

**A REPLY TO STEPHEN GOSSON'S SCHOOLE OF ABUSE  
IN DEFENSE OF POETRY, MUSICK, AND STAGE PLAYS**

by Thomas Lodge

*Protogenes* can know *Apelles* by his line though he se[e] him not, and wise men can consider by the Penn the aucthoritie of the writer, thoughe they know him not. The Rubie is discerned by his pale rednes, and who hath not h[e]ard that the Lyon is knowne by hys clawes. Though *AEsopes* craftie crowe be never so deftlye decked, yet is his double dealing e[a]sely desiphered: and though men never so perfectly pollish there wrytings with others sentences, yet the simple truth wil discover the shadow of ther follies: and bestowing every fether in the bodye of the right M. tourne out the naked dissembler into his owen cote, as a spectacle of follye to all those which can rightlye judge what imperfections be.

There came to my hands lately a litle (woulde God a wittye) pamphlet, baring a fayre face as though it were the sc[h]oole of abuse, but being by me advisedly wayed I fynd it the oftscome of imperfections, the writer fuller of wordes than judgement; the matter certainly as ridiculus as seri[o]us. Asuredly his mother witte wrought this wonder, the child to dispraise the father, the dogg to byte his mayster for his dainty morcell. But I se[e] (with *Seneca*) yt the wrong is to be suffered, since he disprayseth, who by costome hath left to speake well; bot I meane to be short: and teach the Mayster what he knoweth not, partly that he may se his owne follie, and partly that I may discharge my promise, both binde me. Therefore I would with the good scholmayster to over looke his abuses againe with me, so shall he see an ocean of inormities which begin in his first prinsiple in the dispraise of poetry.

And first let me familiarly consider with this find faulte what the learned have alwayes esteemed of poetrie. *Seneca* thoughe a stoike would have a poeticall sonne, and amongst the auncientest *Homer* was no les accompted than *Humanus deus*. What made Alexander I pray you esteme of him so much? Why allotted he for his works so curious a closset? Was ther no fitter under prop for his pillow the[n] a simple pamphlet? In all *Darius* cofers was there no Jewell so costly? Forso[o]th my thinks these two (the one the father of Philosophers, the other the cheftaine of chivalrie) were both deceived if all were as a *Gosson* would wish them, yf poets paynt naughte but palterie toyes in vearse, their studies tended to folishnesse, and in all their inde[a]vors they did not els but *agendo nihil agere*. Lord how Virgil's poore gnatt pricketh him, and how Ovid's fley byteth him, he can beare no bourde, he hath rayseed up a new sect of seri[o]us stoikes, that can abide naught but their owen shadowe, and alow nothing worthye, but what they conceave. Did you never reade (my over wittie frend) that under the persons of beastes may abuses were dissiphered? Have you not reason to waye? that whatsoever e[i]ther Virgil did write of his gnatt, or Ovid of his fley, was all covertly to declar abuse? But you are (*homo literatus*) a man of the letter, little savoring of learning, your giddy brain made you leave your thrift, and your abuses in London some part of your honestie. You say that Poets are subtil, if so, you have learned that poynt of them, you can well glose on a trifeling text: you you have dronke perhaps of *Lethe*, your gram[m]er learning is out of your head, you forget your Accidence, you reme[m]ber not that under the person of *AEneas* in

Virgil, the practice of a dilligent captaine is discribed, under ye shadow of byrds, beastes, and trees, the follies of the world were disiphered, you know not that the creation is signified in the Image of *Prometheus*, the fall of pryde in the person of *Narcissus*, these are toyes because they savour of wisdom which you want. Marke what *Campanus* sayth, *Mira fabularum vanitas sed quae si introspicantur videri possunt non vanae*. The vanity of tales is wonderful, yet if we advisedly look into them they wil seme and prove wise. How wonderful are the pithie poems of *Cato*! the curious comedies of *Plautus*! how bravely discovereth *Terence* our inperfection[n] in his *Eunuch*! how neatly dissiphereth he *Dauus*! how pleasauntly paynteth he out *Gnatho*! whom if we should seeke in our dayes, I suppose he would not be farr from your parson. But I see you woulde seeme to be that which you are not, and as the proverb sayth *Nodum in Cirpo quaerere*. Poets you say use coullors to cover their incoviences, and wittie sentences to burnish theyr bawdery, and you divinitie to cover your knaverye.

