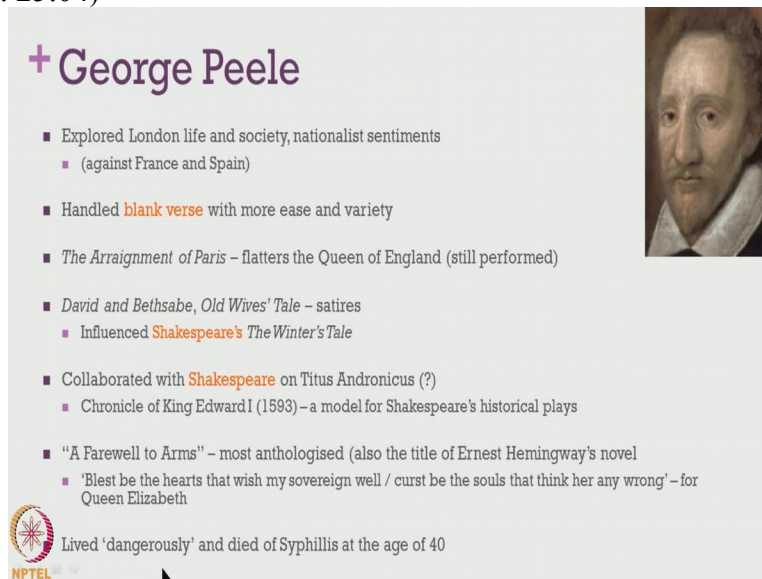
And in terms of the treatment of John Lyly's works, it was mostly the theme of culture and upbringing that he dealt with. So many feel that an understanding of John Lyly's work is very important for us to understand Elizabethan manners, Elizabethan culture, etc. And in his works he always spoke about generosity, sacrifice, friendship over love. In that sense thematically we find, he is quite closer to the Shakespearean plays which are getting produced few decades later.

In that sense Hudson also calls him as the as Shakespeare first master. Here it is very important for us to note that all of these universities wits even when they we discussed even when we discuss their individual merits they are most often discussed in connection with Shakespeare or in terms of the influence they had on the later works of Shakespeare. But towards the end in fact he died poor and bitter.

He gets neglected by the queen reasons for which is not really known and he is also forgotten by his peers and his reputation also had steadily declined it towards the end. In fact the last public performance of his plays or his writings it was seen in 1590. He dies in 1607 and there is this 17 years of inexplicable silence which has been a source of historical curiosity but nothing much is known about the reasons for his steady decline.

But the sad fact also remains that even after his death even much at a much later point in the 18 and 19 centuries when histories began to be written in proper, his stature could not be reinstated much, his reputation could not be claimed back in a very different way either.

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The slide features a purple plus sign followed by the name 'George Peele' in a purple serif font. To the right is a portrait of George Peele, a man with a beard and a white ruff collar. Below the name is a bulleted list of his works and influences. At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo, and at the bottom right is a mouse cursor pointing to the text 'Lived 'dangerously' and died of Syphilis at the age of 40'.

+ George Peele

- Explored London life and society, nationalist sentiments
 - (against France and Spain)
- Handled **blank verse** with more ease and variety
- *The Arraignment of Paris* – flatters the Queen of England (still performed)
- *David and Bethsabe, Old Wives' Tale* – satires
 - Influenced **Shakespeare's** *The Winter's Tale*
- Collaborated with **Shakespeare** on Titus Andronicus (?)
 - Chronicle of King Edward I (1593) – a model for Shakespeare's historical plays
- "A Farewell to Arms" – most anthologised (also the title of Ernest Hemingway's novel)
 - 'Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well / curst be the souls that think her any wrong' – for Queen Elizabeth

Lived 'dangerously' and died of Syphilis at the age of 40

Now we come to George Peele and he was one dramatists who knew how to handle London life and how to translate it into his place and he also played alongwth the nationalist sentiments. If you remember this was also the time when England was consolidation herself as a nation vis-a-vis France and Spain and they were also. There was also this time when nationalists were running high. So many of his plays had a reflection of those popular sentiments of the time and he is credited to have a handle blank verse with more easern variety. what blank verse is and what details of those are we will take a look at at a later point.

And some of his works major works include the Arraignment of Paris in this was a play which is considered to have flattered the queen to a great extent and in some private circles and for some university didactic purposes, the play is still performed and the other couple of satires include David and Bethsabe, Old Wives Tales and Old Wives Tale is said to have inspired The Winters Tale, a play by Shakespeare.

