

# The Elizabethan Period

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*Plays and Poetry*  
1558-1603

# HISTORY OF THE PERIOD

## AGE OF EXPLORATION-

- John Cabot reaches Newfoundland in 1497
- Francis Drake attacks Spanish ships in 1572
- Walter Raleigh founds Roanoke Colony in 1584

## RELIGIOUS TURMOIL-

- Elizabeth's predecessor Mary, had executed 300 Protestants and restored Catholicism.
- Elizabeth maintained a policy of tolerance, despite several Catholic plots against her life.

# The English Nation

Centralization of monarchy  
focused money and power in  
London, around court.

Idle aristocracy +  
Improving economy  
Many willing patrons

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graph TD; A[Centralization of monarchy  
focused money and power in  
London, around court.] --> C[Strong personality of Queen  
and long reign attracted  
many creative types]; B[Idle aristocracy +  
Improving economy  
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evolution of drama provided  
public entertainment]; D --> E[Focus on arts and changing  
language contributed to  
literary explosion];
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Strong personality of Queen  
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## DRAMA

- Thomas Kyd (1558-1594)  
*The Spanish Tragedy*

- Kit Marlowe (1564-1593)  
*Doctor Faustus*

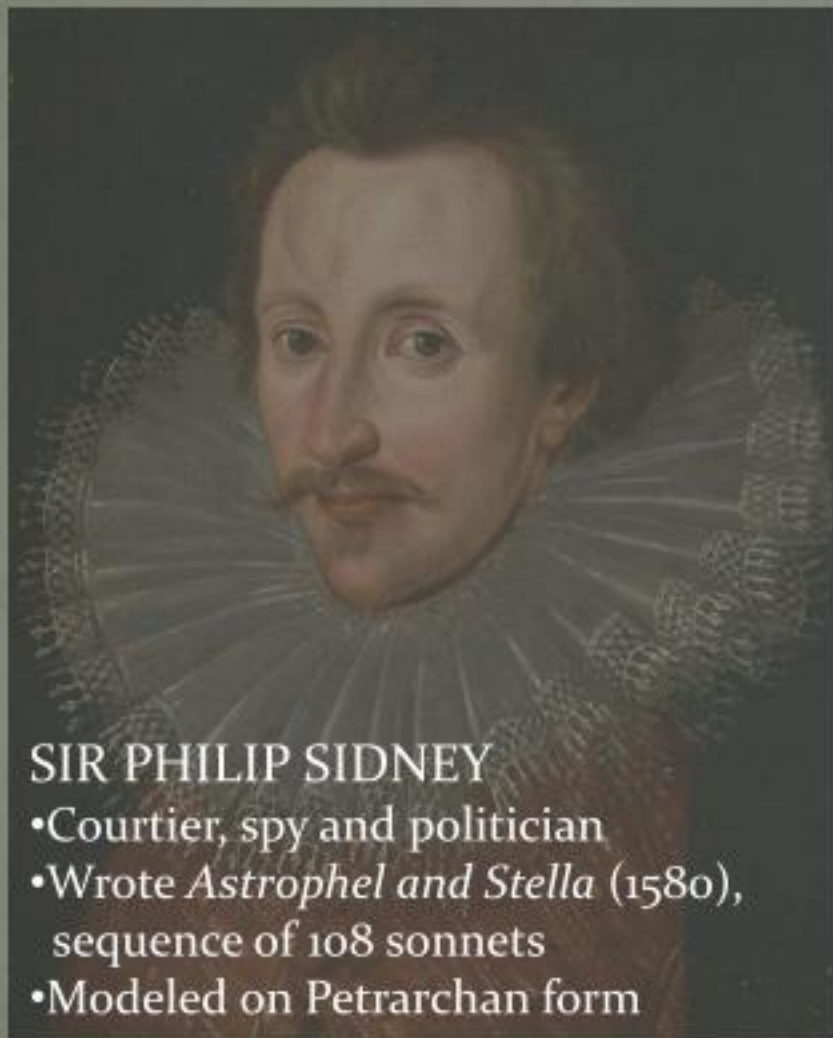
- Ben Jonson (1572-1637)  
*Volpone*

## POETRY

- Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)  
*The Faerie Queene*

- Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)  
*Astrophel and Stella*

# Sonnets and Soldiers



SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

- Courtier, spy and politician
- Wrote *Astrophel and Stella* (1580), sequence of 108 sonnets
- Modeled on Petrarchan form



EDMUND SPENSER

- Irish colonist, courtier
- Wrote *The Faerie Queene* (1590), allegorical epic in archaic style
- Introduced Spenserian stanza

