

History of English Language and Literature
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Lecture No 7b
Jacobean Drama

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Hello everyone. Let me welcome you all to yet another session of the NPTEL course History of English Language and Literature. Today's session we continue to look at Jacobean drama and we begin to see how this was different from the Elizabethan drama and what were the major characteristics and major traits that made Jacobean drama quite different from its predecessors.

So we all know that Jacobean drama gets its name after King James the First who was the ruler of Scotland and England during that time.

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+ King James I – The Jacobean Drama

- Granted Shakespeare's company a new appointment
- King's Servants and Grooms of the Chamber
- "The King's Men"
- Shakespeare's later plays (dark plays) – period of royal recognition and public success



The term Jacobean comes from the Latin name of James Jacobaeus, so one first thing perhaps that comes to our mind when we talk about Jacobean drama is about what had happened to William Shakespeare, the Elizabethan man at the beginning of

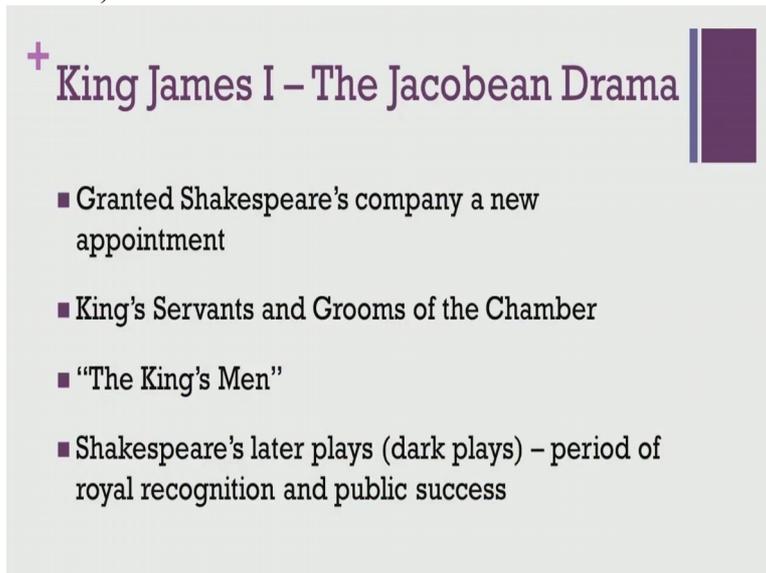
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Jacobean era. So we begin to note that Shakespeare's company itself underwent a change and things are quite successful and things are quite, things continued to be quite successful and positive for William Shakespeare even during the Jacobean times.

We begin to see that King James the First, he granted Shakespeare's

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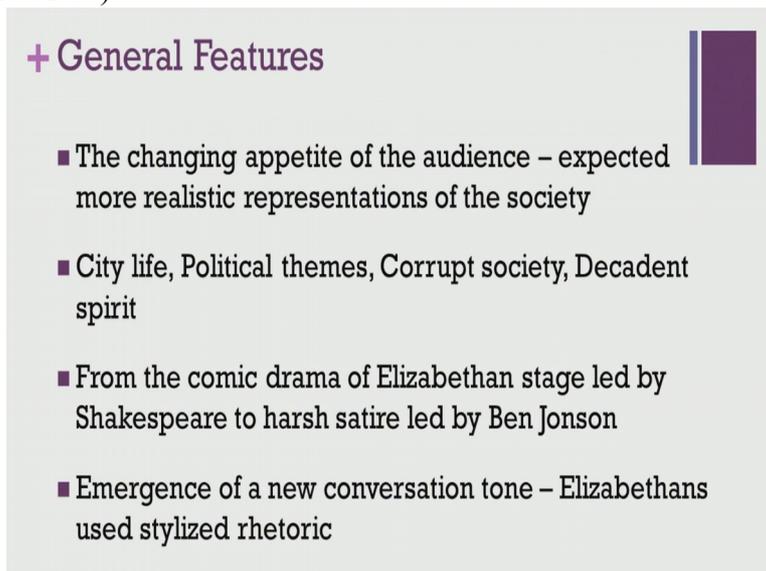


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company a new appointment and King, the Chamberlain's Men, the company that Shakespeare was associated with earlier era, they get re-appointed as King's servants and grooms of the Chamber and that's the company that we now know as the King's Men. And also we note that in the beginning of Jacobean era which was also the later phase of Shakespeare's works and his later plays especially known as the Dark Plays, they were staged during the time and he also continued to enjoy the period of royal recognition and public success.

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+ General Features

- The changing appetite of the audience – expected more realistic representations of the society
- City life, Political themes, Corrupt society, Decadent spirit
- From the comic drama of Elizabethan stage led by Shakespeare to harsh satire led by Ben Jonson
- Emergence of a new conversation tone – Elizabethans used stylized rhetoric

And moving on let us take a look at the general features of Jacobean drama which were quite different from that of the Elizabethan drama. We noted in one of the first sessions about Jacobean drama that Jacobean period was not radically different from the Elizabethan

period. It was the continuation of the English Renaissance which had quite inaugurated from the Elizabethan age onwards. But at the same time but when it comes to drama we see that there are significant changes that takes place and also those changes were in certain ways positive but also it led to a gradual decline which we begin to see at a later point in the Caroline age with the closure of theaters, with the English Revolution that comes into being. Coming back on the topic on the general features of the Jacobean drama, we notice that the appetite of the audience had begun to drastically change. It was keeping in tune with the contemporary situation of that period and they also expected realistic representations of the society that they were part of. So they did not want to see imagined stories on stage but they wanted

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to see a replica of what they were seeing all round the society and what the kind of like they were undergoing during that time.

In that sense, Jacobean drama was

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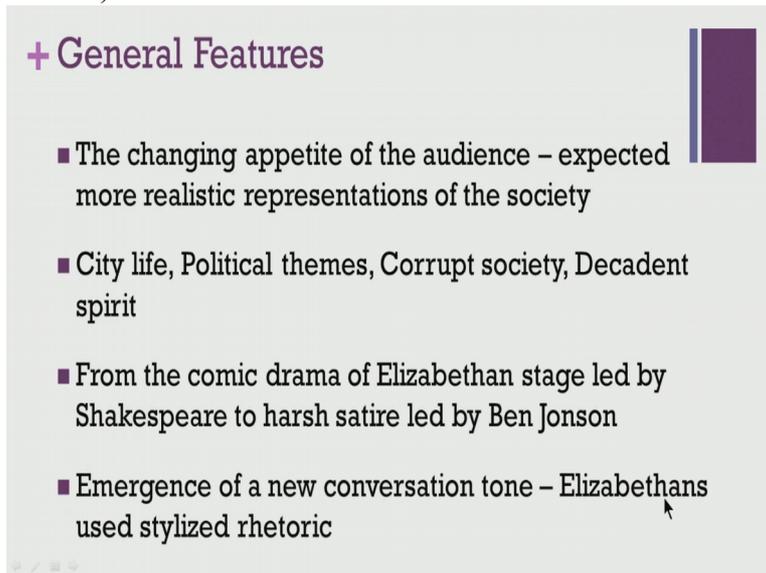
predominantly about city life and it focused on political themes. It also critiqued and also showcased the current society of the times. And the Decadent spirit dominated compared to that of the Elizabethan times. And we also see the transition from the comic drama of Elizabethan stage led by Shakespeare towards a harsh kind of satire led by Ben Jonson. So in that sense we begin to change in treatment, in theme, in subject matter and in the overall quality of drama

