Writing Robert Greene

Essays on England's First Notorious Professional Writer

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Contents

position-taking in the ongoing struggle to define the dramatic field. The uneasiness and problems inherent in staging the play bear witness to the difficulty of the project Greene and his contemporaries undertook.

The choruses engage in the kinds of debates that Braunmuller, Leggatt, and Crumley describe, but also, in their emphasis on distinct kinds of theatre craft, represent an uneasy linking-together of very different stage traditions in the service of Greene's dramaturgical intent. Moreover, the questions Greene appears to be asking have as much to do with fundamentally theatrical questions about communicating across the stage-audience divide as they do with philosophical questions about pleasure and renunciation, satire and comedy, and so forth. The more abstract questions that Braunmuller, Leggatt, Crumley, and others rightly discuss find their root in Greene's wrestling with the varied technical tools at hand in order to convey his meaning in the play. The conflict between the two aesthetics in this play refracts a struggle with what Greene found to be refractory materials. The illegibility of both Oberon and Bohan's productions at various times in the play and their ongoing mutual revisions of the performance raise questions about the didactic usefulness of drama by struggling with the material components of that drama—the struggle with the material precedes the questions and drives the kinds of resolutions Greene comes to, however provisional they may be.[47]

Finally, Greene's play enacts a contest between kinds of drama by testing the representational capacities of two kinds of theatre. In this contest between spectacle and action, the contest attempts to work out so-called literary questions by using all the means available at the time Greene wrote. Those resources are literary, deriving from Greene's education, and artisanal, deriving from the craft of the theatre in which he was working. In *James IV*, both sets of practices, of resources, are mutually dependent, and the play as a whole emerges out of Greene's use of both. The craftsman's artifice is no more a means to Greene's artistic ends (a notion that in terms of the period makes little sense) than the script is a means to the ends of the craftsman. Theatrical artifice, in all senses of the term is both the form of Greene's play and, in a sense, the content.

47 Greene remains dubious about the play's capacity to convey a message to the end—Bohan's final speech tells the audience that they have witnessed a kind of morality play, but his remarks bear almost no resemblance to the action actually presented.

Chapter 4

From *Homo Academicus* to *Poeta Publicus*: Celebrity and Transversal Knowledge in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589)

Bryan Reynolds and Henry S. Turner

The Dialectic of Celebrity

By the time Robert Greene received his second Master of Arts degree from Oxford in 1588—having already been awarded both a BA (1580) and an MA (1583) from Cambridge—he had long since established his position outside the university in the precarious and often contentious world of professional writing.[1] Soon it would be impossible for readers to overlook Greene's most recent distinction, which became a regular fixture of his title pages and prefaces; to one reader in particular, the humanist Gabriel Harvey, the phrase "Robert Greene, Master of Arts in both Universities" became a particularly irritating display of humane learning in the interest of naked ambition. Ironically, Harvey himself was hardly coy about self-promotion, and the famous quarrel among Harvey, Greene, and Thomas Nashe remains one of the most colorful surviving examples of how early modern *homo academicus* sought to define a new position for himself in the public market for printed books, once he had left the familiar, if not always comforting, walls of collegiate life and began to feel his way toward a new system of employment and reward, faculty and task, reputation and identity.[2]

1 See René Pruvost, *Robert Greene et Ses Romans* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1938), the first biographer to point out the correct date of Greene's degrees; also Johnstone Parr, "Robert Greene and his Classmates at Cambridge," *PMLA* 77 (1962): 536–43. For additional biographical information on Greene, see John Clark Jordan, *Robert Greene* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1915/New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1965); Edwin Haviland Miller, *The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

2 We have taken the term *homo academicus* from Pierre Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); as we discuss below, the work of Bourdieu has been central to our analysis in the essay that follows.

And what was this world that *homo academicus* sought to enter, the world of the "professional writer"? No doubt it could be many things: prolific, and thus exhausting; self-indulgent, and thus at times highly gratifying; outspoken, and as a consequence genuinely dangerous to personal freedom and bodily integrity. But above all it was "poor," in all the senses of the term: a world where the symbolic currencies of credit, favor, and reputation barely compensated for the paucity of hard cash, the fickle ignorance of buyers, and the iron-fisted acumen of publishers; a world viewed with a mixture of distaste and distant curiosity by those in a position to lead opinion and determine matters of degree. That the stakes of the period's most famous literary quarrel could be at once so petty and so enormous is easy to see: the oblique jabs, glancing comments, invidious comparisons, and posthumous insults were the only resources available to Greene, Harvey, and Nashe as they sought to leverage what little symbolic power they had in the face of the Stationer's monopoly, the Bishop's license, or the patron's favor. Nor is it any wonder that their writings sometimes strike us as narrow and self-regarding: bruised egos and narcissistic consolation are perhaps all that remains when resources are scarce, temporary alliances pass for friendship, and personal ambition becomes the only stay against the threat of a penniless and lonely death.