### TIES TO ELIZABETH:

- **Gloriana**, the Faerie Queene, represents Elizabeth
- **Archimago**, an evil magician, represents the Church
- Symbolic implication of Gloriana's descent from **Arthur**

### OVERALL MESSAGE:

- Humans are naturally inclined toward **good**,
- **Weak** when confronted with **temptation**, especially deception
- Only the **steadfastly virtuous** ultimately prevail

## *The **Faerie** Queene*

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### **ALLEGORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

# The *Faerie* Queene

Britomart

Represents **Chastity**  
Female knight  
Moderation as key to salvation

Represents **Holiness**  
Resembles **Peter**  
Salvation through suffering  
and redemption

Redcrosse

Artegall

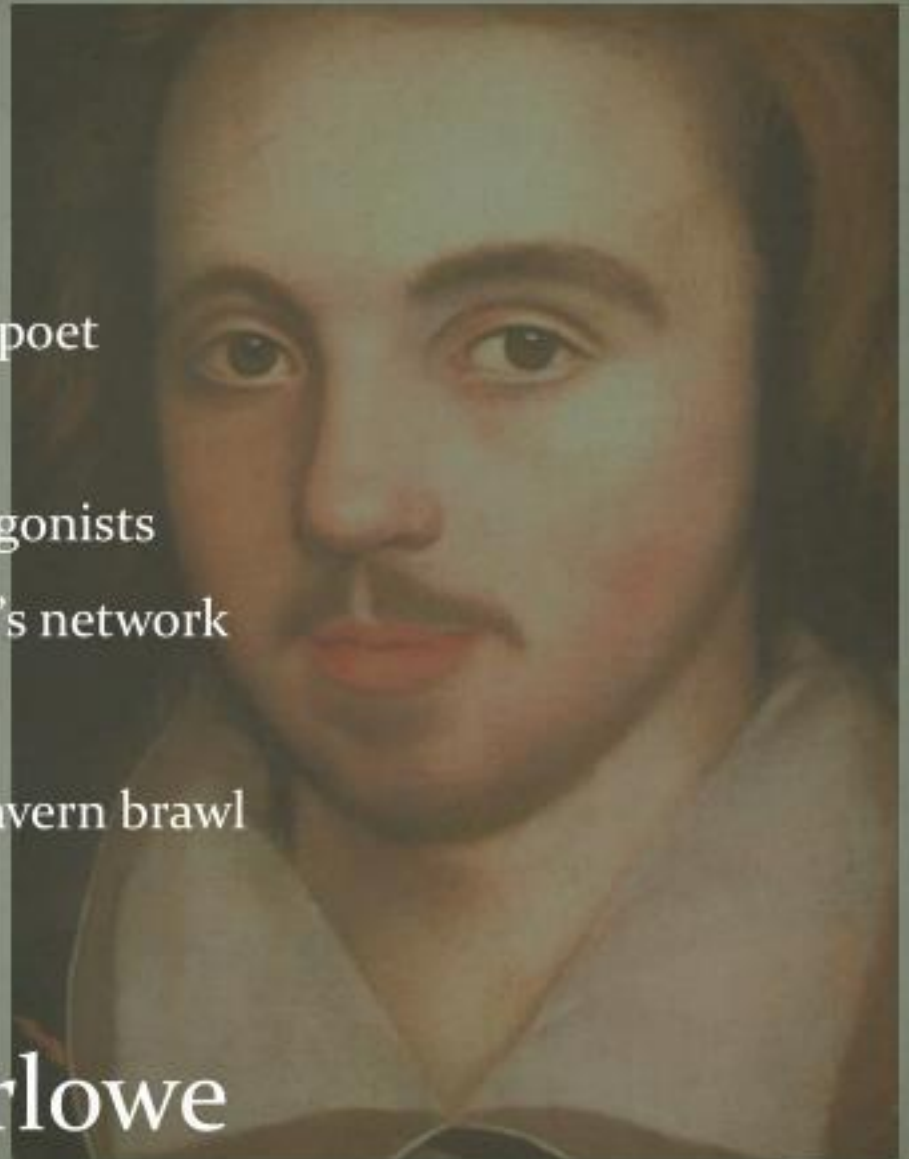
Represents **Justice**  
Defeats, then falls for, Britomart  
Justice can be virtue or weapon

