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 spilt 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 Holly 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

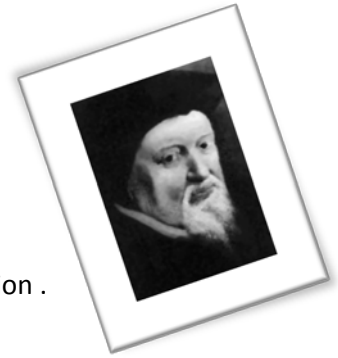
Lutheranism (Protestantism) Spreads

- 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 Holly 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

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- 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

1st 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 bu Chirch 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 Spencer, 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, Scotts 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 Spencer as primitive and threatening.
- Scotts 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. Fristration 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 careers 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 Knigh*t, 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
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.

Lecture 6

On His Blindness by John Milton

When I consider how my light is spent[1]
Ere half my days[2] in this dark world and wide
And that one talent[3] which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless,[4] though my soul more bent
To serve therewith[5] my Maker, and present
My true account,[6] lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact[7] day labor, light denied?"
I fondly[8] ask. But Patience,[9] to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts.[10] Who best
Bear his mild yoke,[11] they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post[12] o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.[13]

Notes

1. **light is spent:** This clause presents a double meaning: (a) how I spend my days, (b) how it is that my sight is used up.
2. **Ere half my days:** Before half my life is over. Milton was completely blind by 1652, the year he turned 44.
3. **talent:** See Line 3 which is a key to the meaning of the poem.
4. **useless:** Unused.
5. **therewith:** By that means, by that talent; with it
6. **account:** Record of accomplishment; worth
7. **exact:** Demand, require
8. **fondly:** Foolishly, unwisely
9. **Patience:** Milton personifies patience, capitalizing it and having it speak.
10. **God . . . gifts:** God is sufficient unto Himself. He requires nothing outside of Himself to exist and be happy.
11. **yoke:** Burden, workload.
12. **post:** Travel.
13. **chide:** scold or reproach gently.

Examples of Figures of Speech:

Alliteration: *my **d**ays in this **d**ark **w**orld and **w**ide* (line 2)

Metaphor: *though my soul more bent / To serve therewith my Maker* (lines 3-4). The author compares his soul to his mind.
Personification/Metaphor: *But Patience, to prevent / That murmur, soon replies . . .* (lines 8-9).
Paradox: *They also serve who only stand and wait*.

Background

John Milton's eyesight began to fail in 1644. By 1652, he was totally blind. Strangely enough, he wrote his greatest works, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, after he became blind. Many scholars rank Milton as second only to Shakespeare in poetic ability.

Meter

All the lines in the poem are in iambic pentameter. In this metric pattern, a line has five pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables, for a total of ten syllables. The first two lines of the poem illustrate this pattern:

1.....**2**..... **3**.....**4**.....**5**
When **I** | con **SID** | er **HOW.**| my **LIFE** | is **SPENT**

1.....**2**..... **3**.....**4**.....**5**
Ere **HALF** | my **DAYS** | in **THIS** | dark **WORLD.**| and **WIDE**

Type of Work and Year Written:

"On His Blindness" is a Petrarchan sonnet, a lyric poem with fourteen lines. This type of sonnet, popularized by the Italian priest Petrarch (1304-1374), has a rhyme scheme of ABBA, ABBA, CDE, and CDE. John Milton wrote the poem in 1655.

As This sonnet has simple diction, enjambment (not end-stopped). Milton has used his extensive knowledge of the Bible to create a deeply personal poem, and gently guide himself and the reader or listener from an intense loss through to understanding and gain

The main themes of this poem are Milton's exploration of his feeling of fear, limitation, light and darkness, duty and doubt, regarding his failed sight, his rationalisation of this anxiety by seeking solutions in his faith.

John Milton was an English Poet with controversial opinions. One of his most read poem among others is 'Paradise Lost'. He became blind in 1651, which in no way affected his writings. In this poem about his blindness he says

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent

He describes how he is living his life in a "wide" world which is now "dark" like a grave because of the loss of his sight, which he refers to as his "light that is spent" or now used up (lost).

He cannot even use the one way out which is to commit suicide even though his soul bends towards this idea. This will remain a "useless talent" within him which he will never use. He refers to death with sarcasm as a "talent", something that is not normally done in society. This reflects his own way of being angry or hurt as Milton enjoyed writing and his blindness must have presented him with a lot of difficulty. It was his faith that kept him strong and deterred (restrained) him from taking his own life. The strength of his faith is shown in the next lines of the sonnet.

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask; But patience, to prevent

He will serve his Maker no matter how he is suffering as he will have to present to Him a "true account" of his life. He will do this in case he is chided (spoken to angrily) when he returns to God and is asked if he carried on with his day to day life even without his eyesight.

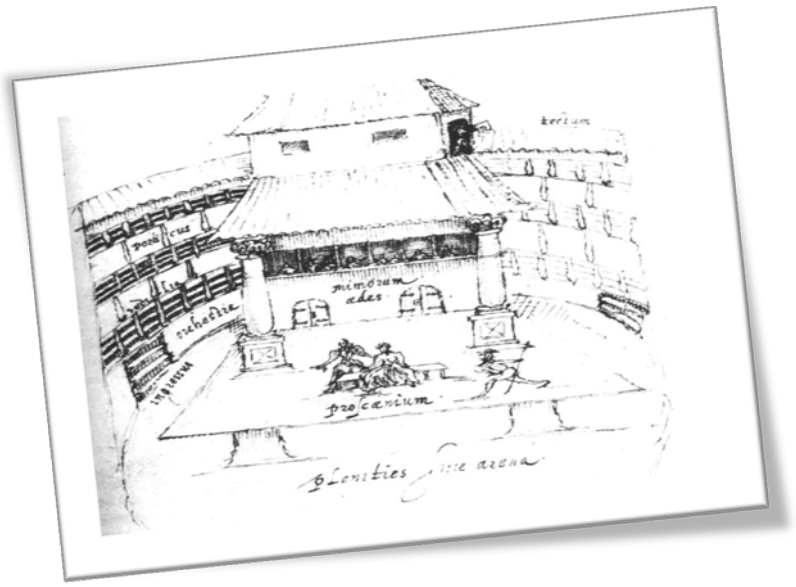
That murmur, soon replies "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

He answers his own question saying that God will not need "either man's work or his own gifts" meaning that God has no need for gifts from men. He is served by thousands of angels who are at his beck (being ready to carry out somebody's wish) "post o'ver land and ocean without rest" to do his bidding. He also adds that angels will serve those who are patient and wait through all sorts of problems that they face.

- Milton's faith in God seems to give him the courage to face his life despite his blindness. It is this faith that seems to give him courage and patience to cope and also gives him the hope that salvation lies for those who wait in patience.
- Allusion: in lines 3 to 6 of the poem Milton alludes to the "Parable of the Talents" in Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, verses 14 to 30.
- In line 7, the speaker, in his attempts to blame somebody, is about to ask a rhetorical question about God's justice before patience interrupts him.
- In line 8, we have personification: "patience" is personified as advice giver.
- in Line 11 we have a metaphor: the humans are submitted to God. "The Yoke is the symbol that brings together the humans and the animals.
- The word "wait" implies "pun" in the sense that he will wait until the end of his life.

Lecture 7

Christopher Marlowe & The Professional Playwrights



Marlowe & the Professional Playwrights

- The first English plays told religious stories, and were performed in or near churches. These early plays are called Miracle or Mystery Plays and Morality plays. The subject of Miracle plays is various such as Adam and Eve, Noah and the great flood. The Morality plays are different from the Miracle plays in the sense that the characters in them were not people but abstract values such as virtues (like truth) or bad qualities such as greed or revenge.

- The religious plays contain comic , and mundane interludes and these were provided with demonic and grotesque figures behaving in a buffoonish manner, gambolling about and letting off fireworks. There is some connection between these "characters" who ran clowning among the audience. From this the English Renaissance and modern drama sprang. Comedy was better than tragedy. There were many playwrights, but Christopher Marlowe outshined them all.

The first generation of professional playwrights in England has become known collectively as the **university wits**. Their nickname identifies their social positions, but their drama was primarily middle class, patriotic, and romantic. Their preferred subjects were historical or semi-historical, mixed with clowning, music, and love interest.

Marlowe wrote many great sophisticated plays. For instance, in Tamburlaine the Great (two parts, published 1590) and Edward II (c. 1591; published 1594), traditional political orders are overwhelmed by conquerors and politicians who ignore the boasted legitimacy of weak kings; The Jew of Malta (c. 1589; published 1633) studies the man of business whose financial sharpness of mind and trickery give him unrestrained power; The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus (c. 1593; published 1604) depicts the overthrow of a man whose learning shows little regard for his own Christianity. The main focus of all these plays is on the uselessness of society's moral sanctions (medieval spirit) against pragmatic, amoral will (renaissance spirit).

They patently address themselves to the anxieties of an age being transformed by new forces in politics, commerce, and science; indeed, the sinister, ironic prologue to The Jew of Malta is spoken by Machiavelli. In his own time Marlowe was damned because his plays remain disturbing and because his verse makes theatrical presence into the expression of power, enlisting the spectators' sympathies on the side of his gigantic villain-heroes. His plays thus present the spectator with dilemmas that can be neither resolved nor ignored, and they articulate exactly the divided consciousness of their time (conflict between the medieval and renaissance values).