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and the overall reception of particular kinds

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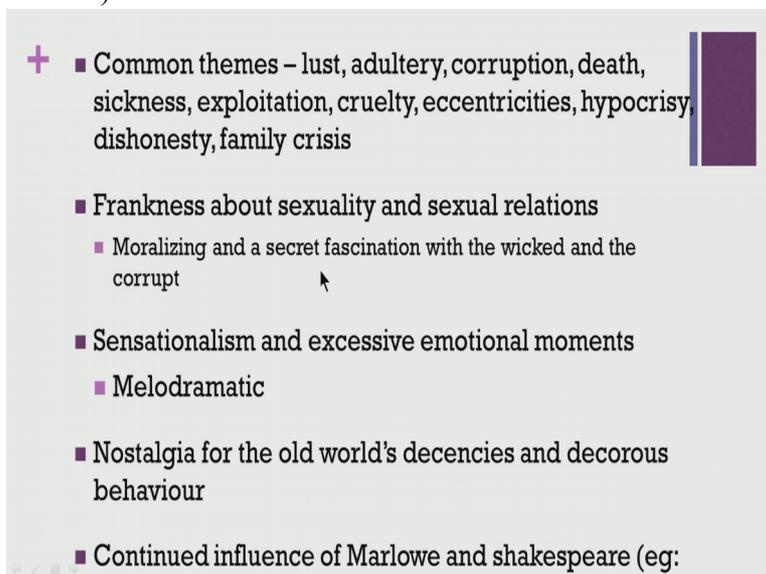
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of drama as well.

And we also find in terms of language a new conversation tone emerging during this time and this is in stark contrast to the Elizabeth period where on stage they mostly used stylized rhetoric.

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+ Common themes

- Common themes – lust, adultery, corruption, death, sickness, exploitation, cruelty, eccentricities, hypocrisy, dishonesty, family crisis
- Frankness about sexuality and sexual relations
 - Moralizing and a secret fascination with the wicked and the corrupt
- Sensationalism and excessive emotional moments
 - Melodramatic
- Nostalgia for the old world's decencies and decorous behaviour
- Continued influence of Marlowe and Shakespeare (eg:

And the common themes of this period continued to be quite different from that of the Elizabethan times. It included lust, adultery, corruption, death, sickness, exploitation, cruelty, eccentricities, hypocrisy and family crisis. So when we look at the themes we will begin to see how dark and cynical things were compared to the romantic Elizabethan times. And there

was also an increased frankness about sexuality and sexual relations. Many things continued to be

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taboo in terms of literary and dramatic expression but nevertheless we do find that, in spite of the moralizing tendencies of the Puritan period, that was about to follow, we find a secret fascination in the English people for the

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wicked and the corrupt things to be seen on stage.

So we find in that sense a very Decadent spirit dominating most of the performances and also the literary activities of the times. And we also find an increased sense of sensationalism and excessive emotional moments getting displayed on stage and this led to the term

melodramatic to be associated with Jacobean drama. And there was also a set of playwrights who were nostalgic about the old world's decencies and the decorous behavior of the Elizabethan times; we find them getting staged and getting displayed on the stage as well. And in that sense nevertheless we cannot say that there was a drastic change from the Elizabethan times. There were also a few playwrights who continued to be influenced by Marlowe and Shakespeare and continued to look at Shakespeare's and Marlowe's plays as perfect models. Dekker was one such playwright who continued to be influenced by the

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Elizabethan writers.

So let us take a look at the prominent playwrights of the Jacobean period. We have listed them in no particular order, Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, George Chapman, John Marston, Cyril Tourneur, John Day, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Heywood, John Webster, John Ford, Philip Massinger and James Shirley.

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+ On stage

- Exaggerated human situations (eg: ambition), extreme violence on stage
 - eg: The White Devil, Duchess of Malfi – highly intelligent characters – crimes and violence in pursuit of their ambition
 - Iago in Othello – the most notorious villain
 - King Lear's daughter tearing the old Gloucester's eyes out with a cry 'Out, vile jelly)
 - The Changeling: a murderer cutting off the finger of his victim because the ring he wants to steal won't come off

So what were these playwrights doing differently on stage? So on stage most of them used exaggerated human situations and we find that many of the otherwise commendable Renaissance emotions were seen as or were portrayed as quite ambitious and quite extravagant. And we do also find the staging of extreme violence on stage.

And some of the examples in the dramatic scene would be The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi; these plays in fact portray highly intelligent characters committing crimes and violence in pursuit of their ambition. So ambition we begin to

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see that in the Jacobean period, it was not always portrayed as a positive thing, it was also seen as a kind of a trait which accompanied violent behavior and also excessive selfishness. And Iago in Othello as we all know, he is the most notorious

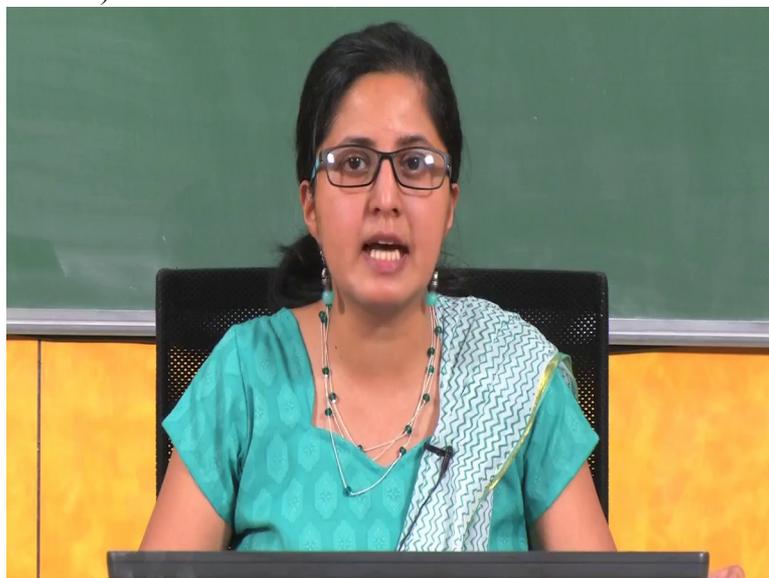
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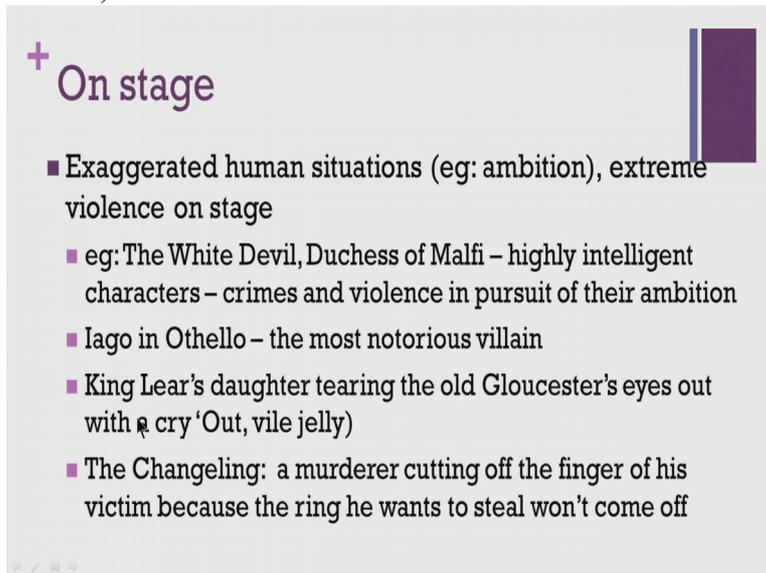
villain ever perhaps in the English drama. And Shakespeare's plays which explored the dark side