MAJOR  
CHARACTERS

# DANGEROUS DRAMATISTS

- Talented young playwright and poet
- Inventor of blank verse
- Best known for ambitious protagonists
- Worked as a spy in Walsingham's network
- Connected to "School of Night"
- Died at a young age, knifed in tavern brawl
- Shakespeare's greatest rival

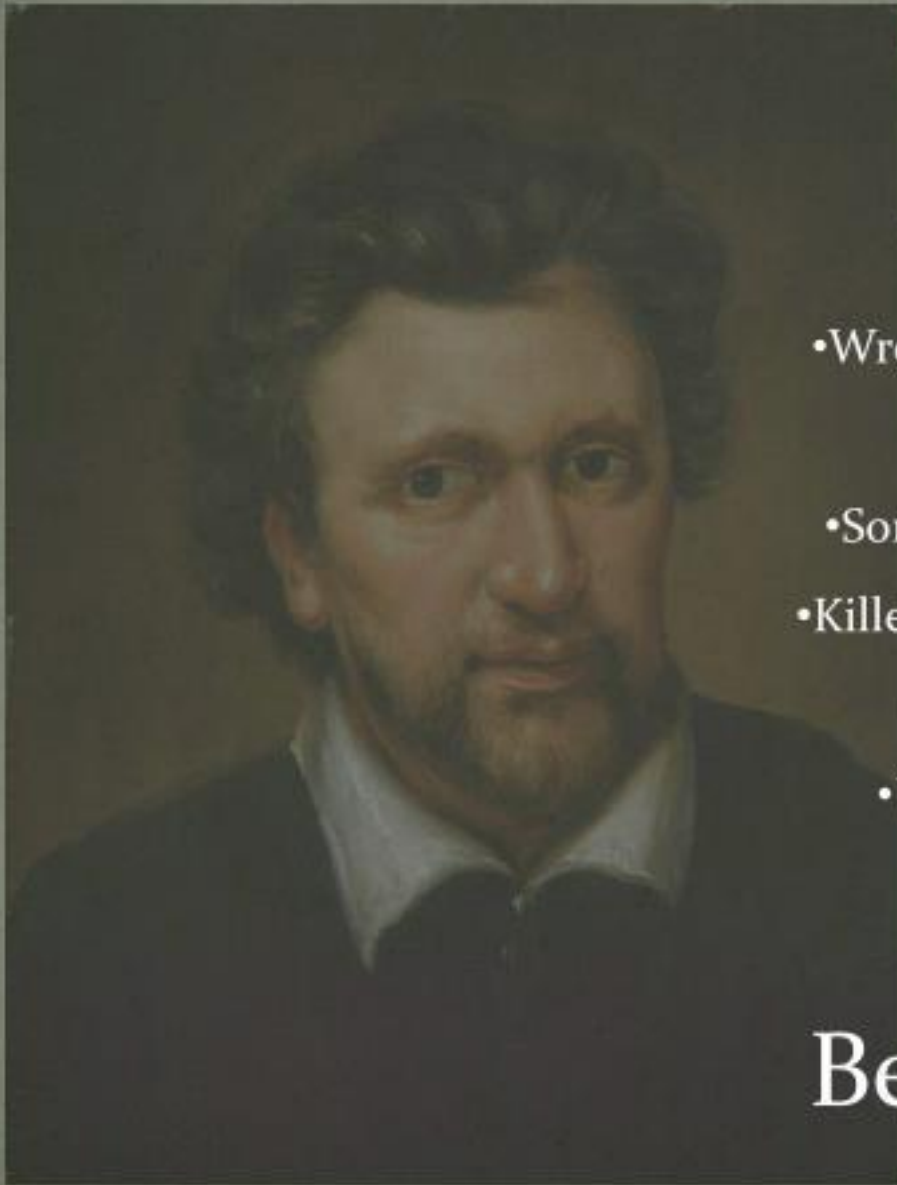
Christopher Marlowe



# DANGEROUS DRAMATISTS

- Wrote **masques** and poetry as well as plays
  - Gift for comedy, especially **satire**
- Somewhat successful, but **temperamental**
- Killed a man in a duel, spent time in **prison**
  - **Popularity declined** as his plays aged
- *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* continue to win praise for **plotting and ingenuity**

Ben **Jonson**



- Allegorical **fable** that satirizes greed
- Characters' names indicate **personalities**
- Best known for **ambitious** protagonists
- **Plot** is typical of Jonson:

Complex and convoluted, and ultimately instructive.