There is a similar effect in The Spanish Tragedy (c. 1591) by Marlowe's friend Thomas Kyd, an early revenge tragedy in which the hero seeks justice for the loss of his son but, in an unjust world, can achieve it only by taking the law into his own hands. Kyd's use of Senecan conventions (notably a ghost impatient for revenge) in a Christian setting expresses a genuine conflict of values, making the hero's success at once triumphant and horrifying. Doctor Faustus represents this conflict **par excellence**.

Doctor Faust

Doctor Faustus :

Doctor Faustus, a well-respected German scholar, grows dissatisfied with the limits of traditional forms of knowledge—logic, medicine, law, and religion—and decides that he wants to learn to practice magic. His friends Valdes and Cornelius instruct him in the black arts, and he begins his new career as a magician by summoning up Mephostophilis, a devil. Despite Mephastophilis's warnings about the horrors of hell, Faustus tells the devil to return to his master, Lucifer, with an offer of Faustus's soul in exchange for twenty-four years of service from Mephastophilis. Meanwhile, Wagner, Faustus's servant, has picked up some magical ability and uses it to press a clown named Robin into his service.

Mephastophilis returns to Faustus with word that Lucifer has accepted Faustus's offer. Faustus experiences some misgivings and wonders if he should repent and save his soul; in the end, he agrees to sign the contract with his blood. As soon as he does so, the words "Homo fuge," Latin for "O man, fly," appear branded on his arm. Faustus again has second thoughts, but Mephostophilis gives him rich gifts and a book of spells to learn. Later, Mephastophilis answers all of his questions about the nature of the world, refusing to answer only when Faustus asks him who made the universe. This refusal prompts yet another round of misgivings in Faustus, but Mephastophilis and Lucifer bring in personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins to convince Faustus, and he is impressed enough to quiet his doubts.

Armed with his new powers and attended by Mephastophilis, Faustus begins to travel. He goes to the pope's court in Rome, makes himself invisible, and plays a series of tricks. He disrupts the pope's banquet by stealing food and boxing the pope's ears. Following this incident, he travels through the courts of Europe, with his fame spreading as he goes. Eventually, he is invited to the court of the German emperor, Charles V (the enemy of the pope), who asks Faustus to allow him to see Alexander the Great, the famed fourth-century b.c. Macedonian king and conqueror. Faustus conjures up an image of Alexander, and Charles is suitably impressed. A knight makes fun of Faustus's powers, and Faustus punishes him by making antlers (bony horns) coming from his head. Furious, the knight vows revenge.

Meanwhile, Robin, Wagner's clown, has picked up some magic on his own, and with his fellow, Rafe, he starts a number of comic misadventures. At one point, he manages to summon Mephastophilis, who threatens to turn Robin and Rafe into animals (or perhaps even does transform them; the text isn't clear) to punish them for their foolishness.

Faustus then goes on with his travels, playing a trick on a horse-courser along the way. Faustus sells him a horse that turns into a heap of straw when ridden into a river. Eventually, Faustus is invited to the court of the Duke of Vanholt, where he performs various tricks. The horse-courser shows up there, along with Robin, a man named Dick (Rafe in the A text), and various others who have fallen victim to Faustus's trickery. But Faustus casts spells on them and sends them on their way, to the amusement of the duke and duchess.

As the twenty-four years of his deal with Lucifer come to a close, Faustus begins to dread his approaching death. He has Mephastophilis call up Helen of Troy, the famous beauty from the ancient world, and uses her presence to impress a group of scholars. An old man urges Faustus to repent, but Faustus drives him away. Faustus summons Helen again and expresses great admiration for her exceptional beauty. But time is growing short. Faustus tells the scholars about his pact, and they are horror-stricken and resolve to pray for him. On the final night before the expiration of the twenty-four years, Faustus is overcome by fear and remorse. He begs for mercy, but it is too late. At midnight, a group of devils appears and carries his soul off to hell. In the morning, the scholars find Faustus's limbs and decide to hold a funeral for him.

Critical Analysis of Doctor Faust

This play is about how Faustus puts on a performance for the Emperor and the Duke of Vanholt. The main thesis or climax of this play is when Faustus two friends Valdes and Cornelius who are magicians, teach him the ways of magic. Faustus uses this magic to summon up a devil named Mephistophilis. Faustus signs over his soul to Lucifer (Satan), in return to keep Mephistophilis for 24 years. We also see what happens when magic power gets in the wrong hands when Mephistophilis punishes Robin, who is a clown and his friend Ralph for trying to make magic with a book they have stolen from Faustus. In the beginning angels visit Faustus, and each time he wonders whether or not to repent, but the devil appears and warns him not to by tempting him of magic to possess. In the end of the play the two good and evil angels have been replaced by an old man, who urges Faustus to repent. But it is to late for so doing and the play ends with the devil carrying him off to hell.

Key points about English Drama

- Maundane Drama: Growing restrictions on religious drama in the late sixteenth century contributed to the English theatre.
- Professional Stage: The late sixteenth century saw the establishment of the first permanent theatres and the professionalisation of the English theatre world.
- Acting Companies: Acting was company-based and all-male. Women were not allowed to act publicly. Acting companies were generally of two types: adult and boy companies.
- Playwriting: There was a massive expansion in the number of plays in English in the late sixteenth century; many were written collaboratively; they drew on a variety of sources and classical and Medieval dramatic traditions.
- Regulation: All plays had to be licensed for performance and for printing; some were subject to censorship, generally because they dealt directly with living individuals or contentious issues.
- Publication: Plays were generally written for performance not reading; only some were printed. Printed versions of plays were not necessarily the same as each other or as the versions that were originally performed in the theatre.
- Staging: Renaissance plays had to be adaptable for a variety of venues (stages) and therefore generally relied on a minimalist staging style; scenery and sets were not used; settings were usually evoked through textual allusions.
- Academic Drama: It was common to study and perform classical plays in schools and at the universities, as a way of training students in Latin, rhetoric and oratory.
- Inns of Court Drama: Lawyers occasionally hosted professional performances and mounted their own plays and masques. Their own entertainments were often politically topical in theme and satirical in mode.
- Court Drama: Dramatic entertainments were a central part of court culture. As well as hosting play and masque performances, monarchs were accustomed to being entertained with short 'shows' when they went round the country. These often combined advice or requests for patronage.
- Household/Closet Drama: Noblemen and women sometimes patronised and played host to professional players; some also staged amateur performances and/or wrote their own plays and masques. Some of these texts are 'closet' dramas (intended for reading), others appear to have been written for performance.
- Attitudes to Drama: The large audiences drawn to players' performances point to a popular taste for public theatre, but the stage had its opponents. Some complained that plays were morally corrupting; others were concerned that theatres were causes for crime, disease and disorder. Opponents of the theatre were often characterised as puritans but not all puritans were opponents of drama or vice versa.
- Comedy: Comedies dominated the professional stage in the late sixteenth century; they were defined by their happy endings rather than their use of humour, and borrowed from classical and European comic writing.

- Tragedy: The first English tragedies were written in the Renaissance and were in influenced by Senecan tragedy and Medieval tales. Tragedy only became one of the dominant genres in the Jacobean period.

- History: History plays dramatized the stories of (reputedly) historical characters and events and were particularly fashionable in the 1590s; many were based on material found in the wave of historical chronicles published in the sixteenth century.

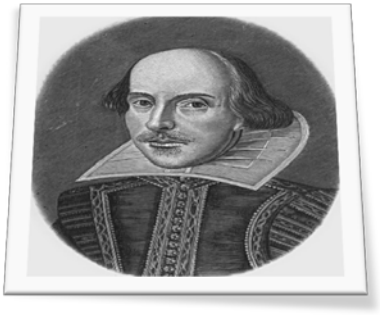
- Romance and Tragicomedy: Early Elizabethan plays often mixed tragedy and comedy. In the early seventeenth century there was a renewed taste for plays which mixed the genres, including romances and tragicomedies. Some contemporaries complained about such generic hybrids, but tragicomedy became the dominant dramatic genre on the Stuart stage.

- Masques: The masque was a lavish, multimedia form of entertainment developed in the Renaissance and particularly popular at the Stuart court. The proscenium arch(front stage), perspective staging, and female performance were pioneered in England in court masques (Prepared and Compiled by Dr. m n naimi) .