But tell mee truth *Gosson*, speakest thou as thou thinkest? What coelers findest thou in a Poete not to be admitted? Are his speaches unperfect? Savor they of inscience? I think if thou hast any shame thou canst not but like and approve the[m]. Are ther godes displeasent unto thee? doth *Saturne* in his majesty move thee? doth *Juno* with her riches displease thee? doth *Minerva* with her weapon discomfort thee? doth *Apollo* with his harping harme thee? Thou mayst say nothing les then harme thee because they are not, and I thinke so to[o] because thou knowest them not. For wot thou that in the person of *Saturne* our decaying years are signified, in the picture of angry *Juno* our affections are dissiphered, in ye person of *Minerva* is our understa[n]ding signified, both in respect of warre, as policie. When they faine that *Pallas* was begotten of the braine of *Jupiter* their meaning is none other but that al wisdom (as the learned say) is from above, and commeth from the father of Lights: in the portrature of *Apollo* all knowledge is denocated. So that, what so they wrot it was to this purpose, in the way of pleasure, to draw men to wisdom: for se[e]ing the world in those daies was unperfect, yt was necessary that they like good Phisi[ci]ons should so frame their potions, that they might be appliable to the quesie stomaks of their werish patients. But our studentes by your meanes have made shipwrack of theyre labors, our schoolemaisters have so offended that by your judgement they shall *subire poenam capitis* for teaching poetry, the universitie is litle beholding to you, al their practices in teaching are frivolus. Witt hath wrought that in you, that yeares and studie never set[t]led in the heads of our sagest doctors.

No mervel though you disprayse poetrye, when you know not what it meanes. *Erasmus* will make that the pathway to knowledge which you disprayse, and no meane fathers vouchsafe in their seriouse questions of divinitie, to inserte poetically sensures. . . . Poets you confesse are eloquent but you reprove them in their wantonness, they write of now wisdom, you may say their tales are frivolus, they prophane holy thinges, they seeke nothing to the perfection of our soules. Theyr practise is in other things of lesse force: to this objection I sanswer no otherwise then *Horace* doeth in his booke *de arte poetica* where he wryteth thus:

*Silvestres homines sacer interpresque deorum  
Sedibus, et victu faedo deterruit orpheus.  
Dictus ob hoc lenire Tigres rabitosque leones.*

*Dictus et Amphion Thebanæ condit[or] urbis  
Saxa movere sono, testudinis et prece blanda  
Ducere quo vellet. Fuit hoc sapientia quondam,  
Publica privatis secernere sacra prophanis,  
Concubitu prohibere vago, dare Iura maritis,  
Oppida moliri, leges incidere ligno.*

The holy spokesman of the Gods  
With heave[n]ly Orpheus hight:  
Did drive the savage men from wods,  
And made them live aright.  
And therefore is sayd the Tygers fierce,  
And Lyons full of myght  
To overcome: *Amphion*, he  
Was sayd of Theabs the founder,  
Who by his force of Lute dyd cause  
The stones to part a sonder,  
And by his speach did them drect  
Where he would have them staye:  
This wisdom this was it of olde  
All strife for to allaye.  
To give to every man his owne,  
To make the Gods be knowne,  
To drive each lecher from the bed  
That never was his owne.  
To teach the law of mariage,  
The way to build a towne,  
For to engrave these lawes in woods  
This was these mens renowne.

I cannot leave *Tirtheus* pollicy untouched, who by force of his pen could incite men to the defence of their countrye. If you require of ye Oracle of *Apollo* what successe you shal have: *respondet bellicoso numine*. Lo now you see your objections my answers, you behold or may perceive mainfestlye that Poetes was the first raysors of cities, prescribers of good lawes, mayntayners of religion, disturbors of the wicked, advancers of the wel disposed, inve[n]tors of laws, and lastly the very fo[o]tpaths to knowledg and understa[n]ding. Ye if we sho[u]ld beleve Herome he will make *Platos* exiles honest me[n] and his pestiferous poets good preachers: for he accounteth *Orpheus*, *Museus*, and *Linus*, *Christians*, therefore *Virgil* (in his 6 boke of *AEneidos* wher he lernedly describeth ye journey of *AEneas* to *Elisum*) asserteneth us, yt among them yt were ther for the zeale they beare toward there country, ther were found *Quinque pii vates et Phaëbo digna loquiti* but I must answer al objectio[n]s, I must fil every nooke. I must arme myself now, for here is the greatest bob I can gather out of your booke forsoth *Ovids* abuses, in descrybing whereof you labour very vehementlye termi[n]g him lecher, and in his person dispraise all poems, but shall on[e] mans follye destroye a universal comodity? What gift what perfit knowledg hath ther bin, emong ye professors of wc ther

