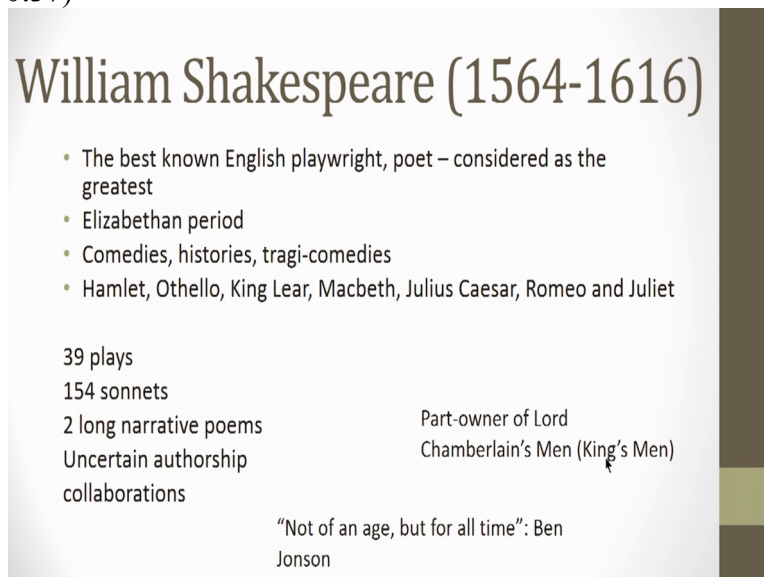


Introduction to World Literature
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“Sonnet 130” by Shakespeare and “Love Sonnet XVI” by Neruda

Good morning and welcome today's session. Today we are taking a look at two very famous sonnets. Sonnet 130 by Shakespeare and Love Sonnet XVI by Pablo Neruda and these 2 are considered as representative poets of their age and we know that their reputation rests beyond the works that they have written, they also have become iconic figures in the kind of traditions and works that they have begun to represent.

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William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

- The best known English playwright, poet – considered as the greatest
- Elizabethan period
- Comedies, histories, tragi-comedies
- Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet

39 plays
154 sonnets
2 long narrative poems
Uncertain authorship
collaborations

Part-owner of Lord Chamberlain's Men (King's Men)

“Not of an age, but for all time”: Ben Jonson

William Shakespeare lived in the 16th century from 1554 till 1616. He got to witness the reign of 2 monarchs. He started writing during the Elizabethan period and they continued to write even after the Ascension of James I. He is by all means the best-known English playwright, poet, he is also considered as the greatest of all times, he is certainly the most representative figure of the Elizabethan period who totally changed the grammar of drama and the way in which plays were seen, were conceived and staged.

And he also dramatically change the profession of drama itself and he challenged all kinds of conventional notions about the training that a dramatist was said to have received. He also acted in his plays. He began to produce his own plays, he owned, he was partly the owner of the

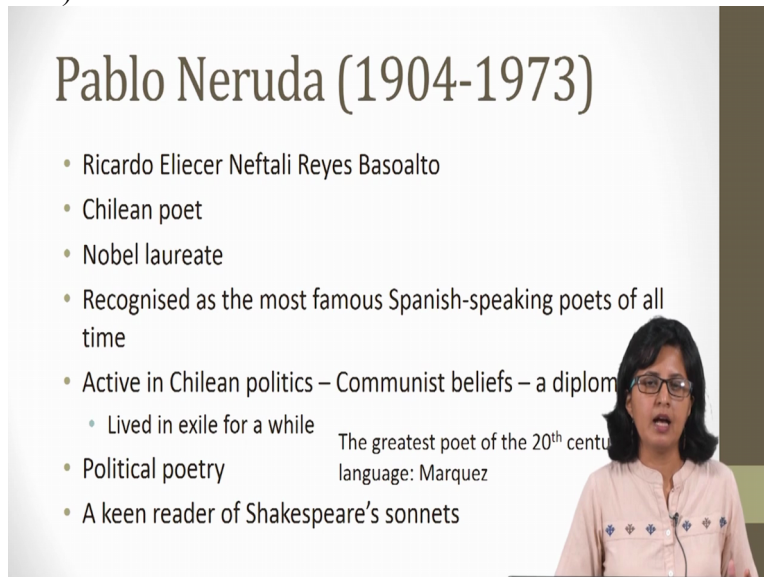
company in which he initially used to it, the Lord Chamberlain's men, later renamed as king's men after the Ascension of King James I. And we find him arriving in London as a penniless, friendless man who is not trained in the classical methods, who has very little formal education.