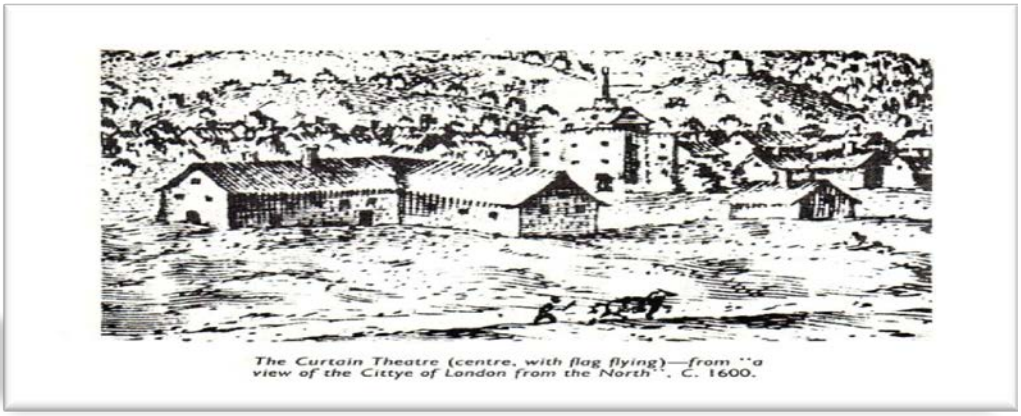
Lecture 8

THE SHAKESPEAREAN THEATER

William Shakespearean

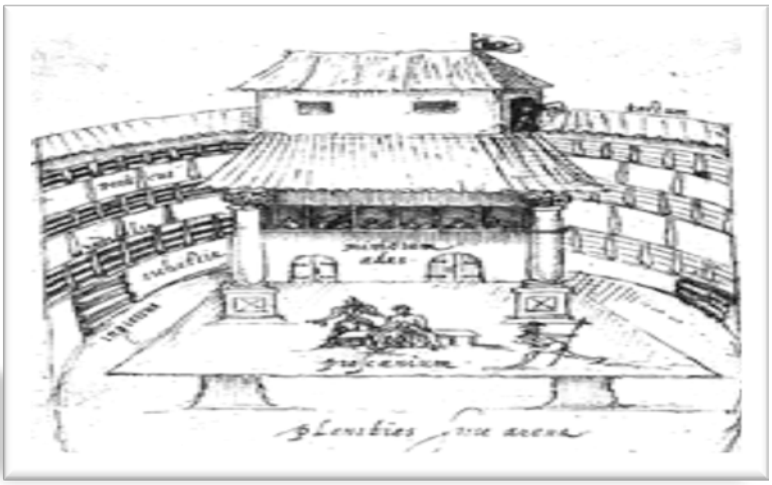


THE SHAKESPEAREAN THEATER



The Curtain Theatre (centre, with flag flying)—from "a view of the Cittye of London from the North". C. 1600.

The (Elizabethan) Shakespearean Theater



THE SHAKESPEAREAN THEATER

Before Shakespeare's time and during his boyhood, groups of actors performed wherever they could—in halls, courts, courtyards, and any other available open spaces. In 1574, however, when Shakespeare was ten years old, the Common Council passed a law requiring plays and theaters in London to be licensed. In 1576, actor and future Lord Chamberlain's Man, James Burbage, built the first permanent theater called simply The Theatre outside London's city walls. Thereafter, many more theaters were established around the city of London, including the Globe Theatre in which most of Shakespeare's plays were performed. (The image shows an illustration of the Curtain Theater, which was built some 200 yards away from The Theater and also housed many Shakespearean plays.)

Elizabethan theaters were generally built after the design of the original Theatre. Built of wood, these theaters comprised three rows of seats in a circular shape, with a stage area on one side of the circle. The audience's seats and part of the stage were roofed, but much of the main stage and the area in front of the stage was open to the elements sun as rain. About 1,500 audience members could pay an extra fee to sit in the covered seating areas, while about 800 "groundlings" (standing spectators) paid less to stand in the open area before the stage.

The stage itself was divided into three levels: a main stage area with doors at the rear and a curtained area in the back for "discovery scenes"; an upper, canopied (decorated cover with clothes) area called "heaven" for balcony scenes; and an area under the stage called "hell," accessed by a trap door in the stage. There were dressing rooms located behind the stage, but no curtain in the front of the stage, which meant that scenes had to flow into each other and "dead bodies" had to be dragged off.

Performances took place during the day, using natural light from the open center of the theater. Since there could be no dramatic lighting and there was very little scenery or props (The objects and furniture used in the play), audiences relied on the actors' lines and stage directions to supply the time of day and year, as well as the weather, location, and mood. Shakespeare's plays convey such information masterfully. In **Hamlet**, for example, the audience learns within the first ten lines of dialogue where the scene takes place ("Have you had quiet guard?"), what time of day it is ("'Tis now struck twelve"), what the weather is like ("'Tis bitter cold"), and what mood the characters are in ("and I am sick at heart").

One important difference between plays written in Shakespeare's time and those written today is that Elizabethan plays were published after their performances and sometimes even after their authors' deaths. The scripts were in many ways a record of what happened on stage during performances, rather than directions for what should happen. Actors were allowed to suggest changes to scenes and dialogue and had much more freedom with their parts than contemporary actors. A scene illustrative of such freedom occurs in **Hamlet**: a crucial passage revolves around Hamlet writing his own scene to be added to a play in order to ensnare (gain power over somebody by using dishonest means) his murderous uncle.

Shakespeare's plays were published in various forms and with a wide range of accuracy during his time. The discrepancies between versions of his plays from one publication to the next make it difficult for editors to put together authoritative editions of his works. Plays could be published in large anthologies in folio format (the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays contains 36 plays) or smaller quartos. Folios were so named because of the way their paper was folded in half to make a large volume. Quartos were smaller, cheaper books containing only one play. Their paper was folded twice, making four pages. In general, the First Folio is considered to be more reliable than the quartos.

Although Shakespeare's language and classical references seem archaic (old) to many readers today, they were accessible to his contemporary audiences. His viewers came from all classes and his plays appealed to all kinds of sensibilities, from "highbrow" accounts of kings and queens to the "lowbrow" blunderings of clowns and servants. Even utterly tragic plays like **King Lear** or **Macbeth** contain a clown or fool to provide comic relief and to comment on the events of the play.

Audiences would also have been familiar with his numerous references to classical mythology and literature, since these stories were staples (an essential part) of the Elizabethan knowledge base. And yet, despite such a universal appeal, Shakespeare's plays also expanded on the audience's vocabulary. Many phrases and words that we use today—such as "amazement," "in my mind's eye," and "the milk of human kindness," to name only a few—were coined by Shakespeare. His plays contain indeed a greater variety and number of words than almost any other work in the English language.

About Macbeth :

Legend says that **Macbeth** was written in 1605 or 1606 and performed at Hampton Court in 1606 for King James I and his brother-in-law, King Christian of Denmark. Whether it was first performed at the royal court or was performed at the Globe theatre, there can be little doubt that the play was intended to please the King, who had recently become the patron of Shakespeare's theatrical company. We note, for example, that the character of Banquo—the legendary root of the Stuart family tree—is depicted very favorably. Like Banquo, King James was a Stuart. The play is also quite short, perhaps because Shakespeare knew that James preferred short plays. And the play contains many supernatural elements that James, who himself published a book on the detection and practices of witchcraft, would have appreciated. Even something as minor as the Scottish defeat of the Danes may have been omitted to avoid offending King Christian.

The material for **Macbeth** was drawn from Raphael Holinshed's **Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland** (1587). Despite the play's historical source, however, the play is generally classified as tragedy rather than a history. This derives perhaps from the fact that the story contains many historical fabrications—including the entire character of Banquo, who was invented by a 16th-century Scottish historian in order to validate the Stuart family line. In addition to such fictionalization, Shakespeare took many liberties with the original story, manipulating the characters of Macbeth and Duncan to suit his purposes. In Holinshed's account, Macbeth is a ruthless and valiant leader who rules competently after killing Duncan, whereas Duncan is portrayed as a young and soft-willed man. Shakespeare draws out certain aspects of the two characters in order to create a stronger sense of polarity. Whereas Duncan is made out to be a venerable and kindly older king, Macbeth is transformed into an indecisive and troubled young man who cannot possibly rule well.

Macbeth is certainly not the only play with historical themes that is full of fabrications. Indeed, there are other reasons why the play is considered a tragedy rather than a history. One reason lies in the play's universality. Rather than illustrating a specific historical moment, **Macbeth** presents a human drama of ambition, desire, and guilt. Like Hamlet, Macbeth speaks soliloquies that articulate the emotional and intellectual anxieties with which many audiences identify easily. For all his lack of values and "vaulting ambition," Macbeth is a character who often seems infinitely real to audiences. This powerful grip on the audience is perhaps what has made **Macbeth** such a popular play for centuries of viewers.

Given that **Macbeth** is one of Shakespeare's shortest plays, some scholars have suggested that scenes were excised (removed) from the Folio version and subsequently lost. There are some loose ends and non-sequiturs* in the text of the play that would seem to support such a claim. If scenes were indeed cut out, however, these cuts were most masterfully done. After all, none of the story line is lost and the play remains incredibly powerful without them. In fact, the play's length gives it a compelling, almost brutal, force. The action flows from scene to scene, speech to speech, with a swiftness that draws the viewer into Macbeth's struggles. As Macbeth's world spins out of control, the play itself also begins to spiral towards to its violent end.

- **A non-sequitur** : is a statement, remark, or conclusion that does not follow naturally or logically from what has been said.

Lecture 9

Macbeth

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Macbeth Plot Summary :

King Duncan's generals, Macbeth and Banquo, encounter three strange women on a bleak Scottish moorland on their way home from quelling a rebellion. The women prophesy that Macbeth will be given the title of Thane of Cawdor and then become King of Scotland, while Banquo's heirs shall be kings. The generals want to hear more but the weird sisters disappear. Duncan creates Macbeth Thane of Cawdor in thanks for his success in the recent battles and then proposes to make a brief visit to Macbeth's castle.

Lady Macbeth receives news from her husband of the prophecy and his new title and she vows to help him become king by any means she can. Macbeth's return is followed almost at once by Duncan's arrival. The Macbeths plot together and later that night, while all are sleeping and after his wife has given the guards drugged wine, Macbeth kills the King and his guards.

Lady Macbeth leaves the bloody daggers beside the dead king. Macduff arrives and when the murder is discovered Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain flee, fearing for their lives, but they are nevertheless blamed for the murder.

Macbeth is elected King of Scotland, but is plagued by feelings of guilt and insecurity. He arranges for Banquo and his son, Fleance to be killed, but the boy escapes the murderers. At a celebratory banquet Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo and disconcerts the courtiers with his strange manner. Lady Macbeth tries to calm him but is rejected.

