

Philip sidney



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Sir Philip Sidney was born in November, 1554 to Sir Henry Sidney and Mary Dudley and died in October 1586. Many scholars regarded Sidney as the consummate Renaissance man and believed that Stephen Gosson largely motivated Sidney's work. Stephen Gosson was a playwright who devoted his attack on English stage through *The School of Abuse*. Sidney was a prominent scholar and literary figure of his time. Sidney's literary works include *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, *Astrophel and Stella*, the *Defence of Poesy*. All of his poems were published posthumously and some of them circulated among his friends and family. A literary analysis of Sidney's work entails a critical examination of his literal style, prose, teachings, foundations, values and inspirations of his work.

Sidney's memoir began immediately after his death, with different people criticizing his works. Many people agree that the concept and creativity for literary feature essential to Philip's prose style in "the Arcadia" were fundamental innovations which encouraged greater attention as well as experimentation in artistry among writers. Sidney's manipulation of future poets and critics relate to his perception of society's view of poets. Sidney viewed poetry as a means of creating a separate form of reality. He argues that poetry facilitates imagination, perception and modes of understanding concepts (Sidney and Jean, 76).

Sidney wrote that no artist would deliver an artwork that has no work of nature as a principal object of the artwork. Sidney's poems are fictions made from natural materials, shaped by his visions. Sidney's visions require readers to be aware of the art of fiction. This means that a poet must have a vivid conception of his work in his mind before writing it for audience. His

visions for poetry include a fact that poets must never depart from external nature. When poets depart from the natural limitations, they become capable of creating new things that never existed in the natural world. This is because poetry is an independent part of nature that requires absolute exploration. In this view Sidney presents poets as creators and mediators between historical actuality and transcendent forms. Catharsis nearly complements Sidney's doctrine as it finds parallelism in Sidney's understandings of virtues. Sidney's *Apology* includes elements of Neo-Platonism, especially its emanation doctrines. He also integrates metaphoric language theory in his works (Sidney, 53).

In *Apology* Sidney recurrently uses portraiture as a metaphorical representation of issues. In *Apology* Sidney uses language to suggest the modern semiotics with central themes that imitate Plato's *Republic* and some of Aristotle's works. He emphasizes that poetry as an art form, as an imitation that represents counterfeiting just like a "speaking picture". Despite this, Sidney develops his unique idea of using metaphorical language by employing analogy in universal correspondences. In addition to this, his tendency of harmonizing extreme elements is close to John Donne's poetic works (Sidney, 63).

The subsequent English history clearly illustrates Sir Sidney's influence on literary criticism. One of Sidney's influences on subsequent literature includes Percy Busshe Shelley's poetic and critic works. In Shelly's critical work, *A Defense of Poetry*, Shelly casts his modern poetic arguments, especially his Romantic strain. William Stigant, an essayist, poet and translator later wrote in one of his essays that Shelly's *Defence of Poetry* is <https://assignbuster.com/philip-sidney/>

an analysis of an inner poetic essence whose existence depended on its development and operation on a man's mind. Shelly wrote that even though ethical science coordinates the basic elements of poetry and influences a moral life, poetry helps in awakening and enlarging the mind through a combination of thoughts.

Sidney's work also influenced Mary Wroth, who claimed to be Sidney's relative. Sidney's writing inspired her gender stories, as she maintained Sidney's literary styles and metaphoric representations.

In 1621 Mary Wroth printed her sonnet sequence, *Pammphilia to Amphilianthus*. It closely resembled Sidney's work, starting with the words she chose for the title; *The Uranian Montgomery countess*, which resembled Sidney's *Pembroke Arcadia's countess*. This way, Wroth "imitated" Sidney's literary skills. Sidney appears to deliberately break sonnet principles by creating idealized representations of women in his representation of Stella.

In his apology for poetry Sidney seeks a place for poetry as well as showing concern for national and literary identity. He responds to a poetical antipathy illustrated in *The School of Abuse* by Stephen Gosson. In this poem Gosson proposes a puritan attack on Sidney's type of literature. He says that the importance of poetical nobility lies on its influence readers into virtuous action. During this era of puritanical belief and antipathy towards imitation poetry, Sidney's defense was a fundamental contribution to the genre. He described the genre's indispensable value to the society especially poetry's ethical function and mimetic nature (Berry, 67).