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of humans, it also was

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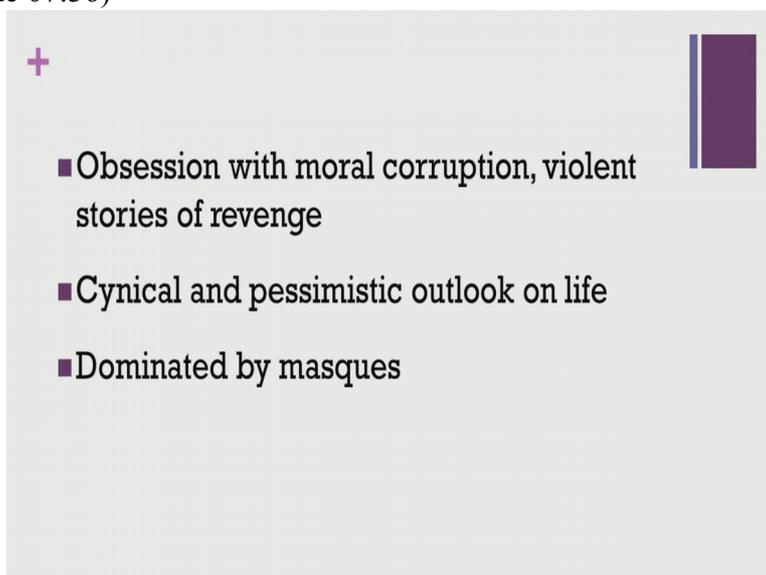
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product of this time.

And there were certain very violent and gory scenes which were depicted on stage such as the King Lear's daughter tearing the old Gloucester's eyes out and with this very gleeful cry out vile jelly. So this was seen as quite violent during those times but interestingly the people also, they were quite fascinated in watching these kind of scenes. And it is also this particular scene in the play The Changeling where the murderer had cut off the finger of the victim because the ring he wanted to steal was not easily coming off. So this, the stage was predominantly consisting of such kind of violent and

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- Obsession with moral corruption, violent stories of revenge
- Cynical and pessimistic outlook on life
- Dominated by masques

gory scenes.

There was also an obsession with moral corruption and violent stories of revenge were quite enjoyed by the audience. You see a display of cynical and pessimistic outlook on life and we also find that unlike the Elizabethan times, there is a domination of masques. And what masques are and what its characteristics are, we will be

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seeing shortly.

There were four major types of drama that dominated this period, revenge tragedy, city comedy, tragi-comedies and masques.

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Let us quickly take a look at what each of these means. Revenge tragedy was in the line of the Senecan tradition as we have noted as well. So it was bloody and violent and it also

included a lot of revenge plots on stage. And Shakespeare's Hamlet belongs to this particular type and

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we also find that the following plays were considered

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+ Major types

- Revenge tragedy
 - Senecan tradition, bloody and violent
 - Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
 - Middleton or Tourneur's – *The Revenge Tragedy*
 - Middleton – *Women Beware Women*
 - Webster – *The White Devil, The Duchess of Malfi*
 - Middleton and Rowley – *The Changeling*
 - John Ford – *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*

as significant revenge tragedies of the time. There is this play called The Revenge Tragedy which the author remains rather contested. One does not know whether it was authored by Middleton or by Tourneur. And Middleton's revenge tragedy Women Beware Women, Webster's The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi, Middleton and Rowley together had produced The Changeling and John Ford's Tis Pity She's a Whore.

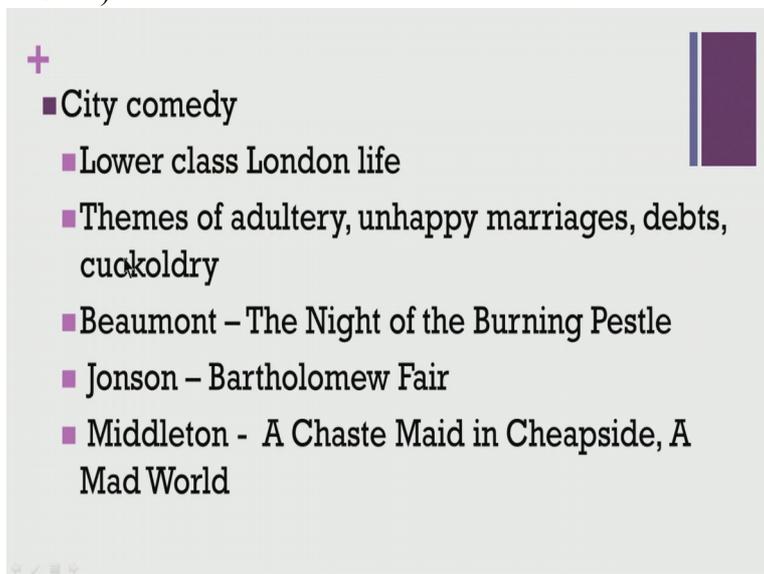
We will be taking a look at these particular playwrights in detail at a later point but however it is important

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to give these examples at the outset in order to differentiate

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these different types. The second type was city comedy which featured the lower class London life. It also comprised the themes of adultery, unhappy marriages, deaths and cuckoldry. And Beaumont and Jonson were two of the famous playwrights who dealt with the theme of city comedy. And we find that Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle and Jonson's Bartholomew Fair, they were quite popular during those times and Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside and A Mad World, they gave a very different kind of appeal to the genre of

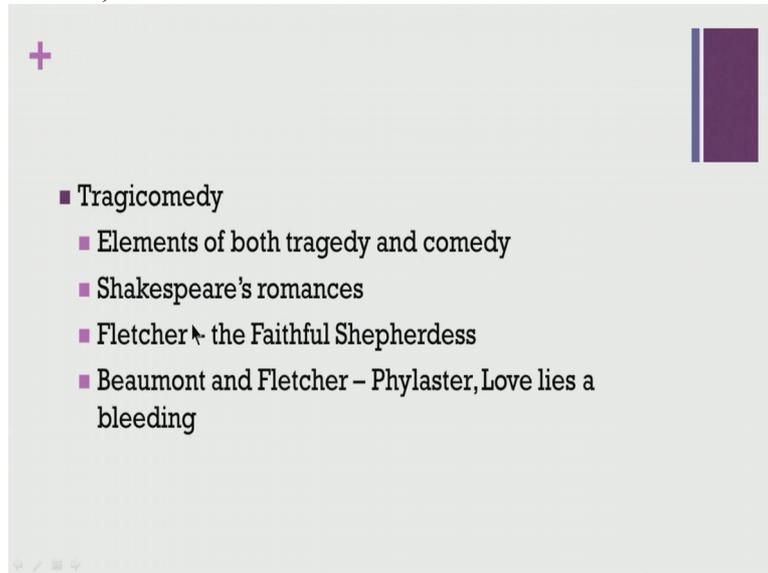
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city comedy.