Macbeth seeks out the witches and learns from them that he will be safe until Birnam Wood comes to his castle, Dunsinane. They tell him that he need fear no-one born of woman, but also that the Scottish succession will come from Banquo's son.

Macbeth embarks on a reign of terror and many, including Macduff's family are murdered, while Macduff himself has gone to join Malcolm at the court of the English king, Edward. Malcolm and Macduff decide to lead an army against Macbeth.

Macbeth feels safe in his remote castle at Dunsinane until he is told that Birnam Wood is moving towards him. The situation is that Malcolm's army is carrying branches from the forest as camouflage for their assault on the castle. Meanwhile Lady Macbeth, paralysed with guilt, walks in her sleep and gives away her secrets to a listening doctor. She kills herself as the final battle commences.

Macduff challenges Macbeth who, on learning his adversary is the child of a Ceasarian birth, realises he is doomed. Macduff triumphs and brings the head of the traitor to Malcolm who declares peace and is crowned king.

Macbeth Soliloquy: Is This A Dagger

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.

With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

Explanation:

(Macbeth speaks to himself) Is this a dagger which I see before me, with its handle stretching towards my hand? Let me catch hold of you! (apostrophe) I can not hold you, and yet I see you all the time (antithesis). You fatal dagger, aren't you perceptible by touch

as well as sight? Or, are you only a false creation, a product of my over-excited brain? I see you (visionary dagger) as clearly as I see this dagger which I am drawing. You guide me along the way I was going (the dagger positions Macbeth as a man without will or as an object). It is exactly such a dagger that I was to use. Either my eyes are deceived by the other senses, or all my other senses are wrong and my eyes alone are trustworthy. This is to say that Macbeth's sight is either less acute or sharper than his other senses. You are still there before my eyes, but now I see drops of blood on your blade, which was first stainless…This dagger must be an illusion! It is only the bloody deed I propose to do that takes the shape of the dagger before my eyes!....

One half of the world is now asleep and foul dreams beguile (deceive) men lying asleep in their curtained beds. It is the time when witches worship their Queen Hecate and make offerings to her. It is the time when ghost-like murderer, awakened by the cry of the wolf (which acts as his watch), stealthily moves towards his victim with silent steps, as I am doing now, or as did Tarkin, when he went to ravish Lucrece…

Let not the safe and firmly-set earth hear my footsteps or know which way I walk, lest the very stones should proclaim my presence and force me to put off this horrible deed, so well suited to this time when all are asleep as if they were dead…While I waste my time in idle threats, Duncan continues to be alive! Words can have a damping (cooling) effect on the heat of action one wishes to perform.

Let me go and soon it will be over. The bell calls upon me to the deed. May you not hear this bell, Duncan, for it is the death bell which calls you either to heaven or to hell.

Concluding summery:

After Banquo and his son Fleance leave, and suddenly, in the darkened hall, Macbeth has a vision of a dagger floating in the air before him, its handle pointing toward his hand and its tip aiming him toward Duncan. Macbeth tries to grasp the dagger and fails. He wonders whether what he sees is real or a "dagger of the mind, a false creation / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain" (2.1.38–39). Continuing to gaze upon the dagger, he thinks he sees blood on the blade, then abruptly decides that the vision is just a manifestation of his unease over killing Duncan.

The night around him seems thick with horror and witchcraft, but Macbeth stiffens and determines to do his bloody work. A bell rings—Lady Macbeth's signal that the guards are asleep—and Macbeth starts walking toward Duncan's chamber.

Significance :

Macbeth's soliloquy in Act 2. scene1.33-61 is significant because of what it reveals to the audience about Macbeth's character, this is conveyed through vocabulary, imagery, his attitude and development and Lady Macbeth's actions. It is also significant because of the way in which it creates tension. This is conveyed through the presence of supernatural, vocabulary and references to historical events and theme.

Apostrophe:

A statement, question, or request addressed to an inanimate object or concept or to a nonexistent or absent person. Requests for inspiration from the muses in poetry

are examples of apostrophe, as is Marc Antony's address to Caesar's corpse in William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar :

"O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth, That I am meek and gentle with these butchers! . . . Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood! . . ."

Mood: the prevailing emotions of a work or of the author in his or her creation of the work. The mood of a work is not always what might be expected based on its subject matter. The mood could be melancholic, sad, confident, pessimistic or optimistic .

Parable: a story intended to teach a moral lesson or answer an ethical question. In the West, the best examples of parables are those of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, notably "The parable of the Talent."

Allusion: a reference within a literary text to some person, place, or event outside the text. In his poem, On His Blindness, Milton alludes or refers to the Bible. In line 3 to 6 of that poem Milton, for example, allude to the "Parable of the Talents" in Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, verses 14 to 30.

Soliloquy : in DRAMA, a MONOLOGUE in which a character appears to be thinking out loud, thereby communicating to the audience his inner thoughts and feelings. It differs from an ASIDE, which is a brief remark directed to the audience. In performing a soliloquy, the actor traditionally acts as though he were talking to himself, although some actors directly address the audience.

The soliloquy achieved its greatest effect in English RENAISSANCE drama. When employed in modern drama, it is usually as the equivalent of the INTERIOR MONOLOGUE in FICTION.

Lecture 10

The Shakespearean Sonnet

Sonnet 55

Not Marble, Nor the Gilded Monuments

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn, 5
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room 10
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

First Quatrain: “Not marble, nor the gilded monuments”

The speaker of Shakespeare sonnet **55** begins by proclaiming that his poem is more powerful than “marble” or “gilded monuments.” Princes have nothing on poets when it comes to enshrining truth: “Not marble, nor the gilded monuments / Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme.” The poet/speaker has faith that his sonnets will outlast any stone statue that is “besmear’d with sluttish time.”

Marble and stone monuments become mere obscene gestures when compared to the written monuments that contain a true poet’s tributes to truth and beauty. The poet knows that truth is soul inspired, and therefore it is eternal.

Second Quatrain: “When wasteful war shall statues overturn”

In the second quatrain, the speaker insists that nothing can erase “The living record of your memory.” The poem’s memory is permanent; even though “wasteful war” may “overturn” “statues” and “broils root out the work of masonry.” The poem is ethereal and once written remains a permanent record written on memory.

“The living record” includes more than just parchment and ink; it includes the power of thought that is born in each mind. The true seer/poet creates that living record in his poems to remind others that truth is indelible, beautiful, and eternal and cannot be waylaid even “[w]hen wasteful war shall statues overturn, / And broils root out the work of masonry.”

Third Quatrain: “'Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity”

The poem containing truth and beauty is immortal; it is “'Gainst death.” No enemy can ever succeed against that soul-truth; as the speaker avers, “your praise shall still find room / Even in the eyes of all posterity / That wear this world out to the ending doom.”

This poet/speaker, as the reader has experienced many times before in his sonnets, has the utmost confidence that his poems will be enjoying widespread fame and that all future generations of readers, “eyes of all posterity,” will be reading and studying them. The speaker’s faith in his own talent is deep and abiding, and he is certain they will continue to remain “[e]ven in the eyes of all posterity / That wear this world out to the ending doom.”

The Couplet: “So, till the judgment that yourself arise”

In the couplet, “So, till the judgment that yourself arise, / You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes,” the speaker caps his claims by asserting that in the accounting of the poem, the poetic truth and beauty will exist forever and remain imbedded in the vision of future readers.

Conclusion:

The poem aims to immortalize the subject in verse. The poem is meant to impress the subject with the poet's intent. The poem shall survive longer than any gold-plated statue (gilded monument), that might be erected to a prince, etc. The subject of the poem (probably some winsome beauty that the poet really really wants to shag), will be portrayed in the poem for all time, etc. Further, the ending basically says that she'll be immortalized in the poem until the Day of Judgement (reference Judeo-Christian belief system), and she "rises" from her grave to face said Judgement.

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That time of year thou mayst in me behold

When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day 5

As after sunset fadeth in the west,

Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10

As the death-bed whereon it must expire,

Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,

To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

Analysis :

Shakespeare is perhaps the most well known poet of all time. Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. Before his death at the age of 52, Shakespeare had written a great number of comedies, tragedies, plays and sonnets. Shakespeare's 73rd sonnet consists of 14 lines, 3 quatrains and a couplet in an iambic pentameter form. The first line of the sonnet is sometimes referenced as the title. It reads, "That time of year thou mayst in me behold." The poet paints a picture in each quatrain of the sonnet conveying his anxieties of the impending harshness of old age. He wants the reader to understand the value of life and love. He does this by illustrating that life is limited by time.

In the first section of the sonnet, the poet draws an allusion between an external image and an internal state of mind. The poet anticipates the impending chill and abandonment that comes with old age. The first four lines read, "That time of year thou mayst in me behold/ When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang/ Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,/ Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." (1-4). The imagery of a harsh autumn day is made more tactile by the use of pauses in the second line. Each pause helps to create the imagery of leaves blowing away, one by one, and feeling the chill of a late autumn wind. The choice of the words, "Bare ruin'd choirs" is a reference to the remains of a church that has been stripped of its roof, exposing it to the elements and left to decay. It seems as if the poet is saying, "See this place, this is how I am feeling; old, cold and abandoned. I am in a state of ruin and I am barely hanging on." The knowledge that joy once existed in this place, as alluded to by the bird's sweet song, sets the emotional tone, one of sympathetic pity.

