

History of English Language and Literature
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Lecture No 7a
The Jacobean Age (Continued)

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Hello and welcome to the today's session of the course, History of English Language and Literature. Today's lecture is a continuation of the previous lecture on the Jacobean age. So we continue looking at Jacobean England and the chief features which distinctly made it different from the previous and the preceding ages.

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+ Jacobean England

From
Trevelyan

- Permanent expansion of the English race overseas - James I
 - Colonies in Virginia, New England and West Indian Islands – Barbados, coast of 'Hindoostan'
 - The first requisite - Peace

- Govt. maintained the conditions (peace and sovereignty) – private enterprises supplied the initiative, money and men (ships and equipment) – Promoters (nobles, wealthy subjects)
 - Trading companies – to distant parts of the world
 - London companies – financed and organized the migration (eg: Virginia company)
 - The Hundred Years' War – the first instinctive gesture to reduce France to an English province

- Created a permanent market for English goods
 - Products of the New World – eg: tobacco plantations in Virginia

The East India Company - 1600

We begin to see that in Jacobean age, there is a continuous expansion of the English race overseas and under James the First we find England making the stride economically and

politically, and the inaugurations we remember were made even during the Elizabethan times. So we find England establishing colonies in Virginia, in New England and also in the West Indian islands of Barbados and also we notice that the coast of Hindoostan also becomes a major colony of the, of Britain during those times and this is particularly important for us, India being one of the foremost colonies of Britain during those times.

And we notice in the earlier session itself that the primary prerequisite for making such long strides economically and politically was peace. And James the First ensured just that when he made peace with Spain and other neighboring states as soon as he assumed the crown of England. And during this period it is important to note that the government maintained the conditions which were necessary for this colonial expansion, peace and sovereignty were guaranteed by the government and the private enterprises, they supplied this initiative if (()) is necessary for undertaking such vast projects and vast enterprises overseas. They provided with manual labor and also with ships and equipment.

And there were also these set of people known as promoters who were mostly men

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from noble families and also the wealthy subjects during the, under James the First reign. So they provided all the necessary resources in order to successfully undertake these projects and enterprises abroad. And we

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also notice that lot of companies had emerged in London during this time and these trading companies, they financed and organized the migration of English people to these different colonies which were getting established.

For example we note the significance of Virginia Company which was one of the leading companies of those times. And many historians at a later point have begun to notice that, without the support of these trading companies England may not have been able to undertake such a huge enterprise, such a huge colonial enterprise during the, from the early seventeenth century onwards. And Trevelyan has got this interesting point to make, about making connections with the Hundred Years' War and the later colonial expansive mode that England was in.

He notices that, perhaps there was an instinctive gesture made by England even during the Hundred Years' War by trying to reduce France to an English province. Though that

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was an unsuccessful attempt we do find that the seeds were germinating from then onwards and it successfully brings about a kind of fruition from the Elizabethan times onwards. And we also find that England makes lot of smart moves economically.

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+ Jacobean England From Trevelyan

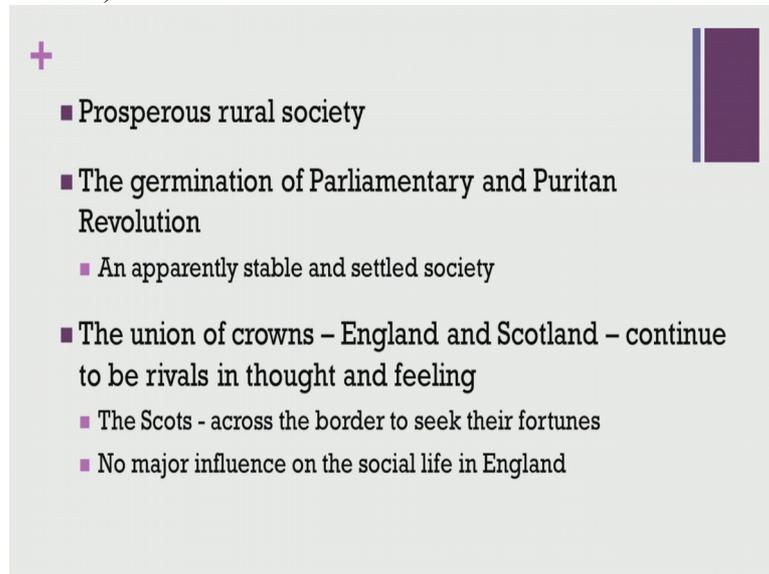
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They are, create permanent markets for English goods in all their colonies and also we notice that the products of the new world were much appreciated, example there were lot of tobacco plantations in Virginia during that time which were quite popular as well.

And as an aside, quick note about East India Company which was established with the Charter of the Queen Elizabeth in 1600. Interestingly currently it is owned an Indian

entrepreneur and also this is particularly interesting because the media reported it as an act of redemption given the 200 years of colonial history that England had under Britain.

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- Prosperous rural society
- The germination of Parliamentary and Puritan Revolution
 - An apparently stable and settled society
- The union of crowns – England and Scotland – continue to be rivals in thought and feeling
 - The Scots - across the border to seek their fortunes
 - No major influence on the social life in England

And moving on, Jacobean England was very prosperous rural society as well. It was not just based on the townships and Trevelyan also notes that the typical English man had not yet, not yet become a entire town's person. He was also partly rooted in the countryside, his roots were still in different modes of agricultural and different pastoral modes.

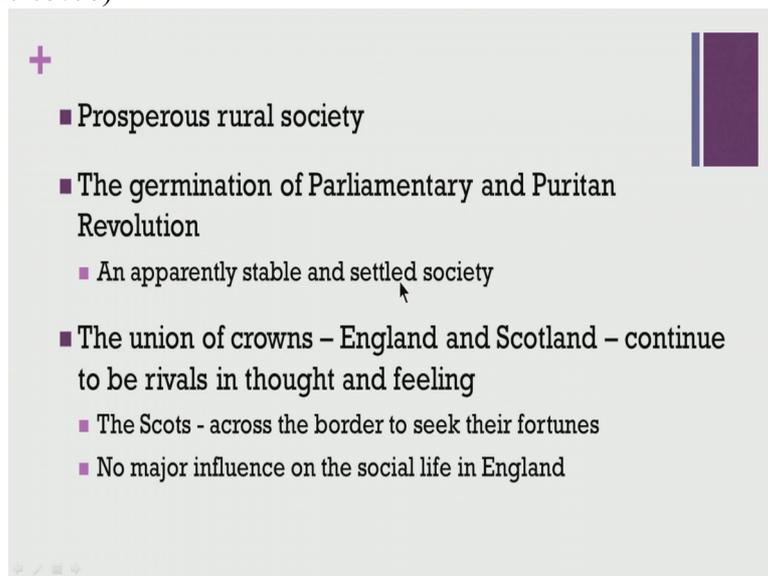
And we also find germination of the parliamentary and Puritan Revolution happening during the same time under King James the First. But in spite of this, Trevelyan notes that there was perhaps an illusion of an apparently stable and settled society which we notice during the Jacobean times and we find that the case was not just the same when we witness the Cromwellian Revolution at a later stage under Charles First rule. And the union of crowns was a significant political move where England and Scotland came under the

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same king, King James the Sixth of Scotland and James First of England.

