

**History of English Language and Literature**  
**Prof. Dr. Merin Simi Raj**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**  
**Module Number 01 Lecture Number 5a**  
**The University Wits: A prelude to Shakespeare**

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Good morning and welcome to the today's lecture on the course History of English Language and Literature. Today we continue to look at the importance of university wits in the emergence of Shakespearean drama at a later stage. So in the previous section we also took a look at some of the university wits and we took at their lives in detail and today in continuation with that we will continue to situate the importance of the two more remaining university wits mainly Kyd and Marlowe. So these figures are quite important

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## + Kyd and Marlowe

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- “Marlowe’s characters are trapped because they cannot discover a map”
  - From Pat Rogers’ critical analysis
- Often mentioned together in the context of Shakespeare’s tragedies



in the history of English Literature and they have a rare distinction of having attracted more attention from critics and historians compared to the other university wits. In fact in Pat Rogers critical analysis he makes a very interesting comparison between Kyd and Marlowe which also is partly the reason for clubbing these two together in one particular session also in terms of the influence that they had on Shakespeare's writings at a later stage it's more pronounced and more profound than all

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of the other university wits put together.

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Pat Rogers observes this thing about Kyd's and Marlowe's characters. Kyd's characters are trapped because everything has been mapped out for them. Marlowe's characters are trapped because they cannot discover a map. So in that sense there is a continuity in the writing tradition. There is also a way in which they can be closely connected with the analysis of the Shakespearean plays at a later stage. And it is important to note that especially when one is discussing Shakespeare's tragedies they are often mentioned together and they also give a proper context to the understanding of Shakespeare's tragedies both in terms of craft and technique.

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## + Thomas Kyd

- Son of a London scrivener – **no university** education
- Most of his work has been **lost**
- **The Spanish Tragedy** – most popular, at least 10 editions before 1634
  - The great exemplar of the Elizabethan and Jacobean **revenge tradition** – seems to have greatly influenced **Shakespeare**
  - Numerous twists and turns of plot, eight deaths, racy verse, emotional speeches
  - Spectacles – public hanging, a lunatic, the biting out of a man's tongue, a play-within-the-play
  - Excellent stagecraft – kept the audience glued to their seats – “if you blinked, you missed a murder” (Pranod Nayar)
- **Ur Hamlet**, ‘A Danish tragedy’ – an immediate ancestor of **Shakespeare’s Hamlet** (?)
  - Anonymous, authorship disputed
- Involved in subversive political activities (?) with Marlowe, a friend and some time roommate – imprisoned and tortured (saved from further punishment because of Marlowe’s early death)



died at the age of 36

And we begin to look at the life of Thomas Kyd. He was born as the son of the London scrivener, you, we noted in the previous lecture itself that he was the only one among the university wits to have had no university education. At least there are no records which prove

that he went to either of the University of Oxford or to Cambridge and most of his works significantly has been lost as well. So in that sense it becomes another factor for intellectual and historical curiosity that he was one of the prime influencing factors in shaping

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the dramatic career of William Shakespeare. His Spanish Tragedy was

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and is still considered as the most of important of Kyd's works and also one of the most influential works that laid the foundation to the Elizabethan tragedy from the mid sixteenth century onwards. In fact even during his lifetime the work was so popular that by 1634 at least 10 editions of Spanish Tragedy had come out. In the earlier period it was also spelt a little differently it was the Tragedie with d i and e. It was only in the later editions that the English many Kyd's plays began to be revised and more became more suited for

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our contemporary kind of consumption. In fact he is said to have inaugurated this revenge tradition in Elizabethan plays and this in that sense is said to have greatly influenced Shakespeare and his influence in fact continued into the Jacobean period as well there were many writers who were trying to produce plays alongside along the tradition of Spanish Tragedy and this plot of Spanish Tragedy was also very interesting. It was quite thrilling for the audience to watch during that time and this was in fact the only play, one of the first plays to offer this kind of a thrilling experience for the audience. This had numerous turns and twists of plot in terms of the plot he had included many racy details into it. It had about 8 deaths in

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a single play which was quite stunning for the Elizabethan audience then there were emotional speeches the verse was quite a racy and there were these different kinds of spectacles which might appear a bit gory in the when we look at it in the contemporary perspective there were scenes of public hanging there was a scene with lunatic in place and there is a very violent and gory scene which a man bites out his own tongue those kinds of spectacles were rare during the time in the Elizabethan audience were quite

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thrilled to see them on stage and there was lot of innovation in terms of the play structure as well it was structured in a way that there was a play within a play

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so with all of these innovative details he stood apart as a very distinctive character distinctive dramatist during the Elizabethan times and his influence also for the same reason continued to be very profound. Pramod Nair, one of the recent

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compilers of Literary History, he feels that there is

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A slide titled '+ Thomas Kyd' with a portrait of Thomas Kyd on the right. The slide contains a list of bullet points about his life and work. An NPTEL logo is in the bottom left corner.