Tragi-comedy was another interesting type which was also explored intensively by

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- Tragicomedy
 - Elements of both tragedy and comedy
 - Shakespeare's romances
 - Fletcher - the Faithful Shepherdess
 - Beaumont and Fletcher - Phylaster, Love lies a bleeding

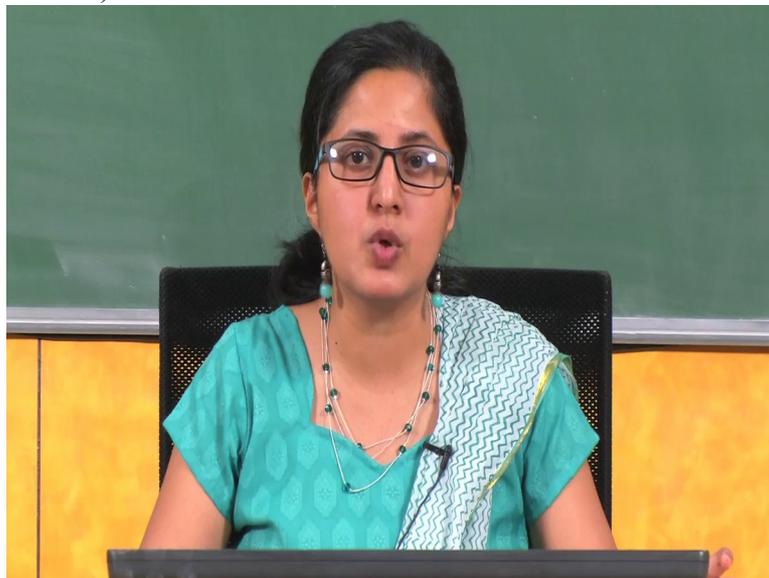
William Shakespeare himself. This combined the elements of both tragedy and comedy and in that sense quite different from the classical tradition. It was also a contribution of the Elizabethan Romantic times because that was the time when playwrights dared enough to combine the elements of tragedy and comedy. And most of Shakespeare's romances, they fall into this particular category and during the Jacobean times, Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess and the collaborative work by Beaumont and Fletcher together Phylaster which had an alternative title Love Lies a-Bleeding; it was also considered quite popular.

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- + ■ Masques
 - Performed in courts by amateur artists – courtiers
 - Semi-dramatic, part of festivities
 - Included songs, dances, elaborate settings (Earlier form – pageants?)
 - Ben Jonson
 - Before – John Lyly // After – John Milton

Masques were performed mostly within the courts and the artists were amateurs and they were also mostly courtiers. So we begin to see that the plays continues to be performed not just in the public playhouses but also within the court and it is also useful to remember that James the First

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also continued to be uh quite appreciative of these various kinds of performances

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within the court. And the masques were semi-dramatic in nature. They were also staged as part of festivities. And this included a more elaborate setting with songs, dances etc which could be part of any kind of celebration during the Jacobean times.

And if you remember, maybe we can identify an earlier form of the masques in the pageants which used to be staged right from the early and later medieval times onwards. Ben Jonson was perhaps the stalwart of this kind of masque during his lifetime and if we begin to ask who were the ones who wrote

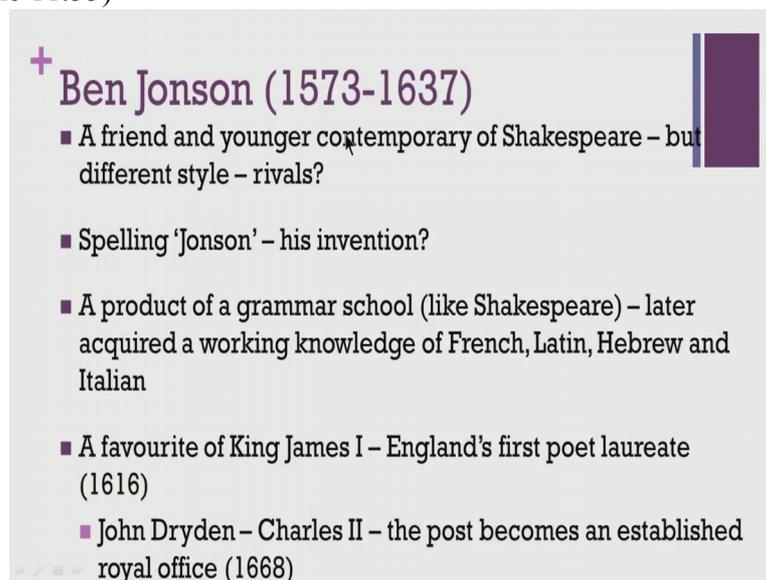
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masques earlier or after that, may it was John Lyly who came out with masques in the early Elizabethan times and also at later point we find John Milton also writing masques though they were not very popularly performed during that time.

Let us now continue to take a look at these playwrights in detail so that we get a sense of the kind of drama and the signs, the kind of drama and the kind of technique that they were using which made them radically different from that of the Elizabethan times. Ben Jonson lived

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+ Ben Jonson (1573-1637)

- A friend and younger contemporary of Shakespeare – but different style – rivals?
- Spelling 'Jonson' – his invention?
- A product of a grammar school (like Shakespeare) – later acquired a working knowledge of French, Latin, Hebrew and Italian
- A favourite of King James I – England's first poet laureate (1616)
 - John Dryden – Charles II – the post becomes an established royal office (1668)

from 1573 to 1637. He is perhaps the most important playwright of the Elizabethan/Jacobean times. We also saw in the previous session that he was a poet as well and it was very difficult to classify him into any kind of tradition or any kind of genre. So his versatility continued to be his

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major claim to fame throughout his

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lifetime. And we find that he was a friend and a younger contemporary of Shakespeare but their styles were very different and some even feel that they could have been rivals since they were both writing and performing during the same time in the Elizabethan period and even the early Jacobean period.

And spelling Jonson without an h, that was considered quite interesting earlier as in the contemporary and it is generally said that it was perhaps his own invention to drop the h from the name Johnson perhaps to look a little different. He was also a product of one of the Grammar schools of the times just like Shakespeare, he, there is no evidence that he went to a

university but however he later acquires a working knowledge of various languages such as French, Latin, Hebrew and Italian. He even undertakes translation at a later point and he is also heavily influenced by the tenets of Classicism unlike Shakespeare. He was a favorite of King James the First and that did grant him a lot of royal favors.

In that sense he is considered England's first poet laureate. He was appointed with this position in 1616. However in case of England we do not find his post becoming an established royal office until 1668 when Charles the Second appointed John Dryden as the Poet Laureate. And we also note that, because of this position that Jonson enjoyed in

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James the First court, for a long time he was granted a generous annual pension from the court. But at later point we do find a decline of fortunes in Jonson's life. He falls into poverty and ill-health and many reasons have been cited to

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- ✦ ■ Decline of fortunes, poverty, ill health
 - Personal library burned in 1623, out of favour with the court
 - Ridiculed for editing a folio of his 'Workes' – A model for Shakespeare's posthumous 'First Folio'
- Elevated plays alongside poems
 - Masques, poems, plays – same meticulous standard
 - Unheard of then, plays considered 'vulgar productions'
- Outlived Shakespeare by 19 years – dies in 1637
 - Outlived all of his children – poems written mourning their deaths?

this effect.

And one major incident was the burning down of his personal library in 1623 and at a later point, at a later point he even falls out of favor with the court. He also ceases to be a recipient of the royal pension from the court. And another significant thing that many find it could have contributed to his ill-health and also to his declining fortunes is that he dared to be ridiculed

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heavily for trying to edit a folio of his own works. And this in fact this Folio is considered to be

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served as a model for Shakespeare's posthumous First Folio.