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And however they continued to be rivals in thought and feeling

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in England and Scotland at least for another century. We do not find them coming together for any kind of joint enterprises. And initially when James the First moved to England, we find that a lot of nobles and lot of adventurers and lot of people seeking a better fortune, they had moved along with him to the island of England but however that was, we do not find a major exchange of population taking place after that because of this. This union of these dynasties had very little influence on the social life of the England in the seventeenth century.

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+ Colonial expansion

- Patriotic and Religious motives:
 - In part Self-regarding and economic and in part ideal and religious
 - To obtain land
- 1630-1643 — 200,000 Pounds — 20,000 people to New England in 200 ships + 40,000 more emigrants to Virginia and other colonies

So colonial expansion is said to have had multiple motives. It was partly patriotic, it was partly religious, there was also this ideal element of trying to civilize the people who were less fortunate and less civilized than Britain was then. And Trevelyan also notes that this colonial expansive mode and the motives that regarded, it was part self regarding and

economic and in part ideal and religious. So it was a mixture of this that made England's moves successful in most of the distant lands. And also there were these set of people who set out to these distant lands in search of a better fortune

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in order to obtain land, buy land and also to make a better life for themselves. And they were many who chose to leave England because they were feeling increasingly oppressed under the monarchy, under the lot of changing religious systems in spite of the secular and free spirit that the Elizabethan and later the Jacobean England promised. Since the spirit of Reformation and Renaissance were running really high, they also wanted to look for greener pastures.

And to understand the gravity of this situation and to understand the enormity of the kind of investments which were being made

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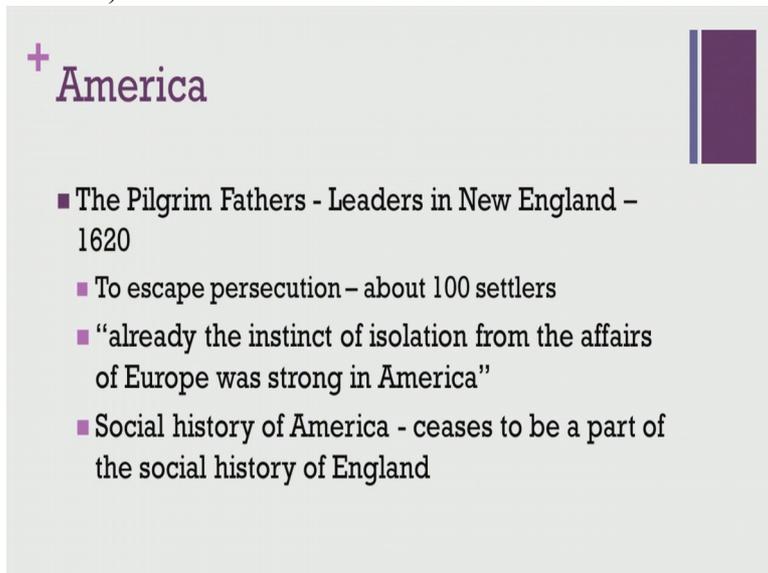


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it is significant to note that, between 1630 and 1643 about two hundred thousand pounds were invested only for the colonial expansion and statistics tells us that about twenty thousand people moved to New England in about 200 ships around the same time, and another forty thousand followed to Virginia and other colonies as emigrants. And we also notice the kind of implications that colonialism had not just in England but also in other parts of the world where we are familiar with other social and world histories.

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+ America

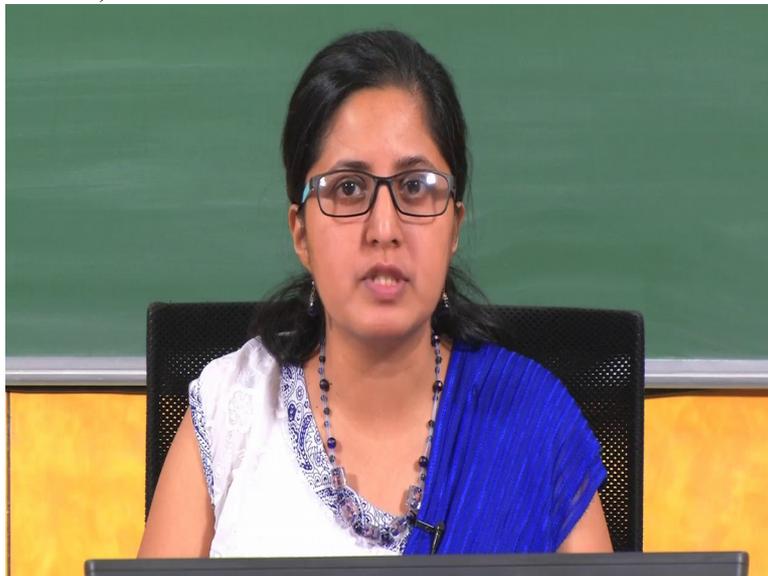
- The Pilgrim Fathers - Leaders in New England – 1620
 - To escape persecution – about 100 settlers
 - “already the instinct of isolation from the affairs of Europe was strong in America”
 - Social history of America - ceases to be a part of the social history of England

And this was the time which became very significant in the history of America as well. If you are familiar with little bit of world history, you would also know that the the Pilgrim Fathers who were the leaders in the colony New England they were the ones who left for the land which we know as America in the 1620s, the primary objective was to escape religious

prosecution. Initially only about 100 settlers decided to migrate and they were also known as the Pilgrim Fathers and some historians note that already the instinct of isolation from the affairs of Europe was strong in America.

So in that sense we do not find England and America interacting much socially, culturally, economically or politically for many centuries to come and we also notice that the social history of America around this time ceases to be the part of social history of England. Given that they had a shared history until a point of

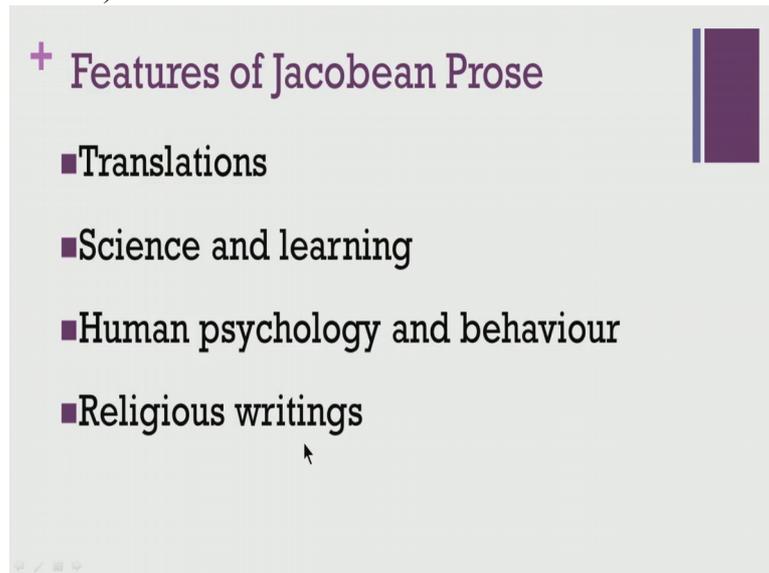
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time, it is important to note this divorce that happens at this point of time, particularly due to religious reasons and also this is triggered interestingly by the colonial ambitions which were initiated by Queen Elizabeth and later by King James the First.