hath not bin a bad on [?] the Angels have sinned in heave[n], *Ada[m]* and *Eve* in earthly paradise, emo[n]g ye holy apostles ungratious Judas. I reson not yt al poets are holy but I affirme yt poetry is a heave[n]ly gift, a perfit gift then which I know not greater plesure. And surely if I may speak my mind I thi[n]k we shall find but few poets if it were exactly wayd what they oughte to be: your *Muscovian* straungers, your *Scithian* monsters wonderful, by one *Eurus* brought upon one stage in ships made of Sheepskins, wyll not prove you a poet nether your life alow you to bee of that learning: if you had wisely wayed ye abuse of poetry, if you had reprehended ye foolish fantasies of our poets *nomine non re* which they bring forth on stage, my self would have liked of you and allowed your labor. But I perceive nowe yt all red colloured stones are not Rubies, nether is every one an *Alexander* yt hath a stare in his cheeke, al lame men are not *Vulcans*, nor hooke nosed men *Ciceroes*, nether each professor a poet, I abhor those poets that savor of ribaldry, I will with the zealous admit the expullcion of suche enormities. Poetry is dispraised not for the folly that is in it, but for the abuse whiche many ill Wryters couller by it. Beleeve me the magestrats may take advise (as I knowe wisely can) to roote out those odd rymes which runnes in every rascales mouth. Savoring of rybaldry, those foolishe ballets that are admitted make poets good and godly practises to be refused. I like not of a wicked *Nero* that wyll expell *Lucan*, yet admit I of a zealous governour that wil seke to take away the abuse of poetry. I like not of an angyre *Augustus* which wyll banishe *Ovid* for envy. I love a wise Senator, which in wisdedome wyll correct him and with advise burne his follyes: unhappy were we yf like poore *Scaurus* we should find *Tiberius* that wyll put us to death for a tragedy making, but most blessed were we if we might find a judge that severely would amende the abuses of Tragedies. . . .

But other matters call me and I must not staye upon this onely, there is an easier task in hand for me, and that which, if I may speak my conscience, fitteth my vain bes, your second abuse, Gosson, your second abuse; your disprayses of Musik, which you unadvisedly terme pyping: that is it will most byte you, what so is an overstay of life, is displeasaut to your person, musik may not stand in your presence, whereas all the learned Philosophers have alwayes had it in reverence. *Homer* commendeth it highly, referring to the prayses of the Gods whiche Gosson accompteth folishnesse; looke uppon the harmonie of the Heavens; hang they not by Musik? Doe not the *Spheares* move? The *primus* motor governe[s], be not they *inferiora corpora* affected *quadam sumpathia* and agreement? Howe can we measure the debilitie of the patient but by the disordered motion of the pulse? Is not man worse accompted of which he is most out of tune? Is there any thinge that more affecteth the sense? Doth there any pleasure more acuat our understanding? Can the wonders yt hath wroughte and which you your selfe confesse no more move you? It fitteth well now that the learned have sayd, *musica requirit generosum animu[m]* which since it is far from you, no marvel though you favor not that profession. It is reported of the *Camelion* that shee can chaunge her selfe unto all coollors save whyte, and you can accompte of all thinges save such as have honesty. *Plutarch* your good Mayster may bare me witness that the ende whereto Musick was, will prove it prayes worthy. O Lord howe maketh it a man to remember heavenly things to wo[n]der at the works of the creator. *Eloquence* can stay the souldiars sword from slaying an Orator, and shall not musike be magnified which not onely saveth the bodye

but is a comfort to the soule? David rejoyseth singeth and prayeth the Lorde by the Harpe, and the Simbale is not removed from his sanctuary, the Aungels syng *gloria in excelsis*. Surely the imagination in this present instant calleth me to a deepe consideration of my God. Looke for wonders where musike worketh, and wher harmonie is ther followeth incredible delectation. The bowels of the earth y[i]eld where the instrument soundeth and *Pluto* cannot keepe *Proserpina* if *Orpheus* recorde. The Seas shall not swallowe *Arion* whilst he singeth, nether shall hee perish while he harpeth, a doleful tuner yf a diing musition can move a Monster of ye sea to mourne. A Dolphin respectet a heavenly recorde. . . .