But by the time he leaves London, we get to know that he is the most famous playwright, he goes back to Stratford-upon-Avon but that is where he was born, to buy the second-largest house and he had set the standard for not just the Elizabethan drama about all kinds of drama that followed. His reign was very prolific, he wrote comedies, histories and tragi-comedies. This is apart from the number of poetical other productions that he had to his credit. Some of his important works, plays which were also huge successes include the Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet.

He had altogether authored 39 plays. I am not sure if it would be entirely right to say that he had authored because he had not written and published any of his works. All of his works were staged. His works were printed and published together as the Folio, the first Folio came out after his death. He has to his credit 154 sonnets, 2 long narrative poems, there are also certain works, the authorship of those are a bit contested. There were a number of collaborations set he had with many of his contemporaries.

One of his contemporaries remarked this about him. He is not of an age but for all time. It was Ben Jonson who gave this immense tribute to William Shakespeare.

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Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)

- Ricardo Eliecer Neftali Reyes Basoalto
- Chilean poet
- Nobel laureate
- Recognised as the most famous Spanish-speaking poets of all time
- Active in Chilean politics – Communist beliefs – a diplomat
 - Lived in exile for a while
- Political poetry
- A keen reader of Shakespeare's sonnets

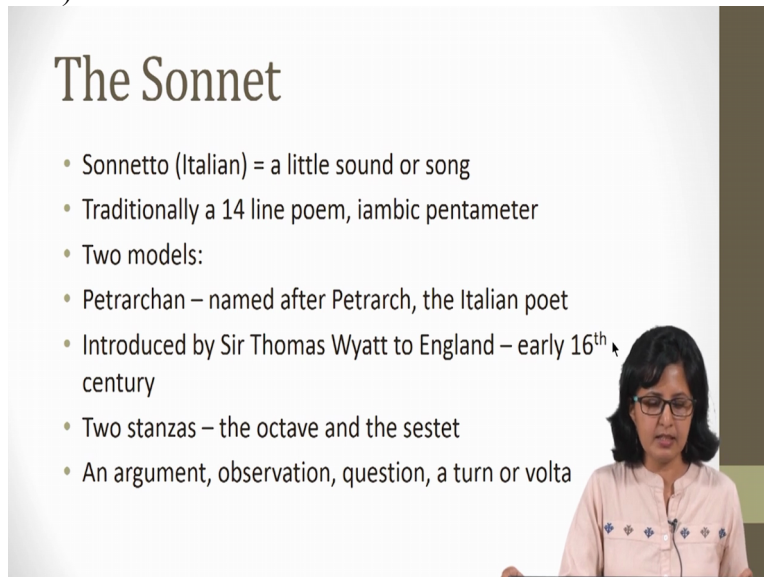
The greatest poet of the 20th century
language: Marquez

(A small video inset shows a woman with glasses speaking.)

Pablo Neruda, the other poet that we are looking at today, he lived from 1904 till 1973. So he is a 20th-century poet. His real name was Ricardo Eliecer Neftali Reyes Basoalto. He is a Chilean poet. Pablo Neruda used to be his pen name initially and later it became his legal name as well. He is a noble laureate. He is recognised as the most famous Spanish-speaking poets of all time. He was very active in Chilean politics, he was a diplomat, he had on his communist beliefs, he also lived in exile for a while.