It is also meaningful to analyse Sidney's influence from the way he handled the utilitarian viewpoint of rhetoric, which emerged from Petrus Ramus, sophists and humanists. Imitating Aristotle, Sidney wrote that human action equals knowledge. Sidney's view of literary modification emphasizes a connection between virtues and art. Sidney puts this in Apology when he argues that it can be insufficient to simply present virtues as a precept. Poets must influence men to become virtuous. The modern influence of the Apology is mainly derivation of the humanistic teachings that highlight poetic work and the virtue of prudence. The virtue of prudence places more emphasis on human action than knowledge, as it handles the possibility of combining stability with innovation.

During the Sidney's era there was an ideological and an aesthetic concern over theatre. Theatrical issue was contentious because of the growing disdain for the values of theatrical culture. For instance, there was a growing money economy which facilitated social mobility. During this time Europe was experiencing its first wave of inflation. By 1605 London's theaters were very popular, regardless of the introduction of theater charges. The theaters in London could accommodate approximately eight thousand audiences. Conversely, Sidney had divergent opinions on drama as he illustrates in Apology. He displays opposition to the little attention people paid to drama, especially the way artists conveyed drama. Sidney explained that the tragedy surrounding drama did not lie in history, but rather in Poesy's laws. This is because artists had liberty of feigning new matter or framing history to tragical convenience. Sidney attempts to apply various strategies to affirm the proper place of poetry in society. For example, he despises the way the

society misaligned poetry with youth when he introduced the idea that poetry is a camp of champions. He refers to poets as soldiers with courage.

He uses a judicial oration form when writing *An Apology for poetry* in order to illustrate defense in a trial structure. This helps to emphasize his idea that poetry creates a new form of reality. In addition to this Sidney uses forensic rhetoric to highlight his arguments that poetry does not only express a separate reality but also has a long and respectable history. Poetry is defensible in its ability to influence readers to virtuous action. In the *Apology*, Sidney had a tough time dealing with censorship as he used several rhetorical devices. He was also well versed with courtiership. To avoid censorship he employed the classical oration structure together with its conservative divisions. His use of classical oration style emanated from his education in humanism. He also uses the classical structure to construct his arguments by utilizing rhetorical methods (Weamys and Patrick, 57).

Sidney uses allegory and metaphors to reveal and conceal his position on certain issues. For example, his horsemanship is used as a form of analogy and imager differentiates his transformational power vision of poetry. To overcome censorship in the *Apology*, Sidney emphasizes method and style. This way, Sidney knowingly supports fiction and attacks factual privileges. He argues that poets usually make no literal arguments of truth and are under no illusions, thus create fictional statements. Therefore, the contentious issue is not only the poetic values in sense of their usage, but also poetry's place in a replete and contingent world.

In conclusion, it is important to note Sidney's contribution to the English and poetic literature, especially in affirming the position of poetry in the society. Sidney's works, especially *Apology and a Defence for Poetry* illustrate his enthusiasm to defend poetry. He also inspired future writers such as Mary Wroth, William Stigant and Percy Busshe Shelley. Some of Sidney's prominent works include *Astrphel and Stella*, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* and *The Defence of Poetry*. Sidney's central argument was that poetry stimulates imagination, perception and creativity. He also argued that poetry had a power to influence readers to virtuous action. In addition to these, Sidney emphasizes the importance of nature in creating artwork. His influence on the literary criticism is visible through the subsequent literatures, as he inspires several poets and his arguments act as foundation principles for contemporary artwork. Sidney utilized several writing techniques to convey his messages as well as conceal from or reveal information to his readers. These techniques include the use of metaphors and allegory in his writing. This analysis has looked at the importance of Sidney's work in the advancement of poetry, the significance of his work to the society, the literal styles he used in his writing and the contribution to modern poetry.