But since you wrote of abuses, we may licence you to lye a little, so ye abuse will be more manifest. Lord with how goodly a cote have you clothed your conceiptes, you abound in storyes but impertinent, they bewray your reeding but not your wisdom, would God they had bin well aplied. But now I must play the musitian right nolesse buggs now come in place but pavions and mesures, dumps and fancies, and here growes a great question what musick *Homer* used in curing ye diseased gretians, it was no dump you say, and so think I, for yt is not apliable to sick men, for it favoreth Malancholie. I am sure it was no mesure, for in those days they were not such good da[n]sers, for so[o]th the[n] what was it? If you require me, if you name me the instrume[n]t, I wyl tel you what was ye musik. Meanwhile a gods name let us both dout yt is no part of our salvation to know what it was nor how it went. When I speak with *Homer* next you shall knowe his answeare.

But you can not be content to erre but you must maintain it to[o]. *Pithagoras* you say allowes not that musik decerned by eares, but hee wisheth us to ascend unto the sky and marke that harmony. Surely this is but one doctors opinion (yet I dislike not of it) but to speake my conscience my thinkes musike best pleaseth me when I heare it, for otherwise the catter walling of Cats, were it not for harmonie, should more delight mine eies then the tunable voyces of men. But these things are not the chieftest poynts you shote at, thers somewhat els sticketh in your stomak God graunt it hurt you not, from the daunce you run to the pype from 7. to 3. which if I shoulde add I beleeve I could wrest out halfe a score of inco[n]veniencies more out of your booke. Our plesant consortes do discomfort you much, and because you lyke not thereof they are discomendable, I have heard it is good to take sure fotinge when we travel unknowen countryes, for when we wade above our shoe latchet *Appelles* wyll reprehende us for coblers, if you had bene a father in musick and could have decerned of tunes I would perhaps have likt your opinion sumwhat where now I abhor it, if you wear a professor of that practise I would quickly perswade you, that the adding of strings to our instrument make the sound more hermonious, and that the mixture of Musike maketh a better concent. But to preach to unskillful is to perswad ye brut beastes, I wyl not stand long in thys point although the dignitye thereof require a volume, but how learned men have esteemed this heavenly gift, if you please to read you shall see. *Socrates* in hys old age will not disdain to learn ye science of Music amo[n]g children, he can abide their correctio[n]s to[o], so much accou[n]ted her that wt you contemn, so profitable thought he yt, wt you mislik. *Solon* wil esteme so much of ye knowledg of singing, yt he wil soner forget to dye the[n] to

sing. *Pithagoras* likes it so wel yt he wil place it in *Greace*, and *Aristoxenus* will saye yt the soule is musik. *Plato* (in his booke *de legibus*) will affirme that it can not be handled without all sciences, the *Lacedemonians* and *Cretensis* wer sturred to warre by *Anapaestus* foote, and *Timotheus* with the same incensed kinge *Alexander* to batel, ye yf *Boetyus* fitten not, on *Tauromitanus* (by this *Phrigian* sound) hastened to burn a house wher a stru[m]pet was hidden. . . .

But as I like musik so admit I not of thos that deprave the same: your pipers are as odius to mee as yourselfe; nether alowe I your harpinge merye beggers: although I knew you my self a professed play maker, and a paltry actor. Since which ye windmil of your wit hath bin tornd so long wyth the wynde of folly, that I fear me we shall see the dogg returne to his vomit, and the clenched sow to her myre, and the reformed scholemayster to hys old teaching of follye. Beware it be not so, let not your booke be a blemish to your own profession. Correct not musik therfore whe[n] it is praiseworthy, least your worthlesse misliking bewray your madnes. Way the abuse and that is matter sufficient to serve a magistrates animadversion. Heere may you advise well, and if you have any stale rethorik flourish upon thys text, the abuse is, what that is applied to wantonnesse, which was created to shewe Gods worthinesse. When ye shamefull resorts of shamles curtezaness in sinful sonnets shall prophane vertue, these are no light sinnes, these manke many good men lament, this causeth parents hate there right borne children, if this were reformed by your policie I should esteeme of you as you wysh. I feare me it fareth otherwyse, *latet anguis in herba*, under your fare show of conscience take heede you cloake not your abuse, it were pittie the learned should be overseene in your simplenesse, I feare me you will be politick with *Machavel* not zealous as a prophet. . . .

