INTELLIGENCE AND METADRAMA IN THE EARLY MODERN THEATRE

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Introduction: Errant Intelligence – The Devil's Own

It is the argument of this book that the perception of the intelligencer permeates both early modern dramatic production and its reception, and generates the self-conscious metadrama which is often found in the plays of the period. This connection between intelligencing and metadrama expresses a shift in the conceptual and moral landscape of the time, instancing an 'articulation . . . of changes in consciousness', as Raymond Williams might say, operating at the boundaries of social structures and perceptions.[1] The social arrangements and physical situations that intelligencers might exploit in order to get their hands on useful information are replicated in the metadramatic structures of plays which use multiple hidden eavesdroppers and overlookers to advance their plots and storylines. In narrative or dramatic form this may well give a frisson of pleasure to an audience, but it also carries an alarming reminder in an early modern context that the intelligencer's often unseen presence portends mischief of some kind. It may be no surprise in this context that popular cultural metaphors for the intelligencer revolve around imagery of the demonic or the devilish. Besides its various dramatic functions, early modern metadrama registers an increased perception of the debasement of intelligence systems upon which the authorities of the time are so dependent. The fact that intelligencers are not only perceived as inherently mercenary but also that their testimony is typically regarded as tainted with sulphurous associations inevitably calls into question the moral legitimacy of those that rely on these insidious agents. The problematic perceptions of the intelligencing community in early modern England are rooted in questions of both systemic moral ideology and individual probity; their appearance in the metadramatic forms of the theatre shows just how public these issues had become.

In the history of theatrical interpretation, metadramatic modes and structures have been understood in various ways, but a dominant perspective has been that the primary impetus for the use of metadramatic forms is artistic experimentation. Sometimes this facility for dramatic experiment has been offered as evidence of the superiority of one artist over another. Another recurring suggestion is that authors are using metadrama to explore the relationship of drama with 'truth' or 'illusion', perhaps with reference to the workings of what are described as 'levels of illusion'. Some of these are robust studies of dramatic structure while others tend toward the speculative. My own methodology aims to establish a historical basis for the authorly imperative to create drama of this kind, and to read metadramatic strata according to both their aesthetic qualities and their material contexts. To this end, my subject is how metadramatic constructs are informed by particular social pressures, including ideas related to corrupt authorities, the emerging perceptions of authorship and the potential for misapprehension by empowered audiences, all of which are informed in turn by public perceptions of the work of intelligencers.

My ongoing study of metadrama has followed the logic of Williams's argument that early modern dramatic form registered 'altered social relationships' and that revolutionary undercurrents of some kind could be found in the 'deep formal qualities of the dramatic mode'.[2] I have previously outlined uneasy correlations between authors, informers and audiences, and some of the social experiences that drove or facilitated much metadramatic practice.[3] One of the themes arising from this was the tendency for the onstage informer to operate as a distorted mirror image of the author, a circumstance that causes authors to want to dissociate themselves from such embarrassing and dangerous doppelgängers. In this, a simple Freudian 'narcissism of small differences' was discovered in operation, in which one group attempts to distinguish itself from another by exaggerating the slight differences between them.[4] The irony of this process is that it also flags up the very likeness which is the source of the need to establish such difference in the first place. Furthermore, having established that authors' perceptions of the threat posed by informers were not histrionically exaggerated, the intelligencer and informer were found to stand out as significant figures in the metadrama of the period.

Metadrama often emerges as what Gerhard Fischer and Bernhard Greiner have called an 'agency of action and reflection in the context of cultural conflict', and the experience of the author and the intelligencer is certainly to clash and converge in their cultural moment, as the metadrama often reflects.[5] My argument here is that the particular forms of theatrical self-reflexivity generated by onstage intelligencers and informers reveals the perception that authority is tainted by the association with such figures. As they explore the nature of authority's compromise with the corrupt and the deceitful, however, a kind of resistance is to be found in the deep structures of metadrama. In some respects, the figure of the dishonest intelligencer works in early modern metadramatic forms both as a function of corrupt authority and a means of its destruction. If the metadrama does not quite attempt its own explicit deconstruction of this area of cultural conflict, its capacity as an agent of reflection nevertheless allows for a visceral anatomisation of the contradictions inherent within the underlying structures of early modern authority.

In the present twenty-first-century cultural context, the word 'intelligencer' might be said to resound with interesting and excitingly positive connotations around 'intelligence', which could perhaps even be abbreviated to the much sexier 'intel', suggesting a secretive and protective network or 'community' on which our personal safety and national security rest.[6] Similarly, the late sixteenth-century sense of 'intelligence' also carried associations of higher-level thinking and sagacity, and included nuances of collected information. The common core understanding of the nature of the intelligencer, however, was distinct from ours in many ways. When Thomas Nashe's character Master Bodley, despite apparently being content to be known as a spy, objects to being referred to with the 'hellish detested *Judas* name of an Intelligencer', we may assume he is expressing a popular distinction.[7] It is one which often gets biblical in its condemnation of the latter. The canonical Judas is of course the archetypal evil schemer of western culture, the principal betrayer of Jesus Christ, who infamously informs against him for money and treacherously identifies him to the authorities with a kiss: a gesture whose very superfluity registers a refinement of evil intent.[8] In early modern texts, the terms 'informer' and 'intelligencer' are almost always interchangeable, and the present study follows this usage. Speaking of Bodley and his acquaintance Thorius, Nashe elaborates that to be suspected for an

intelligencer 'is to make eyther of them worse pointed and wondered at than a cuckold or wittall, and set them up as common marks for everie jackanapes Prentise to kicke, spit, or throw durt at'.[9] He likens the intelligencer to the usurious popular caricature of the Jew, 'that but for the spoile loves no man', and goes on to list the other characteristics of the intelligencer, claiming that he is a metaphorical 'curre, that flatters & fawns upon everie one . . . till he may spie an advantage, and pluck oute his throate', or an 'ingratefull slave' that habitually 'spendeth the bitterest of his venome, where hee hath received most benefites'; he is a 'hang-man, that dispatcheth all that come under his hands' and a 'drunken serjeant or sumner, that could not live if (like the divell) hee did not from time to time enquire after the sinnes of the people'.[10] Unpredictable and volatile dog, poisonous slave, merciless hangman, drunken policeman: the intelligencer's reputation reverberates with insulting accusations and is assaulted with disparaging imagery from many angles. But it is perhaps the religious aspect of this characterisation that is the most revealing of the social impact of the figure. Simply put, the informing intelligencer is not only a scheming Judas figure, but actively a promoter of evil on the most fundamental level, 'like the divell'. Through to at least the late seventeenth century, this religious figurative language is used to disparage and curse the person and the actions of the intelligencer. When his own community is feeling the pressure of plotters and intelligencers, the leading Quaker dissenter George Fox angrily takes up this cudgel to complain that an informer 'is a Persecutor, and Spoiler, and a Destroyer; and the DEVIL is the Head of all Informers.'[11] In this emphatic, doubly capital, satanic accusation one may hear the resentment of the victim, and indeed Fox was himself informed against on a number of occasions.[12] Another Quaker writer of the time, George Whitehead, also weighs in with religious metaphor, inveighing against informers as 'betraying Judases, Devils Incarnate . . . Dogs [and] Wolves . . . of the Synagogue of Satan'.[13] This narrative is continued in the late seventeenth-century tract, 'The Informers answer to the late character vindicating themselves from the scandalous truths of that unlucky pamphlet', that ventriloquises the arrogance of the informer, boasting that 'if ever we should be called to account, will march to *Tyburn* with most Heroick Gallantry, and have it engraven . . . on our Tombs that we dyed the Laws *Scandal* Religious *Scourge*; and the Devils *Martyrs*.'[14] To pause

to consider the implications of these terms, the functions of the spy and the intelligencer may be seen to reveal complex interactions of loyalty and betrayal, with the spy nuanced towards the former in our cognition and the intelligencer tending to evoke the latter. For the non-religious mind this may seem a fine distinction, but if we were to imagine the Devil as God's 'spy' or 'secret agent' this would of course reflect significantly on the character of the Almighty. An informer lacks the spy's cosy licence and seems to offer a self-serving facility that contaminates what it touches. If, as György Lukács has suggested, 'the principal spectator of tragedy is God', to some extent this is at the crux of the issue in the perception of the relationship between intelligencers and the authorities they work for in the early modern period.[15] Whether or not a surveillance device itself is reliable, as Georges Banu has said of a more modern era, 'it denounces, in a roundabout way, the motivations and identities of those who are putting it in place'.[16] John Stephens's depiction of an intelligencer in *Essays and Characters* (1615) as a 'protected Cheater, *or* a Knave in authoritie, licenced by authoritie', resounds with such resentment at the concession to dishonesty that association with such figures demands.[17] Only a truly Machiavellian perspective could suggest that the character of authority might be untainted by its reliance upon the devices, assertions and testimonies of society's most Judas-like and devilish characters.