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an excellent stage craft getting displayed in Spanish Tragedy. And it was this craft that had kept the audience glued to the to their seats when they were watching Kyd's Spanish Tragedy and there is an interesting observation made about the presentation of the Spanish Tragedy, if you blinked you missed a murder. So that was the kind of pace with which the events were getting unfolded in the play and apart from Spanish Tragedy which of course continues to be

his supreme most contribution in fact we can even extend it and say that Spanish Tragedy may be considered as one of the most supreme contribution

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of the entire Elizabethan wits put together prior to Shakespeare. And there was this play partly attributed to Thomas Kyd but not entirely based on historical evidence

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play named Ur Hamlet which was a Danish tragedy to begin with and many feel that this is the work which could be considered as an immediate ancestor to Shakespeare's Hamlet but there is very little historical authentic evidence to prove the same and the authorship of this play to Thomas Kyd is also heavily disputed. In fact his life also undergoes a lot of turn of events towards the end because he is said to have involved in lot of subversive political activities like many other university wits were and his association with Marlowe was not very

fruitful in this aspect. In fact his association with Marlowe had even brought a lot of ill-repute and disrepute to the personality of Thomas Kyd and Marlowe was incidentally a friend and a sometime roommate of Thomas Kyd and he was in fact tortured and punished because he was set to have collaborated with Marlowe in one of his spy adventures against the state and his, Marlowe's early death is said to have saved Thomas Kyd from some form of any impending punishment. But there is very these are all mostly historical conjectures with very little proper evidence of proof. Thomas Kyd also dies very early at the age of 36 so there was not much time for him to prove his literary output also after Spanish Tragedy we do not find any significant kind of literary output being generated from him. In fact it is interesting to note that apart in fact it is very interesting to note that a dramatic genius which produced a work such as

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The Spanish Tragedy was not capable of giving the same kind of (()) later age. So maybe he was rightfully involved in lot of controversies which prevented his dramatic genius from flowering into a, into a proper form.

Christopher Marlowe is in fact the most interesting and the most controversial of all these figures so much so that many historians feel that if he had lived a little longer he would have entirely outwitted William Shakespeare, his contemporary.

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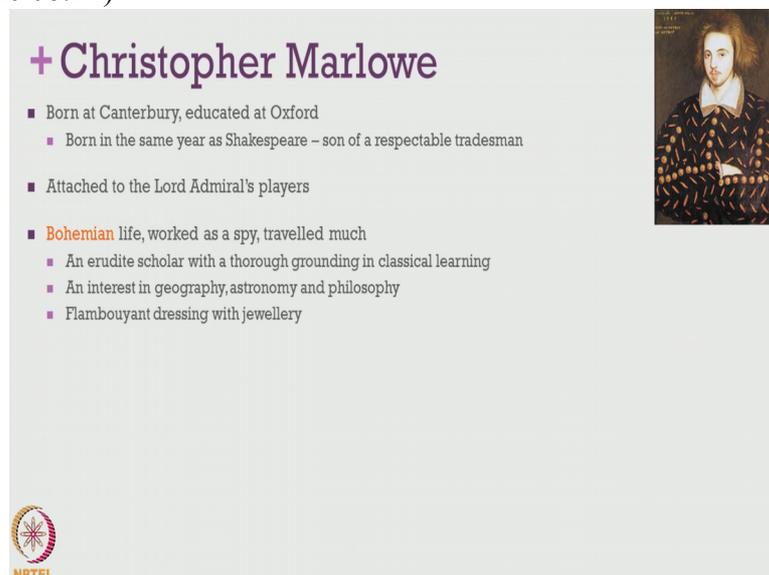
**+ Christopher Marlowe**

- Born at Canterbury, educated at Oxford
  - Born in the same year as Shakespeare – son of a respectable tradesman
- Attached to the Lord Admiral's players



He was born at Canterbury. He was educated at Oxford. He has this distinction of being born in the same year as Shakespeare and he was also the son of respectable tradesman. So in many ways there was lot of reputation that he was already born with and he also came to London to pursue a career in theatre. He was attached to Lord Admiral's players, prominent Theatre Company of those

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- Born at Canterbury, educated at Oxford
  - Born in the same year as Shakespeare – son of a respectable tradesman
- Attached to the Lord Admiral's players
- **Bohemian** life, worked as a spy, travelled much
  - An erudite scholar with a thorough grounding in classical learning
  - An interest in geography, astronomy and philosophy
  - Flamboyant dressing with jewellery



times but his lifestyle was very interesting. He lived in a very Bohemian way which also, many feel that had marred some of his literary genius. His life was not just about drama and literature. He is also had said as worked as a spy. He had travelled much, so his life is very interesting and these kind of varied interests and varied influences we find in his

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writings as well. Everyone was in agreement of this fact in mid sixteenth century London that he was very erudite and his scholarship was quite evident in everything that he had done during his lifetime. He had a very thorough grounding in classical learning but it did not come in the way of dramatic genius in any way. He knew how to bring and blend the elements from classical drama and infuse a new kind of life in the Elizabethan drama which was emerging then. He also had varied kind of scholarly interest. He was interested in

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geography, astronomy and philosophy and as we noted earlier in his plays and his production we find a direct reflection of all of this scholarship. And keeping in tune with his Bohemian lifestyle, he had a very, his dressing was considered very flamboyant and he used lot of

elaborate jewellery which was matter of curiosity and interest for Elizabethan people of those times

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and even later historians look at it with much interest and curiosity. And significantly he had no bent for comedy like most of the other erudite dramatists of the time. He believes that comedy is of inferior stature than that of tragedy. And