So now we come to look at the major literary features of this time. We noted in the earlier session as well that there was flourishing poetry, prose and drama, though in comparison to the Elizabethan period it was in a steady state of decline. And

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what were the major features of Jacobean prose?

There were lot of translations which were getting prevalent, the availability of printing press, the knowledge of different languages and the scholarly inputs made it quite easy and also popular to translate the various texts available in the other languages into English. There was also a lot of growing readership for this new translations and we also find a lot of books coming out

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in terms of science and learning, because this was the age of Renaissance and people had a lot of interest in knowing more about what new scientific methods were and also knowing about

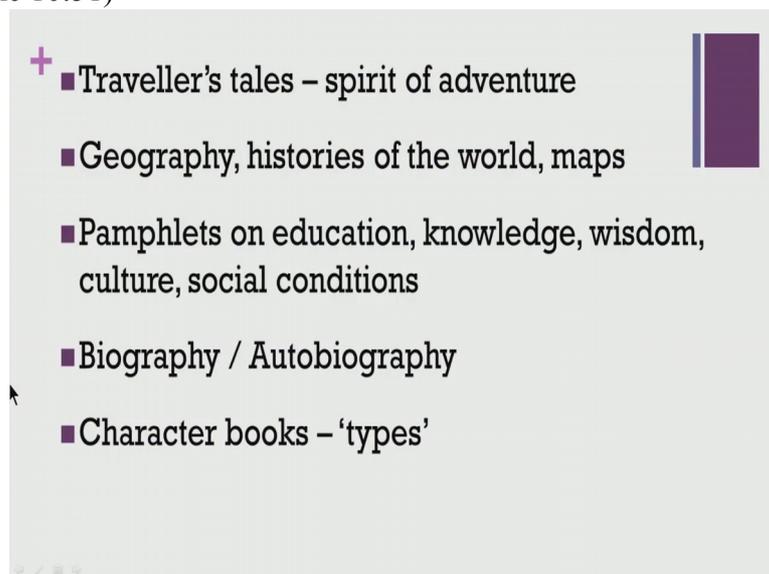
the other scientific innovations and other scientific theories which were being put forward by, from other countries and other provinces.

And we also find the English people getting more and more interested in human psychology and behavior. We find this getting reflected in the dramatic tendencies of the time. If you notice and we would also come back to it when we talk about the Jacobean drama, we begin to notice that most of the plays of those times including the later plays of William Shakespeare, they explored human emotions and they tried to delve deeper into the human psychology and understand what hidden desires and the other kinds of motives that triggered particular kinds of emotions or led people to particular kind of violent and undesirable acts.

So we do find this sort of interest in human behavior catching more and more in the coming ages even leading to uh more scientific and more concern and interest in psychology in general. And this was also the time when religious writings flourished. And religious writings did not, were from a different nature than that of the medieval times. They did not, they were not always sacred in nature. They also encouraged a lot of arguments. They encouraged a lot of questioning and also tried to bring religion and religious discussions closer to the common man.

And keeping in tune with the spirit of adventure and the spirit of colonialism, a lot

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- + ■ Traveller's tales – spirit of adventure
 - Geography, histories of the world, maps
 - Pamphlets on education, knowledge, wisdom, culture, social conditions
 - Biography / Autobiography
 - Character books – ‘types’

of travelogues were also getting produced. This perhaps is the age which inaugurated the celebration of travel writing. And we also find works in geography, histories of the world

particularly because many English adventurers were travelling to other distant lands and they always had interesting things to tell the others. So they always came up with book soon after their travels and this was much appreciated and even the English common man was quite desiring to go to these distant lands and if one could not undertake

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these trips they derived a kind of vicarious pleasure by reading the books written by these adventurers and the travellers. And this is also the age when maps become very popular. Also this is seen as a significant invention and a big move in terms of traveling, in terms of new adventures to distant lands etc.

And we also find a lot of pamphlets on education, knowledge, wisdom, culture and social conditions and this is not just of a nature of a chronicle. We also find the writers insightfully critiquing the conditions that they see not just in England and also the different cultural and different social context that they encounter during their travels or even during the many trades and cultural, many trades and other exchanges with other people in the other lands. And this is the age which sees the beginning of biography or autobiography as a separate genre and we also find people taking interest in real lives and recording real lives for posterity.

And this age also sees the beginning of kind of books known as character books. We find the people writing about particular kinds of character what perhaps triggered particular kinds of behavior etc. We find the reflection of this in Ben Jonson's drama as well at a later point.

Perhaps

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+ Authorized Version of the Bible

- The English Bible – the Authorized version – King James' Bible – 1607-1611
- Forty seven scholars – of the Church of England
 - 1769 – extensively re-edited by Benjamin Blayney at Oxford (today's KJV)
- Climax of a long series of earlier translations – 1535, 1568
 - In response to the problems of the earlier translations

the supreme achievement of this period was the authorized version of the Bible undertaken by King James the First. As we, as we noted in the earlier session itself he was quite a learned person. He was scholar; he had the kind of learning which was quite rare among princes so he undertakes this major mission which becomes his supreme achievement as well. And this was a huge project that lasted for a few years from 1607 till 1611.

This was commissioned to a group of 47 scholars all of whom who belonged to the Church of England and this was, the present King James Version as we know it today, it was extensively edited at a later point in the 1769 by Benjamin Blayney at the Oxford. So currently when we talk about the King James Version, we talk about this Oxford version which was edited in 1769 and the edition which came out in 1611 under commission of King James the First, this was in fact the climax of the long series of earlier translations.

In 1535, King Henry the Eighth had tried to compile a translation which was perfect and by 1568 we also find the Bishop's version coming into place. But however there were lot of complaints about the earlier translations and many Puritans especially had identified a lot of problems with the earlier translations. So this project was undertaken in response to these complaints and also to bring about a kind of uniformity in the way in which the

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Bible can be standardized and disseminated.

-We find that there is a remarkable diversity in the way this work is done

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- Diversity - collection of different books composed at different times by many hands - expository, narrative and lyrical
- Unity and uniformity
- Expository portions, narrative portions, lyrical portions
- Influence in literature – Bunyan, Ruskin, Macaulay, Milton, Tennyson

and this is also, this is also noted by many literary historians and even Biblical historians at various points of time that this collection had come together amazingly well given that it was composed of different books, composed at different times by many hands. And the narration was also of expository nature, of narrative nature and also of lyrical nature. This is the first time perhaps Bible also begins to be seen as a literary work. And even today King James Version is considered as, not just as religious text but also as a work which has got supreme literary and cultural value.