Although in his *Characters* the seventeenth-century writer Francis Lenton echoes the common early modern view in describing informers as 'hated of all . . . the scum of Rascality', with his contemporary Joseph Hall agreeing in *Cases of Conscience* that 'every man is loath to be an Informer . . . out of the conscience of his owne obnoxiousnesse', some complexity must be allowed for in the nature of the choice to occupy oneself in performing such a role.[18] To a significant extent, of course, this social phenomenon is driven by economics. In his *Kind-hart's Dreame* (*c.*1607), Henry Chettle, taking the ironic comedic voice of Richard Tarleton, outlines the necessity that drives petty informing, cony-catching and such on low pay and high rents in saying of his landlord, that 'he knows by honest courses I cannot pay the rent . . . indeed sometimes I have my Landlordes countenance before a Justice, to cast a cloake over ill rule', justifying himself with the rhetorical question 'why not I as well as my neighbors, since theres no remedy'.[19] Besides this hint at legal recourse, and possibly

even at informing against his landlord, Chettle bemoans contemporary city life in general as a cause of predation, crying, 'I would the hart of the Cittie were whole, for both within and without, extreame crueltie causeth much beggerie'; this is a time, he says, when the weak are sorely oppressed, where 'the Lyon hunteth the Wolfe, the Wolfe devoureth the Goate, and the Goate feedeth on mountain hearbs: so among men, the great oppresse the meaner, they againe the meanest.'[20] This offers a social and economic context which may be heard to resound in Thomas Overbury's description of one who is 'Informer-like-dangerous in taking aduantage of any thing done or sayde'.[21] It is apparently at least partly an understanding of the necessity that drives the predatory informer which makes people 'as carefull of their speeches and actions as the sight of a known Cutpurse . . . makes them watchfull ouer their purses and pockets'.[22]

Nevertheless, despite the depredations of such a harsh social environment, the choice to become an intelligencer is still perceived as a primarily moral decision that takes one into the moral territory of the Judas, and into the theoretical and theological hinterland of the Devil himself. The apparent correlation of intelligencers and devils in contemporary society may be confirmed by a reading of texts such as Thomas Dekker's *Lantern and Candlelight or The Bellman's Second Walk* (1608). Here, it is term-time in the court of Hell when the fiendish proceedings are halted for the entry of 'a certain spirit in the likeness of a post', which Dekker calls 'an intelligencer sent by Beelzebub . . . into some countries of Christendom, to lie there as a spy', carrying with him 'a packet of letters from several lieges that lay in those countries'.[23] In Chettle's dream, he is visited by 'a knight of the post, whome in times past I have seen as highly promoted as the pillory'.[24] The 'knight of the post' is a messenger who is also a professional perjurer or informer, and may perform the role of 'an ingrosser, an intelligencer, a constable, or a usurer', as Sandra Clark says.[25] The designation of 'post' also carries a pun on the whipping post to which an intelligencer might send his hapless victims.[26] Elizabethan and later pamphleteers see this as an appropriate disguise of the Devil, as Clark notes.[27] Chettle's demonic postman turns out to be the Devil's own informer who, weary from dealing with Pierce Penniless's message to Lucifer, is now 'returning to contaminate the ayre, with his pestilent perjuries, and abhominable false witnesse bearing.'[28] Meanwhile, Dekker's similarly Satanic postman's packet

contains a warning to be delivered to the Devil of the eponymous Bellman's informing work in exposing what he calls the 'secrets of the best trades that are taught in Hell, laying them open to the broad eye of the world, making them infamous, odious, and ridiculous.'[29] This is an instance of a writer writing of an intelligencer who is informing on a writer that is in turn playing the informer to society. Not only is this last informing entirely justified, since it is on the nefarious activities of Hell, but it is also performed in the most public manner. As the demons moan with what must be the utmost irony, the Bellman 'very spitefully hath . . . set them out in print'.[30]

In response to the Bellman's intelligencing against them, Dekker's Devil advises his 'hell-hounds' that they 'never had more cause . . . to grow politicians', to use another term of contemporary disparagement often applied to intelligencers and ambitious, morally compromised courtiers.[31] It is with more deep irony that such a figure laments that the Bellman should be willing to 'pry into the infernal mysteries . . . and, having sucked what knowledge he can from them . . . turn it all into poison, and to spit it in the very faces of the professors, with a malicious intent to make them appear ugly and so to grow hateful and out of favour with the world'.[32] Seeing this, the Devil orders his demons to punish what he calls 'that saucy intelligencer, the Bellman of London', to various suggestions from the demonic crew.[33] One foolish devil suggests that another intelligencer, whom he calls 'the Black Dog of Newgate', should 'be let loose, and afar off follow the bawling Bellman, to watch into what places he went, and what deeds of darkness every night he did'.[34] The fact that this raises only laughter may be ominous. In Luke Hutton's *The Black Dog of Newgate* (*c*.1596), the cony-catching deceiver Black Dog is both Machiavellian accuser and employer of informers, as may be seen in his use of common bestial and financial imagery to say of one informer, 'man's life and soul this dog seeks to subdue. / His mouth to stop, angels I gave him two'.[35] When the Black Dog next attacks, the speaker uses the typical dog metaphor, saying that 'like a subtle cur in speeches halts he / With thousand sleighty wiles, old shifts compacted, / Charging me oft with that I never did', the very image of the informer, adding further implications of the canine with 'in his smooth'st looks are cruel bitings hid'.[36] As a 'madding cur who doth from kind regress', this description concludes, 'of mothers' sons this dog has spoiled a hundred'.[37]

Although Hutton perceives this particular social malaise in the familiar garb of the cony-catcher, again this world overlaps with that of the intelligencer, to the degree that cony-catchers also often depend on one or another species of false accusation for the operation of their devices.[38] Hutton describes them as being 'sure to have intelligence . . . [from] some odd fellows which are inquisitors of purpose, who always what they hear rumoured, they presently come and certify their good masters cony-catchers, of all.'[39] This is intelligence-gathering for nefarious purposes as much as any other. Hutton's dedication to Sir John Popham, Elizabeth's Lord Chief Justice, offers a species of informing of his own, which aims to 'certify you of the notable abuses daily committed by a great number of very bad fellows, who under the colour of office and service, do mightily abuse both justice and Justices'.[40] To further matters of intrigue along these lines, he asserts that he is issuing the book despite the 'malice of the threatening cony-catcher who hath sworn, if I publish this book, they will do me what mischief they can.'[41] The author thus becomes informer and suffers under the threat of the mischief-makers he publicises.

Meanwhile, Dekker's Bellman notes the network of demonic intelligencers that one young gull is to be predated by: 'first are scouts sent out to discover his lodging; that known, some lie in ambush to note what apothecary's shop he resorts to every morning, or in what tobacco-shop in Fleet Street he takes a pipe of smoke in the afternoon.'[42] The Devil's intelligencer then takes this information and seals up 'a letter full of it' to send to the Devil.[43] As a result of this, Dekker's Devil sends a minor devil as intelligencer with the instruction to 'wind thyself into all shapes; be a dog to fawn, a dragon to confound; be a dove, seem innocent . . . creep into bosoms . . . and there spread the wings of thine affection.'[44] As Pamersiel, the Devil's intelligencer or 'infernal promoter', rides around surveilling the sinning public, Dekker imagines the scene theatrically, exclaiming that 'a thousand of these comedies were acted in dumb show, and only in the private houses', and describing how the Devil's messenger hastens home 'having filled his table-books with sufficient notes of intelligence.'[45] He alludes further to the universality of informing and intelligencing of various kinds when he describes how his intelligencer 'laughed so loud that Hell heard him . . . because so many watchmen were continually called and charged to have an eye to [the night's] doings'.[46]

All of this speaks of a contemporary awareness of the function of the intelligencer and the informer that bears resemblance to the

invisible world of devils and demons with which Christians have historically populated the dark edges of their imaginations. This draws on a highly Pauline fantasy of ruling 'principalities and powers', an insidious demonic pantheon which popular opinion seems to see made manifest in recognisable form in early modern England. Biblically speaking, St Paul's letters shift their ground fairly unintelligibly on the concept of the power and influence of devils such that conflation and confusion can be the only outcome for the thinking believer. In his letter to the Ephesians, St Paul claims that 'we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places' and thus clearly identifies the hidden powers with devils and demons.[47] In Colossians, he claims firstly that God created 'all things . . . that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers', thus including the devils and demons; then secondly that in the act of crucifixion, he 'spoiled' principalities and powers, 'he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them' on behalf of the believers.[48] Further, in his letter to Titus, he reminds believers to 'be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates', which conflates the concept of demonic jurisdiction jarringly with specifically worldly authorities. With this background it may not be surprising that contemporaries versed in this kind of teaching might also tend to conflate the demonic and the worldly powers in their own religious imaginations or worldviews.[49]

In a move which connects the author and the informer explicitly, Dekker refers to his Bellman as 'our spy that came lately out of the lower countries', which is not only a cute reference to Hell, the ultimate 'low country' (containing a bawdy pun), but also a self-conscious association with his own Dutchness which casts himself as both the satirical conscience of the society and the informer sent to collect information for the correction of the 'abuses' he attempts to rectify.[50] When the intelligencer and the Bellman meet, 'the mariner of Hell opened his chart' and from this book of abuses, 'the Bellman drawing forth a perfect map, they parted; which map he hath set out in such colours as you see.'[51] Thus the whole invective testimony of this Second walk of the Bellman is supposed to mirror the intelligencer's report to the Devil, and though it functions as high satire, this proposes the essential oneness of author and intelligencer.