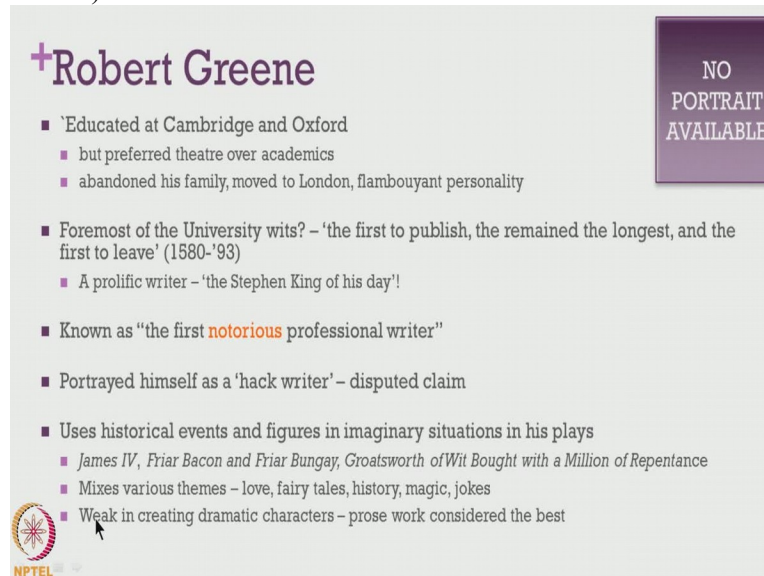
So we continued to see all of these writers and their significance being properly flagged and marked by how Shakespeare had to benefit from these at a later point and he is also said to have collaborated with Shakespeare on his play Titus Andronicus but there is very little evidence and most of these facts are quite conjectural in nature as well. And it is said that it is said that John George Peeles Chronicle of King Edward I was also a model for Shakespeare historical plays at a later point.

However his most anthologized work is a is a short work, A Farewell to Arms if you if you recall this is also the title of Hemingway's famous novel and in fact in this poem has been much anthologized in this verse has been much popularized due to the ways in which it had been structured and also more importantly for the way in which it flatters the queen to no extent. If we can read out a couple of lines from that.

Blessed be the hearts that wish my souvenir well, cursed be the souls that think her any wrong and this was dedicated for queen Elizabeth and was a popular verse during those times. It continues to be a popular one even till date and in terms of his lifestyle in fact later we begin to notice that almost all of them had a very similar loose kind of lifestyle. He is said to have lived dangerously without any kind of discipline or morals in plays and he was he died of Syphillis at the age of 40.

So his literary output was very limited in that sense. His life and his lifestyle continues to be of more interest than perhaps his dramatic output put together.

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+Robert Greene

- Educated at Cambridge and Oxford
 - but preferred theatre over academics
 - abandoned his family, moved to London, flamboyant personality
- Foremost of the University wits? – ‘the first to publish, the remained the longest, and the first to leave’ (1580-'93)
 - A prolific writer – ‘the Stephen King of his day’!
- Known as “the first **notorious** professional writer”
- Portrayed himself as a ‘hack writer’ – disputed claim
- Uses historical events and figures in imaginary situations in his plays
 - *James IV, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*
 - Mixes various themes – love, fairy tales, history, magic, jokes
- Weak in creating dramatic characters – prose work considered the best

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NO PORTRAIT AVAILABLE

Now we come to another very important figure, Robert Greene and his life and his general liturgy output is much shrouded in mystery so much so that historians are not even able to identify a portrait of his, a portrait of him though he lived in mid-16th century. So he was also educated at Cambridge and Oxford, he had potential to become a very successful academic they used to say it seems but anyway he preferred theatre over academics and the general gossip about

him in the town speculated that he had abandoned his family in a different province and he had moved to London to pursue a career in theatre.

And he is also said to have had a very flamboyant personality and he is considered as the foremost of the university wits in terms of the literary output and in terms of the colorful life that he enjoyed during that time and he it is said about him that he was the first to publish, remain the longest and the first to be and if you notice his active period was only for just about a little more than 12 years from 1580-1593.