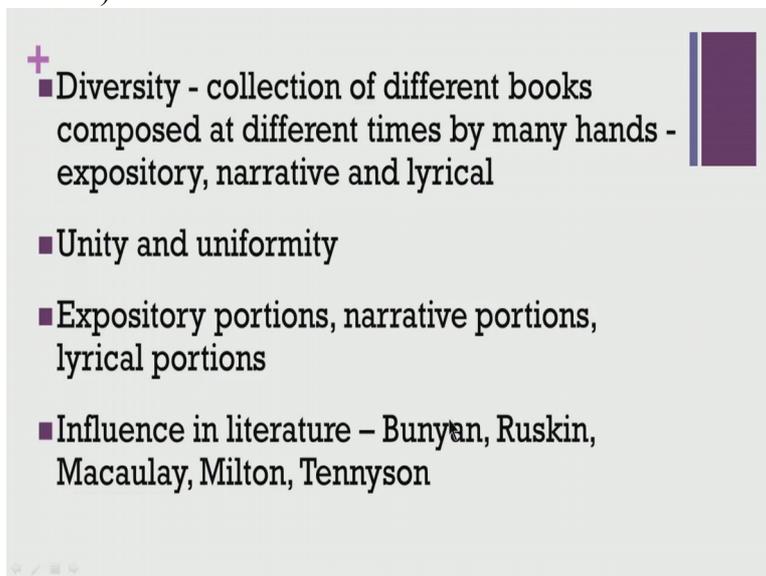
This also ensured that there is unity and uniformity

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among, within (()). So in that sense he is also credited, King James the First is also credited alleviated many of the problems, liturgical and theological problems that existed in terms of various versions of the Bible. After the authorized version came out, this work Bible is said to have influenced many literary writers at different points of time. For instance we may now

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remember John Bunyan, Ruskin, Macaulay, Milton and Tennyson who all belonged to different literary ages and have all acknowledged the supreme influence that Bible had in their, in their literary productions and also in the

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influence of their particular kinds of schools of thought.

Now we come to look at the important prose writers of the period. Francis Bacon undoubtedly is the most

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+Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

- Elizabethan and Jacobean eras
- Diverse topics and interests, one of the founders of modern systematic thought
 - 'Wrote in Latin and English – considered Latin more important
- Essays – 1597 / 1625 (59 pieces)
 - Essays on familiar subjects – learning, studies, vainglory, great place
 - The term essay borrowed from the French writer Montaigne
 - The first edition 1597 – ten pieces
 - The final edition, 1625 – fifty-nine pieces
 - Essay on Education – intended as a gift to James I

A small portrait of Francis Bacon, showing him from the chest up. He is wearing a dark cap and a white ruff collar. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right.

important one of this time and he belongs to in fact both the eras, to the Elizabethan and the Jacobean era and in that sense it is a little difficult to situate him to one particular era. So we also find him displaying the traits of both Elizabethan and Jacobean period. He dealt with varied topics and his range is quite interesting and he is considered as one of the founders of modern systematic thought. He wrote in Latin and in English and interestingly he found Latin more powerful for literary transmission and he also thought

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that Latin is going to be the language of the future.

And the most

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+Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

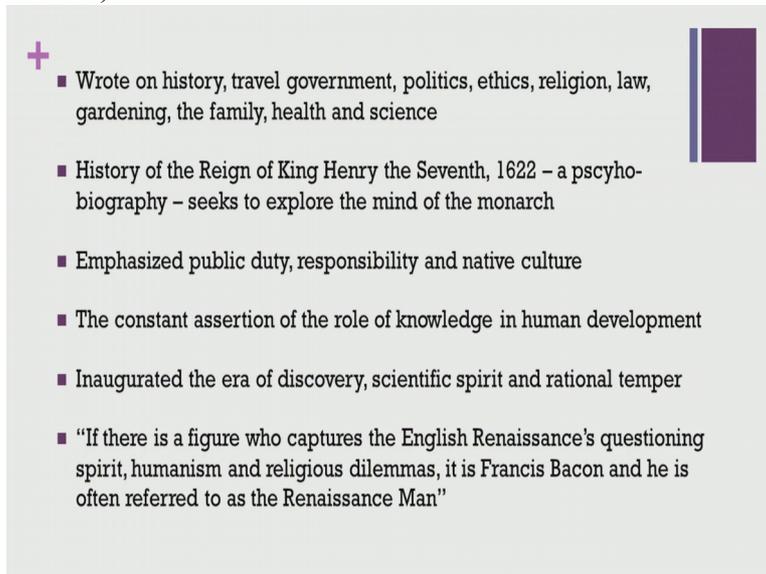
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A small, square portrait of Francis Bacon, showing him from the chest up. He is wearing a dark, high-collared garment and a black hat with a white band. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the left.

important of his works is known as The Essays. It is in fact a collection of essays which bears the same title Essays and altogether we have about 59 pieces in this collection that he had brought out. And most of these essays were on familiar subjects, on learning, studies, vain glory, great place. So the range was quite impressive. And the term essay he had borrowed from the French writer Montaigne who was very popular during those times and if you recall, the translations had made most of these foreign languages and foreign text quite accessible to the English public. The first edition of this work, it had come out in 1597 and it had only 10 pieces and also to be noted that the first edition had come out during the Elizabethan time and the final edition of this came out in 1625, when the final edition had come out in 1625 during

the Jacobean period with 59 essay pieces and all of these, and particularly one essay on education, he was, he had intended to give this to James the First as a token and as a tribute.

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- Wrote on history, travel government, politics, ethics, religion, law, gardening, the family, health and science
- History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh, 1622 – a psycho-biography – seeks to explore the mind of the monarch
- Emphasized public duty, responsibility and native culture
- The constant assertion of the role of knowledge in human development
- Inaugurated the era of discovery, scientific spirit and rational temper
- “If there is a figure who captures the English Renaissance’s questioning spirit, humanism and religious dilemmas, it is Francis Bacon and he is often referred to as the Renaissance Man”

And talking a little bit more about Bacon's works he wrote widely and extensively on a range of topics such as history, travel, government, politics, ethics, religion, law, gardening, family, health, science, one could in fact go on. If you are familiar with Bacon's essays you would know that he had written about almost everything under the sun. And couple of other works are particularly of interest to us. He had written a history of the reign of King Henry the Seventh. This was published in 1622 and this is considered as a psycho-biography given that he sought to explore the mind of the monarch, mind of the monarch Henry the Seventh in this work. And he also had emphasized public duty, responsibility and native culture in many of his works and we also find him exemplifying all of these qualities during the Jacobean time. And in his writings and also in his personality we find a constant assertion of the role of knowledge in human development. This was also keeping in tune with the spirit of humanism and the spirit of Renaissance which was prevalent during the times. He is said to have inaugurated the era of discovery, scientific spirit and rational temper.