And why was he ridiculed for such a, why was he ridiculed for an act which would simple and commonsensical from the contemporary

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point of view. During the Jacobean times and even the later Elizabethan times,

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plays were not elevated alongside poems. It was not considered, plays were not considered as, plays were not considered as significant or as great as that of poems. And for the same reason they were also considered as vulgar productions. So for a writer to try and compile his own works and publish them as a folio, that was considered as quite a ridiculous thing during those times. He was heavily made fun of in London circles for trying to do that. If you remember Shakespeare's compilations and Shakespeare's Folio comes out only posthumously many years later when some of his fellow actors had put a folio together. So this kind of an activity was unheard of then.

So we also see that he was perhaps quite ahead of his times and, but his

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contemporaries failed to understand that. We find actually he outlives

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Shakespeare by about 19 years. He dies in 1637 and it is generally assumed that many of his children also died quite early and there are some poems credited to have been written at the occasion of their deaths. And we

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know very little about his family life, but it is not considered as a very happy life that he had led

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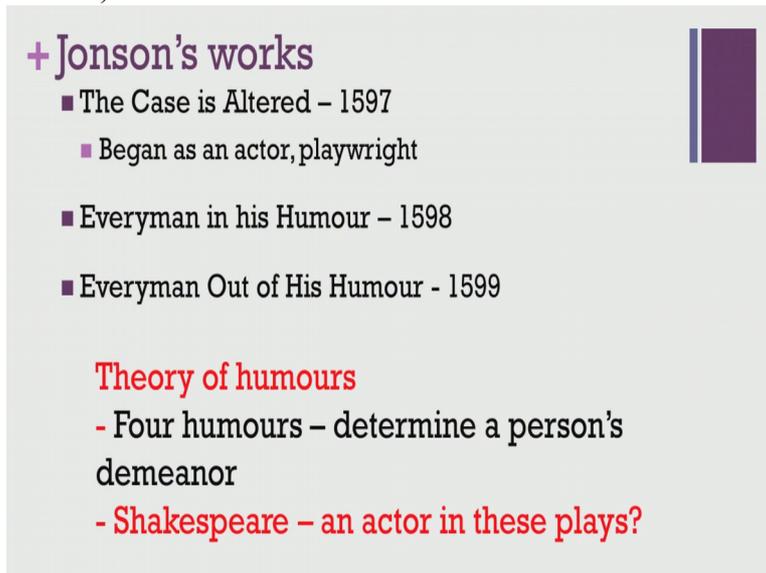
- + ■ Plays for the court and for the public stage
 - Drama, translations, poetry
 - court masques, historical tragedies, comedies
 - Lyrics – eg: “Drink to me only with thine eyes”
- Sour temper? 1598 – killed a fellow actor Gabriel Spencer in a duel, narrow escape from the gallows
 - Days after the first performance of Every Man in his humour
 - Converts to Catholicism during his stint in jail
- Epitaph – ‘O rare Ben Johnson’ (his original spelling)
- Buried in the Poets corner at Westminster Abbey

in terms of his family. He staged plays both for the court and public stage. He wrote all kinds of works such as drama, translations and poetry. He also staged court masques, historical tragedies and comedies. His songs and lyrics were quite famous and popular during those times. One example which is oft-quoted as the song which begins with

Drink to me only with thine eyes so it was impossible to talk about his drama without the songs. He is also said to have in possession of a short temper. In 1598 he almost killed a fellow actor Gabriel Spenser in a duel and he narrowly escaped from the gallows. And this was quite strange as this had happened after the first, just the few days after the performance of his one of his best known and successful plays Every Man in His Humour and this actually proved to be quite life-changing event for him. During his jail, during his stint in the jail he is also said to have converted to Catholicism.

And truth that kind of life that he dared, and truth that kind of life that he led in his epitaph we find this inscription O rare Ben Johnson, in his original, Johnson spelt in his original spelling. He is also buried in Poet's corner at Westminster Abbey.

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+ Jonson's works

- The Case is Altered – 1597
 - Began as an actor, playwright
- Everyman in his Humour – 1598
- Everyman Out of His Humour - 1599

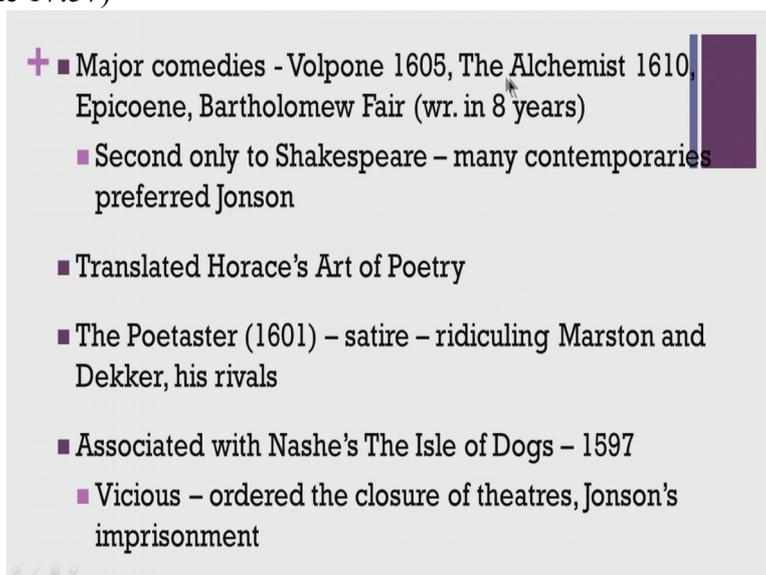
Theory of humours

- Four humours – determine a person's demeanor
- **Shakespeare – an actor in these plays?**

And quick look at Jonson's works all of them put together.

His first play is The Case is Altered in 1597 where he began as an actor and a playwright, Every Man in His Humour in 1598 and Every Man out of His Humour in 1599, these two are the best known of his works and his much of his claim to fame rests on these two works. And in this he also proposed this theory of Humours arguing that a person's character is determined by the four predominant humours that a person possesses. And Shakespeare is also said to have acted in these plays but there is not much of evidence to prove that. His major comedies included Volpone in 1605,

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+ Major comedies - Volpone 1605, The Alchemist 1610, Epicoene, Bartholomew Fair (wr. in 8 years)

- Second only to Shakespeare – many contemporaries preferred Jonson
- Translated Horace's Art of Poetry
- The Poetaster (1601) – satire – ridiculing Marston and Dekker, his rivals
- Associated with Nashe's The Isle of Dogs – 1597
 - Vicious – ordered the closure of theatres, Jonson's imprisonment

The Alchemist in 1610, and Epicoene and Bartholomew Fair that followed and all these four were written in the first eight years and he enjoyed huge success and popularity due to these plays during the Jacobean time. He is considered as second only to Shakespeare and many contemporaries in fact even preferred Jonson over Shakespeare. He also translated Horace's Art of Poetry which also gave him a more scholarly kind of reputation. And his work The Poetaster which was a satire, that was quite

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enjoyed during the times

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- + ■ Major comedies - Volpone 1605, The Alchemist 1610, Epicoene, Bartholomew Fair (wr. in 8 years)
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- Vicious – ordered the closure of theatres, Jonson's imprisonment

because he ridiculed other contemporary writers such as Marston and Dekker who were also his rivals in terms of drama. He is also said to have associated with Nashe, The Isle of Dogs, Nashe being one of the University Wits.