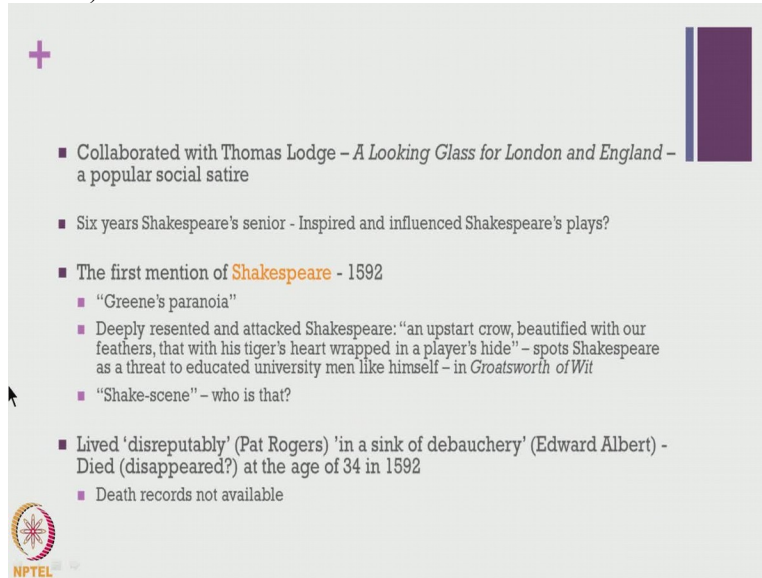
He was a prolific writer, he produced over 20 works which are credited to his own name and there are also set of anonymous works which are conjectured to be productions of Robert Greene. He was in that sense the Stephan king of his day as some of the recent historians would put it and he was also quite and notorious in professional in his dealings especially in terms of his pamphlets. He had a portrait of himself as a hack writer but many later historians, find this claim quite disputed and there is a lot of controversy about that as well.

In his writings he uses a lot of historical events and figures. He also the first one to have introduced imaginary kind of situation in his place quite remote from the reality of those times. And some of his important works include James IV, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a million of Repentance, we will come back to this work Groatsworth of Wit shortly for its significance. And in his works we noticed that there is a mix of a variety of themes.


In that sense he was quite experimental. He dared to mix in elements which were not acceptable in the classical tradition and also he dared to experiment in such a way that he did not even know whether the audience would accept it or not. However we find that in his works there is a blend of love, fairy tale, history, magic, jokes the kind of things that people normally would not dare to bring in together in a single page especially during those times.

However he said that he was very weak in creating dramatic characters, his craft and that was not very well formed.

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- Collaborated with Thomas Lodge – *A Looking Glass for London and England* – a popular social satire
- Six years Shakespeare's senior - Inspired and influenced Shakespeare's plays?
- The first mention of **Shakespeare** - 1592
 - "Greene's paranoia"
 - Deeply resented and attacked Shakespeare: "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide" – spots Shakespeare as a threat to educated university men like himself – in *Groatsworth of Wit*
 - "Shake-scene" – who is that?
- Lived 'disreputably' (Pat Rogers) 'in a sink of debauchery' (Edward Albert) - Died (disappeared?) at the age of 34 in 1592
 - Death records not available



And his pros were comparatively is considered as the best and he also is said to have done a lot of collaborative work. He collaborated with Thomas Lodge in other university wit and this is the production, *A Looking Glass for London and England*. This was also a popular satire of those times. And Robert Greene is also noted for his connection with Shakespeare in a very antagonistic way though and he was 6 years Shakespeare senior and they both said to have lived and worked towards a proper career in London around the same time and he is said to have inspired and influence Shakespeare plays at a later stage however we do not have a proper evidence in terms of the comparative dramatic output.

In fact Robert Greene is credited and more in terms of his first mentioned of Shakespeare which is noted in 1592. This is in his work in work named *Groatsworth of Wit* this was a pamphlet that Robert Greene had bought about and here we find him discussing without referring to Shakespeare's name about a certain character who was becoming very popular in the dramatic scene of London during those times and this is generally known referred by the later historians as a display of Greenes paranoia.

He is said to have deeply resented and attacked Shakespeare in his pamphlet. There is only a single mention of this. However the term Shake-scene is historians feel that its a mention about Shakespeare who had arrived in London in the 1580s and had begun to rise to prominence in the