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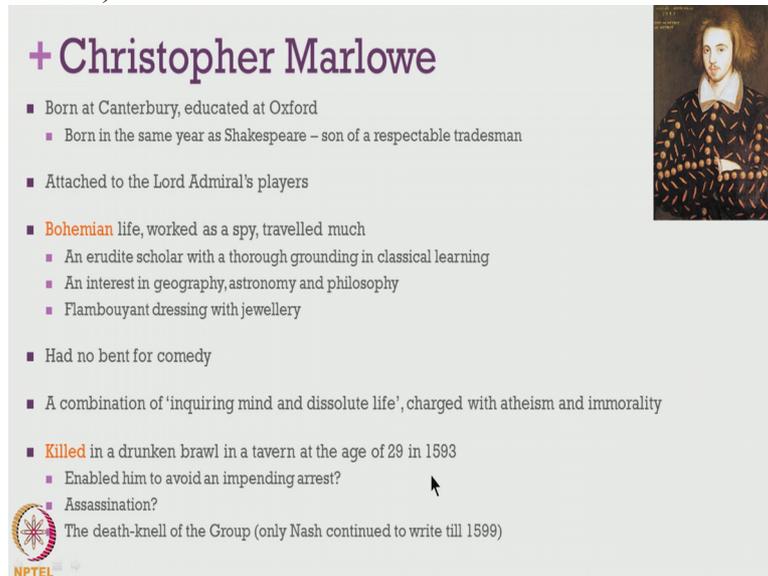
A slide titled "+ Christopher Marlowe" with a list of bullet points and a portrait of Marlowe. The slide has a light grey background. The title is in purple. The bullet points are in purple. The portrait of Marlowe is in the top right corner. An NPTEL logo is in the bottom left corner.

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- A combination of 'inquiring mind and dissolute life', charged with atheism and immorality

his plays, it was in many ways keeping in tune with his own value system and his belief system so we find that his combination, his thought process was a combination of an enquiring mind and dissolute life, yeah. So in his plays we find certain kind of profound influence of atheism and immorality coming in. So we do find that he was a man of varied

interests and this kind of variety had brought in a new kind of refinement to the drama that he was producing.

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- A combination of 'inquiring mind and dissolute life', charged with atheism and immorality
- **Killed** in a drunken brawl in a tavern at the age of 29 in 1593
  - Enabled him to avoid an impending arrest?
  - Assassination?

The death-knell of the Group (only Nash continued to write till 1599)



And he also had a very unfortunate end. He was killed in a brawl in a tavern at the, at the young age of 29. This happened in 1593 and some even feel that since he was involved in a lot of spy work and a lot of controversial political affairs, if he had not died in the tavern, in that pub

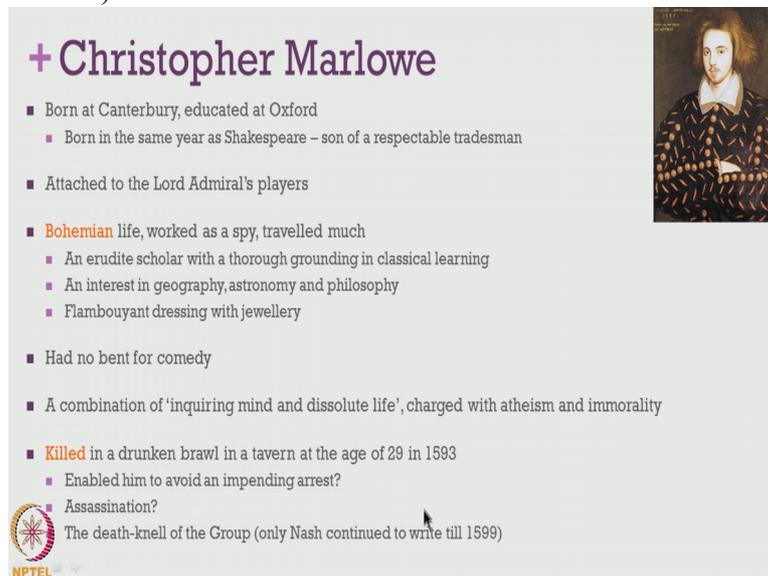
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he would have got arrested and would have been imprisoned for the rest of his lifetime. And there is also this assumption that he was not really killed accidentally but perhaps he was assassinated because of his political, controversial political connections and this in fact this event which marked the death of Christopher Marlowe, it had a very negative impact on the

lives and the dramatic output of all the university wits. In fact we also know that from 1592-93 onwards we find only Thomas Nashe continuing till 1599, all the others

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either they shift to other professions or they just disappeared into oblivion or they just withdraw themselves into life of obscurity. This was the kind of influence that Marlowe's life had on the change of general dramatic scene of Elizabethan England.