Well, I leave this poynt til I know further of your mynde, mean while I must talke a little wyth you about ye thyrd abuse, for the cater cosens of pypers, theyr names (as you terme them) be players, and I think as you doe, for your experience is sufficient to enforme me. . . . Men yt have knowledge what comedies and tragedis be, wil comend the[m], but it is sufferable in the folish to reprove that they know not, becaus ther mouthes wil hardly be stopped. Firste therfore, if it be not tedious to Gosson to harken to the lerned, the reder shall perceive the antiquity of playmaking, the inventors of comedies, and therewithall the use and comoditaye of the[m]. So that in ye end I hope my labor shall be liked, and the learned wil soner conceve his folly.

For tragedies and comedies *Donate* the gramarian sayth, they wer invented by lerned fathers of the old time to no other purpose, but to yeelde prayse unto God for a happy harvest, or plentifull yeere, and that thys is trewe the name of Tragedye doeth importe, for if you consider whence it came, you shall perceive (as *Iodocus Badius* reporteth) that it drewe his original of *Tragos*, *Hircus*, and *Ode*, *Cantus* (so called), for that the actors thereof had in rewarde for thyr labour, a Gotes skynne fylled with wyne. You see then that the fyrst matter of tragedies was to give thankes and prayses to GOD, and a gratefull prayer of the countreyemen for a happye harvest, and this I hope was not discommendable. I know you will judge [th]is farthest from abuse. But to wade farther, thys fourme of invention being found out, as the dayes wherein it was used did decay, and the world grew to more perfection, so yt witt of the younger sorte became more riper, for they leaving this fourme, invented an other, in the which they altered the nature but

not ye name: for sounets in prayse of ye gods, they did set forth the sower fortune of many exiles, the miserable fal of haples princes, the reuinous decay of many cou[n]tries, yet not content with this, they present the lives of *Satyers*, so that they might wiselye, under the abuse of that name, discover the follies of many theyr folish fellow-citesens: and those monsters were then, as our parasites are now adayes: such as with pleasure reprehended abuse. As for commedies because they bear a more plesanter vain, I will leave the other to speake of them. *Tully* defines them thus. *Comedia* (sayth he) is *Imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, et imago vetatis*, and it is sayde to be termed of *Comai* (emongste the Greekes) which signifieth *Pagos*, and *Ode, Cantus*: for that they were exercised in the fiede. They had thy beginning wyth tragedies, but their matter was more plessaunt, for they were suche as did reprehend, yet *quodam lepore*. These first very rudely were invented, by *Susarion Bullus*, and *Magnes* t[w]o auncient poets, yet so that they were mervelous profitable to the reclamyng of abuse: whereupon *Eupolis* with *Cratinus*, and *Aristophanes* began to write, and with ther eloquenter vaine and perfection of stil[e], dyd more severely speak agaynst the abuse the[n] they: which *Horace* himselfe witnesseth. For sayth he ther was no abuse but these men reprehended it. A thefe was loth to be seene on there spectacle. A coward was never present at theyr assemblies. A backbiter abhord that company, and I my self could not have blame your (Gosson) for exampting yourself from this theater, of troth I should have lykt your pollicy. These therefore, these wer they that kept men in awe, these restrayned the unbridled cominaltie, whereupon *Horace* wisely sayeth,

*Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore,  
Oderunt peccare mali, formidine penae.*

The good did hate al sinne for vertues love,  
The bad for feare of shame did sin remove.

Yea would God our realme could light upon a *Lucillius*, then should the wicked bee poynded out from the good, a harlot woulde seeke no harbor at stage plais, lest she shold here her owne name growe in question: and the discourse of her honesty cause her to bee hated of the godly. As for you I am sure of this one thing, he would paint you in your players orname[n]ts, for they best becam you. But as these sharpe corrections were disanulde in Rome when they grewe to more licenciousnes: so I fear me if we should practise it in our dayes, the same intertainmente would followe. But in illreformed Rome what comedies now? A poets wit can correct, yet not offend. *Philemon* will mitigate the corrections of sinne, by reproving them covertly in shaodwes. *Menander* dare not offend ye Senate openly, yet wants he not a parasite to touch them prively. *Terence* wyl not report the abuse of harlots under there proper stile, but he can finely girde the[m] under the person of *Thais*. Hee dare not openly tell the Rich of theyr covetousnesse and severity towards their children, but he can controle them under the person of *Durus Demeas*. He must not shew the abuse of noble yong gentilmen under theyr owne title, but he wyl warne them in the person of *Pamphilus*. Will you learne to know a parasite? Look upon his *Dauus*. Wyl you seke the abuse of courtly flatterers? Behold *Gnato*: and if we had some Satericall Poetes nowe a dayes to penn our commedies, that might be

