



RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

الأدب الإنجليزي - عصر النهضة

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Lecture 1

Causes of the Renaissance: The Reformation

(Renaissance Literature)

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Main points

Causes and Consequences of the Reformation

- ❖ Before the Reformation ALL Christians in Europe were Roman Catholic
- ❖ Reformation Ended the Religious Unity in Europe
- ❖ Attack on the medieval church—its institutions, doctrine, practices and personnel
- ❖ The Reformation caused a split in Christianity with the formation of the new Protestant religions

The Medieval Church

- ❖ Mission of the Church: To save the soul of all the members.
- ❖ **Tithe:** People donated one tenth (1/10) of the produce from their lands to the church each year.
- ❖ Wealth: Church became wealthiest group in Europe
- ❖ Church was the Center of daily life. The local church served as a church, meeting place, and shelter during war.
- ❖ Community: The church dominated community life and controlled interaction between Christians .

The Problem of the Catholic Church

Greed, corruption and absenteeism

- ❖ Sales of indulgences: The release of a soul from purgatory (hell) for monetary donation – a HUGE abuse of Church power! Extortion of money from the poor
- ❖ Unfair Land and wealth distribution
- ❖ The corruption of the Papacy
- ❖ European population was increasingly anti-clerical
- ❖ Absenteeism of church leaders during natural disasters (plague, famine) or to solve everyday problems for people

New Socio-economic realities

- ❖ Better educated, urban populace was more critical of the Church than rural Peasantry
- ❖ Renaissance monarchs were growing impatient with the power of the Church
- ❖ Society was growing more humanistic and secular
- ❖ Growing individualism

Technological Developments

- ❖ Scientific developments contradicted Church doctrine
- ❖ Invention of movable type (printing) in 1450 by Johann Gutenberg
- ❖ Manufacture of paper becomes easier and cheaper
- ❖ Spread of ideas faster than the Catholic Church could control them
- ❖ Intensified intellectual criticism of the Church
- ❖ Protestant ideals appealed to the urban and the literate

Calls for Reform

- ❖ The Church's political power started being challenged
- ❖ Unwillingness to depend on the Church and rejection of the constraints it enforced
- ❖ Growing human confidence vs. "original sin"
- ❖ Catholic church becomes defensive and unable to respond to the criticism
- ❖ The confusing nature of scholasticism and of church dogma

Reformers

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)

- ❖ A Dutch scholar, humanist, and theologian.
- ❖ Was ordained a Catholic priest, but never practiced priestly duties.
- ❖ Studied, instead, theology and classical Greek at the universities of Paris and Cambridge.
- ❖ Was critical of some of the practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church.
- ❖ Sought to reform the Catholic Church.



In Praise of Folly - by Erasmus

- ❖ Written in Latin in 1509
- ❖ Best-seller (only the Bible sold more by 1550)
- ❖ Erasmus was a devout Catholic who sought to reform the Church, not destroy it
- ❖ Criticized immorality and hypocrisy of Church leaders and the clergy
- ❖ The book inspired renewed calls for reform, and influenced Martin Luther

Reformers

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

- ❖ A German Priest
- ❖ Openly addressed the problems in the Church
- ❖ Said that faith is private and church should have no Control over it.





- ❖ Oct 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenburg, Germany
- ❖ The 95 theses summarized his criticisms of Church
- ❖ 1000s of copies distributed throughout Germany and Europe.

Reformation Begins

- ❖ By 1521 Luther was calling for Germany to split from the catholic Church
- ❖ Wanted German princes to overthrow Papal power in Germany and establish a German Church
- ❖ Jan 1521 – Luther is excommunicated
- ❖ He was summoned by Imperial Diet of Holy Roman Empire to the city of Worms by Emperor Charles V and was ordered to change his ideas
- ❖ Luther – “NO” – The Edict of Worms was issued, making Luther an outlaw Luther kept in hiding by German princes

Lutheranism

Lutheranism (Protestantism) Spreads

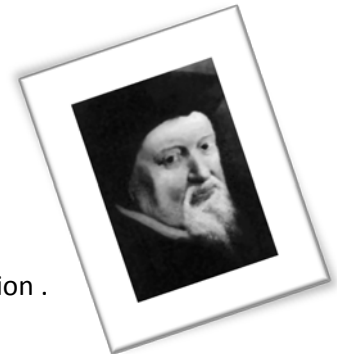
- ❖ Followers of Luther’s religious practices increased
- ❖ Protestantism Gained support among many German princes
- ❖ 1524, German peasants revolted (The Peasants’ Revolt) and hoped Luther would support them, but... because Luther needed the support of German princes, he did not help the peasants
- ❖ Germany is in turmoil – is it Catholic? Is it Lutheran?
- ❖ To establish peace, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V accepted the Peace of Augsburg, and allowed German princes to choose their own faith and religion.