Fading youth is represented by twilight in the second section of the sonnet. "In me thou see'st the twilight of such a day/ As after sunset fadeth in the west," (5-6). The denotation of twilight as referenced in the Franklin dictionary is the light from the sky between sunset and full night. Here, a visual sense of darkness approaching with the connotation that the end is near is clearly illustrated. "Which by and by black night doth take away, /Death's second self, that seals up all in rest." (7-8). The twilight is rapidly taken away by the black night, figuratively expressed as, "death's second self." Sleep is often portrayed as a second self of death, or death's brother.

In the third quatrain of the sonnet, the poet makes it clear by using a different metaphor, that his death will be permanent. "In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire/ That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, / As the death-bed whereon it must expire/ (9-11). He uses this simile to imply that the ashes of his youth equate to death. "Consumed with that which it was nourished by. / (12). The connotation simply stated, life lived is death.

- **The type of Sonnets rhyme schemes :**

  - abab cdcd efef gg is the Shakespearean rhyme scheme
  - abab bcbc cdcd ee is the Spenserian rhyme scheme
  - abba abba cdec de is the Petrarchan rhyme scheme

- **The division of the Shakespearean sonnet : 3 quatrains (the quatrain is 4 lines) and a couplet (2 lines) .**

- **The division of the Petrarchan sonnet : octave or octet (8 lines) and a sestet (six lines) .**

- **Every form of sonnet is 14 line. This is a fixed form.**

The true message of this sonnet is clearly written in the first line of each quatrain. I can hear Shakespeare shouting, "SEE ME, I am cold, abandoned and separated from joy! SEE ME, my mortal end is near! SEE ME, and know your love for me is strengthened! I beg you to understand; my life has an ending imposed by the restrictions of time. It is not a continuous cycle. Spring may follow winter and dawn may follow night, but alas, my youth will not, cannot, follow the decay of death. Know this and love me well!"

Lecture 11

The Cavalier Poets

- The 'cavalier' poets, who are usually said to include Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling and Thomas Carew, take their name from the term used to describe those who supported the royalist cause in the English Civil War.
- They share a belief in loyalty to the monarch and are generally royalist in sympathy.
- They participated in the royal idealisation of the relationship between Charles I and Henrietta Maria, composing poems which celebrated Platonic (as well as sensual) love of the kind the royal couple expressed, and loyal devotion to the beloved ruler .
- Other shared values include a prizing of friendship, hospitality and a commitment to the classical concept of the 'Good Life'.
- Many of these values, and the neo-classical poetic style with which they are associated, were inherited from Ben Jonson.
- Alongside the flourishing of the religious lyric and new types of love lyric, the early seventeenth century witnessed a fashion for various forms of occasional poetry and encomiastic verse (poetry of praise), such as verse epistles praising individuals, epithalamiums (or wedding poems), epitaphs and elegies.
- In similar fashion, a number of early seventeenth-century poets wrote poems which celebrated particular places or buildings. Probably, the most famous of these are the so-called 'Country-House' poems which became popular following the publication of Aemilia Lanyer's 'The Description of Cookham' (1611) and Ben Jonson's 'To Penshurst' (1616) (see below).

Ben Johnson

- Ben Johnson established a poetic tradition.
- The Jonsonian tradition was, broadly, that of social verse, written with a Classical clarity and weight and deeply informed by ideals of civilized reasonableness, ceremonious respect, and inner self-sufficiency derived from Seneca. It is a poetry of publicly shared values and norms.
- Ben Jonson's own verse was occasional. It addresses other individuals, distributes praise and blame, and promulgates (declares) serious ethical attitudes. His favored forms were the ode, elegy, satire, epistle, and epigram, and they are always beautifully crafted objects, achieving a classical harmony and monumentality.
- For Jonson, the unornamented style meant not colloquiality but labour, restraint, and control. A good poet had first to be a good man, and his verses lead his society toward an ethic of gracious but responsible living.

England's First Verse about Society

- With the Cavalier poets who succeeded Jonson, the element of urbanity and conviviality (pleasant and sociable life) tended to loom large.
- The Cavalier poets were writing England's first verse about the society, lyrics of compliments and casual liaisons, often cynical, occasionally sensual.

The Cavalier Poets

The Cavalier poets were writing England's first verse about the society, lyrics of compliments and casual liaisons, often cynical, occasionally sensual.

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES.
by Robert Herrick

WHENAS in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free ;
O how that glittering taketh me !

"Upon Julia's Clothes"
By: Robert Herrick (1648)

- The poem is a response to a dress worn by an imaginary woman called Julia.
- The poet likes the flowing, liquid effect of the silk dress.
- The woman appears to be attractive when she wears this style, but the emphasis is on the look of the clothes.
- In the second stanza Herrick praises the shiny fluttering of the dress
-
- He claims to be very attracted to the effect it creates.

Robert Herrick

- Robert Herrick's "Upon Julia's Clothes" is a brief but popular poem that often appears in anthologies. Its six lines offer a masterful imagery with a unity of purpose, rhythm, and RHYME that combine to elevate its common subject matter above its proper station.
- The speaker begins, "When as in silks my Julia goes," and Herrick adds repetition in the next line, "Then, then (me thinks) how sweetly flows."
- The parenthetical remark gives a touch of realism to the sentiment, while the flow of Herrick's words imitates that of the silk he describes. The noun in the third line represents the height of sensuality, as the speaker describes what flows so sweetly, "That liquefaction of her clothes."
- Herrick uses the scientific term liquefaction in the poem evokes a contrast and emphasizes the grace the silks require to appear like a liquid, organic skin that flows about Julia's body.
- The final triplet is the expression of a man reveling in woman's beauty, as Herrick writes,

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave Vibration each way free;
O how that glittering take me.

Herrick: Imagery and Style

- **Imagery** The poem is built around an image of a woman named Julia wearing a free flowing silk dress. He probably picked the name 'Julia' to fit in with the picture of the flowing dress.
- **Metaphor** The movement of the dress is compared to flowing liquid: 'liquefaction'. It also glitters or shines like jewels.
- **Paradox**: [apparent contradiction] Silk, a solid material, is compared to something liquid.
- **Assonance**: Notice the musical effect of vowel repetition in the second and fourth lines where the 'e' sound is repeated.
- **Consonance**: [repetition of a consonant sound anywhere in a word] The six 'l' sounds of the first stanza emphasise the flowing or liquid movement of the silk dress.

Lecture 12

The Country-House Poem

- The English ‘country-house’ poem was an invention of the early seventeenth century
- and is defined by its praise of a country-house estate and its (usually male) owner.
- Country house poetry is a sub-genre of Renaissance poetry and was first written during the Seventeenth century. It was closely linked to patronage poetry, in which poets (sometimes outrageously) flattered patrons in order to gain sponsorship and status.
-
- At this time, many houses were built in the countryside as a display of wealth, and as a retreat for the courtier when overwhelmed by the court and city life.
- Country houses were not, originally, just large houses in the country in which rich people lived. Essentially they were power houses - the houses of a ruling class. They could work at a local and national level as the seat of a landowner who was also a member of parliament.
- Basically, people did not live in country houses unless they either possessed power, or, by setting up in a country house, were making a bid to possess it.
- Country house poems generally consisted of complimentary descriptions of the country house and its surrounding area which often contained pastoral detail.
- Country house poems were written to flatter and please the owner of the country house. Why did poets do this? Until the nineteenth century the wealth and population of England lay in the country rather than the towns; landowners rather than merchants were the dominating class. Even when the economic balance began to change, they were so thoroughly in control of patronage and legislation, so strong through their inherited patronage and expertise that their political and social supremacy continued.
- From the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century anyone who had made money by any means, and was ambitious for himself and his family, automatically invested in a country estate. Poets tried to gain the favour and patronage of these landowners through praise of their homes.

Ben Jonson's country house poem *To Penshurst* was written to celebrate the Kent estate of Sir Robert Sidney, Viscount Lisle, later earl of Leister (father of Mary Wroth). The poem idealises country life and sets up an opposition between the city and the country. The title *To Penshurst* indicates that the poem is a gift, in praise of Penshurst. Jonson begins by telling us what Penshurst is not:

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious
show . . . nor can boast a row of polish'd pillars
. . . thou hast no latherne.

- This tells us that Penshurst was not built to show off the wealth of its owners, and is far from ostentatious. The qualities that cannot be found at Penshurst are listed to make it seem humble and down-to-earth compared to the average country house. Perhaps this is done to prevent peasants' resentment of lavish spending on luxuries by the wealthy. A more likely explanation, however, is that it is subtle criticism of other, more flamboyant residences. Jonson seems to take a Christian standpoint in his encouragement of modesty and his veiled criticism of the vanity of the owners of more showy edifices. Or perhaps it is a frustrated stab at the inequalities of capitalism. Penshurst is said to boast natural attractions:

  of soyle, of ayre, of wood, of water:
  therein thou art fair.
- The idea that nature is beautiful and does not need decoration is emphasised. The opening lines of the poem may lead the reader into thinking that Penshurst is a dull place, so the employment of classical allusions serves to seize the reader's attention, and also adds an air of mystery and uncertainty. This also gives the impression of a Pagan society, and reinforces mythological stereotypes about the countryside, although we are told towards the end of the poem that "His children...have been taught religion".
- It is significant that the poem mentions the poet Philip Sidney: "At his great birth, where all the Muses met.“ We are told that Penshurst was the birthplace of Sidney, and this serves to disperse the stereotype that country folk were unintelligent.
- The absentee landlord, who dissipated his time and fortune in living it up in the city, became a stock figure in contemporary satire. But so did the boozy illiterate hunting squire, the Sir Tony Lumpkin or Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, who never left the country at all, or if he did only made himself ridiculous.
- Philip Sidney was seen as the model of a Renaissance man. He was a courtier, talented poet, advisor to the Queen, and soldier. His whole family were patrons of the arts, so the connection made between Penshurst and the Sidney family gives the impression that Penshurst was the epitome of an educated, cultured household.
- In the central part of the poem, Jonson makes Penshurst sound like a countryside Utopia. The copse "never failes to serve thee season'd deere”, "each banke doth yield thee coneyes (rabbits, "the painted partrich lyes in every field . . . willing to be kill'd.“ This kind of submission sounds too good to be true
- It is likely that Jonson's portrayal of country life has a satirical edge. He says that "fat, aged carps runne into thy net“ and that when eels detect a fisherman, they "leape . . . into his hand." This irony may be directed towards those who boast that country life is trouble-free.