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**+ Christopher Marlowe**

- Writing career – **5 years**
  - Writing companions – Nashe and Greene
  - Shared lodgings with Thomas Kyd. Friends with Walter Raleigh
  - The first sustained analysis of the effects of power – *Tamburlaine, Jew of Malta, Edward II, Doctor Faustus*
  - *Tamburlaine the great* – a new kind of tragedy – the rise of shepherd to generalship and the command of the Mongol empire – one of the first great characters in English drama
  - *Edward II* – dramatic tension between duty and desire – a weak-willed king – deals with homosexuality
  - *Doctor Faustus* – a man's quest for knowledge, demonic power – critical of the classical learning – first tragic hero to go through intellectual torment



And if we talk about Marlowe's writing career, it was very prolific. He wrote for only a brief period of time, a little more than 5 years but if we compare the output with the period of time when he was active it's very prolific and very impressive and he is for that same reason he is even compared with William Shakespeare. In fact if we take a look at the later analysis and the later criticism Marlowe's works are only ones which are compared along the same stature

alongside William Shakespeare. Nashe and Greene were Marlowe's major writing companions and we do not have much evidence of any collaborative work that they had produced but they have said to have enjoyed a good kind of relationship throughout their lifetime and he at some point he had shared lodgings with Thomas Kyd which we noted earlier that which had also led to lot of disrepute for Thomas Kyd and all also led to his imprisonment and torture because they assumed that they were together in some of the

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political conspiracies, the details and evidence of which is very little known and mostly are of conjecture in nature. He was also said to have been friends with Walter Raleigh and some feel that his assassination or his accidental death in the pub after a fight with a someone who was drinking with him, some even feel that it had something to do with Walter Raleigh and he had staged the entire thing but there is very little evidence to conclude any of these facts. And in terms of his writing output, some of his major works continued to be taught and discussed even in the contemporary. That is the kind

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of influence they have had in the, not just in the dramatic interest of London scene but also in the academic fraternity in the later period to come. And his works *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward the Second* and *Doctor Faustus*, these plays are considered to be the first ever ones to analyze the effects of

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power on ordinary human beings and in that since he had a very rare kind of (( )) to probe into the minds of humans and to understand what power and repercussions could do to their as a life-changing event and *Tamburlaine the Great* is credited to be as new

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kind of tragedy. In fact it talks about a rise of a shepherd to generalship and how the same person goes on to command the entire Mongol empire and Tamburlaine's character is said to be one of the greatest characters in English drama in terms of characterization and in terms of the general finish that Marlowe had brought about. And Edward the Second is the first ever play to explore the dramatic tension between duty and desire. It also showed how one could experiment with a with the life of weak-willed king and Shakespeare at a later stage is said to have drawn a lot from the portrayal of Edward the Second and another rare distinction about Edward the Second which also talks a lot about the bold personality that Marlowe was then, Edward the Second deals with the theme of homosexuality which was taboo then

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and continues to be a taboo to a certain extent even in the contemporary. So to talk about such a theme in the mid-sixteenth century it really took a lot of guts from the dramatist's part so that had led to lot of controversy nevertheless it also forced the Elizabethan public to talk about things which were considered taboo. And Doctor Faustus, perhaps

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the most renowned of Marlowe's plays, it talks about a certain man-made Faustus who ends up selling his soul to the devil Mephistopheles and this is in fact a one play which detail explores in detail a man's quest for knowledge and demonic power and in this play in fact Marlowe, a different side of Marlowe comes into play.

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He in fact is critical of the classical learning and he is he perhaps questions the kind of hierarchy in which learning is placed and he does not make much of a distinction between the

reputed classic learning and certain other certain other disreputable kind of practices witchcraft, demonic worships and so forth. In that sense he questions a lot of conventions which were in place not just in Elizabethan England but also in the larger scheme of classical learning. And Doctor Faustus is said to be the first ever tragic hero

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to go through intellectual torment within the phase of drama. So in many ways, though the limited, though the output of Marlowe continues to be very

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limited in terms of number their influence was very profound not just in the writings of Shakespeare but also in the way in which the drama began to be fashioned and refashioned not just in England but also worldwide. And it isn't just the success of *Tamburlaine*,

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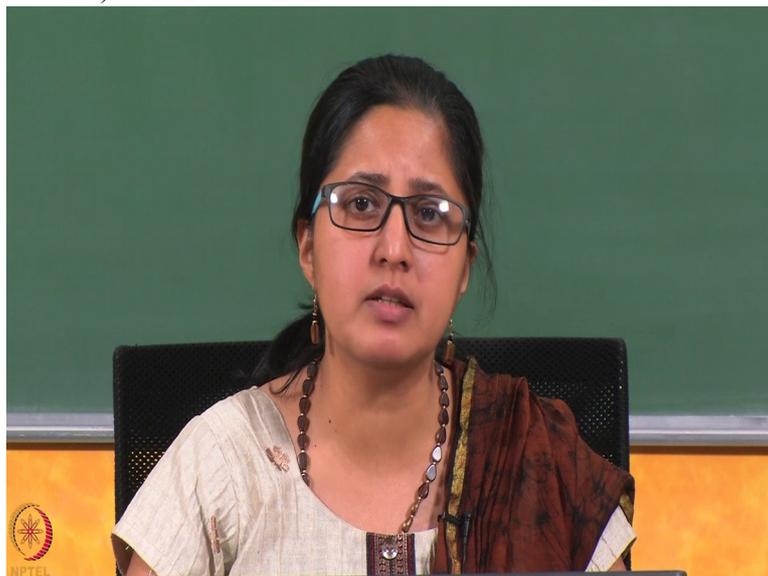
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- The success of *Tamburlaine* – turned the London stage into a strong and popular industry



one of his earliest play. It had turned London stage into a strong and popular industry. This is very important because when Shakespeare takes over