Protestantism Spreads across Europe

- ❖ Ulrich Zwingli and the Zwinglian Reformation
- ❖ John Calvin and Calvinism
- ❖ Henry VIII and the English Reformation

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) / The Zwinglian Reformation

- ❖ priest in Zurich, Switzerland
- ❖ Revolted against the Catholic Church:
- ❖ Banned all religious relics & images
- ❖ Whitewashed all church interiors.
- ❖ Banned music in church services
- ❖ Did not merge with Luther because he disagreed with him on communion .



John Calvin (1509-1564) and Calvinism

- ❖ Replaced Zwingli (killed in religious war)
- ❖ French, fled to Switzerland for safety
- ❖ 1536 – began reforming Geneva, Switzerland
- ❖ Created a church-government of elect and laity
- ❖ Used consistory (moral police)
- ❖ Sent missionaries throughout Europe to convert Catholics
- ❖ His ideas spread to France, Netherlands, Scotland
- ❖ Mid 16th Century – Calvinism more pop than Lutheranism
- ❖ Anti-Catholic
- ❖ Was influenced by Martin Luther, but..
- ❖ Disagreed with Luther's "Salvation through Faith alone."
- ❖ Established his own Protestant Religion in Switzerland



Calvinism : Started in Switzerland

England and America = Puritans

Scotland = The Presbyterians

Holland = The Dutch Reform

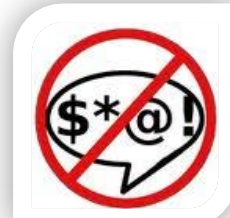
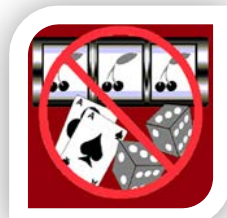
France = The Huguenots

Germany = The Reform Church

South Africa = Boers

Calvinism believes in:

- ❖ Predestination: It is decided, at birth, if people will go to heaven or hell
- ❖ Preach a purified existence and opposed to drinking, gambling, card playing, swearing, etc.



Reformation in England

- ❖ Political, not religious motives for reform
- ❖ Henry VIII – King of England needs a male heir to carry on the Tudor Dynasty



- Married Catherine of Aragon (Aunt of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor)
 - Catherine gave him a daughter, Mary and no son,
 - So Henry wanted a divorce!
 - In the Catholic Church, you need an annulment, granted by the Church. The Pope ONLY can grant it to a King.
- ❖ Political, not religious motives for reform
 - ❖ The Pope refused to grant the annulment, too political
 - ❖ Standoff between: The King of England and HRE Emperor
 - ❖ After a long argument, Henry decided to break away from the Catholic Church
 - ❖ Archbishop of Canterbury granted Henry VIII a divorce
 - ❖ Act of Supremacy(1534) established the Church of England
 - ❖ King Now controls over religious doctrine, appointments, etc
 - ❖ Henry VIII dissolved Catholic claims, sold its land and possessions
 - ❖ Took power but remained close to Catholic teachings

Henry and His Wives

- ❖ Henry was desperate for a son. So much so he married 6 times!!
- ❖ The saying goes...Divorced, Beheaded, Died Divorced, Beheaded, Survived



The Church of England

- ❖ 1547 – Henry died
His 9 year old son, Edward VI, took the throne
- ❖ The Church of England or the Anglican Church became more Protestant, which triggered the anger of the Catholic Church
- ❖ 1553 – Edward VI died
His half-sister Mary (Catholic) took throne
- ❖ Mary wanted to restore Catholicism
- ❖ She had over 300 Protestants burned alive as heretics, which earned her the title “Bloody Mary.”
- ❖ Mary increased tensions between Catholics and Protestants

Lecture 2

Gold, God and Glory

Trade routes, Missionary work and Fame

- ❖ Crusades tried to dislodge Muslims from control of trade routes to the East
- ❖ Crusades were a big loss, but Europe learnt to draw maps and sail seas.
- ❖ Fall of Islamic Spain, al-Andalus, put a huge reservoir of wealth and scientific knowledge in the hands of Europe
- ❖ Notice the dates: Fall of Grenada January 1492, Columbus sails in July 1492.

Explorations Begin

- ❖ Portugal, Spain, England, and France led the exploration and colonization movement and built individual empires across the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Australia.
- ❖ Portugal led the way. A land of experienced sailors who had traveled the seas in search of trade for centuries. Portuguese monarchs like Prince Henry the Navigator understood their country's dependence on the sea and eagerly finance exploration ventures.

Portugal

- ❖ Portugal led the way. A land of experienced sailors who had traveled the seas in search of trade for centuries. Portuguese monarchs like Prince Henry the Navigator understood their country's dependence on the sea and eagerly finance exploration ventures.
- ❖ The Portuguese, first, explored the west coast of Africa and established trade in gold and slaves.