Aemilia Lanyer (1569-1645) was of Italian Jewish descent. She may have served in the Duchess of Kent's household. Her volume of poems *Salve deus rex Judoeorum*, 1611, was in part a bid for support from a number of prominent women patrons. Her country house poem *The Description of Cooke-ham* gives us an account of the residence of Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland, in the absence of Lady Clifford, who is depicted as the ideal Renaissance woman - graceful, virtuous, honourable and beautiful. Lanyer describes the house and its surroundings while Lady Margaret is present, and while she is absent. While Lady Margaret was around, the flowers and trees:

Set forth their beauties then to welcome thee!
The very hills right humbly did descend,
When you to tread upon them did intend.
And as you set you feete, they still did rise,
Glad that they could receive so rich a prise.

- It seems as if nature is there for the sole purpose of pleasing Lady Margaret. The birds come to attend her, and the banks, trees and hills feel honoured to receive her. Nature is personified throughout the poem, and, when Lady Margaret leaves, appears to go through a process of mourning: "Every thing retaind a sad dismay".
- Many poems emphasise the strength of nature and the weakness of, but in this poem, nature seems to be at the mercy of a human, and a woman at that. This unrealistic notion of Lady Margaret's control over the elements greatly flatters her, and the poem is therefore likely to gain Lanyer's favour with the Countess. A far more rational explanation would be that Lady Margaret resided at Cooke-ham during the summer months, and just after she left, autumn came upon the countryside. In order to flatter Lady Margaret, Lanyer implies that the countryside is mourning her departure, but in actual fact she sees the turn of the season, which is not affected by Lady Margaret. Just as in To Penshurst the lifestyle seemed too good to be true, in A Description of Cook-ham, the Lady of the house seems to be too close to perfection to be real.

- Perhaps Lanyer's poem is a satirical take on the relationship between the poet and the patron. She appears to be saying that poets will write anything to flatter patrons in order to gain their favour - even something as ridiculous as the idea that nature is emotionally sensitive ("the grasse did weep for woe", and mourns the departure of a human being.

Conclusion

- The social criticism contained in these two poems is subtle, and shrouded. Society is never criticised directly by the poets, and irony was their most valuable tool. Nature behaves in strange, abnormal ways in both of the poems. In To Penshurst, animals seem unrealistically submissive towards the wills of the people, provisions are acquired with the minimum of effort. The timber crisis of the seventeenth century illustrates the extent to which poets grappled with contradictory images of nature: "Nature, on the one hand, is the fallen, postlapsarian realm of scarcity and labour and, on the other, the divinely ordered handiwork of a beneficent God that can be made to yield infinite profits."
- The social criticism present in To Penhurst is very effective because it is so unexpected. The role of country house poems was to praise and flatter, yet it is possible to detect a strong sense of irony in the descriptions, and we see the criticism present if we read between the lines.
- Similarly, love poetry is sometimes used as a way for poets to discuss other things. The poem Who so list to hount I knowe where is an hynde, written by Sir Thomas Wyatt, at first appears to be a love poem, but it could also be interpreted as criticism of patronage, hunting and politics. The hunter and the hunted are compared to the patron and the poet. At this time, poets were afraid to be direct in their criticism of the world they lived in, because they could incur the wrath of the monarch, which was never beneficial if the poet wanted to gain patronage.
- The poems are effective as social criticism because the criticism is not obvious, but if one looks closely, it becomes apparent. However, it was unlikely that people read country house poetry to be provided with political or social insights, so it is likely that many of the allusions were lost on the majority of readers.

Lecture 13

Christopher Marlowe and Sir Walter Raleigh : The Pastoral

Definition

pastoral (L 'pertaining to shepherds') A minor but important mode which, by convention, is concerned with the lives of shepherds. It is of great antiquity and interpenetrates many works in Classical and modern European literature. It is doubtful if pastoral ever had much to do with the daily working-life of shepherds, though it is not too difficult to find shepherds in Europe (in Montenegro, Albania, Greece and Sardinia, for instance) who compose poetry sing songs and while away the hours playing the flute.

For the most part pastoral tends to be an idealization of shepherd life, and, by so being, creates an image of a peaceful and uncorrupted existence; a kind of a clean world.

Marlowe's poem and Raleigh's carefully symmetrical response were printed together in England's Helicon (1600); the attribution of the second to Raleigh is first made by Izaak Walton in The Complete Angler (1653), where both poems are reprinted.

Slightly longer versions appear in Walton's second edition (1655). Donne's "The Bait" (also quoted by Walton) is inspired by the exchange. Marlowe's poem embodies the classic example of carpe diem, as can be seen in the shepherd's attitude, while Raleigh's nymph finds in them an argument precisely for not seizing the day.

In the late r6th c. many other works amplified the pastoral tradition, such as Marlowe's The Passionate Shepherd to His Love, which evoked a memorable reply from Sir 'Walter Raleigh.

The Passionate Shepherd to his Love

Come live with me and be my love,

And we will all the pleasures prove

That valleys, groves, hills and fields,

Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,

Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,

By shallow rivers, to whose falls

Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses

And a thousand fragrant posies;

A cap of flowers, and a kirtle

Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool

Which from our pretty lambs we pull;

Fair linèd slippers for the cold,

With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,

With coral clasps and amber studs.

And if these pleasures may thee move,

Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing

For thy delight each May morning.

If these delights thy mind may move,

Then live with me and be my love.

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

If all the world and love were young,

And truth in every shepherd's tongue,

These pretty pleasures might me move

To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold;

When rivers rage and rocks grow cold

And Philomel becometh dumb,

The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields

To wayward winter reckoning yields;

A honey tongue, a heart of gall

Is fancy's spring but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,

Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies

Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,

In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,

Thy coral clasps and amber studs,

All these in me no means can move

To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,

Had joys no date, nor age no need,

Then these delights my mind might move

To live with thee and be thy love.

Notes

1. prove: test, try out
2. madrigals: poems set to music and sung by two to six voices with a single melody or interweaving melodies
3. kirtle: dress or skirt
4. myrtle: shrub with evergreen leaves, white or pink flowers, and dark berries. In Greek mythology, a symbol of love.
5. coral: yellowish red;
6. amber: yellow or brownish yellow
7. swains: country youths.
8. Philomel : the nightingale.

Type of Work

"The Passionate Shepherd" is a pastoral poem. Pastoral poems generally center on the love of a shepherd for a maiden (as in Marlowe's poem), on the death of a friend, or on the quiet simplicity of rural life. The writer of a pastoral poem may be an educated city dweller, like Marlowe, who extolls the virtues of a shepherd girl or longs for the peace and quiet of the country. Pastoral is derived from the Latin word pastor, meaning shepherd.

Setting

Christopher Marlowe sets the poem in early spring in a rural locale (presumably in England) where shepherds tend their flocks. The use of the word madrigals (line 8)—referring to poems set to music and sung by two to six voices with a single melody or interweaving melodies—suggests that the time is the sixteenth century, when madrigals were highly popular in England and elsewhere in Europe. However, the poem could be about any shepherd of any age in any country, for such is the universality of its theme.

Characters

The Passionate Shepherd: He importunes a woman—presumably a young and pretty country girl—to become his sweetheart and enjoy with him all the pleasures that nature has to offer.

The Shepherd's Love: The young woman who receives the Passionate Shepherd's message.

Swains: Young country fellows whom the Passionate Shepherd promises will dance for his beloved.

Theme :

The theme of "The Passionate Shepherd" is the rapture of springtime love in a simple, rural setting. Implicit in this theme is the motif of carpe diem—Latin for "seize the day." Carpe diem urges people to enjoy the moment without worrying about the future.

Meter

The meter is iambic pentameter , with eight syllables (four iambic feet) per line. (An iambic foot consists of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.) The following graphic presentation illustrates the meter of the first stanza.

.....1.....2.....3.....4
Come **LIVE**..|..with **ME**..|..and **BE**..|..my **LOVE**,

.....1.....2.....3.....4
And **WE**..|..will **ALL**..|..the **PLEA**..|..sures **PROVE**

.....1.....2.....3.....4
That **HILLS**..|..and **VALL**..|..eys, **DALE**..|..and **FIELD**,

.....1.....2.....3.....4
And **ALL**..|..the **CRAG**..|..gy **MOUNT**..|..ains **YIELD**.

Rhyme

In each stanza, the first line rhymes with the second, and the third rhymes with the fourth.