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the Elizabethan scene he knew how to commercialize drama; he knew the forces that were driving the London market in terms of the dramatic scene. And *Tamburlaine* is said to have laid the foundation and made it easier for the other playwrights to come. So it was with *Tamburlaine* that many other patrons, the playhouses, the actors, all of them began to realize the commercial potential of London stage. And Marlowe is also credited

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  - Shared lodgings with Thomas Kyd. Friends with Walter Raleigh
  - The first sustained analysis of the effects of power – *Tamburlaine*, *Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, *Doctor Faustus*
  - *Tamburlaine the great* – a new kind of tragedy – the rise of shepherd to generalship and the command of the Mongol empire – one of the first great characters in English drama
  - *Edward II* – dramatic tension between duty and desire – a weak-willed king – deals with homosexuality
  - *Doctor Faustus* – a man's quest for knowledge, demonic power – critical of the classical learning – first tragic hero to go through intellectual torment
- The success of *Tamburlaine* – turned the London stage into a strong and popular industry
- Marlowe – made full use of the potential of blank verse



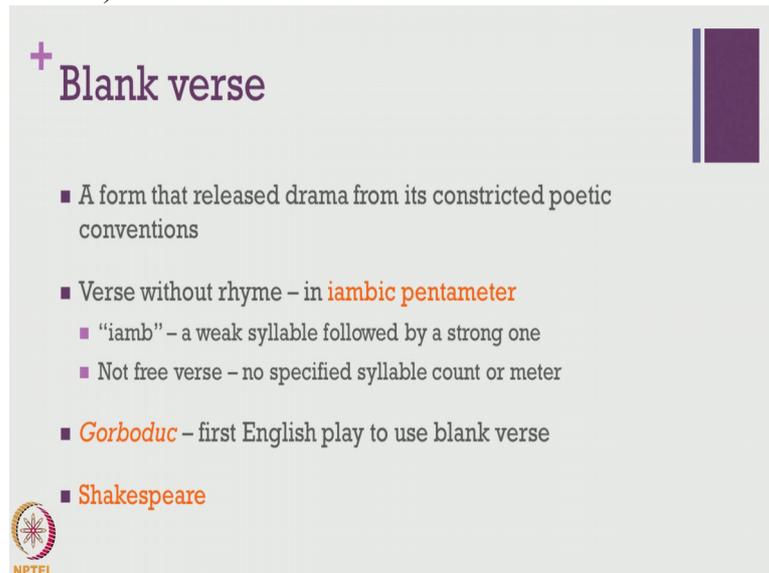
to be the one who made full use of blank verse. This also brings us to this question of the significance of blank verse. In terms of a literary tradition

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the Elizabethan drama was emerging gradually but steadily and strongly. One of the literary techniques that aided this emergence was the prominence of blank verse. Blank verse did not however originate in Elizabethan England. This was beginning to be practiced from Chaucer's times but the Elizabethans have said to have perfected this technique and they had begun to use in a multiple ways

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**+ Blank verse**

- A form that released drama from its constricted poetic conventions
- Verse without rhyme – in **iambic pentameter**
  - “iamb” – a weak syllable followed by a strong one
  - Not free verse – no specified syllable count or meter
- **Gorboduc** – first English play to use blank verse
- **Shakespeare**

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in their plays. And what is blank verse? We need to take a, quite a detailed look at it. It is the form that released drama from its constricted poetic conventions and it is also considered verse without rhyme which also makes us to force this distinction between blank verse and free verse. Blank verse is not actually free verse and free verse, there is no specified syllable count or meter but in blank verse followed a particular kind of meter known as iambic pentameter which we will be shortly taking a look at and it is iamb means weak syllable followed by a strong word. This is also in tune with the way English language is spoken but with stresses, with stressed and non-stressed syllable. And Gorboduc the tragedy, one of the first English tragedies to be ever produced, this is credited to have perfected the use of blank verse during the, and Gorboduc, the first ever English tragedy to be produced is said to have perfected the use of blank verse

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from the Elizabethan times onwards and Shakespeare is another important figure who continued to use blank verse whenever there was a poetic rendering in any of his plays. So that brings us to this question

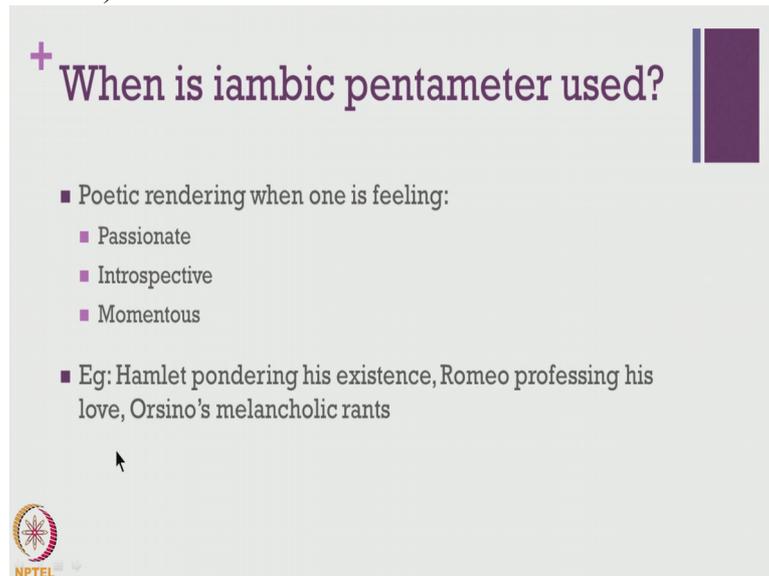
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### + What is iambic pentameter?