- ❖ 1497, Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa and Continued to India. He and his crew were the first Europeans to reach India by sea.
- ❖ Then the Portuguese established settlements in Brazil in South America.
- ❖ Brazil provided Portugal gold and sugar.
- ❖ Portugal was more interested in trade than in taking over a land and its people. By the 1600s, Portugal had established trading posts in important coastal areas of Africa and Asia..



The Spanish Empire

- ❖ Spain's exploration and colonization were led by the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus. In 1492, Columbus reached the Caribbean Islands. His aim was to find a new route to Asia.
- ❖ Accidentally found America while looking for a westward route to Asia
- ❖ His voyages considered a turning point in history



- ❖ In 1510, Spain financed the voyage of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, who headed south and west, rounding the tip of South America and finally reaching the Philippine Islands after 18 months at sea.
- ❖ Magellan died there, but his crew returned home after circumnavigating the entire world and proving that the earth was round!
- ❖ Spanish explorers soon conquered the powerful Inca and Aztec empires in what is now Peru and Mexico. They established colonies that destroyed the native's civilization and its population. The Spanish empire eventually became the largest and strongest of the colonial empires.
- ❖ The Spaniards used the gold and silver of the Americas to finance military wars and to take over Asian trades in spices, silk and cloth.
- ❖ Spreading the Catholic religion was also an important part of the Spanish colonization.



The English Empire

- ❖ England started by conquering Ireland in the 1500s.
- ❖ In the 1600s and 1700s, the English established tobacco plantations in the Caribbean Island and colonies along the Atlantic coast of North America.
- ❖ The colonists were a mix of religious puritans and pirates and mercenaries.



- ❖ In 1600, England chartered the East India Company to trade in the East Indies (India and Southeast Asia) and soon established a colonial presence in India. India eventually came under British rule in 1858.
- ❖ England first explored Australia in the late 1600s and established a strong colonial presence there in the late 1700s after the American colonies became independent.

The French

- ❖ The French settled in North America once French explorer Samuel de Champlain founded the colony of Quebec as a trading post in 1608. Then they moved down the Mississippi River and claimed the central part of what is now the United States.

Rise of Mercantilism

- ❖ Governments sponsored most early ventures
- ❖ Private sponsorship begins with Joint-Stock Companies
- ❖ Money pooled together = Limited liability
- ❖ World trade shifts from Mediterranean to Atlantic
- ❖ Mercantilism begins:
 - Nations base wealth on gold and silver, gained only through mining or trade.
 - Gov'ts begin forcing colonies to trade ONLY with parent country
 - All raw materials go to parent country, and colonies must buy finished goods from parent country
 - All wealth then stays with parent country

Social Impact

- ❖ Massive population growth in Europe between 1450-1650 (55 mil to 100 mil)
- ❖ Columbian Exchange- new crops, animals, diseases exchanged **Items only in Europe/Asia before 1492:** Beet, Carrot, Cherry, Cinnamon, Coffee, Grape, Lettuce, Melon, Oat, Olive, Orange, Rice, Spinach, Wheat, Cattle, Goat, Pig, Sheep, Cotton, Rat **Items only in America before 1492:** Avocado, Cacao Bean (Chocolate), Chile Pepper, Corn, Peanut, Pineapple, Potato, Pumpkin, Sweet Potato, Tomato, Turkey, Tobacco
- ❖ People begin to migrate to New World colonies for new opportunities

Scientific Revolution

Colas Copernicus

Studied in Poland; questioned old beliefs
Thought Earth was round, it rotated in axis, & revolved around the sun
Wouldn't publish beliefs until near death (afraid of the Church)

Johannes Kepler

Used math to prove Earth revolved around sun
Also discovered planets move in ellipses & at different speeds

Galileo Galilei

Built telescope & observed several moons
Proved theories of Copernicus
Church forced him to recant his beliefs
Also worked with physics and motion

Francis Bacon

Founded the scientific method (truth through evidence)

Rene Descartes

Questioned everything; father of analytical geometry

"I think therefore I am"

Isaac Newton

st 1 European to recognize concept of gravity (apple)

Wrote of laws of universe (*Principia*)

Developed calculus to study changes in forces or quantities

Andreas Vesalius

Recorded information on human anatomy (*The Structure of the Human Body*)

Robert Hooke

Used microscope to study the body

Discovered cells

Conclusions

Of course, Renaissance did not usher only an age of exploration and travels and literature.

It also ushered an age of exploitation and destruction

Many nations were destroyed in the areas that came under European control.

Some like the Mayas and Incas were very sophisticated

The Renaissance also ushered the age of the International Slave Trade, and millions of Africans were kidnapped and taken to plantations in the Americas where they were forced into bondage and servitude.

Not to forget that mercantilism builds the foundations of the modern Capitalist system

New methods of warfare that are far more devastating than anything humanity has ever seen.