- Use of **grotesque** and varied **meter**



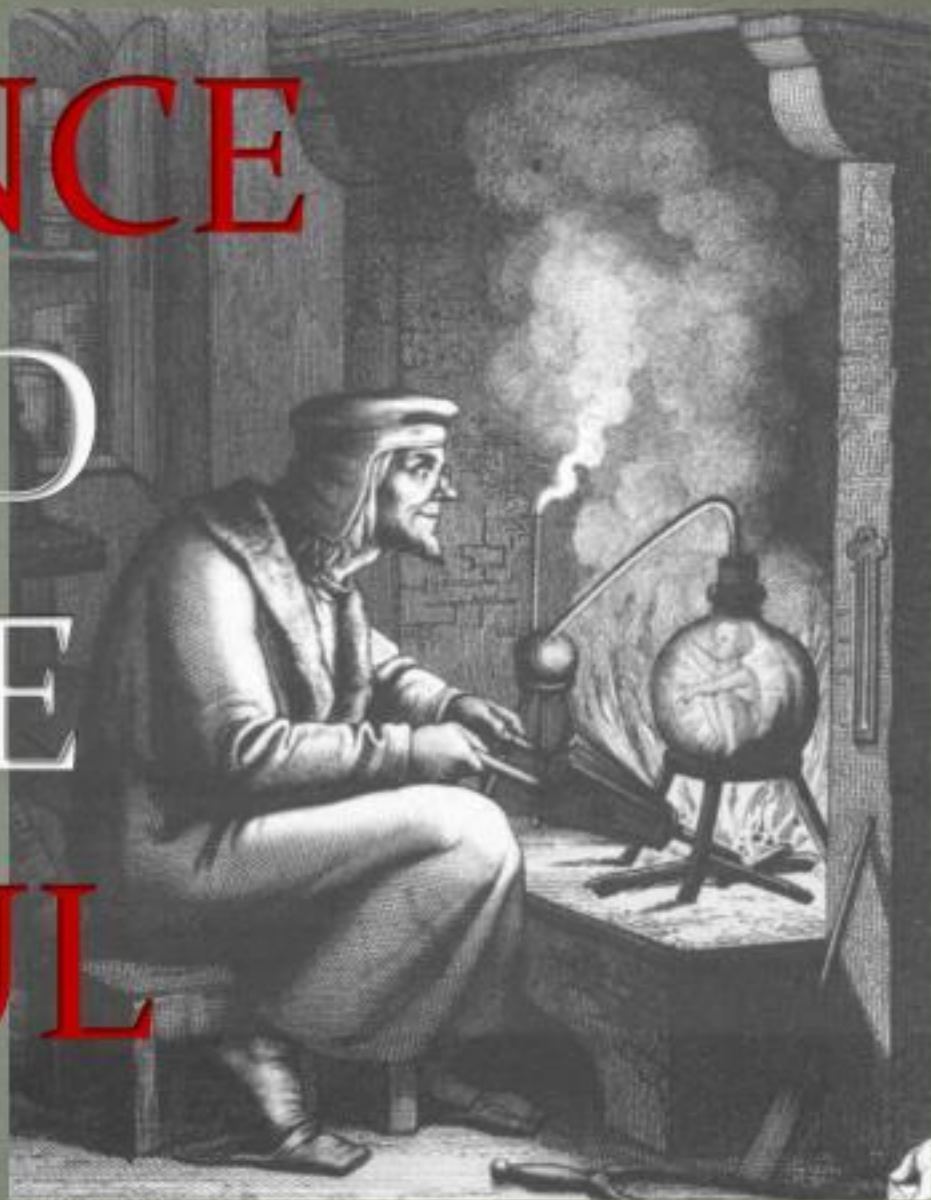
VOLPONE

SCIENCE

AND

THE

SOUL



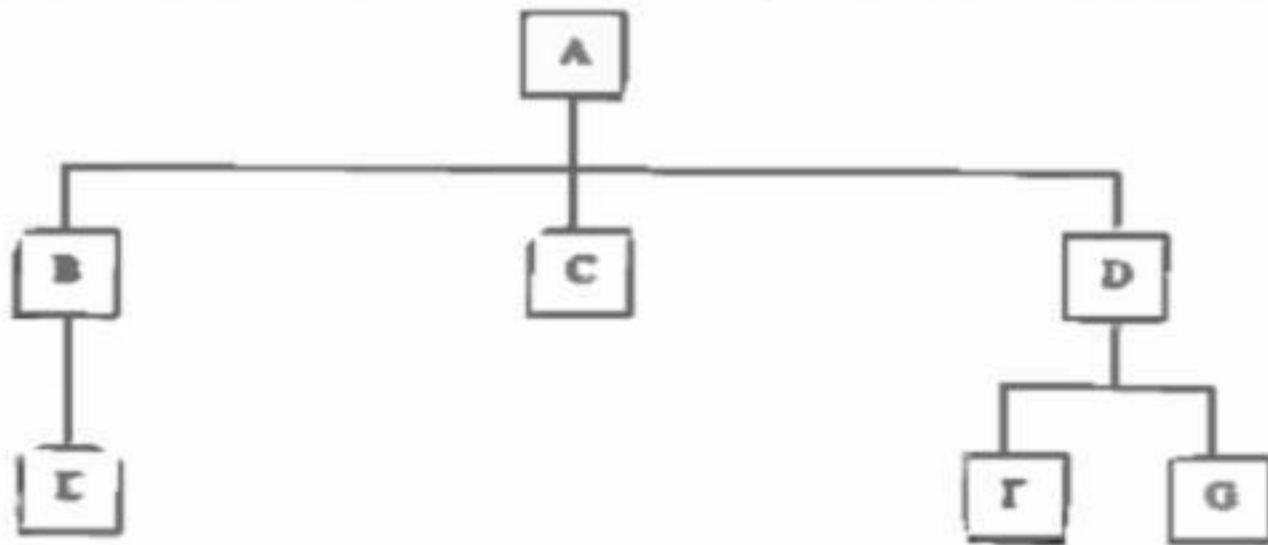
# When we assume...



- **Faulty** assumptions lead to **incorrect** ideas
  - Four humors and human behavior
  - Homonculus and reproduction
- **Deductive** vs. **Inductive** Reasoning
- Development of the **scientific** method

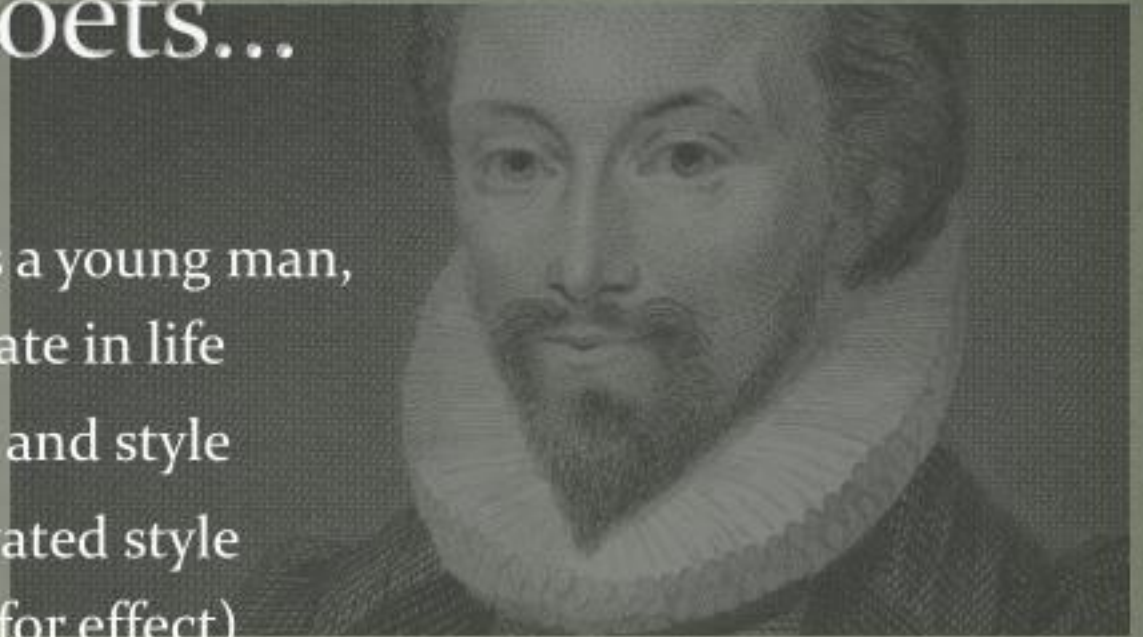
# Formation of Syllogism...

Proposition ➡ Idea ➡ Syllogism



# Prodigal Poets...

- Soldier/politician as a young man, became a priest late in life
- Unconventional life and style
- Often sacrifices elevated style for discordancy (for effect)
- Remembered for his poetry, but also his conflict of faith.



John Donne

# Prodigal Poets...



- Soldier and politician as a young man, became a priest late in life
- Unconventional life and style
- Often sacrifices elevated style for discordancy (for effect)
- Remembered for his poetry, but also his conflict of faith, which reflects the period

John Milton