aligned with Judas" (115). There is more to be said about the interplay of religious and secular. Third, and most important, Leitch is perfectly aware that a focus on treason as such is not specific to the period she has chosen, and so turns back for brief looks at Ricardian poetry (does the Chaucer of *Troilus* or the "Man of Law's Tale" or the "Monk's Tale" really have less interest, or a less secular interest, in treason than these texts?) and the earlier English romances of the fourteenth century, notably those of the Auchinleck manuscript, in which she claims that treason "is more part of the furniture than the architecture" (63). As it stands, this looks like special pleading. There is more to be said in these areas, but future work will be much in Leitch's debt. She has opened a conversation that was needed, and she has done so admirably.

Not least, her literary-historical claims of interaction between the late medieval and the early modern are thoroughly persuasive. When we next read *King Lear*, even keeping in mind work by Michael Hays and Alex Davis on its chivalric antecedents, we will be more conscious than before of how much this text owes to the cultural imaginary of the fifteenth century for its unsparing portrayal of treason, both vertical and horizontal, in a world that is bleakly godless.

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On Not Defending Poetry: Defence and Indefensibility in Sidney's "Defence of Poesy." Catherine Bates.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xviii + 300 pp. $105.

Catherine Bates's *On Not Defending Poetry* makes no argument. Instead, the book enacts the rhetorical performance of an argument. That performance extends O. B. Hardison's long-familiar identification of two competing voices in the *Defence* (one neoclassical, the other romantic) into what Bates calls a new and radical deconstruction of Sidney's poetics. One voice (A) defends the orthodox, instrumentalist, and bankable use of poetry as a culturally valuable science; the alternative voice (B) is variously described as delirious, radical, queer, aesthetic, self-loving, masochistic, and abject. Subject to interrogation, voice A fractures under the weight of idealism's contradictions, disclosing its complicity in the "interests of capitalist ideology," including militarism, colonialism, sexism, and other ills routinely ascribed to Western metaphysics; by contrast, voice B emerges through textual miscues and symptomatic slippages to contest idealist economies in ways sometimes associated with the marginalized and the oppressed, and sometimes (eschewing instrumentalism altogether) with perversity, jouissance, and self-abuse (x). In short, Bates's book sets out to rescue Sidney B from Sidney A by "projecting" onto A's argument the "radicalism'" of a "contemporary professor of English," even if "radicalism" seems an odd descriptor for a politics so commonplace (x–xi).

Bates's book is divided into three parts, which correspond to the three main accusations against poetry that Sidney counters in his *Defence*'s *refutatio*—namely, that poetry is profitless, that poetry lies, and that poetry abuses. In part 1, deconstruction flattens the metaphorical into the literal: the world of Sidney A is all about gold, "designed to commodify poetry" by producing virtuous readers, and thus "strikingly anticipates . . . capitalist mass production" (41). Sidney B's shadow text populates this golden world with "simple Indians," whose freedom from capitalism and colonialism renders them true practitioners of *la poésie pure*. Part 2 addresses the *Defence*'s claims to truth with a split-screen reading that proceeds, first, as an assault against the Logos as guarantor of "truth and meaning" (92)—the "Christian and Platonic" foundation that Bates presupposes, strangely, as A's bedrock—and, second, as a revelation of that "infinite regress of lying liars," whose profitless lies Sidney B slyly embraces as "a shattered masochistic subject" in pursuit of a self-punishing freedom (102). In part 3, Bates largely dispenses with Sidney A to lionize Sidney B as a "towering, illiterate Goth" bent upon annihilating "the processes of proper and orderly [re]production" to "bring the *polis* to its knees"—"a schoolboy's fantasized retaliation" against his teachers (231–32). So much for defending poetry.

The image of Sidney as schoolboy Goth is so fantastic as to raise questions about the source of the fantasy. In the process of debunking the "Establishment's poster boy" for "literary criticism," Bates represents herself as another version of that same "towering" Goth toppling the academy's walls (65). And what fantasies subsist inside that fantasy? Bates's "Establishment" recalls the long-dead culture wars of the 1990s, and while fantasizing its existence sounds intellectually heroic, there simply are no longer any voices marshaling Sidney's poetics in defense of literary criticism, established or not. There are other fantastic claims about which questions might be raised—some concerning historical and biographical issues, and some regarding more ordinary matters of terminological clarity and logical coherence—but judging the book on such grounds would miss the point.

Bates's performance screams to be weighed, instead, by its own double-voiced standard. On the cover of *On Not Defending Poetry* is the picture of a horse easily mistaken for a unicorn. While that horse's absent-present unicorn's horn might be read symptomatically as Bates's own longing for the missing signifier—or, better still, as her longing for that mystified absolute negative of the signifier in absence—nothing about the book compels interpretation so abstract. Unicorn horns are (legend has it) pretty pricey commodities, and Bates—for all of her extended attacks on commodity culture, capitalism, and the Establishment—knows clearly how to negotiate symbolic capital to her advantage. The proof is in the reader's hands, so to speak, bearing, remarkably, the academy's gold standard as impression, OUP. A bankable criticism, indeed.

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