The literature of the Renaissance did not appear simply because some writers of genius appeared, but because the new socio-economic realities brought with it new cultures and new ways to look at the world and new ways to think and organize and communicate.

Lecture 3

Humanism

- ❖ The Renaissance is one of two or three moments in the history of Europe that has been most transformative. It is comparable in its magnitude to the Scientific Revolution and the Industrial Revolution.
- ❖ Previous lectures illustrated how the Renaissance created new economic, geographical and military realities. Now we will address the new cultural realities that this period produced.
- ❖ The culture that the Renaissance brought with it is called: Humanism. It is a culture that is still with us today and many writers, intellectuals, artists and philosophers still call themselves today "humanists."

Humanism – Definitions

- ❖ Originally, Humanism meant that important questions of life and death, good and evil, politics and governance, etc. ceased being talked about exclusively from the perspective of the Church.
- ❖ These questions and many others could now be investigated and discussed by average human beings, from their perspectives and for their own interests.
- ❖ That the human mind can now operate without the supervision of the Church dictating the questions and the answers is, broadly speaking, the meaning and the essence of Humanism.

Evolution of Humanism

- ❖ Most historians say that Humanism appeared first in Italy, but scholarship is showing that the Renaissance, Humanism, the Scientific Revolution would not have been possible without the translation of Islamic books 300 years before (11th century) in Toledo, al-Andalus, from Arabic into Latin. We will focus on Italy only here.

The reason why Humanism emerged in Italy are many:

- ✓ It's the home of the Roman Empire and its Latin culture, and much of Humanism consisted in reviving the Latin literature and poetry of classical Rome.
- ✓ Because a substantial amount of the Latin literature of Classical Rome was still available in the churches, monasteries and private villas of Italy. The Church did not allow these texts to circulate before, but the weakness of the Church, the invention of printing and the increased wealth made these texts and book available to the public to read, translate and imitate.
- ✓ The emerging states in Europe have a need for administrators, secretaries, writers and educated people to manage the new wealth they have now from the new trade routes they have established.
- ✓ The Humanists were these writers, secretaries and administrators.
- ❖ Humanists were educated people at the services of kings and princes.
- ❖ They provided these kings and princes with what the Church could not provide: a secular education
- ❖ And it was the pursuit of that secular education that made humanists travel across Europe looking for classical texts from Ancient Rome and Greece.
- ❖ This informal movement spread from Italy to Holland, Germany, France, and England and was responsible for the great literature and science that became a feature of this era and which influenced Europe and the world.

Some important Italian Humanists

- ❖ **Francesco Petrarca**, known as Petrarch (1304-1374) the Father of Humanism, a Florentine who spent his youth in Tuscany and lived in Milan and Venice. He was a collector of old manuscripts and through his efforts the speeches of Cicero and the poems of Homer and Virgil became known to Western Europe. Petrarch's works also led to the rise of people known as Civic Humanists, or those individuals who were civic-minded and looked to the governments of the ancient worlds for inspiration. Petrarch also wrote sonnets in Italian. Many of these sonnets expressed his love for the beautiful Laura. His sonnets greatly influenced other writers of the time.
- ❖ **Giovanni Pico della Mirandola** (1463-1494) was an Italian who lived in Florence and who expressed in his writings the belief that there were no limits to what man could accomplish.
- ❖ **Leonardo Bruni** (1369-1444), who wrote a biography of Cicero, encouraged people to become active in the political as well as the cultural life of their cities. He was a historian who today is most famous for The History of the Florentine Peoples, a 12-volume work. He was also the Chancellor of Florence from 1427 until 1444.
- ❖ **Giovanni Boccaccio** (1313-1375) wrote The Decameron. These hundred short stories were related by a group of young men and women who fled to a villa outside Florence to escape the Black Death. Boccaccio's work is considered to be the best prose of the Renaissance.
- ❖ **Baldassare Castiglione** (1478-1529) wrote one of the most widely read books, The Courtier, which set forth the criteria on how to be the ideal Renaissance man. Castiglione's ideal courtier was a well-educated, mannered aristocrat who was a master in many fields from poetry to music to sports.

Humanism and Medieval Supernaturalism

- ❖ In the Medieval period, the church restricted the intellectual life to priests and monks, and even these men were not free to think, analyze and read, not even the Bible. Intellectual life had been formalized and conventionalized by Church limitation, until it had become largely barren and unprofitable.
- ❖ The whole sphere of knowledge (ALL questions) had been subjected to the mere authority of the Church's narrow interpretation of the Bible.
- ❖ Scientific investigation was almost entirely stifled, and progress was impossible. The fields of religion and knowledge had become stagnant under an arbitrary despotism.