admitted of zeale to discypher the abuses of the worlde in the person of notorious offenders. I know we should wisely ryd our assemblyes of many of your brotherhod, but because you may have a full scope to reprehende, I will ryp up a rableme[n]t of playmakers, whose wrightinges I would wishe you overlooke, and seeke out theyr abuses. Can you mislike of *Cecillius*? or dispise *Plinius*? or amend *Neuius*? or find fault with *Licinius*? Wherein offended *Actilius*? I am sure you can not but wonder at *Terrence*? Wil it please you to like of *Turpelius*? or alow of *Trabea*? You muste needs make much of *Ennius* for overloke al ths, and you shall find ther volums ful of wit if you examine the[m]: so yt if you had no other masters, you might deserve to be a doctor, wher now you are but a folishe scholemaister. But I wyll deale wyth you verye freendlye, I wil resolve everi doubt that you find. Those instrumentes which you mislike in playes grow of auncient custome, for when *Rossius* was an Actor, be sure that as with his tears he moved affections, so the Musitian in the Theater before the entrance, did mornefully record it in melody (as *Servius* reporteth). The actors in Rome had also gay clothing and every ma[n]s aparel was apliable to his part and person. The old men in white, ye rich men in purple, the parasite disguisedly, the yong men in gorgeous coulours, ther wanted no devise nor good judgeme[n]t of ye comedy, whe[n]c[e] I suppose our players both drew ther plaies and fourme of garments. As for the appointed dayes wherin comedies wer shown, I reede that the Romaynes appoynted them on the festival dayes, in such reputation were they had at that time. Also *Iodocus Badius* will ascertain you that the actors for shewing pleasure receved some profite. But let me apply those dayes to ours, their actors to our players, their autors to ours.

Surely we want not a *Rossius*, nether ar ther great scarsity of *Terrences* professio[n], but yet our men dare not nowe a dayes presume so much as the old Poets might, and therfore they apply ther writing to the peoples vain, wheras if in the beginning they had ruled, we should now adaies have found smal spectacles of folly. But (of truth) I must confes with *Atristotle*, that men are greatly delighted with imitation, and that it were good to bring those things on stage, that were altogether tending to vertue: all this I admit, and hartely wysh, but you say unlesse the thinge be taken away the vice will continue, nay I say if the style were changed the practise would profit. And sure I thinke our theaters fit, that *Ennius* seeing our wa[n]ton *Glicerium* may rebuke her, if our poetes will nowe become severe, and for prophane things write of vertue: you I hope shoulde see a reformed state in those thinges, which I feare me yf they were not, the idle hedded commones would worke more mischief. I wish as zealously as the best that all abuse of playenge were abolished, but for the thing, the antiquitie causeth me to allow it, so it be used as it should be. I cannot allow the prophaning of the Sabaoth, I praise your reprehension in that, you did wel in discommending the abuse, and surely I wysh that that folly wer disclaymed, it is not to be admitted, it maks those sinne, which perhaps if it were not, would have binne present at a good sermon. It is in the Magistrate to take away that order, and appoynt it otherwyse. But sure it were pittie to abolish yt which hath so great vertue in it, because it is abused. The Germanes when the use of preaching was forbidden them, what helpe had they I pray you? Forsoth the learned were fayne covertly in comedies to declare abuses, and by playing to incite the people to vertues, whe[n] they

might heare no preaching. Those were lamentable dayes you will say, and so thinke I, but was not this I pray you a good help in reforming the decaying Gospel? You see then how comedies (my severe judges) are requesit both for ther antiquity, and for ther commoditye: for the dignity of the wrighters, and the pleasure of the hearers. But after your discrediting of playmaking, you salve uppon the sore somewhat, and among many wise workes there be some that fitte your vaine: the practise of parasites is one, which I mervel it likes you so well since it bites you so sore. But sure in that I like your judgement, and for the rst to[o], I approve your wit, but for the pigg of your own sow (as you terme it) assuredly I must discommend your verdict. . . .

Wel as I wish it to have continuance, so I praye God wyth the Prophet it be not abused. And because I thinke my selfe to have sufficiently answered that I supposed, I conclude with this. God preserve our peacable prince[s], and confound her enemies. God enlarge her wisdom, that like *Saba* she may seeke after a *Salomon*: God confounde the imaginations of her enemies, and perfit His graces in her, that the daies of her rule may be continued in the bonds of peace, that the house of the chosen Isralites may be maynteyned in happinesse: lastly I frendly bid Gosson farwell, wyshinge him to temper his penn with more discretion.