So he led a very active and adventurous political life. His political poetry was also quite famous along with the love poetry that he wrote. He was a keen reader of Shakespeare's sonnets. That is evidence to show that he was not an admirer and owing to copy of Shakespeare's sonnets. Marquez remarked this about him that he is the greatest poet of the 20th-century in any language. So here we are trying to bring together these 2 poets separated by centuries to see the kind of sonnets that they produced and to look at the similarities in spite of the many etiquettes and centuries that separates them.

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The Sonnet

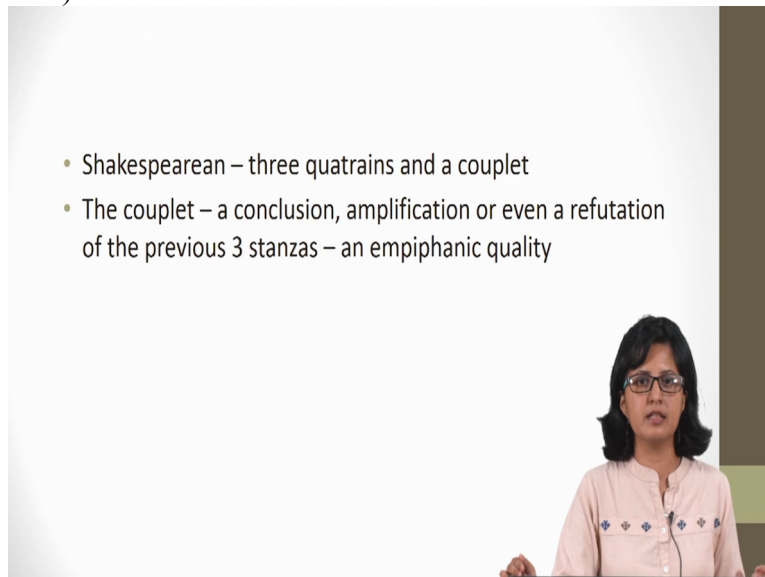
- Sonnetto (Italian) = a little sound or song
- Traditionally a 14 line poem, iambic pentameter
- Two models:
- Petrarchan – named after Petrarch, the Italian poet
- Introduced by Sir Thomas Wyatt to England – early 16th century
- Two stanzas – the octave and the sestet
- An argument, observation, question, a turn or volta

A small inset image shows a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored top with a floral pattern, speaking into a microphone.

The Sonnet as a poetic form needs to be briefly taken a look at. The term derives from the Italian term, Sonnetto. It means a little sound or song. Traditionally, the Sonnet is a 14 line poem, it is written in the iambic pentameter. There are 2 important, 2 famous models as to which the sonnets are generally written. One is the petrarchan model, it is named after Petrarch, Italian poet. This, the Petrarchan model, the Petrarch form of Sonnet writing was introduced to England in the early 16th century by Thomas Wyatt and the Petrarchan Sonnet solid form has two stanzas, the octave and the sestet.

So there is an order conventional in which sonnet form progresses. There is an argument and observation, a question or something to which one is supposed to respond to and finally there is a turn or a volta which kind of gives a point which is radically different from the one with the discussed in the previous stanza.

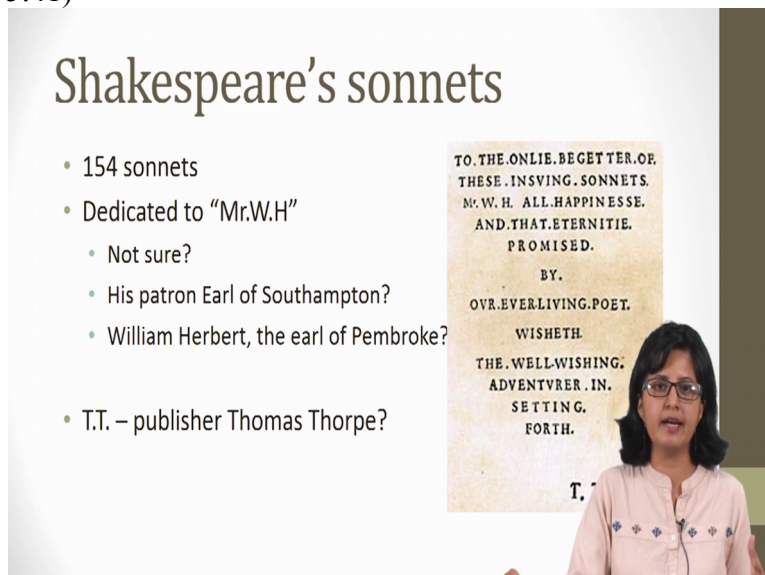
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- Shakespearean – three quatrains and a couplet
- The couplet – a conclusion, amplification or even a refutation of the previous 3 stanzas – an epiphany quality