The multi-layered and reciprocal nature of the worlds of spying, informing, intelligencing and cony-catching are abundantly evident in these extracts, as is the general perception of the demonic nature of these forms of surveillance and social control. It is perhaps unsurprising, in the ubiquitous atmosphere of informing and intelligencing which pervades his society, that Dekker also finds some of this reflecting back upon his own writing person. In his *Martin Markall, Beadle of Bridewell* (1610), Samuel Rid accuses Dekker, in the person of the Bellman, of being 'a most injurious and satirical libeller' for attacking only the weakest sinners and beggars and leaving the fat-cats alone, or what he calls 'those fox-furred gentlemen, that harbour more deceit under their damask cassocks, than is in all the poor rogues in a country', reproving Dekker for doing this because, as he says, 'they be your good masters and benefactors.'[52] Dekker is thus imagined as complicit with the corrupt authorities, as is typical of the libellous informer, but in a sense he has already admitted something of the same order himself and so the accusation falls flat.

Throughout all of this discourse we find a general consciousness that is very much in keeping with the dangerous proliferation of loathed and venally motivated informers and intelligencers across all ranks of society, and an atmosphere in which there seems to be no escape from the 'back-biting tongue of an impure mouth' as John Harington's 1591 preface to *Orlando Furioso* puts it.[53] This 'shifting legion of freelancers', as Charles Nicholl calls them, plied the authorities with information on every salient sphere of life, from the moral to the political and from the theatrical to the ecclesiastical.[54] Their employment increased throughout this period, as I have described extensively elsewhere.[55] On 26 August 1594, an information was passed from the intelligencer Richard Topcliffe to his superior Robert Cecil of the ample confession of a mariner called William Randall, who claimed a part in this proliferation, maintaining that he 'hath conveyed a greater number of traitors of all sorts into England . . . Jesuits, priests, practisers and Intelligencers, than any other of English birth.'[56] Intelligencers are certainly found in all parts of the country, and records note that in the seventeenth century the Corporation of the northern town of York 'paid a fee to an "intelligencer" for sending weekly reports to the Lord Mayor', as P. M. Tillott notes.[57] The practice was ubiquitous geographically and hierarchically, and even Queen Elizabeth herself had cause to

beware what Cecil called 'slanderers or false intelligencers who are apt to calumniate her proceedings', as his letter to James VI of March 1594 shows.[58] The perception of this carries abroad too, and although it is obviously primarily the propaganda of the age there seems to be a core of truth in the account of *The Copy of a Letter, Lately Written by a Spanishe Gentleman, to His Friend in England* (1589), which describes an 'intolerable feare . . . more manifested in your Englishe Gouernment, then in any state els in the whole world'.[59] It is, the writer claims, 'a laborinthe to looke into'.[60] The impression given is of

> spyings abroade, and inquisitions at home: searchings of houses more at midnighte then at noone dayes, apprehensions, examinations, and such daily exercise, and practise of the racke, as neuer the like was hard of . . . extreme tyranny, and deepe dissimulation . . . being the grounde and substance of their gouernment, and conteyning . . . infynite nombers of deceatfull practises, false fictions, and slaunderous lies.[61]

An international reputation for extensive intelligencing and informing is clearly behind this disparaging if propagandist vision of the English state. The Italian verb *toplifizare* was invented as a synonym for 'to torture' to express the particular characteristic input of the above-mentioned Topcliffe to the intelligencing system, which may serve as another indication of international infamy on this score.[62]

Although the focus of this book is the kinds of correspondence we may find between structures of intelligencing and the typical structures of metadrama, and it therefore usually focuses on the kinds of oversight and overhearing common to both, some historical examples of how intelligence was actually reported might also help to develop a fuller picture of this correlation. Showing the internal workings of the network and its problematic politic nature may help elucidate the nature of the pressures which might be brought to bear on those, including writers, who fall foul of its systems.

On 20 May 1593, the intelligencer Robert Bowes sent a note to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, which in turn describes a further note that has been sent to him by his own intelligencer:

> I received this day a little ticket written in these words, viz., 'My lord, ther was a band sought to have bene granted and subscribit be ane nobleman of thir feildis to have conjoyned with . . . [Lennox], Huntlay,

> Angusse, Erroll and others . . . The comissioner suter is a courtier; his name wilbe knowne at metinge, with some farder particulers. This was done not lange syne.' The intelligencer is of very good credit, yet not void of some dry affection against . . . [Lennox].[63]

The layered nature of this transaction, as information passes from intelligencer to intelligencer to intelligencer, speaks about the potential for ambiguity and misinformation to creep in as any written information undergoes such passage, potentially right to the top as we shall see. This report includes an assessment of the possible motivation, and thus trustworthiness, of the original informer, a claim which is clearly worth making. Passing this information upwards then was not without its own hazards, as is amply evidenced in Cecil's letter from the Court at Royston, 3 December 1610, to an intelligencer in the field. This recalls a recent conversation of his with King James about 'a private intelligence' that was given of 'some seditious spirits' who had purposed to ask Parliament to petition the king 'to remove or to send home those Scots that so much consumed their supplies.'[64] At first, as Cecil recounts it, this reported conversation seems straightforward enough, with the king taking the matter 'very merrily and laughingly'. However, on further reflection, the king becomes troubled and wants to know the source of the intelligence, as Cecil elaborates, with the king asking him 'whether it were spoken of Scots only or of others; also whether of all Scots or of some.'[65] Cecil responds, 'I prayed his Majesty to excuse me, for I did not take it as a speech I had any charge to report to him, and did not attend to the particularities of it. It might be I had mistaken it in the telling, and that it was not only of Scots.'[66] However, the king's commandment was 'to know the truth and the party' and Cecil's attempt to weasel out of the situation is unsuccessful.[67] Cecil is then forced to try to protect not only his sources, and his sources' sources, but also the system itself from the king it is designed to preserve:

> I answered it might be that he that gave you the intelligence had never named the party but spoke in generality. Then said he; My Lord may name me the party from whom he had it. To that I replied that if his Majesty would press Councillors to discover those by whom they received intelligence, they should be able to do him no more service in that kind.[68]

The king's reaction was somewhat hot-headed it seems, and somewhat ominously he 'discoursed long to show in what degree of treason they were that would seek to remove servants from a Prince'; as Cecil laments, 'all would not serve but he would know the author or the intelligencer.'[69] Passing the buck, Cecil attempts to fob the king off on his intelligencing addressee, telling 'I prayed his Majesty to forbear till your Lordship and he met, for I did not doubt but that you had many secret informations and many observations of the disposition of the House, which you reserved till you might have speech with him.'[70] However, even this arrangement was still not quite satisfactory to the ultimate authority in the kingdom: 'the conclusion still was that he would not bide so long'.[71] The fact that the ostensible head of intelligence matters in the nation can find himself wriggling uncomfortably to protect his sources from the king himself evidences the compromising ambiguity with which the apparent unreliability of its bases infect the power structure here.

The naive impatience of the king in these matters notwithstanding, Parliament was intimately involved in the processes and practices around intelligencers and informers, both from the legislative perspective and on a more personal level. Not only were the larger issues of informing debated in the House, but informers were sometimes examined there too. The *Journal of the House of Commons* entry for 28 April 1621 describes an intelligencer named Chambers being 'called in to the Bar, kneeling', and confessing 'he is the King's Servant, a Messenger, and is also an Informer.'[72] In this case, the informer was there to give information upon Sir Edward Francis, 'for his Wife's Recusancy'; this was a fairly high level of information, it would seem, and about a not inconsiderable matter. An example of successful intelligencing to Parliament appears also in 1621, in this case against 'abuses in Fleete Prison'.[73] The intelligencer is one 'Kenny', who accuses the 'Warden of the Fleete' of 'Locking Men up; keeping their Children from them, and Meat; making many of them lie in One little Room, more like Dogs than Men', including the 'strange barbarous Usage' of Kenny himself, in which, 'after he had paid his Debts, and . . . Lodging', he was allegedly kept for '22 Months imprisoned, oft close Prisoner'.[74] After examining the case, the Warden of the Fleete was 'brought to the Bar, and charged by Mr. Speaker' that his treatment of prisoners was 'worse than the Inquisition of Spayne, or Gallies among the Turkes'.[75] This is how

an informing system is supposed to work, with reliable information being given to competent authorities and resulting in a grievance solved.