In many ways Greene was luckier, or cannier, than either Harvey or Nashe, since he seems to have realized early on that a carefully managed persona would become his only reliable resource and that the more ubiquitous and variable that persona became—even to the point of self-contradiction—the more likely it was to find a market. His greatest misfortune was to die before them, unwittingly bequeathing control of that persona to at least one avowed enemy and a friend of dubious commitment. In a moment of astonishing vindictiveness and determination, a grudging Harvey could track down the charitable shoemaker's wife who had lodged Greene as he lay dying and then publish the miserable details of his final moments, ladling on self-righteous derision; Nashe, meanwhile, only weakly contested the portrait and offered a tepid defense of his one-time ally and fellow alumnus.[3] "There is no telling," Lori Humphrey Newcomb has recently written, "when his usual title-page billing 'Robert Greene, Master of Arts in both Universities' ceased to claim courtly status and began to flaunt his dramatic fall": the market had welcomed *homo academicus*, used what it could, and moved on.[4]

Scholars writing on the rise of the professional author have long looked to Greene, Harvey, and Nashe as exemplary of the "university wits" who abandoned a career within the walls of the university or the Church in favor of a more public and less secure vocation in London's literary marketplace. But these accounts have largely overlooked the fact that the primary point of contention among writers such

3 See Edwin Haviland Miller, "The Relationship of Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe (1588–92)," *Philological Quarterly* 33 (1954): 353–67.

4 Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002), 28.

as Harvey, Greene, and Nashe was an emerging notion of *celebrity*: the symbolic power celebrity conferred, of course, but, even more crucially, the way celebrity was defined through legitimate acts of recognition. As Pierre Bourdieu has argued:

> Symbolic power—as a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization—is a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognized*, that is, misrecognized as arbitrary. This means that symbolic power does not reside in "symbolic systems" in the form of an "illocutionary force" but that it is defined in and through a given relation between those who exercise power and those who submit to it, i.e. in the very structure of the field in which *belief* is produced and reproduced.[5]

At stake in the quarrels among the so-called university wits was precisely the terms of recognition through which the authority of the professional writer and his product might be evaluated. Each man sought to construe his contemporaries as unworthy of recognition, in a double sense: unworthy to be recognized by others, and even more importantly, unworthy of *bestowing recognition on others*. For the act of recognition implies an act of investment, as Bourdieu has observed: recognition becomes a form of capital when it takes the form of "degree specific consecration ... i.e., the degree of recognition accorded by those who recognize no other criterion of legitimacy than recognition by those whom they recognize."[6]

The "dialectic of celebrity," as we term it, emerges out of this process whereby competing public personae are composed through acts of public recognition that are bestowed by others already recognized as worthy of performing these acts. When these acts of recognition all derive from within the same field and the agents involved are competing over the same tokens of value and modes of power, this dialectic approaches a self-sustaining process that marks the relatively autonomous nature of the field. Because the early modern literary field was still in the process of establishing the terms of definition and value that could be specific to it, the struggle between Harvey, Greene, and Nashe over "literary" authority and the celebrity it might bring was particularly sharp. Writing for commercial publication, after all, was one of only several career paths that the former university man might pursue, typically in alternation or combination with a residency at one of the Inns of Courts; serving as a private tutor or public lecturer, acting as secretary, translator, "reader,"

5 Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 170.

6 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," trans. Richard Nice in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. and introduction by Randal Johnson (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29–73, p. 38.

or intelligencer for powerful patrons or, on occasion, for the government.[7] Indeed, a writer such as Harvey only partially sought to become a "literary" figure in the modern sense: his goal was less to write poems, plays, romances, or other forms that might appeal to a commercial audience of readers than it was to enter political service, and he used his writings to position himself in this sphere. Greene and Nashe, we might say, were *reduced* to seeking recognition as celebrities in a literary market because they found themselves unable to secure reliable sources of patronage, employment, and power outside of the field of commercial publication—their celebrated "authorial" personas were the virtue that resulted from their necessity.