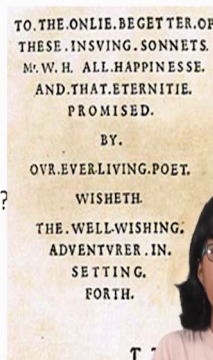
The 2nd kind of sonnet form is the Shakespearean sonnet. It has 3 quatrains and a couplet. In the couplet, we find that it is presented more like a conclusion. It is an amplification or even a refutation of the previous 3 stanzas. It is said that the final couplet, it also has an epiphany quality to it. There is also another form, the Spencerean form which is also derived from the Shakespearean form but it slightly deviates from it.

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Shakespeare's sonnets

- 154 sonnets
- Dedicated to "Mr.W.H"
 - Not sure?
 - His patron Earl of Southampton?
 - William Herbert, the earl of Pembroke?
- T.T. – publisher Thomas Thorpe?



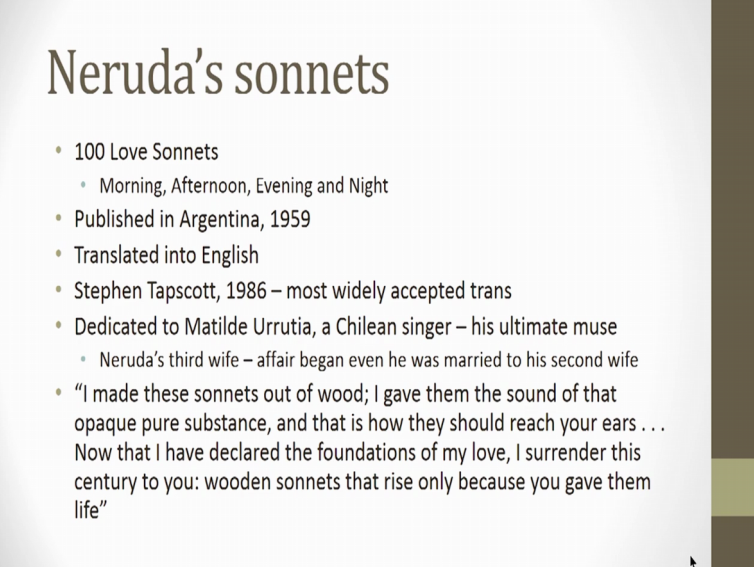
TO. THE. ONLIE. BEGETTER. OF
THESE. INSVING. SONNETS.
M. W. H. ALL. HAPPINESSE.
AND. THAT. ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OVR. EVERLIVING. POET.
WISHETH.
THE. WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRER. IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.
T.

Shakespeare's sonnets were published in the year 1609 and this was in the early 17th century. He published a set of sonnets, altogether 154 and this was very strangely dedicated to one Mr W.H.

Who this WH is, we are not very sure of. Initially people used to think that it is his patron, the Earl of Southampton but later, there is also this argument that it could be William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke but this fair young man that he refers to Mr W.H as, he continues to be the sole character in all of these 154 sonnets.

And this is how the original reads. “The only begetter of these inspiring sonnets, Mr W.H, all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever living poet wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth. T.T, it is supposedly the publisher, Thomas Thorpe but these initials are given in such cryptic forms that it is difficult to say for sure who WH or TT are. But these are the general conjectures about these initials.