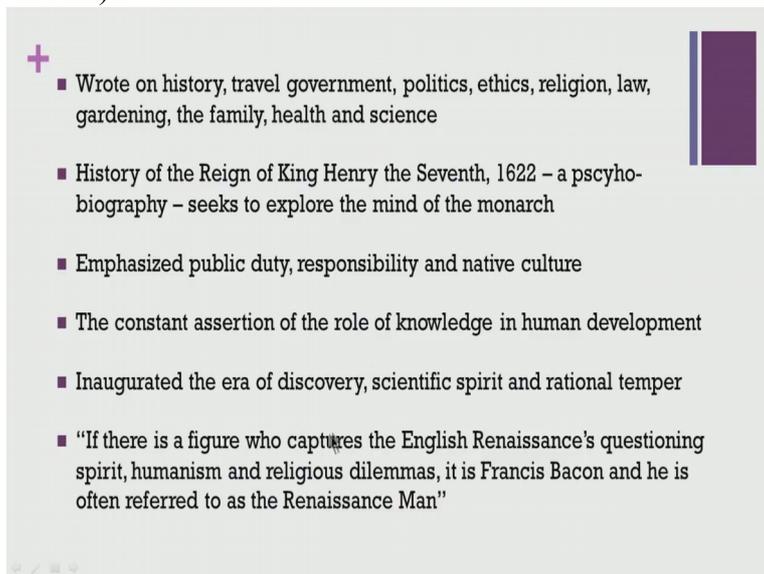
Again we note

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that many of the things which were happening geographically and politically had immensely influenced the writers and the writings of those period. And this is something which is usually said about Francis Bacon,

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- Wrote on history, travel government, politics, ethics, religion, law, gardening, the family, health and science
- History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh, 1622 – a psycho-biography – seeks to explore the mind of the monarch
- Emphasized public duty, responsibility and native culture
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"If there is a figure who captures the English Renaissance's questioning spirit, humanism and religious dilemmas it is Francis Bacon and he is often referred to as the Renaissance man. So historians and literary critics equally

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consider him very important because he personified what Renaissance spirit was and he showed through his writings and through his life what exactly the spirit of Renaissance stood for.

Another important figure

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+ Robert Burton (1577-1640)

- The Anatomy of Melancholy – 1621 – very popular
- Catalogues human follies, full of scientific rhetoric sensational and dramatic stories and mock-seriousness also, a medical slant
- Irony and self-conscious mockery
 - “If it were possible, I would have such priests as should imitate Christ, charitable lawyers should love their neighbours as themselves, temperate and moderate physicians, politicians condemn the world, philosophers should know themselves, noblemen live honestly, tradesmen leave lying and cozening, magistrates corruption, etc, but this is impossible, I must get such as I may”



is that of Robert Burton. He is most famous for his work, The Anatomy of Melancholy which was published in 1621 and his work was hugely popular during those times. And in this one we find him cataloging human follies and it is also full of rhetoric and scientific temper and he includes lot of dramatic stories in it and there is also a mock seriousness built into it. And in that, another interesting thing is that he also had included a medical slant into his work, in

the sense this work would be compared with the *Religio Medici* which was published a little later. And he indulged in a lot of irony and self-conscious mockery in his work.

Say if I can quote from one of his works, here is this bit that he talks about when he talks about the prevailing occupations of those times and how most of them were inherently corrupt. If it were possible, I would have such priest as should imitate Christ, charitable lawyers should love their neighbors as themselves, temperate and moderate physicians, politicians condemn the world, philosophers should know themselves, noblemen live honestly, tradesmen leave lying and cozening, magistrates corruption etc. But this is impossible. I must get such as I may.

So we find him critiquing not just the society but

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also the particular kinds of people and professions around him and even more importantly he is self-critical too.

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+ Major prose writers

- Joseph Hall – *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, 1608
- Thomas Fuller – *The History of the Holy Warre*, 1639 (Crusades)
- Fulke Greville's *Life of Sidney* – 1625
- John Donne's sermons – introspection and autobiographical questioning
 - Eg: "If I accuse myself of original sin, wilt thou ask me if I know what original sin is? I know not enough of it to satisfy others, but I know enough to condemn myself, and to solicit thee" (*Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, 1624)
 - After Shakespeare created the largest number of nautical images in his work
- Richard Haklyut, Samuel Purchas – the first documents on English colonialism, geographical imagery
 - A body of writing that embody English ideas about other nations and England itself

The other major prose writers of the period include Joseph Hall whose supreme work was *Characters of Virtues and Vices* published in 1608 and we have Thomas Fuller who wrote the history of *The Holy War* in 1639. This is a very detailed account of the Holy Crusades undertaken by the Catholic Church and in terms of biography this work is of supreme importance. Fulke Greville's *Life of Sidney* which was published in 1625, we noted in one of the earlier sessions was, Sidney was hugely popular figure during those times and he was not just a literary icon. He was also a cultural icon. He was born into the noble family. He was considered as the perfect English gentleman. So his biography was hugely

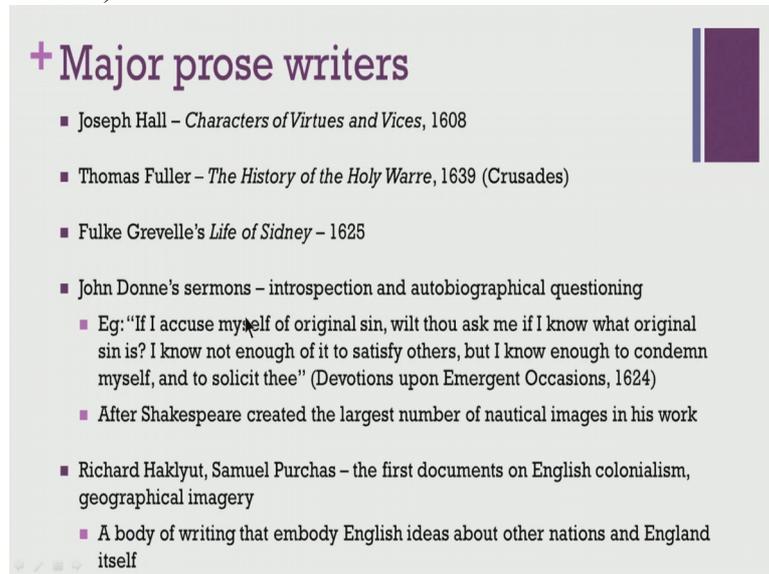
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popular and many were, it said that people always vie to get a copy of their own.

And John Donne's Sermons were also supreme importance. John Donne, we will shortly see, he was also a renowned poet of those times. He was also

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a preacher and his sermons which were of introspective and autobiographical nature. It was hugely popular during those times and many of the sermons were printed and published during his own lifetime. And here let me quote from one of the oft-quoted passages from his sermon "If I accuse myself of original sin, wilt thou ask me if I know what original sin is? I know not enough of it to satisfy others, but I know enough to condemn myself, and to solicit thee" This is an extract from *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* published in 1624.