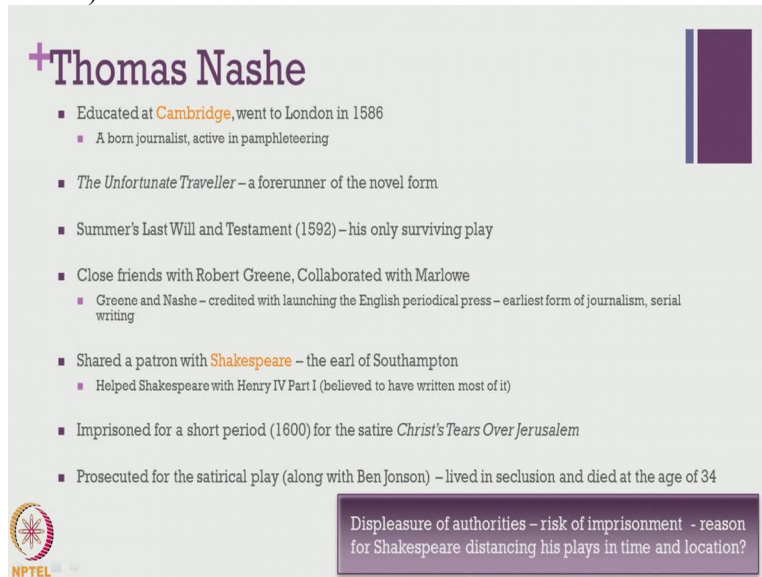
1590s. So in the 1592 Robert Greene makes this very vicious mention about Shakespeare as a upstart crow beautified with a feathers that with his tigers heart wrapped in a players hide.

And this was extremely significant in a historical context because people like Robert Greene assumed that, the arrival of new playwrights on the scene who were not part of the university education. They could be a threat to the survival of the likes of university wits. So in that sense Robert Greene was also echoing the sentiments perhaps all of the other educated playwrights of the time shared.

However it is just another irony of history that at later time we have devoted much of a liturgy history to William Shakespeare than to Robert Greene who derided him in a different context and he is also said to have lived disreputably. That is how Pat Rogers put it. And Edward Albert says that he lived in a sink of debauchery and he did not enjoy much of a good reputation, that is what he recover from the current records.

He is not said to have enjoyed much of a reputation during his life time. But about his death also its much shrouded in history. He is said to have disappeared at the age of 34 in the sense there are no the death records available of Robert Greene. We only hear about the in fact even his mention of Shakespeare in 1592 in one of his pamphlets, that was one of his last public appearance. So to speak after that we do not hear much about him and he is said to have dead and rather mysteriously disappeared. There is still lot of controversy and lot of theories about that.

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The slide features a purple header with the name 'Thomas Nashe' and a list of bullet points. A purple box at the bottom right contains a question. The NPTEL logo is in the bottom left corner.

Thomas Nashe

- Educated at **Cambridge**, went to London in 1586
 - A born journalist, active in pamphleteering
- *The Unfortunate Traveller* – a forerunner of the novel form
- Summer's Last Will and Testament (1592) – his only surviving play
- Close friends with Robert Greene, Collaborated with Marlowe
 - Greene and Nashe – credited with launching the English periodical press – earliest form of journalism, serial writing
- Shared a patron with **Shakespeare** – the earl of Southampton
 - Helped Shakespeare with Henry IV Part I (believed to have written most of it)
- Imprisoned for a short period (1600) for the satire *Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem*
- Prosecuted for the satirical play (along with Ben Jonson) – lived in seclusion and died at the age of 34

Displeasure of authorities – risk of imprisonment - reason for Shakespeare distancing his plays in time and location?

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So with that we move to the next person in line Thomas Nashe. Thomas Nashe was educated at Cambridge he reached London in 1586. He is said to be a born journalist. He was very active in pamphleteering, in fact perhaps the most active of all the university wits put together. His work, *The Unfortunate Traveller* considered as the fore runner of the contemporary novel form and as far as his dramatic output is considered there are many plays that are attributed to him but there is very little evidence to prove that he actually wrote them or not.

So in that sense his only surviving play is *Summers Last Will and Testament* which was produced in 1592 and he had he was quite familiar with the other university wits of those times. He is said to have been close friends with Robert Greene, he collaborated with Marlowe in dramatic enterprises as well as in certain political affairs and in fact Greene and Nashe together Robert Greene and Nashe together they are credited with this rare distinction of launching the English periodical press.

It was in fact only from the mid-16th century that England began to discover a market for a kind of new kind of journalism, a kind of serial writing it said that the people used to look forward to the next piece of writing which was getting serialized there. So in that sense they were pioneers of not just the dramatic component but more of a journalistic pamphleteering kind of writing.