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Neruda's sonnets

- 100 Love Sonnets
 - Morning, Afternoon, Evening and Night
- Published in Argentina, 1959
- Translated into English
- Stephen Tapscott, 1986 – most widely accepted trans
- Dedicated to Matilde Urrutia, a Chilean singer – his ultimate muse
 - Neruda's third wife – affair began even he was married to his second wife
- “I made these sonnets out of wood; I gave them the sound of that opaque pure substance, and that is how they should reach your ears . . . Now that I have declared the foundations of my love, I surrender this century to you: wooden sonnets that rise only because you gave them life”

Neruda also had published his sonnets prolifically. This was in 1959. It was published first in Argentina. His sonnets were titled “100 love sonnets” and they were divided into 4 different parts, morning, afternoon, evening and night. The Sonnet that we are taking a look at today, it belongs to the first part, the morning. All of these sonnets were targeted into English, there are different versions. The most widely accepted translation is that of Stephen Tapscott but today we are looking at a different version when we are looking at Sonnet 16.

His sonnets were dedicated to Matilde Urrutia, she was a Chilean singer and she is considered to be Neruda's ultimate muse. The interesting fact is that Neruda began his affair with Matilde Urrutia even when he was married to his 2nd wife and then he gets married to Matilde Urrutia.

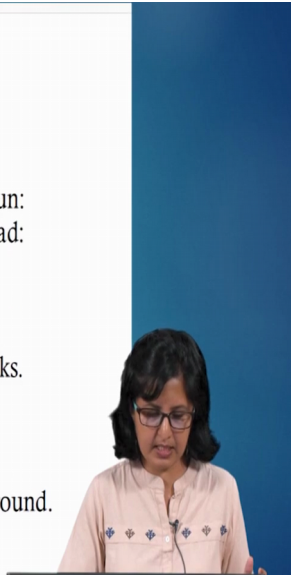
Just like Shakespeare has dedicated all of his sonnets to Mr W.H, we find Neruda dedicating all his sonnets to Matilde Urrutia. This is what he has to say.

“I made these sonnets out of wood; I gave them the sound of that opaque pure substance, and that is how they should reach your ears...

Now that I have declared the foundations of my love, I surrender the century to you: wooden sonnets that rise only because you gave them life”

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My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun,
Coral is far more red, than her lips red,
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun:
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head:
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
And in some perfumes is there more delight,
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know,
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go,
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
And yet by heaven I think my love as rare,
As any she belied with false compare.



Let us first take a look at Sonnet 130 by William Shakespeare. This is considered as one of the most famous sonnets out of the 154. Many of his sonnets are taught and it continues to be read in different locations and this stands out for the specific reasons that it can be seen as a counter to the many Elizabethan traditions. In Shakespeare's plays, we find him reacting against the conventions and also moving against the classical notions which were dominant in defining and in judging the drama of those times. And in the sonnets, we find him doing pretty much the same thing.

Sonnets are conventionally seen as love poetry, as a part of love poetry and we find him talking about love but in a totally different way, in a in a completely subversive way if one could say that. I read this sonnet out for you. Sonnet 130.

“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun. Core is far more red, than her lips red, If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun: If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head: I have seen roses damasked, red and white, But no such roses see I in her cheeks, And in some perfumes is there more delight Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks. I love to hear her speak, yet well I know, That music hath a far more pleasing sound: I grant I never saw a goddess go, My mistress when she walks treads on the ground. And yet by heaven I think my love as rare, As any she belied with false compare.”

So this is how the Sonnet reads. A little more background about the sonnet form in England. There was a time when the sonnet form did not have much respectability in England because it was a foreign thing, it was an Italian thing. It was practised by a lot of Europeans. But we find that from the time of Phillips Henry onwards, it gets a certain kind of respectability, we find a number of poets writing and publishing sonnets. When Shakespeare’s writing there is already a tradition, and accepted tradition for writing sonnets.