Impact of Humanism: Historical Thought

- ❖ The advent of humanism ended the Church's dominance of education and the pursuit of knowledge.
- ❖ Written history started being written from a secular perspective instead of from the supernatural perspective of Church dogma.
- ❖ This is where we get the division of history into: Ancient, Medieval and Modern that is still commonly in use today.
- ❖ Vergil, Cicero, Aristotle, Plato were no longer regarded as mysterious prophets from a dimly imagined past, but as real men of flesh and blood, speaking out of experiences that were remote in time but no less humanly real.

Impact of Humanism: Languages and Education

- ❖ During the Middle Ages in Western Europe, Latin was the language of the Church and the educated people. Humanists began to use the vernacular, and helped develop the national languages of their countries – Italian, French, English, German.
- ❖ Humanists also had a great impact on education. They supported studying grammar, poetry, and history, as well as mathematics, astronomy, and music. They promoted the concept of the well-rounded individual (Renaissance man) who was proficient in both intellectual and physical endeavors.

Impact of Humanism: Civitas

- ❖ Humanism also revived the Roman idea that an educated man should have civic duties and participate in the politics and the management of his own society and its improvement
- ❖ The word “human” became a catchword, as opposed to the “supernatural” explanations of the Medieval Church. Everything – history, politics, science, commerce, religion, good and evil – started being explained from a human perspective, hence the word “humanism.”
- ❖ Humanism understood that these questions had been addressed and investigated by the classics (Greeks and Romans), and an unprecedented effort began in Europe for the recuperation of those ancient cultures and their texts.

Impact of Humanism: Art and Paganism

- ❖ The discovery of ancient texts and treasures was accompanied by new creative enthusiasm in literature and all the arts; culminating particularly in the early sixteenth century in the appearance of some of the greatest painters in Western history: Lionardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo.
- ❖ But also the Light of the Renaissance had also its darkness. Breaking away from the medieval bondage often also meant a relapse into crude paganism and the enjoyment of all pleasures with no restraints. Hence the Italian Renaissance is also often called Pagan, and many in England and France protested against the ideas and habits that their youth were bringing back with them from their studies in Italy.

The Renaissance Spreads

- ❖ From Italy, the Renaissance spread northward, first to France, and as early as the middle of the fifteenth century English students were frequenting the Italian universities.
- ❖ Soon the study of Greek was introduced into England, first at Oxford. It was so successful that when, early in the sixteenth century, the great Dutch student and reformer, Erasmus was too poor to reach Italy, he went to Oxford.
- ❖ The invention of printing helped the multiplication of books in unlimited numbers (before there had been only a few manuscripts laboriously copied page by page). Easier to open universities and scholarly circles everywhere.
- ❖ In England, the Renaissance had a profound impact, especially in the Court, where literature took center stage.
- ❖ Because the old nobility had perished in the wars, Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor line, and his son, Henry VIII, adopted the policy of replacing it with able and wealthy men of the middle class.
- ❖ The court therefore became a brilliant and crowded circle of unscrupulous but unusually adroit statesmen, and a center of lavish entertainments and display.
- ❖ Under this new aristocracy, the rigidity of the feudal system was relaxed, and life became somewhat easier for all the dependent classes. Modern comforts, too, were largely introduced, and with them the Italian arts and literature.

Lecture 4

The Elizabethan Era

- ❖ Politically, it was an unsettled time. Although Elizabeth reigned for some forty-five years, there were constant threats, plots, and potential rebellions against her.
- ❖ **Protestant extremists** (Puritans) were a constant presence; many left the country for religious reasons, in order to set up the first colonies in Virginia and Pennsylvania, and what became the American colonies.
- ❖ **Catholic dissent** (Counter Reformation) reached its most noted expression in Guy Fawkes's Gunpowder Plot of 5 November 1605, still remembered on that date every year. And Elizabeth's one-time favorite, the Earl of Essex, led a plot against her which considerably unsettled the political climate of the end of the century.

Elizabethan Era Cond

- ❖ Elizabeth's reign did, however, give the nation some sense of stability, and a considerable sense of national and religious triumph when, in 1588, the Spanish Armada, the fleet of the Catholic King Philip of Spain, was defeated.
- ❖ England now had sovereignty over the seas, and her seamen (pirates or heroes, depending on one's point of view) plundered the gold of the Spanish Empire to make their own Queen the richest and most powerful monarch in the world.

English Literature of the Renaissance

- ❖ The literature of the English Renaissance contains some of the greatest names in all world literature: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster, and Jonson, among the dramatists; Sidney, Spenser, Donne, and Milton among the poets; Bacon, Nashe, Raleigh, Browne, and Hooker in prose; and, at the center of them all, the Authorized Version of the Bible, published in 1611.

Important Questions

- ❖ So many great names and texts are involved because so many questions were under debate: what is man, what is life for, why is life so short, what is good and bad (and who is to judge), what is a king, what is love? These are questions which have been the stuff of literature and of philosophy since the beginning of time, but they were never so actively and thoroughly made a part of everyday discussion as in the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages.