And one thing which makes Thomas Nashe quite distinctive is the fact that he shared a patron with Shakespeare. The earl of Southampton was the earl of Southampton was Shakespeare

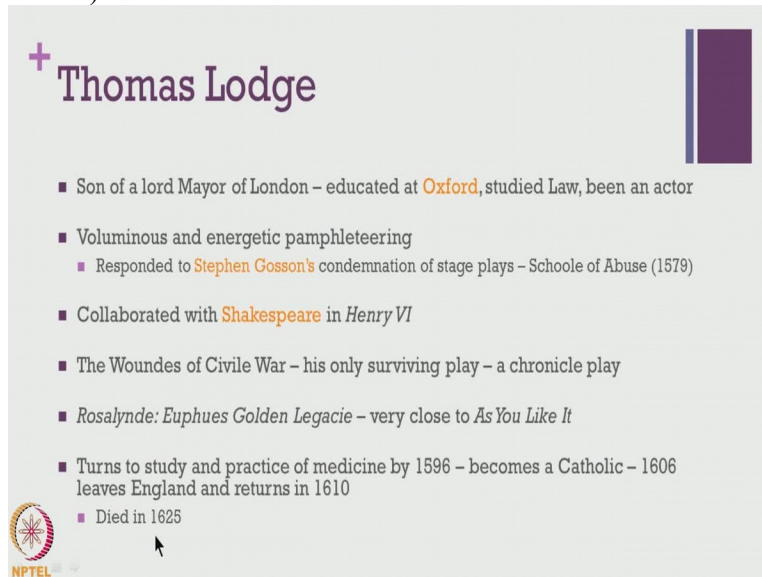
patron about whom we would be talking about a little later. And Nashe is also said to have helped Shakespeare with Henry IV part I and some historians even believed that Nashe wrote most of it. However the entire Play is in the contemporary credited to William Shakespeare alone.

And as we mentioned earlier he was said to have collaborated with Marlowe not just in dramatic affairs but also he led a very controversial political life, he was imprisoned for a short period after the production of his satire Christ's Tears over Jerusalem. There is still a lot of debate over whether he actually had written it or not. However he was prosecuted for the satirical play along with Ben Johnson, another play writer who said to have collaborated with him.

And due to this major political turmoil in his life, due to such kind of unfortunate incidents he is said to have lived in speculation towards the end of his life and he dies at a very young age of 34. And this is another notable fact during this time, there was also this risk of inviting the displeasure of authorities if one spoke about any controversial political decision of those times. And though the Elizabethan scene was far more secular and far more freer and far more spirited in many ways compared to the earlier times, we do notice that the artists' life continued to be at a risk.


There was a risk of imprisonment where and if they had it at any point antagonized any of those in power. And some historians feel that this is the reason for Shakespeare dispensing himself from the political scene of those periods. We do find that most of Shakespeare's plays at a later point, they are not set in London but they are set in imaginary locations, at a distant time and place. So maybe you know these were the lessons that Shakespeare began to pick up from the life and the consequences of certain kinds of acts in university life.

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+ Thomas Lodge

- Son of a lord Mayor of London – educated at **Oxford**, studied Law, been an actor
- Voluminous and energetic pamphleteering
 - Responded to **Stephen Gosson's** condemnation of stage plays – Schoole of Abuse (1579)
- Collaborated with **Shakespeare** in *Henry VI*
- *The Woundes of Civile War* – his only surviving play – a chronicle play
- *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie* – very close to *As You Like It*
- Turns to study and practice of medicine by 1596 – becomes a Catholic – 1606 leaves England and returns in 1610
 - Died in 1625

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Now we move to Thomas Lodge. He was very influential in terms of his upbringing, he was a son of a lord Mayor of London. He is from London, he got educated at Oxford, he studied law but however he does not become a legal adviser of anything of that sort. He comes back to London to be an actor. He was also credited for this very voluminous and energetic pamphleteering. He is the one who responded quite boldly to Stephen Gosson's condemnation of stage play.

This is a very important moment in history of drama in England, we shall be discussing this at a later point and because Stephen Gosson had come up with certain writing against the stage plays and playwrights and all kinds of people pursuing fine arts during the Elizabethan times. It was called the school of abuse, this is this was in 1579 and Thomas Lodge have said to have responded quite vehemently to it and also had invited a lot of criticism and a lot of made a lot of enemies in the process.

He is said to have collaborated with Shakespeare for the writing of Henry VI. By now we notice that most of these writers there is a little evidence of them collaborating with Shakespeare with some point or the other but we are yet to ascertain whether part of this is conject, how much of this is a conjecture and how much of this is true.

His only surviving play a chronicle play its a Wounds of Civil War. And he is not set to have been a wit popular dramatists in terms of his writing, in terms of his craft but he was more

famous in the London circles for his response to see Stephen Gosson. Another significant thing that makes him important in terms of his connection with Shakespeare is his play Rosalynde Euphues Golden Legacie.

