

Historical Importance of Poetry One of Sidney's first points is that the majority of our philosophers have been Roman and before them, Greek, and both of these civilizations placed a great value in the art of poetry. The Romans called poets vates and defined them as a diviner, foreseer, or a prophet. The Greeks named them poet which comes from the word poiein meaning to make. Sidney calls upon Musaeus, Homer, and Hesiod, the fathers of Greek literature and the Italian forefathers of poetry – Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch – the three crowns of the Italian Renaissance to give historical ethos to his argument for the importance of poetry. The epic writers believed writing poetry to be a divine gift based on God's ability to create. Sidney writes, "There is no art delivered to mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth." He claims that poetry could not exist without nature as inspiration and because nature is a direct result of God's creativity, poetry has a certain sense of divinity that cannot be ignored. Poetry is not "enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts". He indicates poetry as nature's Golden Age, a time in Greek Mythology of total peace and prosperity. Even with his comparison of Mother Earth (Gaia) to English, Sidney is probably .(the first critic who introduces the idea of a 'mother tongue' (Norton 1047