- A line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short or unstressed syllable followed by a long or stressed syllable
- Meter – regularized rhythm where the accented syllables occur at regular intervals
- Penta - five

what is iambic pentameter? It is a line of verse with five metrical feet each consisting of one short or unstressed syllable followed by a long or stressed syllable. So that leads us to this question what is the meter then? Meter is a regularized rhythm where the accented syllable occurs at regular intervals. And penta means five, so iambic pentameter is a regular occurrence of stressed syllable within a single verse.

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**+ When is iambic pentameter used?**

- Poetic rendering when one is feeling:
  - Passionate
  - Introspective
  - Momentous
- Eg: Hamlet pondering his existence, Romeo professing his love, Orsino's melancholic rants



So when is iambic pentameter used? And we note that in the poetic rendition whenever the characters plays certain important moments in his life; when he is feeling passionate, when the character is feeling introspective or if the character is feeling momentous, we will find the character resorting to a verse in iambic pentameter. This finds its perfection in many of the Shakespeare's plays, in fact certain famous instances include Hamlet when he is pondering his existence or Romeo professing his love for Juliet or when Orsino is lovesick and he is giving out these melancholic rants, we find all of them are using

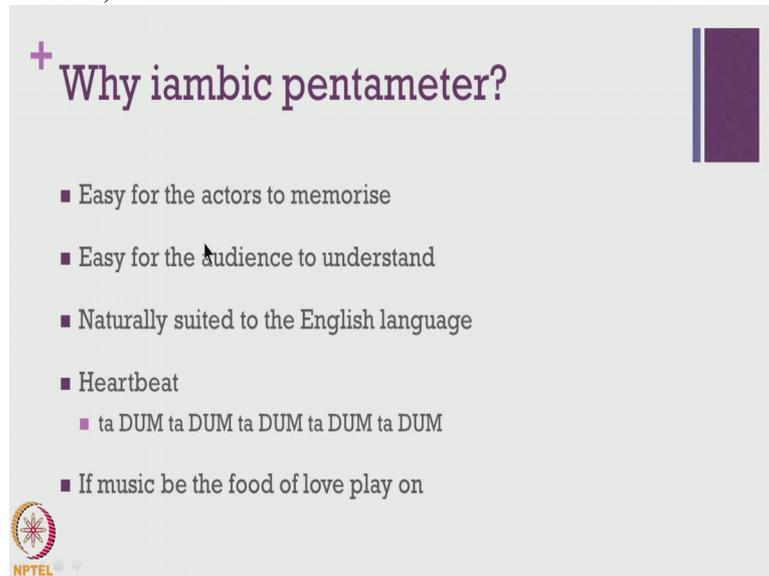
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iambic pentameter to express their feelings; and why iambic pentameter and not any other kind of verse? In fact from the Elizabethan times onwards we realize that iambic we realize

that blank verse perhaps is the most important technical term that gets used over and over again whenever verse is getting talked about. Many Elizabethan dramatists

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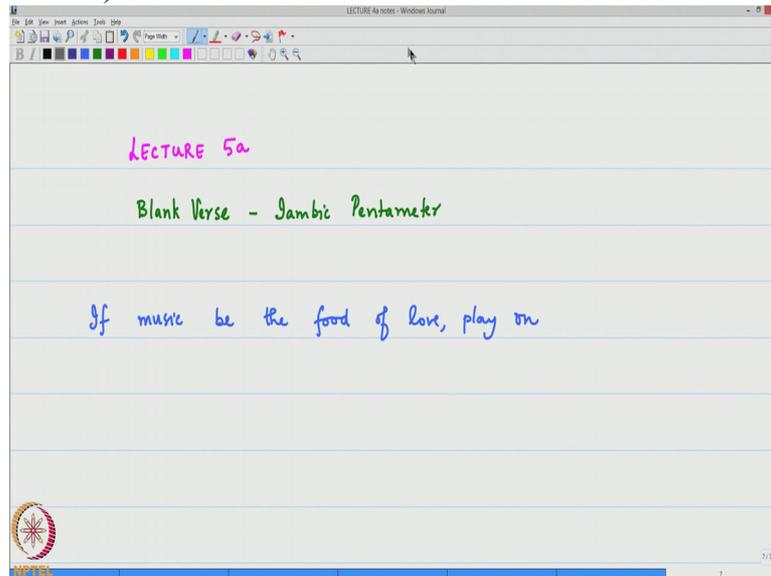
**+ Why iambic pentameter?**

- Easy for the actors to memorise
- Easy for the audience to understand
- Naturally suited to the English language
- Heartbeat
  - ta DUM ta DUM ta DUM ta DUM
- If music be the food of love play on