Humanist Education in the Renaissance

- ❖ Humanist Scholars were great advocates of education.
- ❖ Humanists like Thomas More contributed to the founding of new grammar schools across England in the 16th century.
- ❖ Education became available to children of farmers and average citizens as well as the children of gentry and nobility.
- ❖ England's two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, flourished in the Renaissance.
- ❖ At the heart of the curriculum was the study of classical literature and Latin, the language of international scholarship and diplomacy.

The Most Commonly Studied Authors

- ❖ Cicero for style
- ❖ Aristotle and Horace for their theories on poetry
- ❖ Ovid for his use of mythology
- ❖ Virgil and Quintilian for their use of rhetorical figures
- ❖ Students were required to translate passages from classical authors and imitate their styles, genres and rhetorical figures.
- ❖ In many schools, students studied and performed classical drama, usually Seneca's tragedies and the Roman comedies of Plautus and Terrence.
- ❖ The aim from these studies was primarily to improve students' fluency in Latin and develop their skills in public speaking

The English Language

- ❖ The English that was spoken and written in the Renaissance is known as early modern English. It has similarities and differences with modern English.
- ❖ There was no standardized form of early modern English.
- ❖ The modern grammatical system was not established yet and dialect variations and irregularities were common. Words were also often spelt differently. Many words have now disappeared or changed meaning.
- ❖ English and other European languages were considered simple and rude and inferior to Latin. Calls for improving the vernacular were common.
- ❖ The mission to improve the English language was nationalistic, resulting from England's isolation after the Reformation.

The English Language (cont)

- ❖ To improve the English language, authors encouraged the imitation of classical syntax and the borrowing of words from Latin and other European languages. Others, like Edmund Spenser, encouraged reviving archaic native words from English dialects.
- ❖ By the end of the 16th century English had been transformed: massive expansion in its vocabulary.
- ❖ Without this linguistic revolution, English Renaissance literature would not have been as rich and diverse.

How the English Viewed the World?

- ❖ Global exploration and international trade led to the flourishing of travel literature. Renaissance Europeans became increasingly aware of that the world was inhabited by people who were different from them, but few Englishmen or women had a firsthand experience of that. Most read or heard about it only.
- ❖ There were few foreign immigrants in England but most lived in London, and the largest immigrant community were European Protestants.
- ❖ Ambassadors and traders from Africa and the East were occasional visitors, Jews were banished from living in England in 1290 and Elizabeth I banished blacks in 1601.

Otherness Abroad

- ❖ The only other way in which Europeans could meet people of different nations was through travel, but travel was expensive and difficult and needed government permission.
- ❖ Most English people (including many Renaissance authors) never left the country, and relied on second hand information for their knowledge on other countries and other cultures.
- ❖ As a result Renaissance writings on other peoples and cultures were based on stereotypes and vacillated between fascination, fear and repulsion.
- ❖ Often those who were seen as foreign or different were demonized, especially true for Jews and Muslims.

Otherness (cont)

- ❖ Similarly, Protestants demonized Catholics and vice versa.
- ❖ Europeans also associated blackness with sin and ugliness and whiteness with purity and beauty. Blacks were often presented in negative stereotypes as wicked, unattractive and prone to vice and lust. These stereotypes are vividly illustrated in Shakespeare's villainous Moor, Aaron in Titus Andronicus, and less so in his other famous black protagonist Othello, though the latter is represented in a more complex and sympathetic fashion.
- ❖ Similar representation European representations of Native Americans. Some stigmatized them as primitive and barbaric, and others like Michel de Montaigne praised them as "noble" savages.

England and Europe

- ❖ Catholic countries like France and Italy are represented in English literature in contradictory ways.
- ❖ Both countries were admired for their literature, but...
- ❖ The French are portrayed as fickle, vain and untrustworthy
- ❖ Italians are caricatured as deviant, corrupt, vengeful and lecherous.
- ❖ The Spaniards are often portrayed as hot-blooded religious extremists.
- ❖ By contrast, the representation of the Dutch and Germans (fellow Protestants) is generally benign, though comical: Dutch characters often have funny accents and Germans are often presented as hard drinkers.

Representation of Irish, Scots and Welsh

- ❖ Wales had been part of the English realm since 1535 and caused little problems and the representation of Wales in English literature is largely positive. Sometimes they are mocked for their accents, but they are generally portrayed as loyal and good-natured.
- ❖ Because the Irish resisted English domination, their representation in English literature is negative. Irish tribal customs are stigmatized by English authors like Edmund Spenser as primitive and threatening.
- ❖ Scots are also often represented as barbarous, primitive and dangerous.

