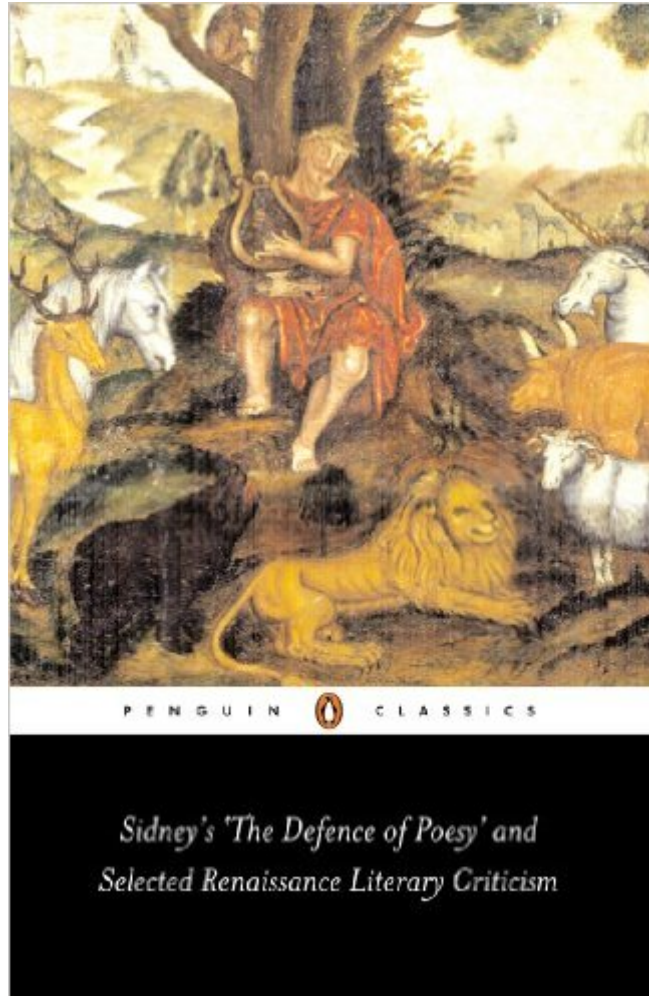


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# Sidney's 'The Defence Of Poesy' And Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

Controversy raged through England during the 1570-80s as Puritans denounced all manner of games & pastimes as a danger to public morals. Writers quickly turned their attention to their own art and the first & most influential response came with Philip Sidney's *Defense*. Here he set out to answer contemporary critics &, with reference to Classical models of criticism, formulated a manifesto for English literature. Also includes George Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy*, Samuel Daniel's *Defence of Rhyme*, & passages by writers such as Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon & George Gascoigne.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I find it difficult to believe there are no reviews of this book yet. From what may be the greatest period of English poetry, when the very definition of what might constitute poetry was developing in both practice and critical statements, this book includes all the work about poetry and poetics that one might wish to have: works by Sidney, Puttenham, Daniel, Gascoigne, Campion, Drayton, and

more. This is a work you will find fascinating, exciting, and useful if you care about poetry at all, from any period. Buy it while it's available! You won't regret it.

I agree with the other reviewer: it is a wonder this has not received more attention on , for it is indeed a marvelous resource. The fine annotations and apparatus are an education in rhetoric in themselves. The complete texts, abridged editions, and excerpts together provide a panoramic view of classical, renaissance, and later poetic debates, with the following questions or areas of interest being especially richly considered in both the texts themselves and the editor's work: a) the historical founding of English meter and early theories of prosody, b) the relation of meter to metaphysics, c) the evaluative problems posed, and anxieties stirred, by the comparison of classical "meter" with English vernacular "rhyme", the inchoate consciousness of England as a nation with an emergent literary tradition, and d) the relation of poetic to rhetorical theory, and e) of Renaissance understandings of their "rediscovery" of learning. Puttenham's Art of Poetry is a classic in itself, and though there is a complete critical edition, most readers will find this abridgment sufficient to reveal its insights and charms without becoming tiresome, as he takes us through a catalogue of figures of speech. Sidney's rhetoric in his defense is so suave, Daniel's so much like that of a barrister, and both together revealing the cultural, moral, and political stakes of poetry that anyone who cares about poetry will find their arguments profound -- even if contemporary literary criticism, with its skeptical materialism and fideism in the ultimacy of power, would discount them as "naïf". In brief, the texts gathered here have much to teach us in themselves, and Alexander's annotations offer additional, historical and theoretical, insights that must have been a labor of love for him, so thoroughly and intelligently has he acquitted himself.

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