

A young person in his twenties, Pope longs to display his learning and be didactic and moralising, his *An Essay on Criticism* suggesting a kind of "critical ethic", as Geoffrey G. Harpham calls it. In this respect, based on the negation of subjective impulses, the true criticism, according to Pope, is natural, modest, moderate, and just, resulting not only "from cognitive superiority or acquired learning, but first and foremost from a certain kind of virtue" (Harpham, 2001, p. 373). Likewise earlier, while defending poetry in neo-Horatian terms as a kind of writing that teaches and delights, Sidney valued the ethical value of virtue but in relation to poetry not criticism. For him, poetry is a superior form of ethics, or rather above philosophy and ethic itself, since it both teaches and moves to virtue as "a divine force, far above man's wit"