Despite operating up to the level of government, the prevailing opinion, however, seems to be that informers and intelligencers are fundamentally untrustworthy and not to be relied upon. As Leicester writes to Burghley on 6 April 1586: 'I pray you, as you are wise, so beware of our common intelligencers hence; you shall find here be shrewd "pick-thinks", and hardly worth the harkening unto.'[76] An example of the instability of the use of 'information' from intelligencers may be seen in one Mr Weston who, in contributing to the debate in Parliament around the issue of 'Examining Members on Oath by Lords', pleaded that 'he informed, not upon his own Knowlege, but by Information; so as he can swear but he was told so.'[77] This tactic, besides offering the comfort of deniability, is highly suggestive of an understanding that 'information' sourced thus is inherently dubious. This may be partly, or significantly, because intelligencers were widely thought to be creative in framing their incriminating evidence in ways that would maximise the potential for them to get money. On 20 December 1580, a letter was sent from Cobham to Walsingham enclosing copies of two French letters, and 'beseeching you to let me know your opinion of them, whether they seem to be true copies, or framed as these intelligencers will devise to procure money.'[78] Cobham asserts, 'In my judgement they are to be suspected.'[79] This potential for the intelligencer's point of view to combine the negative construction of events with the generation of income suggests that there is every incentive for them 'to *create* information, to see conspiracy where none exists', as Nicholl says.[80] The late seventeenth-century tract, 'The Informers answer', asserts in this respect that these figures 'know no Religion but getting of Money, nor Law, but power.'[81] Walsingham himself was well aware that intelligencers might furnish him with 'toyes and matters of their owne invencon.'[82] In Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601), Envy promises to interpret the play with 'wrestings . . . applications, / Spy-like suggestions, privy whisperings, / And thousand such promoting sleights' (Ind. 23–6).[83] In another context, the clergyman Faithful Teate uses the term to describe the intelligencer's wish to 'wrest what he hears to the Preacher's destruction.'[84] The 'wrestings' Jonson's Envy is concerned about are self-interested misinterpretations that aim to apply

the play's plot to aspects of 'the present state' (Ind. 34) in order to denounce the play to the authorities, to the informer's advantage. Jonson of course was troubled by real wresting detractors and spy-like 'promoters'.[85] Since construing and relating things in an augmentative manner is common to both author and informer, the fact that the informer is perceived as notoriously untrustworthy offers some incentive for authors to attempt to distance themselves from these other 'plotters'. Given the relatively precarious position of writers in the period, this propensity accounts to some degree for a preoccupation with misinterpretative overhearers in the drama, and therefore for the metadrama this produces.

Cecil's own trouble with one of his intelligencers, who appears to have been spending his money unwisely and generally failing to keep his mouth shut, was expressed in a letter of 17 January 1601/2 to one Mr Nicholson, which complains that Cecil has been 'often bitten with the discontented humour of intelligencers when they have spent my money a good while . . . and so play me some slippery trick'.[86] He accuses this particular informer of 'trifl[ing] away my money for his intelligence to little purpose', further protesting 'I had rewarded him as well after he went into Ireland, whence he brought me but idle intelligences . . . sometime he wrote me truth, but often very many lies', asserting that he would wish himself 'buried when I . . . hear them whom I must employ for the service of the State to babble or prattle', and concluding 'I think never poor man hath been oftener belied than I have been in such cases.'[87] If the system is so deeply dysfunctional at this high level then we have reason to think that the ordinary citizen's experience may have been much worse.

In fact, the state of the situation in the nation throughout the period was such that a series of acts of legislation were thought necessary against abusive and dishonest intelligencing at all levels. Elizabeth's 'Act to redress Disorders in common Informers' (1576) shows a concern to limit the ability of informers to act without going to law, and to limit the time and place of accusations which did so.[88] Henceforth, informers could be punished at the pillory for suing 'out of process', and this might be accompanied with the sizeable fine of £10.[89] This act also responds to informers who were in the habit of delaying their suits in order to profit from extortion, often of those desperate victims who might want to circumvent a risky court appearance.[90] Chettle describes those intelligencers who serve

false writs and then get others to pay them to delay going to court, and speaks of good lawyers in contrast with these 'pettifoggers'.[91] It was said of one 'crafty Informer' that he would first 'pick some feeling of money' from his victims, and then bring them 'to composition' in what seems to be the same manner, to be rid of the torment with which he would visit them.[92] The act also provides for some potential financial redress if their intelligence is, after all, found to be flawed.[93] Judging by the predominance of its appearance in the drama of the time, this provision seems to address a chief paranoia of the age.

The fact that these things are brought to the point of legislation implies their necessitation by emerging unruly circumstances, but that the legislation was not immediately effective may also be adduced from the 'Act concerning Informers' which followed thirteen years later in 1589. Its stated purpose was because 'divers of the queen's majesty's subjects be daily vexed and disquieted by divers common informers upon penal statutes, notwithstanding any former statute that hath been heretofore made against their disorders'.[94] This seems suggestive of the failure of the first act to have any real impact on informing malpractice. This act adds to the first of 1576 by additionally restricting acceptable actions to those brought within twenty days and within the same county in which the offence was alleged to have taken place.

A further clue to the ubiquitous extent of informing practice at the time may be gleaned from the large amount of exclusions and exemptions from the restrictions mentioned for which the act provides. The freelance intelligencer is released from such temporal and geographical limitations if the information given concerns any of the following:

> champerty [where an unassociated person finances a lawsuit with a view to sharing the proceeds] . . . buying of titles or extortion . . . Land Merchandize from beyond the Seas . . . sweet Wines . . . defrauding the queen's majesty . . . of any custom, tonnage, poundage, subsidy, impost or prizage . . . corrupt usury . . . engrossing, regrating or forestalling.[95]

The fact that this exemption pertains also to any offence where a possible penalty might exceed £20 makes it potentially very broadly applicable.[96] The further necessity for a set of legislation in James's

tellingly entitled 'Act for the Ease of the Subject, concerning Informations upon Penal Statutes' (1623) shows that, despite Elizabeth's best efforts in her acts, this problem seems to have again proliferated in the intervening years. James's act complains again that 'the poor commons of this realm are grievously charged, troubled, vexed, molested and disturbed by . . . relators, informers, and promoters by prosecuting and inforcing them to appear at his majesty's courts' in a refrain which is becoming very familiar.[97] Again, the Act aims to restrict the informer's business to certain courts, jurisdictions and timeframes, and again certain offences are exempted from this legislation, adding the following to Elizabeth's list of offences that are subject to unrestricted intelligencing: 'popish recusancy . . . those that shall not frequent the church and hear divine service . . . transporting of gold, silver, ordnance, powder, shot, munition of all sorts, wool, wool fells or leather'.[98] It is careful to say of any one of these misdemeanours that 'such offence may be laid or alleged to be in any county at the pleasure of any informer, anything in this act to the contrary notwithstanding.'[99] This expansion of exemptions on many significant activities again shows amply how widespread the practice of intelligencing and informing was, but it also seems hardly calculated to work to the greater 'Ease of the Subject', as its title seems to promise. Perhaps these many exemptions and caveats provide some basis for the fact that the courts and lawmakers were perceived to be very much in cahoots with the informers they legislated for. In 1592, Robert Greene describes a 'M. Informer' as looking like 'some handsome pettie fogger of the law', either despite having 'as much slie knauerie in [his] side pouch . . . as woulde breede the confusion of forty honest men' or because of this.[100] Honesty and all that the law means in terms of legitimacy and authority are at issue here.

Some suggested amendments and comments made in debating the 1623 Act may go some way to explicate further concerns over contemporary intelligencing. In the discussion on this in Parliament, Sir Edward Coke conceded that the bill was indeed 'more easeful for the Subject' and stated that this was 'an excellent Bill', yet asserted it was 'defective, and to be helped by Addition', and advocated some extra provisions. These included the suggestion that the informer should be required to 'bring with him a known Man to the Judge, to testify the Sufficiency of the Informer', which speaks to the perception of the informer's character as typically doubtful. He also proposes that

if the informer offers a 'Trick . . . to exhibit an Information, to put off all others by Covyn', a conspiratorial agreement, then he should never 'be admitted to inform afterwards, and to be bound to his good Behaviour'.[101] Rather than simply offering a new perspective, these seem to be aimed at preventing known abuses.

As Cecil's struggles with his errant intelligencer above suggest, intelligencers could make a very comfortable living from a successful career in the field. Walsingham's guiding principle in an age which ran on this kind of surveillance was that 'knowledge is never too dear' and his personal subvention from the Crown for paying informers went from £750 in 1582 to £2,000 in 1585 (*c.*£200,000–£500,000 in 2018), and continued in this manner for some time afterwards.[102] In a letter of 24 March 1598/9, Cecil's agent Dudley Norton talks of 'the 4,000*l.* I brought from Dublin' for this purpose and enquires how best to employ the money 'for the special furthering of her Majesty's service' in what he openly calls 'gifts to spies and intelligencers and rewards for services (by which means no doubt good things may be effected)'.[103] If the figure he gives is accurate, the most conservative equivalent for this amount of money in 2018 terms would be just over £1 million. This would be intended to cover travel and living expenses, and was no doubt supposed to filter further down the pecking order of informers and intelligencers to widen any given net as required, but it still indicates an appreciably augmented level of commitment to the business of intelligencing through the period. In a singular case, when Thomas Kyd was arrested over the 'Dutch Church libel' in 1593, the reward offered for information on him alone was a substantial 100 crowns.[104] In another which is referred to in a Parliamentary debate of 1621, one Mr Alford complained of 40 shillings that was 'demanded by an Informer, for a Pike-staff', presumably the metonymy for a beadle.[105] Although this was one twentieth of Kyd's bounty, it still represented a significant amount of money when a close contemporary of 1629 might earn seven shillings for a week's work in a lead mine.[106] But besides these kinds of payments, informers were typically entitled to up to half of whatever fine was imposed or the value of the commodities involved in their informing.[107] Since this might involve, for instance, a ship's whole cargo, then one can see the earning potential of such activities, and thus the material incentives involved in the production of information for intelligence purposes.[108] This was of course potentially

problematic, as Walsingham's wariness of intelligencers' tendency to produce imaginary 'toyes' suggests.[109]