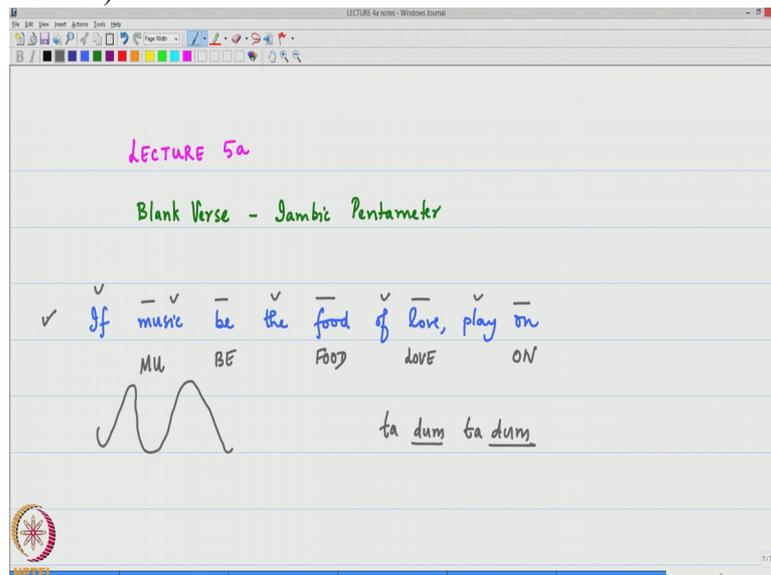
and later significantly Shakespeare, they resort to iambic pentameter because it was very easy for the actors to memorize it because it had a certain rhythmic structure to it and it was easy for the audience to understand as well. Because the metrical structure and the rhythmic pattern was not complicated at all like it was in the other classical forms. And the structure of this was also naturally suited to the English language. In that sense it was quite easy for people to talk, quite easy for people to engage with this because it was quite similar to that of the language structure of English itself. And this is common analogy being made for iambic pentameter with the heartbeat itself, in the sense that there is this general assumption that perhaps initially we resorted to iambic pentameter because it is the same way that the heart beats with a certain rhythmic structure like ta dum ta dum ta dum ta dum. There is a weak syllable followed by a strong syllable and this verse from Shakespeare's Twelfth Night "If music be the food of love, play on", this is in fact the most quoted examples of iambic pentameter. We will quickly take a look at how the iambic pentameter

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analysis could be done. So in iambic pentameter as we noted earlier, we have stress syllable followed by non-stressed syllable just like it is in English language, yeah. So If music be the food of love, play on. So if we try to reproduce it in a different way it would be like there are certain syllables which are getting stressed. If music be the food of love, play on and we also find that there is a falling rhythm and a rising rhythm, a falling rhythm and a rising rhythm, so it goes like that just like a heartbeat ta dum ta dum, yeah. So this blank verse was quite popular in that sense,

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it also made a lot of sense for the audience, for the actors and also for the dramatists to express particular kind of emotions and to convey particular kinds of things.

So this digression aside, let's come back to the main topic of the day on university wits.  
Having noted

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the significance and influence of blank verse, it is time for us to come back to the main topic on university wits and wind up our discussion on there. So as we sum up, let's look at some of the speculations and observations that have been historically and literally prevalent about the university wits in general. There is the general conjecture

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A presentation slide with a light gray background and a purple vertical bar on the right. The title is '+ Some speculations, observations' in purple. Below the title is a bulleted list in purple. An NPTEL logo is in the bottom left corner.

- The **early deaths** of Greene, Marlowe and Kyd – 1590s
  - Died very young in the middle of promising careers
  - Their reputation and talent – disputes, biographical inaccuracies
  - Were they 'fronts' for court writers? – real or proxies?

that the early deaths of Robert Greene, Marlowe and Kyd especially in the 1590s, all of them they die very, an early death in the 1590s at the peak of their career and we note that they all had faced a different kinds of trials and tribulations towards the end of their dramatic career and they were quite promising in terms of their literary output. And we find that the early

deaths were often shrouded in mystery as well and many theories float around as to what constituted those deaths, what constituted their early withdrawal from the dramatic scenes

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and so on and so forth. And the reputation and talent, they also continued to be of huge interest and curiosity and there is this theory of whether they were all real writers or whether they were proxying for another Court figure. We should not go into the details of that but this is just to draw your attention to the fact that there are different kinds of studies, different kinds of researches happening about the university wits especially in the present century. And there is this argument

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A presentation slide with a light gray background. At the top left, there is a purple plus sign followed by the title 'Some speculations, observations' in a purple serif font. To the right of the title is a vertical purple bar. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points. The first point is 'The early deaths of Greene, Marlowe and Kyd - 1590s' and is followed by three sub-points: 'Died very young in the middle of promising careers', 'Their reputation and talent - disputes, biographical inaccuracies', and 'Were they 'fronts' for court writers? - real or proxies?'. The second point is 'Left the playwriting field free for Shakespeare to occupy?'. The third point is 'No other actor-dramatists of note besides Shakespeare'. In the bottom left corner, there is a small circular logo with a star and the text 'NPTEL'.

that some of the historians which could be true to a certain extent as well and it is generally assumed that maybe the early deaths or the early withdrawal of some of them from the