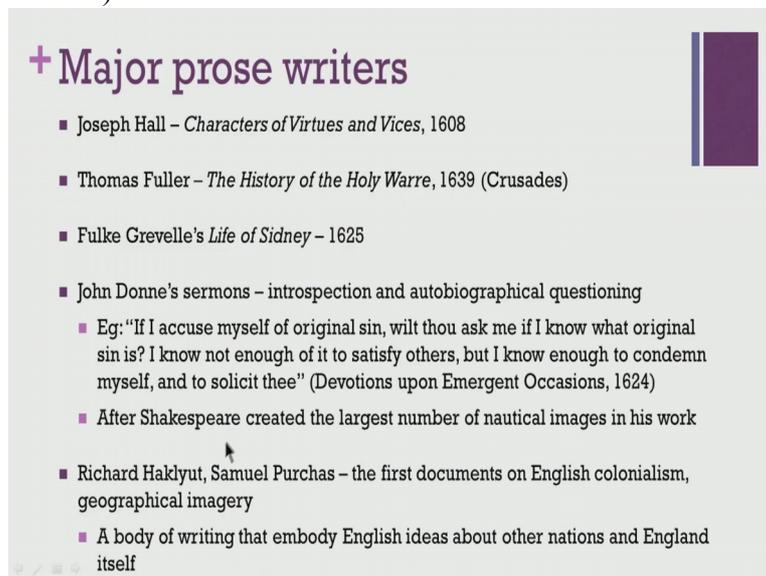
And this was also an instance in which we see that religion becomes, religion ceases to be the sole property of church establishments but also

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there is an element of self questioning and there is an element of criticism getting built into theological discussions. This also makes it more humane and more accessible to the common man and also religion becomes not just an institution but it becomes a more private and emotional affair from this point of time onwards. And it is said about

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+ Major prose writers

- Joseph Hall – *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, 1608
- Thomas Fuller – *The History of the Holy Warre*, 1639 (Crusades)
- Fulke Greville's *Life of Sidney* – 1625
- John Donne's sermons – introspection and autobiographical questioning
 - Eg: "If I accuse myself of original sin, wilt thou ask me if I know what original sin is? I know not enough of it to satisfy others, but I know enough to condemn myself, and to solicit thee" (*Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, 1624)
 - After Shakespeare created the largest number of nautical images in his work
- Richard Haklyut, Samuel Purchas – the first documents on English colonialism, geographical imagery
 - A body of writing that embody English ideas about other nations and England itself

John Donne that after Shakespeare, he is the one who created the largest number of nautical images in his work.

The other important figures were Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas. Richard Hakluyt also belonged to, simultaneously belonged to two different ages. And both of them together, they have said to have published the first available documents on English colonialism and we also

find a lot of geographical imagery dominating many of their works. And they are credited to have produced a body of writing that embody English ideas about other nations and England itself. And we do find the spirit of colonialism and the spirit of this expansion running high through most of these writings and also informing the tendencies and informing the

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determinants and principles of writings, the choice of themes etc.

Now we come to talk about poetry. In poetry there were two major kinds of, major groups of people who dominated it,

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A presentation slide with a light gray background. The title is '+ Poetry: 'Spenserians' & the 'Metaphysicals'' in a purple font. Below the title is a list of bullet points, each starting with a purple square. The slide also features a purple vertical bar on the right side and a mouse cursor pointing at the word 'Spenserians' in the title.

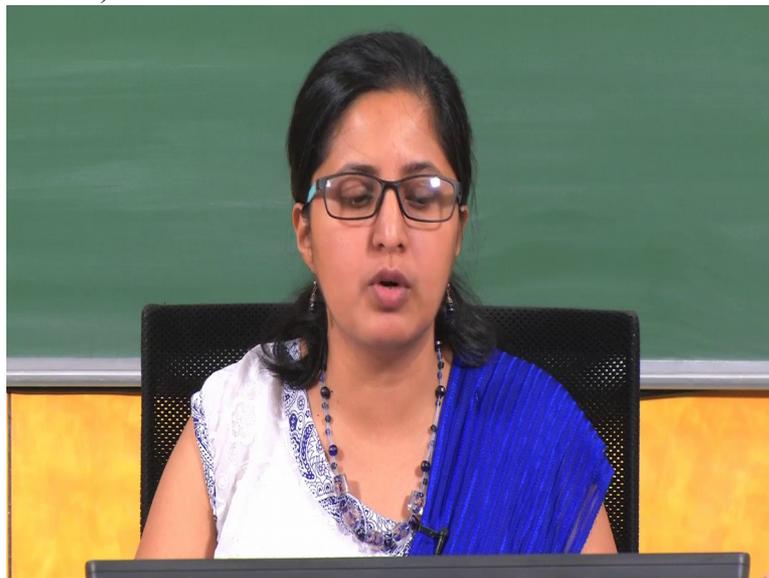
- Indebted to the pastoral tradition of Edmund Spenser
- John Donne and others – affecting the 'metaphysics'
- Ben Jonson – difficult to classify (mainly a satirist and dramatist)
 - Odes, songs and epigrammatic verse
 - Included songs and poems in his plays
 - Poems – more like definitions

firstly the Spenserians and secondly the group of poets loosely known as the Metaphysicals. The Spenserians were almost like the Chaucerians of the earlier period. They tried to imitate Spenser and we find that they were all indebted to the pastoral tradition popularized by

Edmund Spenser and the Metaphysical poets included John Donne and a few others. And they were called Metaphysicals because they affected the Metaphysics, what it is we will be seeing shortly.

And there was also Ben Jonson who did not fit into any category. Ben Jonson is considered as a difficult writer to classify because he is a satire, he is a poet, he is a satirist, he is a dramatist all

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rolled into one and he had this

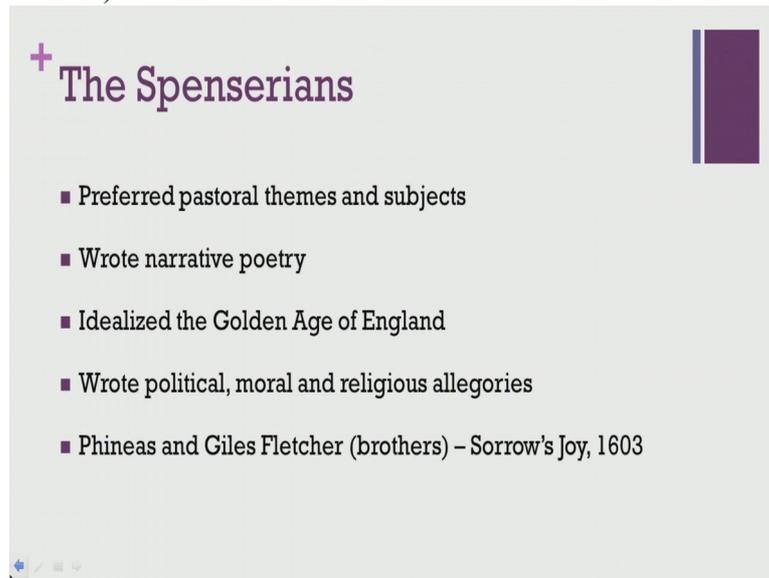
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+ Poetry:
'Spenserians' & the 'Metaphysicals'

- Indebted to the pastoral tradition of Edmund Spenser
- John Donne and others – affecting the 'metaphysics'
- Ben Jonson – difficult to classify (mainly a satirist and dramatist)
 - Odes, songs and epigrammatic verse
 - Included songs and poems in his plays
 - Poems – more like definitions