Structure :

The poem contains seven quatrains (four-line stanzas) for a total of twenty-eight lines. Marlowe structures the poem as follows:

Stanza 1: The shepherd asks the young lady to "live with me and be my love," noting that they will enjoy all the pleasures of nature.

Stanzas 2-4: The shepherd makes promises that he hopes will persuade the young lady to accept his proposal.

Stanzas 5-7: After making additional promises, the shepherd twice more asks the lady to "live with me and be my love."

In the **first** stanza, the Shepherd invites his love to come with him and "pleasures prove" (line 2.) This immediate reference to pleasure gives a mildly sexual tone to this poem, but it is of the totally innocent, almost naïve kind. The Shepherd makes no innuendo of a sordid type, but rather gently and directly calls to his love. He implies that the entire geography of the countryside of England "Valleys, groves, hills and fields/Woods or steepy mountains" will prove to contain pleasure of all kinds for the lovers.

The **next** stanza suggests that the lovers will take their entertainment not in a theatre or at a banquet, but sitting upon rocks or by rivers. They will watch shepherds (of which the titular speaker is ostensibly one, except here it is implied that he will have ample leisure) feeding their flocks, or listening to waterfalls and the songs of birds. The enticements of such auditory and visual pleasures can be seen as a marked contrast to the "hurly-burly" (a phrase Marlowe used in his later play, Dido, Queen of Carthage, Act IV, Scene 1) of the London stage plays which Marlowe would write. These are entirely bucolic, traditional entertainments; the idea of Marlowe, the young man about town who chose to live in London, actually enjoying these rustic pleasures exclusively and leaving the city behind is laughable

Again, these invitations are not to be taken literally. Marlowe may well have admired pastoral verse, and the ideals of it (such as Ovid's ideals of aggressive, adulterous heterosexual love) were not necessarily those he would espouse for himself.

The **third**, **fourth,** and **fifth** stanzas are a kind of list of the "delights", mostly sartorial, that the Shepherd will make for his lady love. Here it becomes clearer that the "Shepherd" is really none of the same; indeed, he is more like a feudal landowner who employs shepherds.

The list of the things he will make for his lady: "beds of roses" (a phrase, incidentally, first coined by Marlowe, which has survived to this day in common speech, though in the negative , "no bed of roses" meaning "not a pleasant situation") "thousand fragrant posies," "cap of flowers," "kirtle embroidered with leaves of myrtle," "gown made of the finest wool/Which from our pretty lambs we pull," "fair-linèd slippers," "buckles of the purest gold," "belt of straw and ivy buds," "coral clasps," and "amber studs") reveal a great deal about the situation of the "Shepherd" and what he can offer his love.

While certainly many of the adornments Marlowe lists would be within the power of a real shepherd to procure or make (the slippers, the belt, possibly the bed of roses (in season), the cap of flowers, and the many posies, and possibly even the kirtle embroidered with myrtle and the lambs wool gown,) but the gold buckles, the coral clasps, and the amber studs would not be easily available to the smallholder or tenant shepherds who actually did the work of sheepherding. This increasingly fanciful list of gifts could only come from a member of the gentry, or a merchant in a town.

The poem ends with an "if" statement, and contains a slightly somber note. There is no guarantee that the lady will find these country enticements enough to follow the Shepherd, and since the construction of them is preposterous and fantastical to begin with, the reader is left with the very real possibility that the Shepherd will be disappointed.

Analysis

"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" was composed sometime in Marlowe's early years, (between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three) around the same time he translated Ovid's Amores. This is to say, Marlowe wrote this poem before he went to London to become a playwright. Thornton suggests that Marlowe's poetic and dramatic career follows an "Ovidian career model" (xiv), with his amatory poems belonging to his youth, followed later by epic poems (such as **Hero** and **Leander**) and Lucan's First Book). The energy and fanciful nature of youth is evident in "Passionate Shepherd", which has been called "an extended invitation to rustic retirement" (xv).

It is headlong in its rush of sentiment, though, upon examination, it reveals itself to be a particularly well-balanced piece of poetry. This poem is justly famous: though it may not be immediately identifiable as Marlowe's (it is often mistakenly thought to be a sonnet of Shakespeare, though that is incorrect in both authorship and poetic form) it has a place in most anthologies of love-poetry. It may well be the most widely recognized piece that Marlowe ever wrote, despite the popularity of certain of his plays.

Comparison :

Notes for "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd."

Raleigh argues that it is not society that taints sexual love. We are already tainted before we enter society. Raleigh combines carpe diem with tempus fugit in an unusual way. Normally we should seize the day because time flies. Raleigh argues that because time flies, we should NOT seize the day. There will be consequences to their roll in the grass. Time does not stand still; winter inevitably follows the spring; therefore, we cannot act on impulses until we have examined the consequences.

* rocks grow cold
* fields yield to the harvest
* the flocks are driven to fold in winter
* rivers rage
* birds complain of winter (a reference to the story of Philomela who was raped and turned into a nightingale). We live in a fallen world. Free love in the grass in impossible now because the world is not in some eternal spring. The seasons pass, as does time. Nymphs grow old, and shepherds grow cold.

Sir Walter Raleigh wrote a response to this poem in 1600 called "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd." He uses the young girl as the speaker, responding to the shepherd. There are no clues to the setting or the girl's physical appearance. The themes of this poem are doubt and the point that time changes things. The young girl thinks realistically and refutes the ideas of the idyllic world the young man had proposed to her. The shepherd seems to be very much of an optimist, whereas the young girl is a pessimist. The structure of these two poems is exact. There are six stanzas consisting of four lines each. This shows that "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" is responding directly to the shepherd in "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love.

"In each ideal proposal he gives, she gives him the realistic answer to why they cannot be together. The speaker in "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" is a young shepherd who proposes a passionate love affair to the girl he desires. He uses nature largely to appeal to her senses. He tells her they will sit will have a life of pleasure and relaxation. He says he will make beds of roses and give her fragrant posies. He promises to outfit her in fine clothes and that she will not want for anything. He uses all these tempting things to help his argument, but he does not make any mention of true love or marriage. It seems he only wants a passionate physical relationship. The pleasures and delights he speaks of are only temporary. His concept of time is only in the present, and he does not seem to think much about the future.

In "the Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd," the young girl is responding to the shepherd's plea. She thinks about life in a practical way, so the shepherd's words have no bearing on her decision. She rebuts his argument and says that if time had no end and every man told the truth, that the pleasures he had promised would convince her to be his lover. The theme of carpe diem is usually that one should "seize the day". However, the girl turns it around and says that because life is short, we should not seize the day. The serious decisions of life such as this one should not be taken lightly and acted upon irrationally.

She states that flowers wither and die, and all the material possessions he offered would eventually break and be forgotten. She realizes that something substantial such as true love, is the only thing that will outlast the material items. In her mind, it is worth waiting for true love. Nothing he had to give can convince her, because she knows that he is only thinking about the present time and has no future plans for them. At the end of the poem, she reiterates the point she had made at the beginning :

But could youth last and love still breed

Had joys no date or age no need

The these delights my mind might move

To live with thee and be thy love (Raleigh 21-24).

These two **poems** can teach a lesson even in the present day. The idealistic world that the shepherd dreamed of seemed like a wonderful thing, but there was nothing substantial to back it up. There are many instances of this in life, not just in love. The young girl had the presence of mind to realize that the things he was offering, though tempting, were not what she wished for in life. She knew that because time is short and life does not last forever, that one must think about the impact decisions made today will have on the future.

Lecture 14

John Donne and metaphysical poetry

- There is no real precedent in English for Donne's love lyrics, either for the sustained variety of verse forms or for the comparably great variety of tone and implied occasion; and though Donne's style grows out of a general sixteenth-century aesthetic of "conceited verses," his particular way of tight, combative argumentation, demanding the relentless close attention of his reader, takes that aesthetic to a dramatically new level.
- At best, that argumentativeness is of a piece with the subject matter: love as battle of wits, either between the lovers themselves, or between the lovers and the world around them. … Donne writes some of the classic poems … that affirm love with a pitch of hyperbole: radically transformative, unshakeably enduring, with the capacity of rendering everything else irrelevant.

Metaphysical Poets

- The name given to a diverse group of 17th century English poets whose work is notable for its ingenious (clever) use of intellectual and theological concepts in surprising CONCEITS, strange PARADOXES, and far-fetched IMAGERY.
- The leading metaphysical poet was John Donne, whose colloquial, argumentative abruptness of rhythm and tone distinguishes his style from the CONVENTIONS of Elizabethan love-lyrics. Other poets to whom the label is applied include Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, John Cleveland, and the predominantly religious poets George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, and Richard Crashaw.
- In the 20th century, T. S. Eliot and others revived their reputation, stressing their quality of WIT, in the sense of intellectual strenuousness and flexibility rather than smart humour. The term metaphysical poetry usually refers to the works of these poets, but it can sometimes denote any poetry that discusses metaphysics, that is, the philosophy of knowledge and existence.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

As virtuous men pass mildly away

And whisper to their souls to go,

Whilst some of their sad friends do say,

The breath goes now, and some say, No,

So let us melt and make no noise,

No tear-floods nor sigh-tempests move;

Twere profanation of our joys (not sacred)

To tell the laity our love. (common)

Moving of the earth brings harms and fears,

Men reckon what it did and meant; (think)

But trepidation of the spheres, (anxiety)

Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit

Absence, because it doth remove

Those things which elemented it;

But we, by a love so much refined

That ourselves know not what it is,

Interassurèd of the mind,

Care less eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls, therefore, which are one,

Though I must go, endure not yet

A breach, but an expansion,

Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so 25

As stiff twin compasses are two.

Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show

To move, but doth if the other do;

And though it in the center sit,

Yet when the other far doth roam, 30

It leans and harkens after it,

And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must

Like the other foot obliquely run;

Thy firmness draws my circle just,

And makes me end where I begun

"A Valediction: forbidding Mourning"

- The speak explains that he is forced to spend time apart from his lover, (his wife) but before he leaves, he tells her that their farewell should not become anoccasion for mourning and sorrow. In the same way that virtuous men die mildly and without complaint, he says, so they should leave without "tear-floods" and "sigh-tempests," for to publicly announce their feelings in such a way would profane their love.
- The speaker says that when the earth moves, it brings "harms and fears," but when the spheres experience "trepidation," though the impact is greater, it is also innocent (simple). The love of "dull sublunary lovers" can not survive separation, but it removes that which constitutes the love itself; but the love he shares with his beloved is so refined and "Inter-assured of the mind" that they need not worry about missing "eyes, lips, and hands."
- Though he must go, their souls are still one, and, therefore, they are not enduring a breach (a cut), they are experiencing an "expansion"; in the same way that gold can be stretched by beating it "to aery thinness," the soul they share will simply stretch to take in all the space between them. If their souls are separate, he says, they are like the feet of compass:
- His lover's soul is the fixed foot in the center, and his is the foot that moves around it. The firmness of the center foot makes the circle that the outer foot draws perfect: "Thy firmness makes my circle just, / And makes me end, where I begun."

Form

- The nine stanzas of this Valediction are quite simple compared to many of Donne's poems, which make use of strange metrical patterns overlaid jarringly on regular rhyme schemes. Here, each four-line stanza is quite unadorned (simple and plain) , with an ABAB rhyme scheme and an iambic tetrameter meter.
- "A Valediction: forbidding Mourning" is one of Donne's most famous and simplest poems and also probably his most direct statement of his ideal of spiritual love. For all his sensuality in poems, such as "The Flea," Donne professed a devotion to a kind of spiritual love that transcended the merely physical. Here, anticipating a physical separation from his beloved, he invokes the nature of that spiritual love to ward off (keep away) the "tear-floods" and "sigh-tempests" that might otherwise attend on their farewell.
- The poem is essentially a sequence of metaphors and comparisons, each describing a way of looking at their separation that will help them to avoid the mourning (showing sadness) forbidden by the poem's title.
- First, the speaker says that their farewell should be as mild as the uncomplaining deaths of virtuous men, for to weep would be "profanation of our joys." Next, the speaker compares harmful "Moving of th' earth" to innocent "trepidation of the spheres," equating the first with "dull sublunary lovers' love" and the second with their love, "Inter-assured of the mind."
- Like the rumbling (making deep sound) earth, the dull sublunary (sublunary meaning literally beneath the moon and also subject to the moon) lovers are all physical, unable to experience separation without losing the sensation that comprises and sustains their love. But the spiritual lovers "Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss," because, like the trepidation (vibration) of the spheres (the concentric globes that surrounded the earth in ancient astronomy), their love is not wholly physical. Also, like the trepidation of the spheres, their movement will not have the harmful consequences of an earthquake.
- The speaker then declares that, since the lovers' two souls are one, his departure will simply expand the area of their unified soul, rather than cause a rift (cut) between them. If, however, their souls are "two" instead of "one", they are as the feet of a drafter's compass, connected, with the center foot fixing the orbit of the outer foot and helping it to describe a perfect circle. The compass (the instrument used for drawing circles) is one of Donne's most famous metaphors, and it is the perfect image to encapsulate the values of Donne's spiritual love, which is balanced, symmetrical, intellectual, serious, and beautiful in its polished simplicity.
- Like many of Donne's love poems (including "The Sun Rising" and "The Canonization"), "A Valediction: forbidding Mourning" creates a dichotomy between the common love of the everyday world and the uncommon love of the speaker. Here, the speaker claims that to tell "the laity," or the common people, of his love would be to profane its sacred nature, and he is clearly contemptuous of the dull sublunary love of other lovers. The effect of this dichotomy is to create a kind of emotional aristocracy that is similar in form to the political aristocracy with which Donne has had painfully bad luck throughout his life and which he commented upon in poems, such as "The Canonization": This emotional aristocracy is similar in form to the political one but utterly opposed to it in spirit.
- Few in number are the emotional aristocrats who have access to the spiritual love of the spheres and the compass; throughout all of Donne's writing, the membership of this elite never includes more than the speaker and his lover—or at the most, the speaker, his lover, and the reader of the poem, who is called upon to sympathize with Donne's romantic plight (sad or desperate predicament).

Further comment :

- "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" shows many features associated with seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry in general, and with Donne's work in particular. Donne's contemporary, the English writer Izaak Walton, tells us the poem dates from 1611, when Donne, about to travel to France and Germany, wrote for his wife this valediction, or farewell speech. Like most poetry of Donne's time, it did not appear in print during the poet's lifetime. The poem was first published in 1633, two years after Donne's death, in a collection of his poems called Songs and Sonnets. Even during his life, however, Donne's poetry became well known because it circulated privately in manuscript and handwritten copies among literate Londoners.
- The poem tenderly comforts the speaker's lover at their temporary parting, asking that they separate calmly and quietly, without tears or protests. The speaker justifies the desirability of such calmness by developing the ways in which the two share a holy love, both physical and spiritual in nature. Donne's celebration of earthly love in this way has often been referred to as the "creed of love."
- Donne treats their love as sacred, elevated above that of ordinary earthly lovers. He argues that because of the confidence their love gives them, they are strong enough to endure a temporary separation. In fact, he discovers ways of suggesting, through metaphysical conceit, that the two of them either possess a single soul and so can never really be divided, or have twin souls permanently connected to each other.
- A metaphysical conceit is an extended metaphor or simile in which the poet draws an ingenious (clever) comparison between two very unlike objects. "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" ends with one of Donne's most famous metaphysical conceits, in which he argues for the lovers' closeness by comparing their two souls to the feet of a drawing compass—a simile that would not typically occur to a poet writing about his love!
- The compass image suggests a connection between the lovers even as they are apart. Yet Donne ingeniously finds further meanings. He considers the difference between a central, “fixed” foot at “home” and a roaming, “obliquely” moving foot. He suggests ideas of desire: leans,” and “hearkens,”.”He concludes with an idea of love as the perfect (“just”) circle that ends where it began.

- The occasion of the poem seems to be parting. Walton asserts that the poem was penned in 1611 when Donne was planning for a tour of France with the Drury family. Parting here is pictured as a miniature enactment of death. The poet refers to an untheatrical form of death where the dying mildly give away to death. Sometimes death may be anticipated, nevertheless at times it comes as an intruder in spite of one saying :”No.”

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

- The term ‘melt’ may also signify a change in physical state. Just as the dead body decays, the bond between both of the lovers shall dissolve. He introduces the three elements-air, water and earth to show that these elements constitute the circle of life and death on earth. The air is referred to in ‘sigh-tempests’, water in ‘tear-floods’ and earth with reference to earthquakes. The poet bringing on all these natural calamities seems to imply their parting is of less consequence as compared to these. Moreover, as compared to such dreaded catastrophes, my parting shall not cause any harm to our love.
- The speaker states that earthquakes may be dreadful, but not the oscillation of the heavenly spheres. This is, because the consequences of the earthquakes can be apprehended (understood), but the effect of the oscillation of the heavenly spheres cannot be perceived. What the poet means to say is that -only things that can be apprehended should be worried about. He advises his lady-love not to fret (worry) too much about their separation.
- Ethereal lovers completely testify to spiritual love. Therefore their physical proximity(closeness in space and time) /absence is of no consequence. The soul is placed above its elemental form, the physical form.

But we by a love so much refined,
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assurèd of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.

- The poet asserts that their love is so pure that it can be apprehended through the senses, and this does not necessarily require the sensory perceptions. The poet then goes to elaborate in the next stanza that their souls are one, and therefore do not see their breach as a gap, but rather recognize it as an expansion. Donne makes use of the image of gold beaten into airy thinness; likewise earthly love is transformed into divine love.
- The poet likens the twin legs of a compass to the lovers' sense of union during absence. This an apt example of metaphysical wit, which yokes dissimilar things together. The two hands of the compass though separated for a small fraction of time were destined to always meet. Also, the compass points the direction to others, suggesting that they were a paradigm for others to follow. Again, a compass drew a circle that was the shape of perfection, according to Ptolemy. By utilizing this shape Donne proves that their love is perfect, physically and spiritually.
- Besides, the two hands are incomplete without each other. With reference to the compass, it is their separation that actually defines them. It is the firmness of one foot that actually renders the other perfect. It makes him end at where he begun-and therefore the circle (of their divine love) becomes complete. This divine circle may also refer to a halo that their divine status has endowed (gave) them .
- **conceit** : a metaphor used to build an analogy between two things or situations not naturally, or usually, comparable. Conceits can be compact or extended. A familiar example of a more elaborate conceit occurs in John Donne’s “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning.” Like most conceits, this one is structural and lingering rather than momentary. Donne compares, at some length, two temporarily parted lovers to the two pointed legs of a compass, which move and hearken (listen) in tandem.
- **paradox** : A paradox is a contradiction that somehow proves fitting or true. As such, it is a central device of seventeenth-century literature, in the work of writers like John Donne, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, and Thomas Browne.