Drawing these issues closer to the environs of the theatre, the legal foundation for the threat of intelligence against an author or actor is made sufficiently obvious in Elizabeth's royal commission of 1581 to Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels. In this, Elizabeth authorises Tilney to have any offending player arrested, and to 'remaine without bayle or mayneprise untill such tyme as . . . [he] shall thinke . . . theire imprisonment to be punnishement sufficient for [their] offences', which is presumably as long as Tilney sees fit. Elizabeth adds threateningly that those found not 'aydinge supportinge and assistinge' Tilney in this 'will answer to the contrarie at [their] uttermost perills.'[110] Tilney was further authorised to ban authors and players from writing or acting 'forever hereafter' and thus depriving them of their living indefinitely for a breach of the established rules of propriety.[111]

Scholars have long argued for the understanding of these material contexts as producing a culture of repression and harassment that has a substantial effect on the drama of the day.[112] It is clear that, once suitably motivated, authorities could act with 'almost paranoid ferocity, threatening death, mutilation or prolonged imprisonment' as Richard Dutton says.[113] However, circumstances certainly did not always go the informer's way. This may be seen from the Commons debate over the type of punishment most appropriate for an alleged libeller and suspected intelligencer Richard Floyde who was charged with 'speaking against the Bible [and] against the noble King and Queen of Bohemia'. In this indictment, besides a nominally agreed and presumably ruinous £1,000 fine, increasingly inventive punishments are suggested by enthusiastic MPs eager for the application of the lash with varying severity. Sir Thomas Row expresses a desire to have Floyde 'whipped through London' and Sir Francis Seymor elaborates that he should be whipped 'from Westmynster at a Cart's Tail, with his Doublet off, to the Tower, the Beads about his Neck, and as many Lashes by the Way as Beads'.[114] Sir Edward Gyles calls for the use of the public pillory where he should be confined 'with a Paper of his Head [*sic*], containing his vile Words', then a whipping 'at the Court Gate; and so at the Temple, and Cheapesyde' with, since he is a Catholic, 'his Beads and Crucifixes, and especially his Friars Girdle, about him'.[115] Sir Francis Darcy helpfully adds to this

that he should be disabled by 'boring through his Tongue'.[116] Sir Edward Cecill agrees, and puts in that he should also be branded with 'a B. on his Forehead', while Mr Angell requests the nicety of a 'gag in his Mouth, to keep him from crying, and procuring Pity'.[117] Sir J. Horsey specifically agrees with the suspicion that he is 'an Intelligencer; which may be discovered by his Papers', and takes things a little further in wanting him to 'have his Tongue cut out, or slit at least'.[118] Sir Thomas Weyneman, meanwhile raises the stakes to a terminal level by suggesting a 'search of his Papers, to find Matters to hang him'.[119] It must be pointed out, however, that these punishments are also theoretically open to any unwary author who might be denounced in such a way and accused of slander or libel. Christopher Marlowe may well have gone further in 'speaking against the Bible' at least, although his terminus was of a different kind.

Throughout the period, examples abound of authors and actors caught up in the paranoia of authorities and their desire to control the creative output of artists using their established networks of intelligencers and informers. In 1579, both John Stubbs and his publisher were mutilated for addressing Elizabeth's marriage in *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf whereinto England is like to be Swallowed*.[120] In 1593, Thomas Kyd was ferociously tortured over alleged writings and died the following year. In 1597, Ben Jonson was imprisoned with fellow players Gabriel Spenser and Robert Shaa, and feared defacement after being informed upon for his part in *The Isle of Dogs*.[121] In 1599, John Hayward was almost executed over his *The Life and Reign of King Henry IV* and was imprisoned for the remainder of Elizabeth's reign.[122] In 1605, George Chapman was informed upon and imprisoned with Jonson for *Eastward Ho* and later in 1608, with his actors, for his *Byron* plays through one who 'plaied the bitter Informer before the french Ambassador'.[123] In 1610, Sir Edward Dymock was fined £1,000 and imprisoned for staging a derogatory play, while three of his actors were each fined £300 and whipped and pilloried in both Westminster and Lincolnshire.[124] In 1633, William Prynne had his ears cropped and served seven years imprisonment for his royal-bashing in *Histriomastix*.[125] It should not be too much of a challenge to see how such prospectively brutal pressure exerted by contemporary authorities might generate the dread of misinterpretation that emerges in the drama of the time, articulated both overtly in personae and plots and more covertly in its metadramatic forms.

This book will of course deal with many generic dramatic and metadramatic representations of intelligencers and informers, but somewhat unusually there is one play that refers directly to a named, real-life informer. In the sub-plot for John Webster and William Rowley's *Cure for a Cuckold* (1624–5), the lawyer Pettifog tells a story about 'an Informer' who is 'a precious knave'. Pettifog's companion Compass declares 'I cannot away with an Informer' and asks him 'will not the Ballad of Flood that was prest, make them leave their knavery?' (4.1).[126] Compass is referring here to the notorious informer Griffin Flood whose anonymous biographical tract, *The life and death of Griffin Flood informer Whose cunning courses, churlish manners, and troublesome informations, molested a number of plaine dealing people in this city of London* (1623), sports one of those self-explanatory early modern titles which seems to require little extra comment.[127] Flood was thought so dangerous on the streets of London that even this small dramatical reference seems to be licensed by his demise in 1623, when he was 'pressed' or crushed slowly to death for murder.

In the world so far described, it is small wonder that the figures of the intelligencer and the informer are significant elements in how the audience is imagined by early modern dramatists. The poet Edward Ward gives us an interesting glimpse of the early modern informer in the context of an audience at the Saddlers Wells Theatre as he 'began to look down, and examine the Pit':

> Where Butchers and Bayliffs, and such sort of Fellows,
> Were mix'd with a Vermin train'd up to the Gallows.
> As Buttocks and Files, House-breakers and Padders,
> With Prize-Fighters, Sweetners, and such sort of Traders;
> Informers, Theef-Takers, Deer-Stealers, and Bullies,
> Old Straw-hatted Whores with their Twelve-penny Cullies,
> Some Dancing and Skiping, some Ranting and Tearing,
> Some Drinking and Smoaking, some Lying and Swearing.[128]

The sheer vocal activity of this ranting, lying and swearing audience is striking and perhaps this is what makes the presence of the informer at the heart of it all seem so menacing. At the other end of the seventeenth century, John Day's *Isle of Guls* (1606) seems to catch at the same mood and also makes allusion to the presence of the informer

in the audience when its Prologue complains of 'the boundlesse hate / Of a confused audience', lamenting that if the satirist would 'strike at abuse, or ope the vaine of sinne / He is straight informed against for libelling'.[129] This would be a dangerous outcome, as we have seen, and it justifies Day's concern here.

Further, within the satirical tradition and the dramatic practice of social commentary, parody and critique, there has long been an obvious potential for crossover with the business of the intelligencer.[130] This intersection generates an area of some ambiguity around the role of satire and the legitimacy of a critical viewpoint. Witness in this respect *Kind-hart's Dreame* where Chettle is using the sardonic, histriomastical voice of Tarleton to rail against the theatres, declaiming 'fie uppon following plaies, the expence is wondrous; upon players speeches, their wordes are full of wyles'.[131] This is exactly the accusation that is often levelled against intelligencers, and sometimes by their employers, as Cecil's concerns over his informer in Ireland may show. Chettle's Tarleton continues in this vein, asking 'is it not lamentable, that a man should spende his two pence on them in an after-noone . . . and in lively gesture see treacherie set out, with which every man now adaies useth to intrap his brother'; the ironic critique concludes, 'if these be the fruites of playing, tis time the practiser were expeld.'[132] Here Chettle mockingly ventriloquises anti-theatrical preachers in casting players as untrustworthy sources, and simultaneously describes the critical environment which invites the intelligencing against authors and actors we have been describing. In 1615, the writer known as T. G. claims a similar connection, as he says, 'players, Poets, and Parasites doe now in a manner ioyne hands', and cites players' propensity for producing 'artificiall lyes, discoueries of cousenage [and] scurrilous words'.[133] This echoes many descriptions of the deceitful creative practices of informers. Chettle then develops this in the ironic voice of the deceiving cony-catcher or informer, claiming that advertising their 'devices' in plays then spreads both knowledge and practice of these to wider society: 'no sooner have we a tricke of deceipt, but [plays] make it common'.[134] This works as either a critique of, or apology for, theatre, but either way it evidences connections between the devices of the dishonest practisers in the real world and the theatrical devices of plot and metadrama, and thus between intelligencers and authors.