For *homo academicus*, finding success in the market for printed books rather than in more traditional patronage or employment required unusual ingenuity, flexibility, and stamina, as Greene's own work attests: romances, short moral tales, repentance narratives, cony-catching "exposés" (largely borrowed from other writers),[8] satire, one work of astrology, and at least five plays—dramatic writing being an area in which Greene, it seems, never enjoyed the success of some of his contemporaries. The rest of this essay examines one of the most successful of Greene's plays, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (c. 1589), and proposes that Greene uses it to undertake an intricate account of the conflicted places that *homo academicus* occupied in late-sixteenth century English culture and of how he might come to occupy a newly emergent position: what we call "*poeta publicus*," the celebrity author. We will provisionally describe the relationship between *homo academicus* and *poeta publicus* as one of "homology," as Bourdieu has articulated the term, in order to demonstrate a series of structural analogies between two sociocultural fields that would seem, despite all Greene's efforts, to remain quite distinct from one another. We will use the principle of homology, first, to describe

7 See for instance the work of Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine on Gabriel Harvey, especially "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy," *Past and Present* 129 (1990): 30–78, and *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); also that of Jardine and William Sherman on Henry Wotton, "Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England," in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge UniversityPress, 1994), pp. 102–24; Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); Warren Boutcher, "Pilgrimage to Parnassus: Local Intellectual Traditions, Humanist Education and the Cultural Geography of Sixteenth-Century England," in Yun Lee Too and Niall Livingstone (eds), *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 110–147; Paul E. J. Hammer, "The Earl of Essex, Fulke Greville, and the Employment of Scholars," *Studies in Philology* 91 (1994): 167–80.

8 For discussion of Greene's borrowings from other writers, see Bryan Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 64–94.

aspects of the constitution of these fields in general where analogies in their respective structures are particularly visible; second, we will examine homologies of position that individual agents might occupy in, between, and/or linking these two fields, circumstances for which terms like "lamination," "stratification," "amalgamation," or "collapse" will prove themselves to be more appropriate than "homology." Since Greene himself was so self-conscious about his position in both fields and actively sought to forge connections between the persona of *homo academicus* and that of *poeta publicus*, he stands as a strong example of how both fields were changing during the period and of how the professional writer—and notably the writer of plays—understood his new liabilities and potential for success.

The "Friar Bacon Formation": Affective Presence and Articulatory Space

As a first step in our analysis of how the figure of Friar Bacon in Greene's play should be understood as an avatar for Greene's own transitional position among several overlapping social fields, it will be necessary to examine the constitution of the "academic" and "literary" fields in general at the end of the sixteenth century and to point out salient points of homology between them. Specifically, we will argue that the definition of *magic and mathematics* (and the interface between them) in the intellectual field of the university provides a model for Greene to assess the place of *poetics*, and especially of *dramatic poesy*, in the literary marketplace. The structural position of these two fields of knowledge within their own institutional spheres, we will go on to argue, were homologous to one another for the simple reason that both fields of knowledge were viewed as fundamentally heterodox or transversal by early modern contemporaries.

The definition and place of magic in the university field occupy much of Greene's play and account for its most engaging elements. Ever since the pioneering work of historians such as D.P. Walker and Francis Yates, critics have recognized the enduring influence that hermetic, cabalistic, and other occult philosophies exercised on figures such as Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola, Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Giordano Bruno, John Dee, and Tommaso Campanella, although in light of more recent scholarship, it is no longer quite true to say, with Yates, that "If there was any interest in [occult hermeticism] in England, it was not in officially established circles in Church or University, but in private circles, such as Sir Philip Sidney's group of courtiers studying number in the three worlds with John Dee, or survivals of the More-Colet tradition."[9] Keith Thomas has demonstrated how widely

9 Francis Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 187. For the discussion of occult knowledge that follows, we have drawn on (in addition to the work of Yates) D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (London: The Warburg Institute and the University of London, 1958/Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1969); Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the*

various occult practices extended in early modern English social life and called attention to the extraordinary persistence of both astrology and alchemy well into the seventeenth century. Charles Schmitt has shown that interest in astrology, alchemy, and magic *did*, in fact, penetrate quite far into the sixteenth-century university curriculum, providing topics of disputation for the MA degree and capturing the attention of well-regarded Oxford doctors such as John Case, Everard Digby, Matthew Gwinne, and John Williams, the last eventually to rise to the position of Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity.[10] To be sure, this interest was a cautious one and always with an eye to the crucial distinction between so-called "white," "spiritual," or "natural" magic and the more dangerous "black," "necromantic," or "demonic" magic. In the former, the special operations of the practitioner animated latent natural forces in order to achieve natural effects or effects that, however artificial they might seem, nevertheless depended on natural processes; in the latter, demons were invoked as intermediary causes in order to produce effects that directly contravened natural processes and that were often undertaken to procure some immediate material advantage for the practitioner.