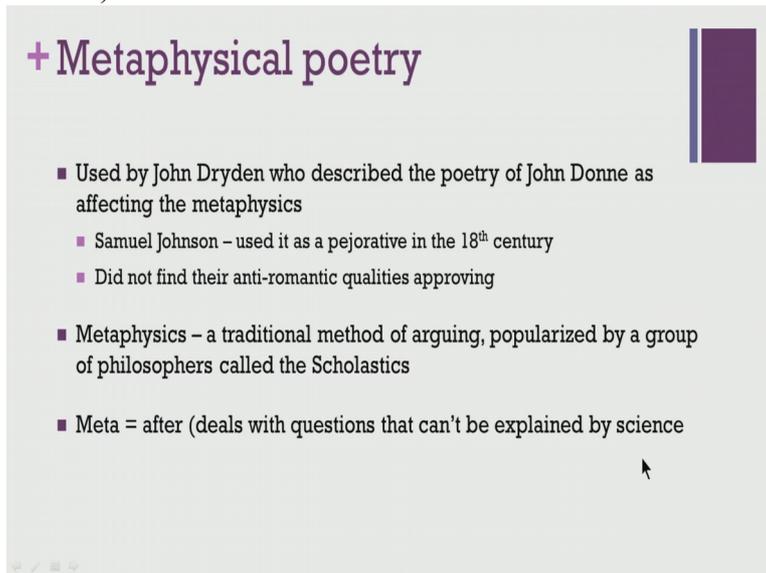
particular tendency to, to include odes, songs and poems in his plays and he also had composed many epigrammatic verse. His poems, they were not of the Elizabethan lyric quality, they were not of the Jacobean quality either. They were more like definition. So in that sense it becomes difficult to classify Ben Jonson and we will be taking a closer and detailed look at him when we talk about Jacobean drama at later point.

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So what kind of poetry did the Spenserians write? They preferred pastoral themes and subjects and they also predominantly wrote narrative poetry and they had this tendency to idealize the Golden Age of England. They were set of poets who were still living in the past and also being very nostalgic about the age which had just passed by. They also wrote political, moral and religious allegories keeping in tune with the spirit of the times but we find them mostly in an emotional sense located in the Elizabethan times rather than in the Jacobean times. And two of the prominent ones, two of the prominent writers of this Spenserian poetry were Phineas and Giles Fletcher who were also brothers. Their poem together The Sorrow's Joy was quite popular during the early seventeenth century.

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+ Metaphysical poetry

- Used by John Dryden who described the poetry of John Donne as affecting the metaphysics
 - Samuel Johnson – used it as a pejorative in the 18th century
 - Did not find their anti-romantic qualities approving
- Metaphysics – a traditional method of arguing, popularized by a group of philosophers called the Scholastics
- Meta = after (deals with questions that can't be explained by science)

Now we come to look at what metaphysical poetry is. The term metaphysical poetry was not at all used during the Jacobean times. It was used much later by John Dryden who used this term to loosely describe a group of poets along with John Donne. And he thought that these were the set of poets who affected the metaphysics. And what exactly is metaphysics? It is a traditional method of arguing, it was popularized by group of philosophers called as scholastics and meta means after. And this poetry dealt with questions that cannot be explained by science. In that sense they were all loosely called as the metaphysicals and Samuel Johnson at a later point, he used it in a not so commendable sense. He used it as a pejorative in the eighteenth century because he did not find their anti-Romantic qualities quite approving. However later on with the Modernist arrival and with T. S. Eliot we find the metaphysical poetry getting a revival and there is a renewed interest in studying metaphysical poetry

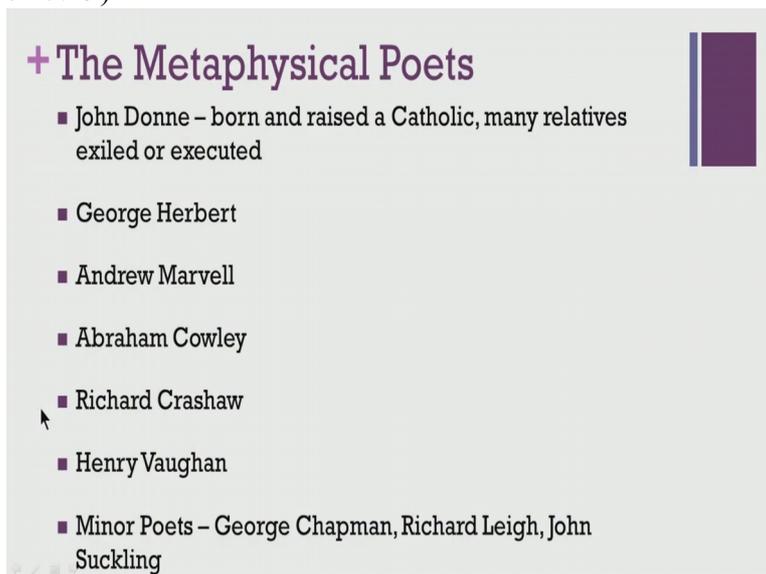
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at a later point as well.

But coming to the details of it, who were the

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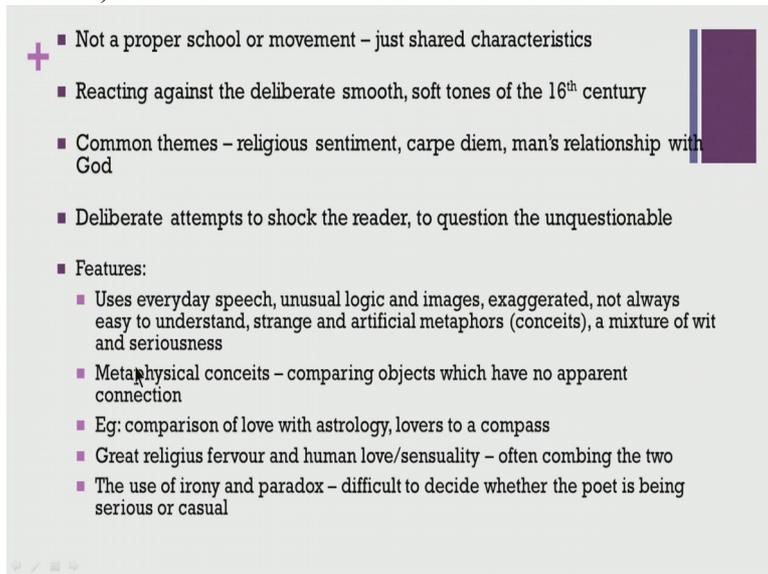
+ The Metaphysical Poets

- John Donne – born and raised a Catholic, many relatives exiled or executed
- George Herbert
- Andrew Marvell
- Abraham Cowley
- Richard Crashaw
- Henry Vaughan
- Minor Poets – George Chapman, Richard Leigh, John Suckling

metaphysical poets? It was John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan and a few minor poets like George Chapman, Richard Leigh and John Suckling. And John Donne was the most important figure. He was the leader of the metaphysical poets if one could put it like that. He was born and raised a Catholic in Protestant England and many of his relatives were exiled or executed. But surprisingly enough we also find him producing a lot of religious writings during this time. We noted that he was a preacher and he also had produced some of the best known works of metaphysical poetry during this time.