The murky territory wherein the perspectives of the author and the intelligencer meet is reflected in some interestingly theatrical narrative devices found in Dekker's expository tracts, which suggest similar associations. Wandering in the woods away from the 'peopled city' with its 'unruly multitude' and the 'stings of envy . . . bullets of treason . . . [and] clamorous suits' of the world that we have been discussing, Dekker's speaker in *The Bellman of London* (1608) finds a kind of arena, a 'grove set thick with trees, which grew in such order that they made a perfect circle; insomuch that I stood in fear it was kept by fairies'.[135] In this *Midsummer Night's Dream*-like location he decides to 'divide the day into Acts, as if the ground had been a stage and that the life which there I meant to lead should have been but as a play.'[136] In this theatrical frame of mind, the speaker, seeing smoke nearby, discovers an open cottage and a kitchen busy with preparation for some mysterious guests. Bribing the cook, he is 'conveyed into an upper loft' where, as he says, 'unseen I might, through a wooden lattice that had the prospect of the dining-room, both see and hear all that was to be done or spoken.'[137] There, like a menacingly concealed intelligencer he forms a hidden audience to the arrival of what he calls the '*Ragged Regiment*'.[138] These he describes as 'knaves by profession, beggars by statute, and rogues by Act of Parliament . . . the idle drones of a country, the catterpillars of a commonwealth, and the Egyptian lice of a kingdom.'[139] Dekker uses this narrative form in a sense to literalise the vision of his first-person narration, but it is significant that this replicates both the oversight of the hidden intelligencer and the unseen audience of much metadramatic structure. It may also be a natural form for a dramatist to use to inform us of this array of what seem to be beggars and petty criminals, but perhaps more so since they might just as easily be itinerant players who were also 'rogues by Act of Parliament'. This seemingly natural connection between the work of the intelligencer and that of the observing author is precisely what authors often feel most compelled to distance themselves from at this time. Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* exemplifies this desire as a play which forcefully describes his rivals not only as wannabe poets, but also specifically as informers who are complicit in the corruption of authority.[140] In his *Covent-Garden* (1638), Thomas Nabbs clearly conflates the author and the intelligencer in the observing and writing character of Littleword who seems to operate on the

'troubled threshold of commonplace collecting and intelligence-gathering' which Lorna Hutson identifies.[141] Characters are reassured that Littleword's writing in his table-book in a corner is merely 'his practise of observation' and that he is only 'taking a humour for a Play' (4.3.60). The response is telling: 'that silent Gentleman is an intelligencer; . . . Hee'l informe against you.' (4.3.73–4).[142] Dekker's devilish messenger mentioned above similarly 'fill[s] his table-books with . . . notes of intelligence.'[143] Furthermore, as I have elsewhere noted, the roles of intelligencer and author have overlapped in historically verifiable ways.[144] On the most obvious side of the equation, contemporary examples of authors who were also very possibly intelligencers include Christopher Marlowe, George Gascoigne, Thomas Watson, Michel de Montaigne, Anthony Munday, John Lyly, Anthony and Francis Bacon and Ben Jonson.[145] On the less obvious side, Nicholl cites one informer named Thomas Drury who, he argues, is primarily motivated in his creative intelligencing by frustrated ambitions as an author.[146]

It is the contention of this present study then that the structures of early modern metadrama are fashioned under the social pressures of a culture suffused with the fear of the empowered and corrupt witness of the intelligencer and the informer. Metadrama is a dramatic mode which either implicitly or explicitly comments or reflects upon its own dramatic ontology in its form or content.[147] This may be plainly defined as drama about drama, where theatrical codes are themselves a part of the dramatic discourse.[148] Early modern metadramatic structures take many forms. They are typically flexible or fleeting, potentially shifting from one metadramatic mode to another in an instant; they are also often overlaid one upon another. They include a mode of simple self-reference, where the dramatic processes are alluded to or openly expressed in some way. They may involve open or closed frame narratives, operating on any scale from role-playing within a role to the play within the play and often entail some form of overt or covert oversight and overhearing between characters.[149] Especially where there is a play set within the primary play narrative, this often results in offstage audiences watching onstage audiences and sometimes vice versa. In the first case, the onstage audience may work as a representation of the offstage audience. Otherwise, the offstage audience may be constructed as itself, seen through the eyes of the actors onstage, or be represented as some other gathering of

people – a crowd at a fair, a senate, a jury, or even in one case as a tapestry.[150] Metadrama always implicates the audience in some manner more explicitly interactive than non-metadramatic forms allow.

Metadramatic self-reference can be as straightforward as a mention of the play's title and as historically intricate as a nuanced reference to an understood social context of the theatre, perhaps to an anti-theatrical tract or the characteristics of a popular actor. The *theatrum mundi* aspect of such self-reference leads one towards a view of reciprocal performativity. This is a metadramatic mode that reveals social roles as essentially theatrical but, at the same time, demonstrates the inherent ambiguity of a dramatic representation which claims to have purchase on the social fabric. This is perhaps a defining factor also in the self-reflexive business of satire which poses such troubling similarities with the intelligencer.

With both open and closed frame narratives, the offstage audience is often offered the position of the intelligencer, that is one in which a particular hidden watcher or overhearer gets to know more than the other characters about the plot as it unfolds. Drawing attention thus to the dramatic structures in which they exist, and by which characters are defined, suggests a potentially active role for the offstage audience in the outworking of the metadrama. It also produces a sense of dramatic irony which is empowering to them since it emphasises the dependence of the drama upon their interpretation. Despite this apparent empowerment, however, frame narratives may employ dynamic structures which act upon an audience in order to suggest the appropriateness of certain responses. The perspectives of onstage audiences of frame narratives can have a dramatic effect, either negative or positive, on those of offstage audiences. This effect can be dependent on the extent to which the inner frame narrative provides its own closure and thus either perpetuates the integrity of the dramatic structure or disrupts a sense of theatrical 'reality'. It can also be inflected by the dramatic status of an onstage audience, in terms of whether the primary diegetic focus is on the inner play or whether it is on the onstage audience, a mode in which the matter proposed for interpretation is the interpretative authority of the audience itself. Since this mode places an audience under the guns of their own critique it may also serve a certain defensive function for the author. Another defensive mechanism is where the offstage audience is explicitly referred to as themselves, and perhaps offered either

a respectable interpretative position or one which mimics the actions of the intelligencer. This mode may be used to draw attention to the latent menace of an audience's misconception, or worse the active dangers of deliberate misconstrual, the prospective material results of which for authors are by now familiar to us.

Some technical terms may be useful in thinking about how audiences are engaged with drama through visual and narrative mechanisms that can be employed to shape either perception or interpretative legitimacy. The narrative term 'diegetic gravity' describes the effect of experiencing a frame narrative inside a frame narrative and so on, and designates the force which pulls the attention inwards through each concentric device to the inmost narrative. As the spectator's perspective is drawn through each successive frame, the outer frames may becomes less noticeable. I describe this 'frame-blindness' as an effect in which an audience may experience the inner play as if it were the outer play. This often tends to place them in close relation to an onstage audience in a process which may suggest confraternity or collusion with those spectators, whether they form a full audience or a single hidden observer. In that a failure to recognise one's dependence on the symbolic systems by which one is interpellated by culture may compromise one's autonomy, Jacques Lacan's concept of *méconnaissance* may be useful in understanding this form.[151] Complicating this are the ways in which various metadramatic strata in a play relate with a type of hypotaxis in causally, spatially or temporally subordinate modes. Also, wherever an offstage audience shares the perspective of an onstage one, they may experience 'metalepsis', in which a fleetingly shared narrative level allows them to perceive the interaction of two levels and to be able to interpret them in terms of each other.[152] The term 'scopic pulsion' relates to this but designates a specifically visual mechanism in which a centripetal impetus directs us towards the inmost point of the drama.[153] As with diegetic gravity, metadrama may both encourage or discourage such motion, depending on how it configures each inner narrative level.

By expressing the very material power relations of the era, the structures and mechanisms of early modern metadrama offer exemplary models for theories of subjectivity. Lacan describes how the subject is constructed through a network of relations in the scopic fields of others.[154] His term 'the gaze' was based on Jean-Paul Sartre's reciprocal 'look', a mechanism of mutually constitutive association

referring to the 'permanent possibility of *being seen* by the Other'.[155] In this model of mutual watching, the seer and the seen mould each other's subjectivities. Lacan, however, refuses the 'fundamental connection' with the Other that this implies, and instead 'conceives of an antinomic relation between the gaze and the eye: the eye which looks is that of the subject, while the gaze is on the side of the object and there is no coincidence between the two'.[156] It is my contention that metadrama allows the author to exercise a form of structural authority over meaning-making dramatic form by foregrounding the ideological elements of its 'network of relations' and thus potentially subverting them. This not only allows the author some form of entry into the symbolic order, but also allows a kind of resistance to malicious construction by 'psycho-social positions' offered by the proxy authority of the intelligencer. Since the subjectivities of both author and intelligencer are mutually informed, even to the point of similarities felt to be in need of repudiation, a Sartrean understanding of these mechanisms will be the most applicable to the present study.

In the texts chosen for this book, metadrama is employed in a variety of ways and the intelligencer figures differently in each. In *Damon and Pithias*, metadramatic self-consciousness is a vehicle for an authorial and social ideal of a kind. The metadrama in this case acts as a register for an abuse of power which perhaps reflects its own conditions of writing while challenging these with an equalising ideal of classical amity. In turn this produces an idyllic kind of authority and proposes a friendly society in which both the author and the audience are freed from predatory self-promotion and even afforded a kind of redemptive transformation.

Considering the metadrama of the stage Machiavel of the era, Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, Middleton/Tourner's *The Revenger's Tragedy* and Marston's *The Malcontent* all serve to suggest that the use of intelligencers weakens the moral authority of the hierarchy they help to sustain. Perhaps even discrediting God on the way, intelligencer personae work as cautionary dysfunctionals, of a kind with Marlowe's Barabas, who plays the scapegoat for a society consumed with the ties of finance. Framed within metadrama, these demonic provocateurs serve as both inheritors of the role of the medieval Vice figure and metaphors for discrepancies in the authority structures of their societies, allowing the exploration of ambiguous connections between the Vice depicted as an anti-authoritarian devil and as a tyrannous authority.