There is an accepted content, there is an accepted form. We find him moving away from that accepted form which is the Petrarchan sonnet and we also find him bringing his own genius, his own original element to this writing. So this as you can see, it is clearly not the conventional kind of love poetry. It begins telling us what his mistress is not. My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun. And he says, coral is perhaps far more red than her lips. And about her complexion, he does not praise her in the way that conventionally poets have been doing.

He is being more realistic and saying it is more tanned and about her hair, he compares it to black wires, nothing very flattering. And he talks about how he has seen roses which are better than the mistress’ cheeks and perfumes which are perhaps better than the order that she gives out. And he also says, while I love to hear my mistress I have to admit that I have heard more pleasing sounds in my life and also he is not attempting to do any kind of outlandish comparison. He is not comparing his mistress to a goddess like many other poets used to do.

Instead, he is saying, my mistress when she walks treads on the ground. It is a very realistic, very straightforward and a seemingly unflattering kind of a writing. But the couplet changes it all. He has these two stanzas in the beginning where he talks about what his mistress is not and how he would rather plain speak rather than trying to praise her and flatter her in an exaggerated manner.

He comes to this couplet and he makes this statement almost sound like a confession. “And yet by heaven I think my love as rare, As any she belied with false compare”.

He is doing many things with this one single stroke. He is talking about the kind of poetry which existed in England during the Elizabethan times before Shakespeare’s times, saying that he would not tow that line trying to falsely compare. He will not tow that line by trying to go after these exaggerated comparisons which are sometimes meaningless as well. Some critics have also felt that this is perhaps more realistic and that seems more genuine than any kind of exaggerated praise or any kind of exaggerated flattering.

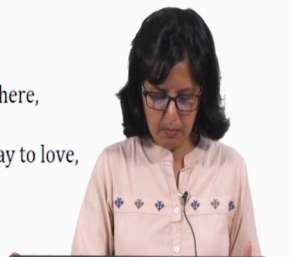
(Refer Slide Time 12:59)

By [Pablo Neruda](#)
Translated by [Mark Eisner](#)

I don't love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz,
or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:
I love you as one loves certain obscure things,
secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom but carries
the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself,
and thanks to your love the tight aroma that arose
from the earth lives dimly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
I love you directly without problems or pride:
I love you like this because I don't know any other way to love,
except in this form in which I am not nor are you,
so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,
so close that your eyes close with my dreams.



Do you see how this resonates and how this complements the love sonnet that Neruda wrote, sonnet 16? The version that we have is the translation by Mark Eisner. I read this sonnet to you, love sonnet 16 by Pablo Neruda.

I do not love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz or arrow of Carnations that propagate fire:
I love you as one loves certain obscure things, secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as a plant that does not bloom but carries the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself, and thanks to your love the tight aroma that arose from the earth lives dimly in my body.

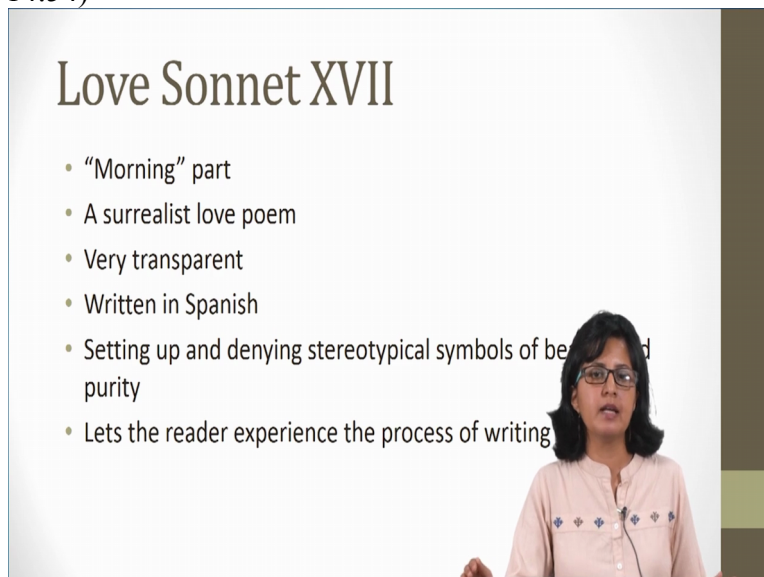
I love you without knowing how, or when or from where, I love you directly without problems or pride: I love you like this because I do not know any other way to love, except in this form in

which I am not nor are you, so close that your hand upon my chest is mine, so close that your eyes close with my dreams.

