

An Apology for Poetry Quotations

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Quote 1: Origin of Poetry: *"It cometh of this word Poiein, which is to make wherein I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we English men have met with the Greeks in calling him 'a maker'."*

Explanation:

Sidney explains that the word 'poet' comes from the Greek 'Poiein,' meaning 'to make.' Poets are creators, like God. They create something new and meaningful.

Quote 2: Value of Meaning over Rhyming: *"It is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet. One may be a poet without versifying or a versifier without poetry."*

Explanation:

Sidney says rhyme alone does not make poetry. A poem must carry deep meaning. A true poet creates to teach and delight, not just to rhyme.

Quote 3: Limitation of Contemporary Drama: *"Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful teaching."*

Explanation:

Sidney compares delight with laughter. Delight gives true joy, but laughter often mocks. He criticizes comedies that only aim to make fun.

Quote 4: Poetry over Philosophy: *"For conclusion, I say the philosopher teaches, but he teaches obscurely, so as the learned only can understand him, that is to say, he teaches that are already taught."*

Explanation:

Sidney says philosophers teach in a complex way. Only educated people understand them. But poetry teaches everyone, clearly and beautifully.

Quote 5: Words of Poetry Haters: *"...while you live, you live in love but never get favour for lacking skill of a sonnet and when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph."*

Explanation:

Sidney mocks those who hate poetry. He says they cannot win love or be remembered after death. Poetry gives lasting fame and love.

Quote 6: Poor Condition of Poetry: *"I have just cause to make a pitiful defence of poor poetry which from almost the highest estimation of learning is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children."*

Explanation:

Sidney says poetry was once highly respected. But now it is laughed at by even children. He defends it with sorrow and hope.

Quote 7: Definition of Poetry: *"Poetry, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word Mimesis."*

Explanation:

Sidney defines poetry using Aristotle's idea. Poetry is imitation, not simple copying. It shows life in a way that teaches and delights.

Quote 8: Perfect Imitation: *"That imitation whereof poetry is, has the most conveniency to nature of all other;"*

Explanation:

Sidney says poetry imitates nature better than anything else. It shows truth in a beautiful way. This is why poetry feels so real.

Quote 9: Ideal Tragedy: *"The ideal tragedy is an imitation of the noble action in the representation of which it stirs, admiration and commiseration."*

Explanation:

Sidney explains what a perfect tragedy should do. It copies great actions that move us deeply. It teaches by making us feel.

Quote 10: Poets as Cultural Leaders: *“So among the Romans were Livius Andronicus, and Ennius. So in the Italian language, the first that made it aspire to be a treasure-house of science were the poets Dante, Boccace, and Petrarch. So in our English were Gower and Chaucer.”*

Explanation:

Sidney says poets helped build great languages. In Rome, Italy, and England, poets led the way. They made language powerful and meaningful.

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