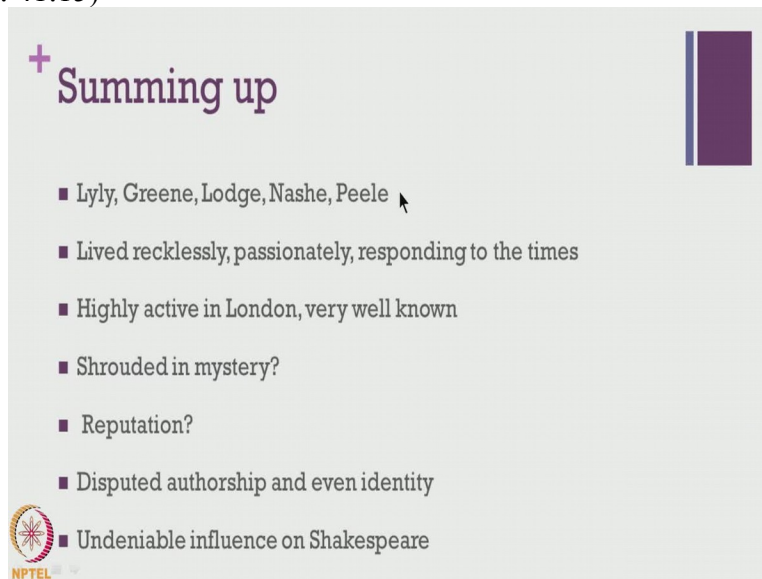
This is considered to be very close to Shakespeare's play of a later period, As You Like It. And he was in fact he his life takes a very different turn towards the end just like that happens in most of the lives of . His life takes a very different turn toward the end just like the lives of most of the university wits. He turns to study and practice medicine from 1596 onwards and after that we do not find any significant dramatic output from him.

He is not also not active in London scene either in terms of political pamphleteering or in terms of any kind of public appearance. He also there is evidence which shows he becomes a catholic if you remember, England was primarily a protestant nation from the Tudor period onwards after the after Henry VIII broke away from the Roman catholic church and framed The church of England.

So being a catholic was a risky affair in London during that time. We find that by 1606 he is forced to flee England fearing persecution. He returns in 1610. There is some letter of evidence which is acquired by the historians he there is a letter which he had written to the ambassador of Paris thanking him for assuring for a safe return to England and he dies in 1625 and there is very little known about his life from 1610 to 1625.


But compared to some of the other university wits, the positive thing is that there are death records available which shows that he had not really disappeared in to obscurity but he just had withdrawn himself from all kind of public all kinds of public appearance and performances.

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+ Summing up

- Lyly, Greene, Lodge, Nashe, Peele
- Lived recklessly, passionately, responding to the times
- Highly active in London, very well known
- Shrouded in mystery?
- Reputation?
- Disputed authorship and even identity
- Undeniable influence on Shakespeare

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And to sum up in this session we took a look at the lives of Lyly, Greene, Lodge, Nashe and Peele and how their dramatic output was significant in shaping the romantic drama of the period and also in influencing Shakespeare's writings at a later point. They all we noted had lived recklessly and passionately but they were also not scared to respond to the times. However the consequences proved perhaps a little more than they could handle as well.

They were all highly active figures in London, they were very well know very reputed and so much so that their stature was considered quite high during that time but at the same time their lives in general, their dramatic output, their influence is also shrouded in mystery and their reputation is also there are multiple theories about what kind of reputation they enjoyed in London during those times.

Some of them feel that the ill reputation that many of them now are credited with is the work of later historians who wanted to somehow the other prioritize Shakespeare and his works over the others. That said and done even the little output which is available of them there is a many there are any cases of disputed authorship and some even feel that they were all proxies for certain other court writers.

So there are different theories in fact about the life and output of the university wits which makes them all the more interesting especially as they are also considered as a prelude to the emergence of Shakespeare and what makes them all the more important in terms of historical details, in

terms of literary criticism in terms of general analysis of drama is that they had a very profound influence on Shakespeare. If any one does a detail analysis of Shakespeare play at a later point of time, it is very difficult to not notice the kind of influence that university wits had in his plot construction, in the way he borrowed particular kinds of theme, the way he responded to London life so on and so forth.

So that's all we have for today's session and the next session we will continue to look at the remaining university wits and how they began to define and redefine the Elizabethan dramatic scene in the mid-16th century.

Thank you for listening