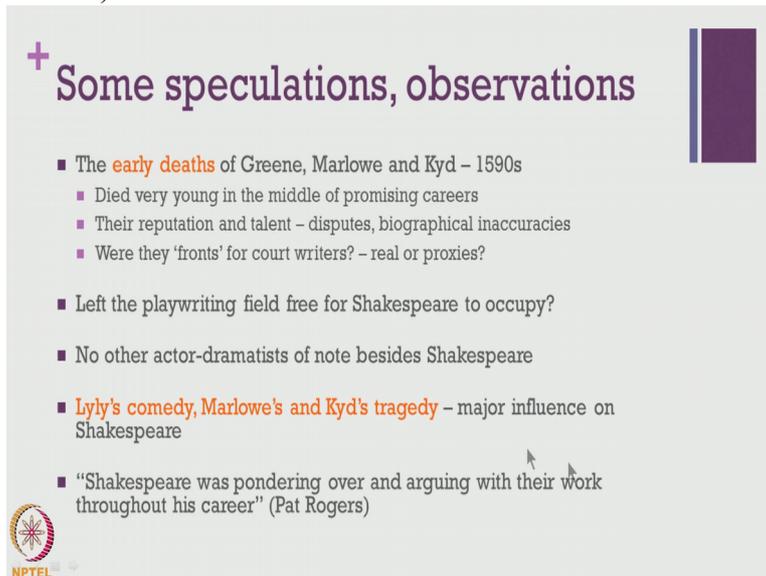
political scene has left the dramatic scene of London quite free for Shakespeare. So when he arrived in London, this was one of the earliest mentions of Shakespeare in the London dramatic scene

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is what we find in Robert Greene's pamphlet as we noted earlier. This is in 1592. And we also note that by fifteen, in the earlier 1590s, all of these writers, they either withdraw to seclusion or they die. And as we noted it is only Thomas Nashe who continues to write until 1599, so when Shakespeare arrives in London with the dream of pursuing a career in drama and theatre, we find that there are no other competitors in place for him other than the university wits. So perhaps this we had it in place for him in such a way that the playfield was made quite free for Shakespeare to emerge and to flower and to enjoy and reap a lot of success. And apart from the university wits, now the interesting thing to be noted is that there is no other noted dramatist other than Shakespeare

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**+ Some speculations, observations**

- The **early deaths** of Greene, Marlowe and Kyd – 1590s
  - Died very young in the middle of promising careers
  - Their reputation and talent – disputes, biographical inaccuracies
  - Were they 'fronts' for court writers? – real or proxies?
- Left the playwriting field free for Shakespeare to occupy?
- No other actor-dramatists of note besides Shakespeare
- **Lyly's comedy, Marlowe's and Kyd's tragedy** – major influence on Shakespeare
- "Shakespeare was pondering over and arguing with their work throughout his career" (Pat Rogers)

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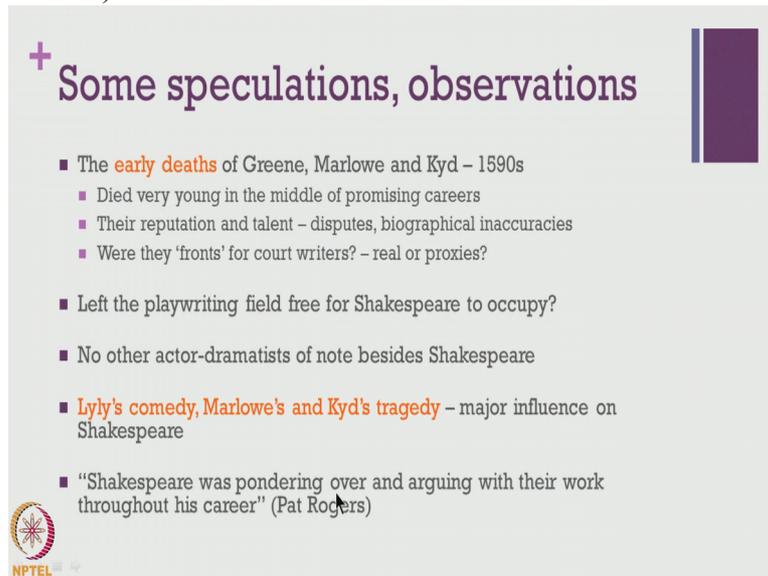
And also Lyly's comedy, Marlowe's and Kyd's tragedy, it had a profound influence on the way Shakespeare continued to write, so in that sense even after Lyly, Marlowe and Kyd had ceased to exist and continue, they had stopped writing, in Shakespeare's play we do find a certain kind of a shadow of all of these university wits lingering on. This is more evident in the detailed analysis of the plays which were done at a later stage

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especially in terms of comparative analysis. Pat Rogers has a very interesting observation to make which I think would sum up the influence that these university wits had on Shakespeare. He says

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**+ Some speculations, observations**

- The **early deaths** of Greene, Marlowe and Kyd – 1590s
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Shakespeare was pondering over and arguing with their work throughout his career. In that sense, it's impossible to understand Shakespeare's dramatic genius

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and Shakespeare's literary career without understanding what they university wits were doing, who they were, what kind of influence they exerted and what kind of social life they lived So we find that Shakespeare's work is in fact a continuing dialog with the predecessor, with the predecessors namely the university wits and in the next session we will be taking the look at the man himself, William Shakespeare but this is all we have for today's lecture. Thank you for listening and see you in the next class.