And detailed look at all of these writers we shall be doing at later point

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- 
- Not a proper school or movement – just shared characteristics
 - Reacting against the deliberate smooth, soft tones of the 16th century
 - Common themes – religious sentiment, carpe diem, man's relationship with God
 - Deliberate attempts to shock the reader, to question the unquestionable
 - Features:
 - Uses everyday speech, unusual logic and images, exaggerated, not always easy to understand, strange and artificial metaphors (conceits), a mixture of wit and seriousness
 - Metaphysical conceits – comparing objects which have no apparent connection
 - Eg: comparison of love with astrology, lovers to a compass
 - Great religious fervour and human love/sensuality – often combining the two
 - The use of irony and paradox – difficult to decide whether the poet is being serious or casual

but right now we will take a quick look at some of their common characteristics or features. This was not a proper school or a movement. They only had some shared characteristics which led other critics to put them all together. There is no evidence like the University Wits that they were all working together or they had a shared agenda. It just happens so that they all happened to write in a particular, during a particular time in almost similar ways. They were all reacting against the deliberate smooth and soft tones of sixteenth century poetry.

So in that sense they were in stark contrast with the Spenserians who were living, leading a nostalgic kind of life and writing nostalgic poetry imitating Edmund Spenser. Here there were a group of poets who were trying to break away from the traditions which were getting established. And most of their common themes were religious sentiments, carpe diem and also man's relationship with God and we find them engaging with these themes through different kinds of innovative treatment. They also tried to deliberately shock the reader and to question the unquestionable. Some of their important features include they use everyday speech in their, in their poetry so we do not find it exactly poetic in the conventional sense. There is a use of unusual logic and images, most of the images are also exaggerated and they are not always easy to understand. It is more scholarly in nature. There are also these images used from different kinds of sources which are not always familiar to the readers. We find them using a particular kind of thing known as conceit which were strange and artificial metaphors, in fact metaphysical conceit is the most defining feature of the metaphysical poetry. There is also a mixture of wit and seriousness built into his poems.

And metaphysical conceit is nothing but the comparison of objects which have no particular connection, no particular obvious connection, for example there is this poem which compares love with astrology and also another poem which compares lovers to a compass. So in that sense there are lot of these unconventional and

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innovative kind of images which are being built into poetry. Most of these poets were also quite religious in nature. We noted in the beginning, let's re-iterate, John Donne was also a preacher and he had a lot of religious fervor. So we,

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- Not a proper school or movement – just shared characteristics
- Reacting against the deliberate smooth, soft tones of the 16th century
- Common themes – religious sentiment, carpe diem, man's relationship with God
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 - The use of irony and paradox – difficult to decide whether the poet is being serious or casual

most of these writers shared passion for religion and also for human love and sensuality and we find them strangely combining both of these together to produce quite innovative effects. And many of them used irony and paradox in their works and in some context it was also

quite difficult to decide whether the poet is being sarcastic or the poet is being serious or casual, so that was the kind of humor and wit that was built into these kind

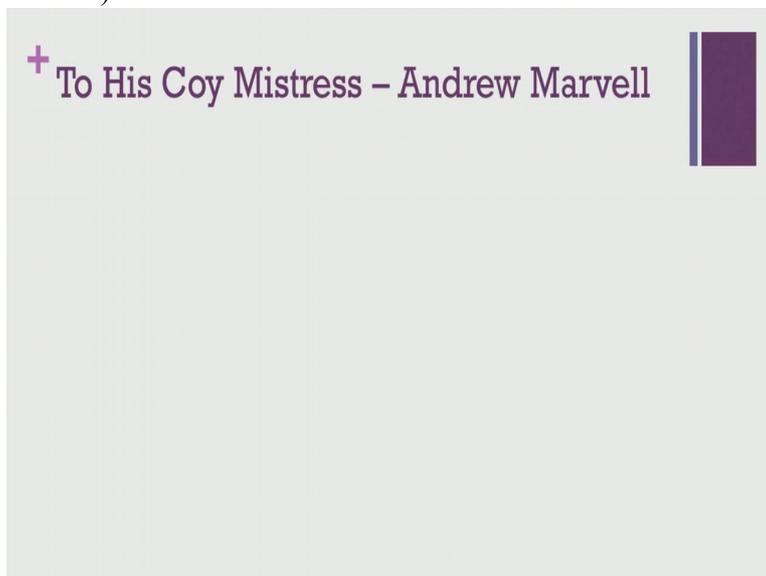
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of poetry.

As and when we wind up, allow me

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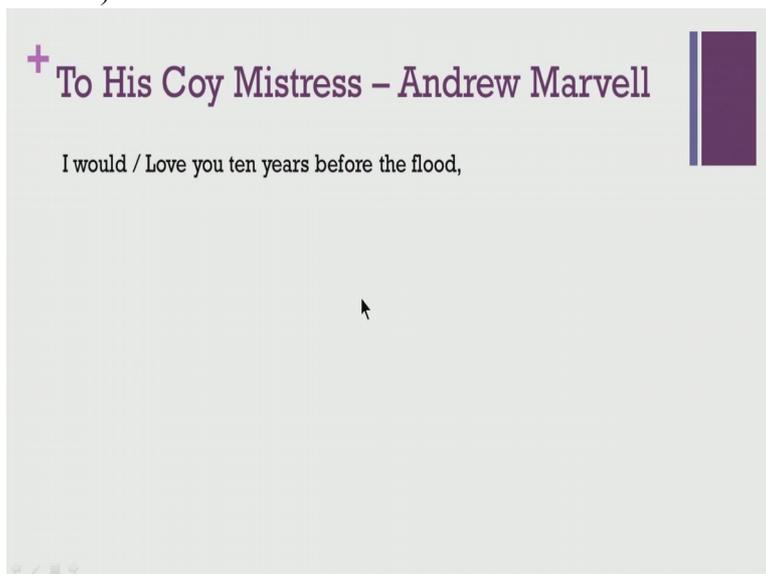
to leave you with a poem by Andrew Marvell To his Coy Mistress. This would perhaps give you a taste of what metaphysical poetry was like and

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show you how different and how unconventional the poetry was during those times. So here goes

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To his Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell

"I would Love you ten years before the flood,

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The slide features a light gray background with a purple title and a purple vertical bar on the right. The text is centered and reads: '+ To His Coy Mistress – Andrew Marvell', 'I would / Love you ten years before the flood,', and 'And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews.' A mouse cursor is visible in the center of the slide.

And you should, if you please, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews.

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The slide features a light gray background with a purple title and a purple vertical bar on the right. The text is centered and reads: '+ To His Coy Mistress – Andrew Marvell', 'I would / Love you ten years before the flood,', 'And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews.', and 'My vegetable love should grow / Vaster than empires and more slow;'. A mouse cursor is visible in the center of the slide.

My vegetable love should grow

Vaster than empires and more slow;

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+ To His Coy Mistress – Andrew Marvell

I would / Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow / Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise / Thine eyes, and on thy forehead
gaze;

An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

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+ To His Coy Mistress – Andrew Marvell

I would / Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow / Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise / Thine eyes, and on thy forehead
gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, / But thirty thousand to the rest;

Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;

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+ To His Coy Mistress – Andrew Marvell

I would / Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow / Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise / Thine eyes, and on thy forehead
gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, / But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part, / And the last age should show your heart.

An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.

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+ To His Coy Mistress – Andrew Marvell

I would / Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow / Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise / Thine eyes, and on thy forehead
gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, / But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part, / And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state, / Nor would I love at lower rate.

For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

So with this we come to an end

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of today's session. We look forward to see you in the next session. Thank you for listening.