This was in 1597 during the later period of the Elizabethan period. It had dealt with many controversial and vicious themes and it even led to Jonson's imprisonment along with Nashe and theaters were also closed down for a brief time in between. So we do find that, along with the University Wits he did live a quite a

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reckless life to a certain extent but he was more fortunate to have been, he was more fortunate to restore his fortunes and restore his

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+ Chief characteristics

- Contemporary London life and manners – insightful than any other writer of his time
- Characterisation – ‘master passion’ of each person
 - Humours – central feature of personality
 - Not complex individuals, but types – ‘Morality plays’ method
- The real founder of Comedy of Manners – satirising the manners and affectations of a social class

literary reputation at a later point of time.

The chief characteristics of his plays include that he was quite insightful in portraying London life and manners and in that sense his works could also be considered with more

historical interest. And characterization was of a different kind in his works. We have already talked about the predominance of humors and the master passion that he argued that each person possess. But however the flip side was that he could not create complex individual. It was mostly types and that was the way he preferred. And in that sense we also find the continuation of the morality plays of the medieval times getting replicated in Jonson's plays. He is in that sense considered as real founder of comedy of manners. He could satirize very effectively the manners and affectations of the, of particular social classes in England

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- + ■ A Realist – not the world of romance
 - Repudiated the lawlessness of the romantic drama, would not combine tragedy and comedy
 - The chief function of literature – to instruct – didactic realism
 - The first great English neoclassic- in revolt against the artistic principles of the contemporary
 - The classics – as a cure for the uncontrolled romantic exuberance of Elizabethan literature

during that time. He was also Realist, he was never for the world of Romance and also we find in him a true Classicist because he repudiated the lawlessness of the Romantic drama and he never wanted to combine tragedy and comedy together. And he also believed in the dialectic functions of literature, in that sense we could see him as a continuation of the medieval tenets and the medieval belief systems. He is also considered as the first great neo-Classicist in that sense and he also found that Classics, he offered the uncontrolled Romantic exuberance of Elizabethan literature. So we do find him revolting against many of the dominant Elizabethan tenets and keeping in tune with the Jacobean times we find him gaining

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more popularity and acceptance as well.

Jonson's work was not without limitations. We find that there was a predomination of intellect in his works. This is what made him quite different from Shakespeare and also his popularity at a later point began to fade away because of this predominance of intellect over originality

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+ Limitations of Jonson

- Predomination of intellect – products of learning, skill and effort – lacked true genius creative power, charm and spontaneity
- Conscious artist and reformer – working on clearly defined principles
- Laboured and mechanical writing – overshadowed all other merits

and genius. And his work, now many critics feel that it was a product of learning, skill and effort and thereby it lacked the true genius of creative power, charm and spontaneity and those were the hallmarks of William

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Shakespeare in comparison with Ben Jonson. And we also find him consciously trying to work his craft into particular principles and also he was more rigid in that sense about his performances and about his

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- Predomination of intellect – products of learning, skill and effort – lacked true genius creative power, charm and spontaneity
- Conscious artist and reformer – working on clearly defined principles
- Laboured and mechanical writing – overshadowed all other merits

writings as well.

And because of his labored and mechanical writing, we find that at later point, his works did not enjoy that kind of superiority in terms of merit because the labored and mechanical writing and also the predominance of intellect overshadowed all the other merits that he uh, that he

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possessed during the Jacobean time. And it becomes very important for us to discuss in detail all of these things about Ben Jonson because he was considered as almost at an equal stature with William Shakespeare during his lifetime, and how and how the fortunes turned and how at a later point he began to be considered to be a lesser kind of artist is of supreme importance for us to understand as literary historians.

Moving on to some of the major

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+ George Chapman

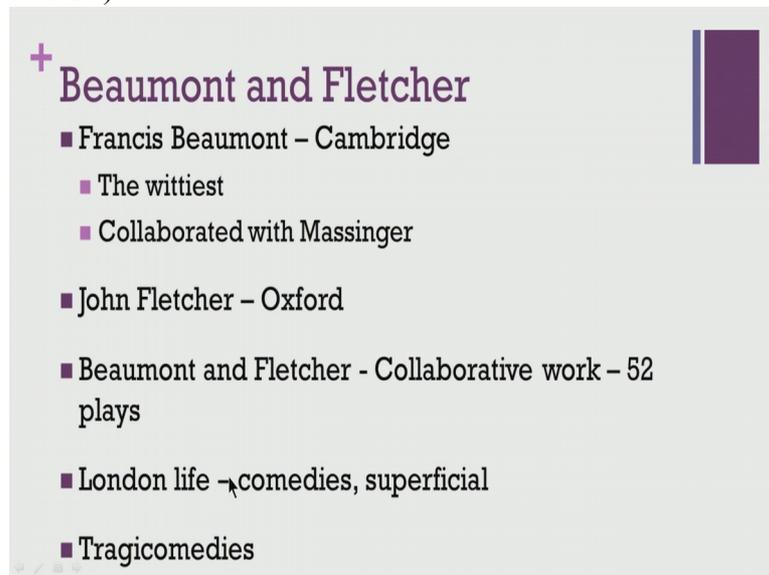
- The first major writer of Jacobean drama
- Translation of Homer – most famous
 - Bloody, violent and gory
- First play – The Blind Beggar of Alexandria
 - Character Cleanthes compared to Marlowe's Tamburlaine
- Engaged with contemporary events
- Chapman, Jonson and Marson – Eastward Ho
 - In response to Westward Ho (Dekker and Webster)
 - Controversial - angered King James – Anti-Scottish

important writers. George Chapman, he is considered as a first major writer of Jacobean drama. His translation of Homer was the most famous of his works. It was also bloody, violent and gory in nature keeping in tune with the Jacobean times. His first play The Blind

Beggar of Alexandria, it had this particular character Cleanthes who was often compared to Marlowe's Tamburlaine. Both were shepherds who rose into great power and great acceptance. They, he also engaged with contemporary events with lot of insight and we find that most of the Jacobean dramatists continued to do that. And Chapman, Jonson and Marston, they together came out with this particular production known as Eastward Ho and it was in this response to Westward Ho, another compilation of Dekker and Webster.

And this particular play Eastward Ho, it was also quite controversial because it angered King James. It had many anti-Scottish elements built into it. May be it was around this same time that Jonson also fell out of the court's

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- Francis Beaumont – Cambridge
 - The wittiest
 - Collaborated with Massinger
- John Fletcher – Oxford
- Beaumont and Fletcher - Collaborative work – 52 plays
- London life → comedies, superficial
- Tragicomedies

favor.