As parasitic outsiders operating inside the political establishment, they stand for a society which is dysfunctional in its control mechanisms, and as metadramatic actors they satirise the decadence or corruption of social forms. With or without finding their own redemptive agency, their own fates are bound up with those of the intelligencing structures they inhabit.

In Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the metadramatic structure offers us untrustworthy onstage spectators whose wild-card antics imply an authorship endangered by an audience empowered by the threat of intelligencing. Beaumont's disruptive onstage citizens may be humorous but their intimidation has some foundation in the real world of contemporary playwriting. Their negative onstage audience model suggests a general interpretative disquiet and stages a crisis of legitimate interpretation and authority. Such metadrama aims to define the parameters of an audience's interpretation, both giving a sense of negotiation in the creation of meaning and dramatising an implicit correlation between author and interpreter. This desire for control suggests a defensive fixation on the mechanisms of power and thus the play's metadramatic structures reproduce the critical atmosphere of the drama and of the material context of its production. This tells us something about the pressures under which contemporary authors must write and in presenting this Beaumont reveals the precarious nature of his own authority.

John Webster's Bosola is an exemplary combination of actor and intelligencer, traversing metadramatic structures in a self-consciously Machiavellian manner. He is, however, unusually complex in a moral sense, and as the Duchess's tragedy unfolds he is finally able to offer some resistance to the expectations of the role. His perception of the Duchess's conduct in the travails he imposes upon her is a factor in this but the revelation of the nature of his own role in the oppressive mechanisms of the state is also a key determinant in his conversion. Playing the reluctant informer, Bosola's belated transformation under the dictates of his conscience suggests a humanising possibility: that the intelligencer, and therefore the morally bankrupt structures of authority themselves, are redeemable.

The metadrama of Philip Massinger's *The Roman Actor* combines some of these issues with the suggestion of theatre's own potential for complicity in the mechanisms of social control. It was the source of the author's authority which informed much early modern debate around the legitimacy of theatre and the precise nature of this

authority is what is at play here. Considering the notoriously theatrical court of Charles I, a contemporary audience might well pause to contemplate whom the play's title might reference. Meanwhile, the defensively self-deprecating metadrama it contains allows Massinger the comforting position of the satirist who remains relatively untroubled by the potential for misinterpretation by intelligencers and informers.

In Chettle's *Hoffman* the metadramatic form proposes an authority which is a performative construct deeply troubled by its own mechanisms of control and whose own machinery of power questions its legitimacy. The metadramatic devices in this play have alternately undermining and recuperative functions in the service of an authority which is inherently destabilised, being in various ways displaced, usurped or the object of frustrated ambition. *Hoffman* in this respect, like many metadramatic plays, forms something of an exploration of the nature of authority.

Complemented by the readings of Shakespeare and Jonson that I have given elsewhere, these perspectives are offered not as the final key to understanding the predominance of metadrama in the early modern period, but as describing one fundamental element in the historical understanding of authors' imperatives in creating drama which related to their world in materially intelligible forms. The metadramatists have many reasons to create drama as they do, some of which will be a matter of conscious deliberation and some merely conventional within the artistic process, but all of these serve to reproduce the social forms which define authors in material ways, both as artists and as functioning social beings.

Notes

1. Raymond Williams, *Culture* (Glasgow: Collins, 1981), p. 142.
2. Williams, pp. 142, 158.
3. See Bill Angus, *Metadrama and the Informer in Shakespeare and Jonson* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).
4. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. J. Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, 1930), p. 90.
5. This is in relation to the German *Volkstheater* movement; see Gerhard Fischer and Bernhard Greiner (eds), *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-Theatre and Self-Reflection* (New York: Rodopi, 2007), p. xv.

6. Of the time and place of writing: 19 February 2018, Titirangi, Auckland, New Zealand.
7. Thomas Nashe, *Haue with you to Saffron-Walden, Or, Gabriell Harueys hunt is up* (London: John Danter, 1596), p. 106, <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845702> (last accessed 20 February 2018).
8. His fee being the 'thirty pieces of silver' (Matt. 26: 15)
9. Nashe, *Haue with you to Saffron-Walden*, p. 106.
10. Nashe, *Haue with you to Saffron-Walden*, p. 106.
11. George Fox, *The devil was and is the old informer against the righteous* (London: John Bringhurst, 1682), n.p., <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11327409> (last accessed 20 February 2018).
12. George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), pp. 139, 325, 458.
13. George Whitehead, *Judgment fixed upon the accuser of our brethren* (London: Andrew Sowle, 1682), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:14582034> (last accessed 7 February 2018).
14. Anon., 'The Informers answer to the late character vindicating themselves from the scandalous truths of that unlucky pamphlet' (London: T.C., 1675), p. 5.
15. Lionel Abel, *Tragedy and Metatheatre: Essays on Dramatic Form* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2003), p. 113.
16. 'il dénonce . . . de manière détournée, les motivations et les identités de ceux qui le mettent en place'. Georges Banu, *La Scène Surveillée* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2006), p. 79 [trans. France Grenaudier-Klijn].
17. John Stephens, *Essayes and characters* (1615), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853040> (last accessed 10 February 2018).
18. Joseph Hall, *Cases of conscience practically resolved* (1654), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11415099> (last accessed 2 February 2018); Francis Lenton, *Characterismi: or, Lentons leasures* (London: I[ohn] B[eale] for Roger Michell, 1631), n.p., <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:9918:68> (last accessed 13 February 2018).
19. Henry Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame* (London: William Wright, 1592), p. 34, <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:17363:19> (last accessed 23 February 2018).
20. Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame*, p. 38.

21. Thomas Overbury, *Sir Thomas Ouerburie his wife with new elegies vpon his (now knowne) vntimely death* (1611), n.p., <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:20234643> (last accessed 2 December 2017).
22. Overbury, *Sir Thomas Ouerburie his wife with new elegies*, n.p.
23. Thomas Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight or The Bellman's Second Walk* (1608), in A. V. Judges (ed.), *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 320.
24. Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame*, p. 10.
25. Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580–1640* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 154.
26. Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Divell*, ed. G. B. Harrison (London: Bodley Head, 1924), p. vi.
27. Clark, p. 154.
28. Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame*, p. 10.
29. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, pp. 320–1.
30. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 321.
31. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 321.
32. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 321.
33. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 321.
34. Thomas Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 321.
35. Luke Hutton, *The Black Dog of Newgate* (1596?), in A. V. Judges (ed.), *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 273.
36. Hutton, p. 275.
37. Hutton, p. 276.
38. Hutton, p. 282.
39. Hutton, p. 280.
40. Hutton, p. 265.
41. Hutton, p. 265.
42. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 328.
43. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 328.
44. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 323.
45. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, pp. 347, 365.
46. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 365.
47. Bible, The Authorised Version (1611), Ephesians 6:12.
48. Bible, The Authorised Version (1611), Colossians 1:16, 2:15.
49. Bible, The Authorised Version (1611), Titus 3:1.
50. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 363.
51. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, p. 365.
52. This is besides an accusation of plagiarism from Thomas Harman's *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly called Vagabonds* (1566); see Samuel Rid, *Martin Markall, Beadle of Bridewell* (1610), in

A. V. Judges (ed.), *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 389, 392.

53. John Harington, 'A Preface, Or Rather a Briefe Apologie of Poetrie', *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse* (London: 1591), sig. Ii.
54. Charles Nicholl, *The Reckoning* (London: Vintage, 1992), p. 130.
55. See Angus, pp. 1–40.
56. R. A. Roberts (ed.), 'Cecil Papers: August 1594', *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 4, 1590–1594* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892), pp. 575–601; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol4/pp575-601> (last accessed 24 February 2018).
57. P. M. Tillott (ed.), 'The seventeenth century: Civic government', *A History of the County of York: the City of York* (London: Victoria County History, 1961), pp. 173–86, *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/city-of-york/pp173-186> (last accessed 24 February 2018).
58. Annie I. Cameron (ed.) 'James VI, March 1594', *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: Volume 11, 1593–1595* (Edinburgh: 1936), pp. 280–303; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/scotland/vol11/pp280-303> (last accessed 24 February 2018).
59. I. B., *The Copy of a Letter, Lately Written by a Spanishe Gentleman, to His Freind in England: In Refutation of Sundry Calumnies, There Falsly Bruited, and Spred emonge the People* (Antwerp: Ioachim Trognaesius, 1589), pp. 5–6.
60. I. B., pp. 5–6.
61. I. B., pp. 5–6.
62. Misha Teramura, 'Richard Topcliffe's Informant: New Light on *The Isle of Dogs*', *Review of English Studies*, Vol. 68 (2017), pp. 44–59, at pp. 46–7.
63. Annie I. Cameron (ed.), 'James VI, May 1593', *Calendar of State Papers, Scotland: Volume 11, 1593–1595* (Edinburgh: 1936), pp. 85–95; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/scotland/vol11/pp85-95> (last accessed 24 February 2018).
64. G. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), 'Cecil Papers: December 1610', *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 21, 1609–1612* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), pp. 262–72, *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol21/pp262-272> (last accessed 26 February 2018).
65. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), pp. 262–72.
66. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), pp. 262–72.
67. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), pp. 262–72.
68. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), pp. 262–72.

69. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), pp. 262–72.
70. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), pp. 262–72.
71. Dyfnallt Owen (ed.), pp. 262–72.
72. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 28 April 1621 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), p. 596; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp596> (last accessed 26 February 2018).
73. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 17 February 1621 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), pp. 525–6; *British* History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp525-526> (last accessed 26 February 2018).
74. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 17 February 1621, pp. 525–6.
75. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 17 February 1621, pp. 525–6.
76. Sophie Crawford Lomas (ed.), 'Elizabeth: April 1586, 6–10', *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, Volume 20, September 1585–May 1586* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921), pp. 523–40; *British History Online*, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol20/pp523-540.
77. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 16 March 1621 (London, 1802), p. 557; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp556-560> (last accessed 24 August 2017).
78. Arthur John Butler (ed.), 'Elizabeth: December 1580, 11–20', *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, Volume 14, 1579–1580* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904), pp. 508–20; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol14/pp508-520> (last accessed 21 February 2018).
79. Arthur John Butler (ed.), 'Elizabeth: December 1580, 11–20', pp. 508–20.
80. Nicholl, p. 135.
81. Anon., 'The Informers answer', p. 4.
82. John Bakeless, *The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 160.
83. See Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, ed. Tom Cain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) (Ind. 23–6).
84. Faithful Teate, *The uncharitable informer charitably informed, that sycophancy is a sin, pernicious to all, but most of all to himself* (Dublin: William Bladen, 1660), p. 52, <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99868810> (last accessed 4 January 2018). Hutson describes plays making 'greater use, in particular, of narration to convey (often misleading) accounts of unstaged events'; see Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 106.
85. 'Promoter' is a synonym for 'informer'; Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, p. 14.

86. R. A. Roberts (ed.), 'Cecil Papers: January 1602, 16–31', *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 12, 1602–1603* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1910), pp. 22–43; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol12/pp22-43> (last accessed 30 January 2018).
87. R. A. Roberts (ed.), 'Cecil Papers: January 1602, 16–31', pp. 22–43.
88. Joseph Chitty, William Newland Welsby and Edward Beavan, *Chitty's Collection of Statutes: With Notes Thereon Intended as a Circuit and Court Companion*, Volume 1 (London: S. Sweet, 1854), p. 475.
89. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, pp. 476–7.
90. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 476.
91. Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame*, p. 44.
92. Anon., *The life and death of Griffin Flood informer*, pp. 2–3.
93. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 476.
94. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 477.
95. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 478.
96. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 478.
97. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 478.
98. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 479.
99. Chitty, Welsby and Beavan, p. 479.
100. Robert Greene, *A quip for an vpstart courtier* (London: Iohn Wolfe, 1592), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841591> (last accessed 21 February 2018).
101. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 8 February 1621 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), pp. 513–14; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp513-514> (last accessed 21 February 2018).
102. Nicholl, p. 125. Banu also points this out: 'la surveillance, chacun le sait, n'est pas gratuite . . . elle implique des retombées financières': 'surveillance, as everyone knows, is not free . . . it involves financial benefits', p. 55 (my translation).
103. R. A. Roberts (ed.), 'Cecil Papers: March 1599, 16–31', *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 9, 1599* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1902), pp. 107–26; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol9/pp107-126> (last accessed 21 February 2018).
104. Nicholl, pp. 47–50.
105. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 8 February 1621 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), pp. 513–14; *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp513-514> (last accessed 21 February 2018).

106. Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260–1850', <https://www.economics.ox.ac.uk/materials/papers/13260/jhreplacement.pdf> p. 8 (last accessed 21 February 2018).
107. This was known as a *qui tam* action. See Maurice W. Beresford, 'The Common Informer, the Penal Statutes and Economic Regulation', *Economic History Review*, Vol. X (1958), pp. 221–38, at p. 225.
108. *House of Commons Journal*, Volume 1: 21 November 1606 (1802); *British History Online*, p. 170, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> (last accessed 3 January 2018).
109. John Bakeless, *The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 160.
110. Janet Clare, *'Art made tongue-tied by authority': Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 33.
111. W. R. Streitberger, *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 223.
112. See Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984), p. 24.
113. Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 8, 126.
114. William Cobbett, Thomas Bayly Howell, Thomas J. Howell and William Jardine, *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, Volume 8 (London: R. Bagshaw, 1810), p. 113.
115. Cobbett, Howell, Howell and Jardine, p. 113.
116. Cobbett, Howell, Howell and Jardine, p. 114.
117. Cobbett, Howell, Howell and Jardine, p. 114.
118. Cobbett, Howell, Howell and Jardine, p. 114.
119. Cobbett, Howell, Howell and Jardine, p. 114.
120. Dutton, p. 59.
121. Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson, A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 111–12, 114, 146. This intelligencer was likely to have been the highly disreputable William Udall: see Teramura, pp. 44–59.
122. Dutton, pp. 119–22; Streitberger, p. 230.
123. George Chapman, *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Byron*, ed. John Margeson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 25.
124. Dutton, pp. 193, 186.
125. See Ethyn Williams Kirby, *William Prynne: A Study in Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931).

126. John Webster and William Rowley *A Cure for a Cuckold* (London: Thomas Johnson, 1661), <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:180072:19> (last accessed 25 February 2018).
127. Anon., *The life and death of Griffin Flood informer Whose cunning courses, churlish manners, and troublesome informations, molested a number of plaine dealing people in this city of London. Wherein is also declared the murther of Iohn Chipperford Vinter, for twich fact the said Griffin Flood was pressed to death the 18. day of Ianuary last past* (London: [G. Eld] for I. T., 1623), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:17716:10> (last accessed 16 February 2018).
128. Edward Ward, 'A walk to Islington with a description of New-Tunbridge-Wells and Sadler's musick-house' (London: 1699), pp. 15–16, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A67529.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext> (last accessed 16 February 2018).
129. John Day, *Isle of Guls* (London: Iohn Hodgets, 1606), n.p., <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840846> (last accessed 2 February 2018).
130. Catherine Keane describes the satirist Horace wishing to distance himself from 'informers who stalk Rome with notebooks in hand, identifying potential victims'; Catherine Keane, *Figuring Genre in Roman Satire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 79.
131. Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame*, p. 32.
132. Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame*, p. 32
133. T. G., pp. 116–17.
134. Chettle, *Kind-harts Dreame*, p. 34.
135. Thomas Dekker, *The Bellman of London* (1608), in A. V. Judges (ed.), *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 303–4.
136. Dekker, *The Bellman of London*, p. 304.
137. Dekker, *The Bellman of London*, p. 306.
138. Dekker, *The Bellman of London*, p. 307.
139. Dekker, *The Bellman of London*, p. 307.
140. See Jonson, *Poetaster* (4.7.9–10) and Angus, pp. 115–35.
141. Lorna Hutson, 'Civility and Virility in Ben Jonson', *Representations*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 1–27, at p. 14.
142. Thomas Nabbs, *Covent-Garden* (London: R. Oulton, 1639), <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848292> (last accessed 12 December 2017).

143. Dekker, *Lantern and Candlelight*, pp. 347, 365.
144. See Angus, esp. pp. 1–40.
145. See Nicholl, pp. 111, 121ff. See also John Michael Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 69, 92ff.; Helen Ostovich (ed.), *Ben Jonson, Four Comedies* (London: Longman, 1997), p. 12; Archer, p. 26; David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber & Faber, 2004), p. 155; R. Warwick Bond, *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), p. 14; Daphne Du Maurier, *Golden Lads: A Study of Anthony Bacon, Francis and Their Friends* (London: Gollancz, 1975), pp. 60, 64, 71, 97–8.
146. Nicholl, pp. 376–80, 82.
147. I treat the structures, forms and implications of metadrama in some detail in Angus, esp. pp. 24–31.
148. François Laroque, *The Show Within: Dramatic and Other Insets* (Montpellier: Publications de l'Université Paul-Valery, 1990), p. 42.
149. As in instances above also, 'oversight' here means 'seeing from a privileged position' with resonances of supervision, not its other sense of missing something.
150. As with Middleton and Dekker, *The Roaring Girl* (1.2.14–30ff.).
151. See Alan Sheridan, 'Translator's Note', in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* (New York: Norton 1977), p. xi. Lacan himself aligned it with *scotoma* (a blind spot) in his description of the *mirror stage*. See 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I', in Lacan, *Écrits*, pp. 93–100.
152. See William Nelles, *Frameworks: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative* (New York: Lang, 1997), p. 155.
153. Jacques Derrida uses this term to describe voyeurism, a concept related to the mechanisms here described; see Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 68.
154. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar, Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1981), pp. 72–3ff.
155. Sight itself is not fundamental to this theory since the mechanism works with merely 'a rustling of branches or the sound of a footstep followed by silence, or the slight opening of a shutter, or a light movement of a curtain'; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen, 1958), pp. 256–7; Bruce R. Smith describes early modern

theatre as an 'auditory field'; an audience's engagement with a play is formed in the imagination, and thus the Sartrean 'look' includes this 'auditory field' which bears an imaginary relation also to metadramatic and diegetic structures; see Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

156. Dylan Evans, *Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (Hove and New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2003), p. 72.