There are other translations and other versions as well that you could find. Here also, we find Neruda almost replicating the tone that Shakespeare had produced in early 17th century. Neruda is writing in the 20th century where there are still stereotypical notions about there are stereotypical ways in which love can be talked about, love can be expressed. He is titling his sonnets as Love sonnets and this is definitely dedicated to the woman that he loves, a woman who is real and who is there in flesh and blood and the poems begins with a negative note, I do not love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz...

So it also in similar ways begins by saying how he does not love and what his love exactly is. So he also rejects all kinds of exaggerated notions and many conventions and stereotypical images that are used to talk about love.

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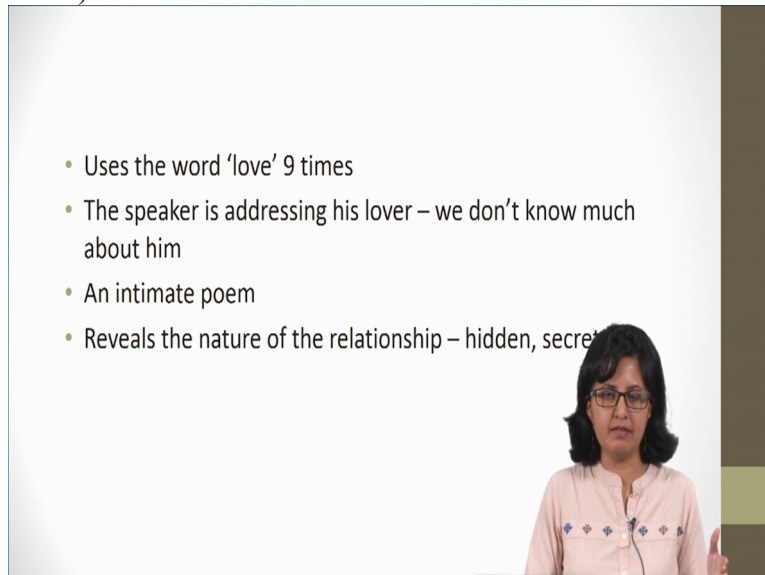
The slide features a title 'Love Sonnet XVII' in a serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list of six points. A woman with glasses and a light-colored top is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide, appearing to be presenting.

- "Morning" part
- A surrealist love poem
- Very transparent
- Written in Spanish
- Setting up and denying stereotypical symbols of beauty and purity
- Lets the reader experience the process of writing

And when we look at this sonnet love sonnet 16, we also need to bear in mind that this is a part of the first segment of these collections, the morning part. It seems as a surrealist love poem, it is very transparent. That is what most critics agree about. This was written in Spanish and what this poem proposes to do as we can see in our reading that it first sets up certain symbols and then it goes on to deny all those stereotypical symbols of beauty and purity. It is giving us a certain set of symbols which can be rejected and the poet also rejects that.

We find Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 also doing the same. He is giving us those symbols, giving us those usual elements to which love or in general the objects of love are compared. Then he goes on to reject them and completely move to a different line of argument altogether. So here, in Neruda's poem, we find that he is, Neruda is almost letting the reader experience the process of writing as well.

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In the poem, he uses the word 'love' 9 times. We find the speaker addressing his lover but we do not get to know much about the speaker himself except that he cares only about love and nothing about the notions or the stereotypical ideas about love. And we find almost a similar kind of attitude in the narrator of Shakespeare's sonnet as well. It is an intimate poem. And this is what makes Neruda's sonnet slightly different from that of Shakespeare.