Patronage

- ❖ Because generosity was a marker of status, kings and rich nobles often acted as patrons or sponsors of the arts, offering support to painters, sculptors, musicians, players and writers.
- ❖ Some patrons like Lady Mary Sidney even invited artists and writers to stay with them for prolonged periods of time.
- ❖ In return for patronage, writers dedicated their work to the patrons, sometimes in the form of a brief preface or a dedicatory letter, and other times by composing a dedicatory poem .
- ❖ Earning a living through publications for living writers was almost impossible. Aspiring writers courted patrons.
- ❖ Rancor and competition between authors were common. Frustration with this situation was not unusual.
- ❖ Writers complain about the difficulty securing patronage and express their dislike for a system that forced them to be flatterers.
- ❖ Ben Jonson, for example, struggled to reconcile the demands of patrons, the literary market and artistic integrity. He became one of the first English writers to make a career from his own writing. Few of his peers managed to do that.
- ❖ There was no copyright laws and most of the period's published authors were independently wealthy or wrote in their spare time only.

Publications and Book Trade

- ❖ There were two main forms of publications: manuscripts and print
 - ✓ Manuscripts were handwritten texts. Prior to the invention of print, most literature circulated in manuscript form.
 - ✓ The invention of the moveable-type printing revolutionized the circulation of texts. It became possible to produce multiple copies quickly and cheaply.
- ❖ The new form of printing was developed by Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-fifteen century and was pioneered in England by William Caxton when he set up a printing press in Westminster Abbey in 1476.
- ❖ Most of the new presses were set up in London, which became the center of the new book trade.
- ❖ In 1557, London printers came together and formed a trade guild, the Stationers Company.
- ❖ From 1586, printing presses were only allowed in London and the two university towns (Oxford and Cambridge)
- ❖ They published a combination of popular and learned books
- ❖ Cheaper books like individual plays were published in Quarto format
- ❖ More prestigious books were published in the larger and more expensive Folio format.
- ❖ Most living authors continued circulating their work in manuscript until the late 16th century.

Lecture 5

Classical Influence on Renaissance Poetry

- ❖ The growth of poetry in Renaissance England was profoundly influenced by renewed interest in classical poetry.
- ❖ Classical poetry encouraged granting the poet a higher social status and provided a rich storehouse of poetic styles and genres.
- ❖ Classical poetry also provided a system of classification:
 - ✓ the Pastoral was seen as the humblest
 - ✓ the Epic as the most prestigious.
- ❖ The most ambitious Renaissance poets imitated the poetic career of Virgil: they began as authors of pastoral poetry and gradually worked their way up to the epic (a pathway called the “Virgilian wheel”).

Classical Influence (cont)

- ❖ **The Pastoral:** Theocritus' *Idylls* (3rd century BC); Virgil's *Eclogues* (37 BC); *Georgics* (29 BC).
- ❖ **The Epic:** Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (600 BC); Virgil's *The Aeneid* (29-19 BC).
- ❖ **Love Poetry:** Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (43 BC, translated in 1565) was especially influential. Its mythological tales were a rich resource on love and desire, and its stylistic elegance offered a model to emulate.
- ❖ Ovid was controversial as an ethical model. Some critics hailed him as a teacher of great wisdom and learning and others condemned him as a corrupter of youth.
- ❖ **Satiric Poetry:** Horace and Juvenal offered contrasting models.

Native and Contemporary Influence

- ❖ **The Pastoral:** influenced by Medieval English authors like William Langland and contemporary continental pastoralists like Jacopo Sannazaro
- ❖ **The Epic:** Influenced also by Medieval English romance like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, written 1375-1400), Italian poems like Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (written 1308-21), Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516, 1532), and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581)
- ❖ **The Sonnet/Petrarchism:** Takes its name from Italian poet Francesco Petrarch (1304-74), most famous for his *Canzoniere* (written 1327-68), a sequence of 366 lyric poem, about the poet's unfulfilled love for a beautiful woman called Laura. Most of the poems are sonnets, a new type of poem whose invention is attributed to Giacomo da Lentino in the 13th century and popularized across Europe by Petrarch. Petrarch's poems have many recurrent features that quickly became conventional topoi or motifs in European love poetry, now simply called The Petrarchan Mode.”

Royal Courts and Patronage

- ❖ In the 16th century, poetry was a genre closely identified with the royal court. Those who wrote poetry were mostly either courtiers or educated, aspiring men (and occasionally women) in search of royal support.
- ❖ For Elizabethan courtiers the ability to write artful poetry was part of being an accomplished gentleman (woman).
- ❖ It was also a way of cultivating rhetorical and persuasive skills necessary in Renaissance politics and diplomacy. Poetry was a very good skill to have for people with political ambitions.
- ❖ For those outside the court, Poetry was also a way of winning favors or patronage from the monarch, especially for those who now seek to make a living as professional poets. Patronage provided status and income.
- ❖ It is for this reason that many of the poets of the Renaissance write about and for the court
- ❖ This situation changes in the 17th century when the rise of the merchant class offered alternative venue for poetry and aspirant poets.

