

Sir Philip Sidney, from *The Defence of Poesie* (1595):

Poesie therefore, is an Art of *Imitation*: for so *Aristotle* termeth it in the word *mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth to speake Metaphorically. A speaking *Picture*, with this end to teach and delight.

Alexander Pope, from *An Essay on Criticism* (1711):

True Wit is Nature to Advantage drest,
What oft was *Thought*, but ne'er so well *Exprest*. (297-98)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from *Biographia Literaria* (1817), discussing the poems Wordsworth published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798):

Mr. Wordsworth . . . was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty of things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand. (Chapter 14)

Matthew Arnold, from *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1864):

If I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. In general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being; the idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. (par. 23)