Other two important writers who are always mentioned together, they are Beaumont and Fletcher. Francis Beaumont went to, Francis Beaumont was educated in Cambridge and John Fletcher was associated with the Oxford University. Beaumont was considered as the wittiest of all the Jacobean playwrights. And he is also said to have collaborated with Philip Massinger. And Beaumont and Fletcher, they did a lot of collaborative work. About 52 plays are credited to their fame and the flip side was that though they

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tried to portray London life and its manners and its various social classes, their comedies were considered as mostly superficial. And they also wrote many tragicomedies but we continue to note that apart from the kind of prolific productions that they made during the Jacobean times we find that their works did not live into posterity with fame or acceptance. Thomas Heywood was major writer of the times. He is said to have written or

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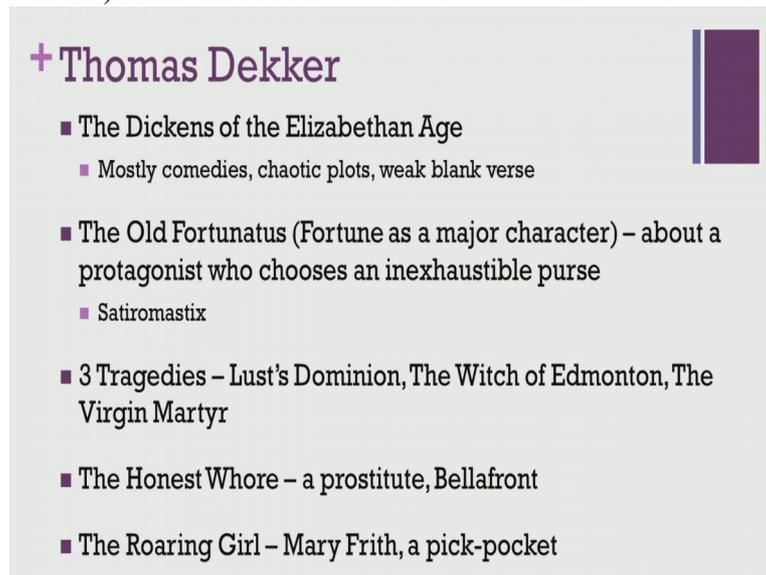
+ Thomas Heywood

- 220 plays – “had a hand or at least a main finger”
- Pictures of London life and manners
- A Woman Killed with Kindness
- The Four Prentices of London
- Apology for Actors – suggested that Thomas Kyd is the author The Spanish Tragedy

collaborated in the writing of 220 plays and that is quite a rare feat. And though he did not entirely write most of the plays, generally it is said about him that he had a hand or at least a main finger in most of these 220 plays. He also portrayed London life and its manners. Some of his major works include A Woman Killed with Kindness which talks about an adulterous woman who leaves her husband and has an affair with another man and also makes a

comeback to her husband. And the other work was The Four Prentices of London which was also hugely appreciated during those times. A significant work which made him more important at a later point was The Apology for Actors and in this work he suggested that Thomas Kyd is the author of The Spanish Tragedy. In that sense he also becomes relevant to our understanding of Elizabethan drama.

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+ Thomas Dekker

- The Dickens of the Elizabethan Age
 - Mostly comedies, chaotic plots, weak blank verse
- The Old Fortunatus (Fortune as a major character) – about a protagonist who chooses an inexhaustible purse
 - Satiromastix
- 3 Tragedies – Lust's Dominion, The Witch of Edmonton, The Virgin Martyr
- The Honest Whore – a prostitute, Bellafront
- The Roaring Girl – Mary Frith, a pick-pocket

Thomas Dekker was considered as the Dickens of the Elizabethan age. His work was mostly based on comedies and he also had chaotic plots and that was seen as a flaw even during those times. And his blank verse also was not well-formed. It was quite weak. And some of his major works include Old Fortunatus in which fortune figures as a major character. This is about a protagonist who chooses an inexhaustible purse and many were quite enthralled with this idea. And another important work of his was, it was titled in quite a similar way, Satiromastix. He also had to his credit three tragedies Lust's Dominion, The Witch of Edmonton and The Virgin Martyr. And the couple of his other works were quite popular during those times, The Honest Whore and The Roaring Girl and both had female protagonists. In The Honest Whore we find this particular story of the prostitute named Bellafront and The Roaring Girl features the story of a pickpocket girl named Mary Fitz.

So we find a range of things coming into the Jacobean drama and it is in that sense perhaps more varied than that of the Elizabethan drama of the

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- A Shoemaker's Holiday – borrowed from Thomas Deloney
 - An eccentric shoemaker who becomes the Lord Mayor of London
 - 1599 – The Globe, The death of Spenser
- Dekker and Webster
 - Westward Ho
 - Northward Ho

previous times. Another significant work was A Shoemaker's Holiday. Many feel that this was borrowed from one of Thomas Deloney's works and this is the story, this drama was about an eccentric shoemaker who became the Lord Mayor of London. We find many of similar kinds of themes getting built into Jacobean drama because social mobility was also becoming increasingly popular. And The Shoemaker's Holiday was produced in stage at a, on a very eventful year and this also belonged to the Elizabethan times. It was in 1599 when The Globe Theatre was erected. Also it was the year of Spenser's death which technically marked the end of the Golden Period of Elizabeth as well.

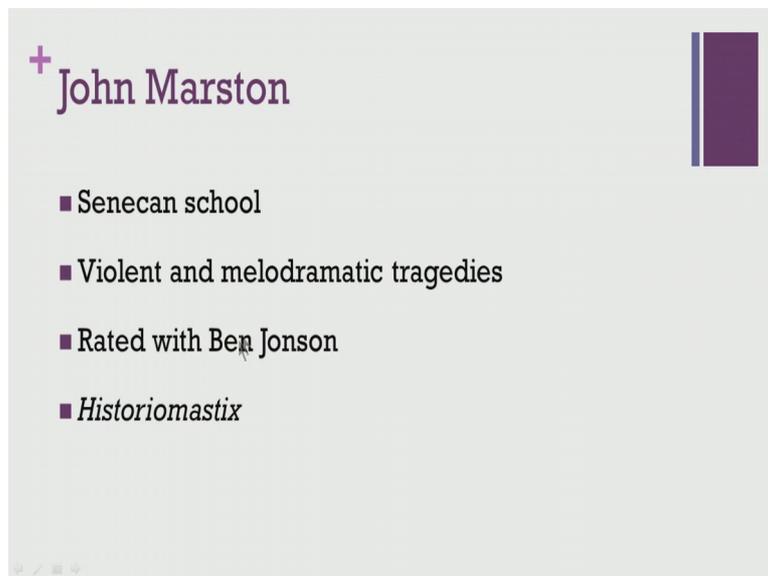
Also Dekker and Webster collaborated in direction of two plays Westward Ho and Northward Ho and we also saw the significance of that

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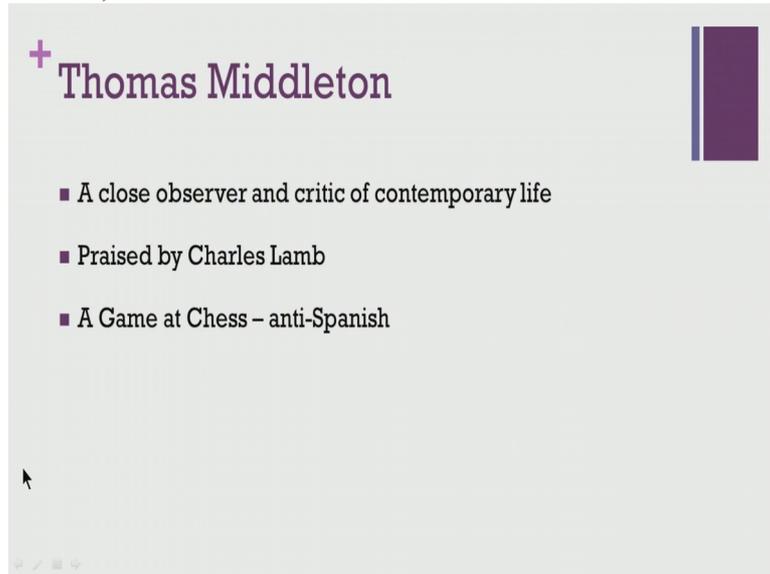
when other writers responded to it. John Marston was a part of the Senecan school of revenge tradition

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most of his works were violent and melodramatic in nature. And he was also rated along with Ben Jonson but we do find that only one of his plays is worthy of mentioning which is named as *Historiomastix*.