In Shakespeare's sonnet, we do find that he is rejecting the notions, he is moving against the conventions and that is a sonnet which can be red against the green of those times but beyond that, we do not get to know the real nature of relationship, we do not even get to know who that mistress is, whether it is an imaginary thing or whether it is based on any relationship that he had, there is no way of knowing it. But in Neruda's we see that the poem, the intimacy of the poem can be used to access certain details about the nature of the relationship as well.

(Refer Slide Time 17:03)

Love Sonnet: XVII

By [Pablo Neruda](#)

Translated by [Mark Eisner](#)

I don't love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz,
or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:
I love you as one loves certain obscure things,
secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom but carries
the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself,
and thanks to your love the tight aroma that arose
from the earth lives dimly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
I love you directly without problems or pride:
I love you like this because I don't know any other way to love,
except in this form in which I am not nor are you,
so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,
so close that your eyes close with my dreams.



If we take a look at the poem again, it is very direct about the secrecy and the intimacy that it implies. In the 3rd line, I love you as one loves certain obscure things, secretly and again in the next stanza, I love you as a plant that does not bloom but carries the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself. So terms such as secret, hidden, it also gives us the nature of the relationship and at the time of this writing, Neruda was really having this relationship in secret.

He was still married to his 2nd wife, he was living mostly in exile and his beloved, the Chilean singer, Matilda, she used to follow him wherever he was, that is what the reports say. And this relationship was kept undercover for a long time for various reasons. And when we know about the other kinds of lives that Neruda led, this (17:55) assumes a different tone and input altogether given that he was a political person as well. He had an active political life.

He was living in exile, he was a diplomat and when such a person is writing this explicit love poetry which also reveals intimate secrets about the nature of the relationship, we do find that elevates this love poetry to a different level altogether. And just as we find in Shakespeare's Sonnet (18:22), here also we find the narrator, the speaker moving towards a mode of confession towards the end of the poem in the final segment.

I love you without knowing how or when or from where, I love you directly without problems or pride: I love you this because I do not know any other way to love, except in this form in which I am not nor are you. So in both these sonnets, in sonnet 130 by Shakespeare and sonnet 16 by

Neruda, we find that the speaker, the narrator of the sonnet, while he is addressing his lady love, he loves to occupy this position of individuality where he decides not to bind himself or themselves by the rules set by the society, by the convention about love, about the nature of love, about the kind of language to be used when one is in love.

So this is a total rejection of all kinds of standards which were set until that point of time and we also find this emerging as a different kind of a love note altogether. Some critics and readers have wondered whether Neruda is the right kind of person to write this love for and because he was married thrice and the relationships also overlapped each other. He was, if you take the case of this sonnet and Matilde with whom he was having a relationship as stated, he started this affair even when he was married to his 2nd wife.

So people have raised questions about the credibility and authenticity of this kind of love which is getting expressed here but nonetheless, what is important is that what emerges as strikingly different and secondly important is not the personality of the speaker which is revealed but the kind of love and images which are being presented, subverted and also reinforced in a different way. And we find Shakespeare and Neruda doing it at different points of time. One, in the early 17th century and other one in the mid-20th century.

And centuries apart, we find similar kinds of emotions and similar kinds of attributes getting reflected with the underlying agenda of moving against the conventions and also about bringing in a unique kind of individuality for these expressions. There could be number of ways in which one can go into the details of these poems and look at the terms used, the diction and to undertake a more detailed political analysis. I certainly encourage you to do that after having read these 2 poems. Having introduced these 2 words which are complementary in nature in spite of the centuries that separate them from each other, we also begin to wrap up this lecture. I also encourage you to take a look at the other sonnets by Neruda and by Shakespeare and to see how you can also find similarities and even contrasting features given that they were written in 2 separate centuries and 2 different languages. And this is also about the kind of universality and the kind of appeal that world literature also talks about where we can bring together works produced in different literary traditions in different literary periods to perhaps talk about similar

kinds of notions and similar kinds of ideas. Thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.