From Manuscript to Print

- ❖ Most Renaissance poetry circulated in manuscript form, but a series of landmark publications in the late 16th and early 17th centuries set a precedent for printing collections of poetry and helped make print the more common form of distribution.
- ❖ One of the earliest collections to be published was the *Songs and Sonnets* that was published by Richard Tottel in 1557, better known as *Tottel's Miscellany*. It consisted of previously unpublished lyrics by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Sir Thomas Wyatt and others.
- ❖ The movement from manuscript to print took the poems from their original intimate context into the wider public. This obliged publishers to add titles or explanatory prefaces, often explaining how such private poems could be presented to a wider public.
- ❖ The success of Tottel's *Miscellany* showed that there was a market for printed poetry

From Manuscript to Print (cont)

- ❖ The posthumous publication of Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) and his collected works (1598) also had a significant impact on the history of printed poetry and make it more acceptable, especially among elite poets.
- ❖ The Sidney volume set a precedent for the publishing of single author collections, which became very popular and profitable in the early 17th century.
- ❖ In 1616, Ben Johnson went even further and oversaw the publication of his own poetic and dramatic *Works* in a very attractive Folio edition, a format generally reserved for learned publications.
- ❖ This was followed by the similar publication of the First Folio of Shakespeare's play (1623), and editions of the poems of John Donne and George Herbert in 1633.

To Teach and Please

- ❖ Early Elizabethan poetry was designed to teach its readers religious, ethical or civic lessons.
- ❖ Later Elizabethan poets continued to be concerned with instruction but believed that poetry was more likely to teach its readers if it amused and entertained them.
- ❖ Poets still could not say directly what they wanted. The popularity in late Elizabethan period of the pastoral and the sonnet was primarily due to the fact that these two genres allowed poets to say what they wanted indirectly.

The Sonnet

- ❖ To speak of English Renaissance poetry, one has to start with the Sonnet. This is the literary form that emerged from Italy first and spread across Europe like wildfire.
- ❖ In the last decade of the sixteenth century, no other lyric form compared in popularity with the sonnet.
- ❖ The sonnet is a short poem usually emotional in content. The form was first developed in Italy during the High Middle Ages by well-known figures like Dante Alighieri putting it to use. But the most famous sonneteer of that time was Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), and it is after him that the Italian sonnet got its name.
- ❖ It has been estimated that in the course of the century over three hundred thousand sonnets were written in Western Europe.
- ❖ Petrarch's example was still commonly followed; the sonnets were generally composed in sequences (cycles) of a hundred or more, addressed to the poet's more or less imaginary cruel lady.
- ❖ The Italian, or Petrarchan sonnet, was introduced into English poetry in the early 16th century by Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542).
- ❖ By far the finest of all English sonnets are in Shakespeare's one hundred and fifty-four poem collection, commonly known as The Sonnets. They were not published until 1609 but seem to have been written before 1600. Their interpretation has long been hotly debated. It is certain, however, that they do not form a connected sequence. Some of them are occupied with urging a youth of high rank, Shakespeare's patron, who may have been either the Earl of Southampton or William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to marry. Others hint to Shakespeare's infatuation for a 'dark lady,' leading to bitter disillusion; and still others seem to be occasional expressions of devotion to other male or female friends.

Thematically

- ❖ The sonnet can be thematically divided into two sections:
 1. The first presents **the theme** or raises an issue.
 2. The second part **answers the question**, resolves the problem, or drives home the poem's point.
- ❖ This change in the poem is called **the turn** and moves the emotional action of the poem from a climax to a resolution.

The Form of the Sonnet

- ❖ The Petrarchan sonnet's fourteen lines are divided into an octave (eight lines) and a sestet (six lines).
- ❖ The octave presents the problem and the sestet responds to it.
- ❖ The rhyme scheme varied somewhat, but typically featured no more than four or five rhymes, for example *abbaabba cdecde*.

The Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet

A
B
B
A = Octave (8 lines)
A
A
B
B
B
A
C
D
E
C = Sestet (6 lines)
D
E

- ❖ The two parts of the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet work together.
- ❖ The octave raises a question, states a problem, or presents a brief narrative;
- ❖ Rhyme scheme is: ABBAABBA
- ❖ the sestet answers the question, solves the problem, or comments on the narrative.
- ❖ Rhyme scheme is CDECDE

The English or Shakespearean Sonnet

A
B
A = Quatrain (4 lines)
B
C
D
C = Quatrain (4 lines)
D
E
F
E = Quatrain (4 lines)
F
G = Couplet (2 lines)
G

- ❖ Each of the quatrains of the English or Shakespearean sonnet usually explores one aspect of the main idea—stating a problem, raising a question, and/or presenting a narrative situation.
- ❖ The final couplet presents a startling or seemingly contrasting concluding statement.