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+ Thomas Middleton

- A close observer and critic of contemporary life
- Praised by Charles Lamb
- A Game at Chess - anti-Spanish

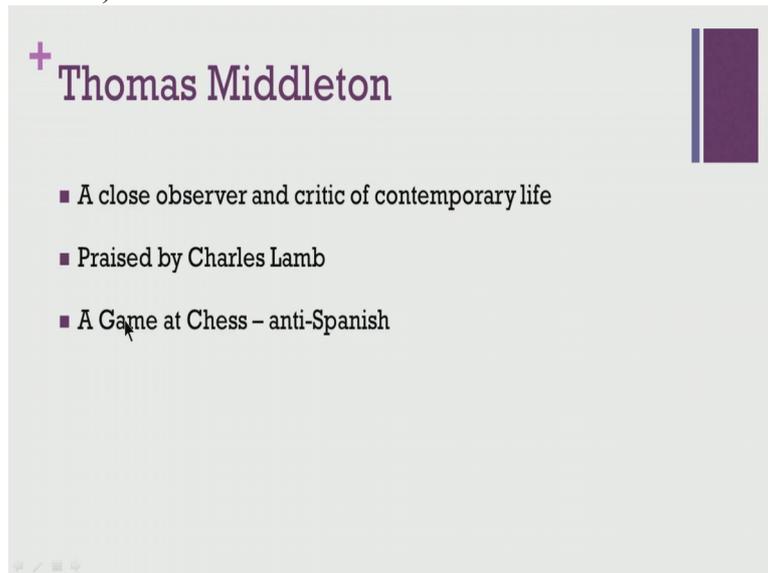
Thomas Middleton was another playwright who was a close observer and critic of contemporary London life. He was quite praised by Charles Lamb. Though he was not hugely,

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though he was not hugely rated by critics at later point of time, we do find that Charles

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+ Thomas Middleton

- A close observer and critic of contemporary life
- Praised by Charles Lamb
- A Game at Chess - anti-Spanish

Lamb had lot of nice things to say about him and his A Game at Chess is considered

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as one of his most important works and this is also anti-Spanish in nature. In that sense it did excite the emotions and fancies of the English people during that times given that the hostility with Spain was an ongoing thing during the Elizabethan times. And we do find that the hostility had come to an end with James the First signing the treaty but nevertheless since the English nationalist ambitions were riding high, the anti-Spanish sentiments could still, could still be worked out among the English people.

Now we come towards the end of this session and we take a look at this particular writer

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+ James Shirley

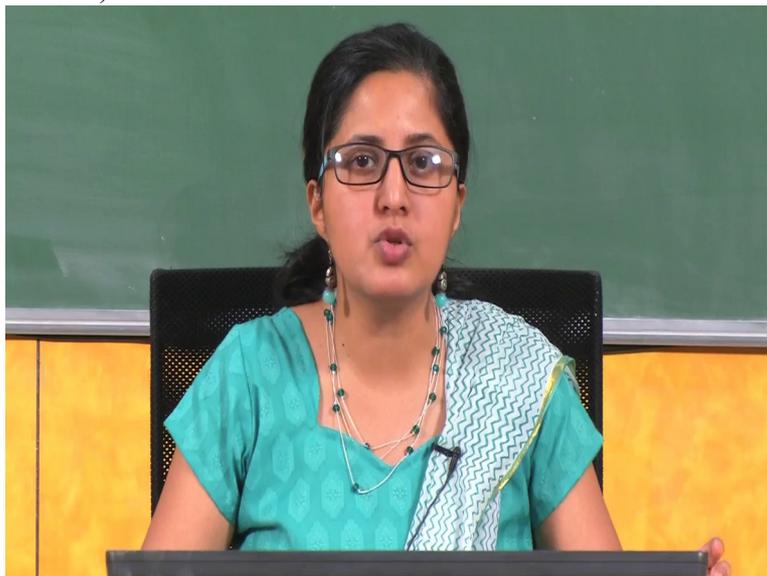
“Claims a place among the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself, as that he was **the last of a great race**, all of whom spoke nearly the same language and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common”

- Charles Lamb

James Shirley. Though we note at a later point that he does not excite the fancies of critics or it was not hugely popular during the time either, so let us try and conclude with this remark by Charles Lamb. James Shirley claims a place among the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself, as that he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. This in certain ways sums up Jacobean drama for us.

In today's discussion we also noted that though

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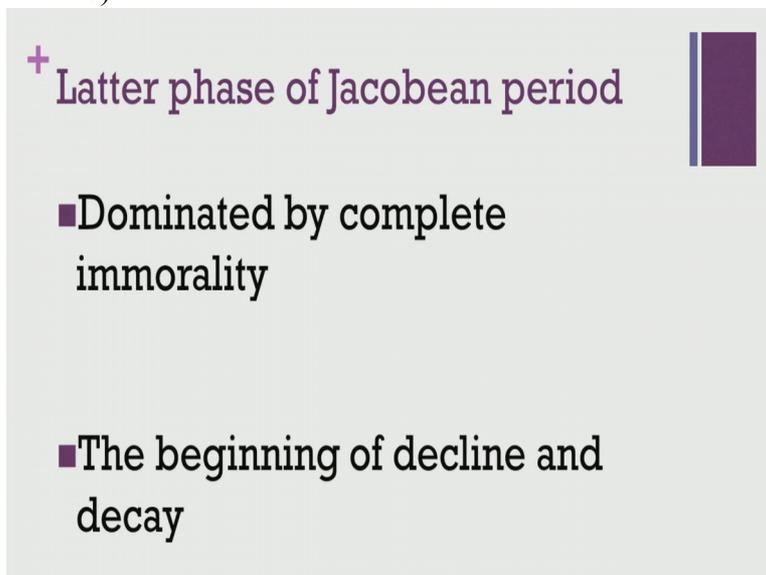


Ben Jonson dominates the scene and the others are more or less like satellites and Charles Lamb's observation in this regard is more important because understanding Jacobean drama

as a singular collective thing is perhaps more important than paying individual attention to each and every author. And this remark of, remark about James Shirley also brings us to a conclusion of today's session and leaving us with a note that though Jacobean drama taken singularly, perhaps it was not as worthy as its predecessor the Elizabethan drama we do find that it had set the stage for many things that were to follow in terms of drama and in terms of theater in England.

So with this we try to wind up today's lecture

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+ Latter phase of Jacobean period

- Dominated by complete immorality
- The beginning of decline and decay

and also let's give a foreshadow of what lies ahead. In the later phase of the Jacobean period we notice that it was only dominated by complete immorality and we also find a steady decline in dramatic genius and also in the performances and we also notice that it is the beginning of decline and decay. And shortly we will begin to see how the theaters were forced to be, forced to close down and it also inaugurates a different kind of ethos and different kind of sentiment

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in terms of performance and drama in England. So with this, we wind up today's session on Jacobean drama. We look forward to see you in the next session and thank you for listening.