As is clear from Greene's play, however, the boundary between natural and demonic forms of magic was, in fact, a much fuzzier one than many writers cared to admit, their different means and ends often difficult to distinguish from one another. An important reason for this convergence may be attributed to the fact that both forms of magic were still intimately associated with the "mathematical sciences" more broadly, as the character Mason, Friar Bacon's colleague in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, avows:

> No doubt but magic may do much in this;
> For he that reads but mathematic rules
> Shall find conclusions that avail to work
> Wonders that pass the common sense of men.[11]

Renaissance (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance*, trans. Carolyn Jackson and June Allen, revised by Clare Robertson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1983/London: Arkana and Penguin, 1990); Anthony Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1999); Don Cameron Allen, *The Star-Crossed Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1941/New York: Octagon Books, 1973); John S. Mebane, *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age* (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

10 See Charles Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983), pp. 53–4, 118–21 and 191–216; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); Mordechai Feingold, "The Occult Tradition in the English Universities of the Renaissance: a Reassessment," in Brian Vickers (ed.) *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 73–94.

11 All citations are to *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, ed. Daniel Seltzer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), by scene and line number, the passage cited above appearing at 2.72–75; cf. also 4.53.

As a consequence of this association, the line between what early modern authorities called "magia" and what we today would describe as "applied mathematics" or "technology" was indistinct, since many of the preoccupations of writers on magic concerned not its theoretical consistency but its practical application, in fields as diverse as optics, mechanics, medicine, horticulture, and pharmacology.[12] Furthermore, interest in occult theories and methods was by no means limited to figures on the margins of institutionalized intellectual life but extended to scholars at the center of the university field, like Case, Gwinne, or Williams, as well as to more public statesmen, and even as far as Elizabeth herself. On March 10, 1576, Elizabeth visited Dee's house at Mortlake in order to be entertained in his garden by his magic glass, and the efforts of Dee and Kelley to secure the secret of the philosopher's stone were followed with equal interest by Case at Oxford and by Elizabeth and Lord Burghley, although no doubt for somewhat different reasons. Even a sober scholar such as Case failed to recognize that Kelley was a self-serving charlatan, and although Rudolf II had expelled Dee and Kelley from Prague for suspicion of fraud, Burghley continued to court Kelley in the hopes that he would return to England with his alleged alchemical solutions.[13]

Among English writers, no figure was more representative of the mysteries and promise of magic and mathematics than the historical person of Roger Bacon, who had long been an outstanding figure in the various occult traditions that had grown out of medieval Arabic manuscripts, such as the *Picatrix*, or that had been disseminated through Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, where Bacon appears, along with Albertus Magnus and Robert Grosseteste, as a magus renowned for his production of mechanical animals, talking statues, and the

12 See, in addition to the works cited in n. 9 above, J. Peter Zetterberg, "The Mistaking of 'the Mathematicks' for Magic in Tudor and Stuart England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980): 83–97; Nicholas Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988); William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

13 For Elizabeth's visit to Dee and dealings with Dee and Kelley, see Samuel Clyde McColloch, "John Dee: Elizabethan Doctor of Science and Magic," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 50 (1951): 75–7 and 84 and Charles Nicoll, *The Chemical Theater* (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 20–21; on Case's interest in Dee and Kelley, see Schmitt, *John Case*, p. 121 and p. 210 ("We now believe that Sir Richard [sic] Kelly is producing gold itself by the use of the philosopher's stone and without deceit or fraud," Case, *Lapis philosophicus* [Oxford, 1599], cited by Schmitt, p. 183). The interests of the government are clear, too, from John Dee's enthusiastic letter to Lord Cecil (15 February 1562) announcing that while in Paris he had discovered a manuscript copy of Johannes Trithemius's *Steganographiae*, a treatise on cryptography that offered, in addition to its methods for secret codes, elaborate formulas for communicating over great distances through the aid of angels. See Clulee, "John Dee's Early Natural Philosophy," p. 644 n. 41; Gatti, p. 74 and n. 32. Trithemius's work was printed in 1606 but in MS much earlier; see Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 86–90.

infamous brazen head.[14] Despite the fact that Bacon himself took pains to distinguish the practice of magic from the study of properly natural forces, by the early seventeenth century, his name had become an important symbolic token for writers seeking to legitimate their inquiries into the relationship between art and nature or their curiosity about a wide range of occult practices: Ficino, Pico, Agrippa, Dee, Bruno, Case, Raleigh, and Sir Thomas Browne, among others, all looked to him as a model for the legitimacy of natural magic as both a theoretical and a practical pursuit.[15] At Oxford, Bacon's reputation as a mathematician, mechanician, alchemist, and natural occultist may have helped to establish a continuous *institutional* tradition of occult inquiry, and this perhaps explains why Case's friend John Williams prepared an edition of Bacon's *Libellus* or *Epistola Rogerii Bacon ... de retardandis senectutis accidentibus et de senisbus conservandis* (1590), published at Oxford by Joseph Barnes, Case's own publisher. Many of Bacon's writings also circulated in manuscript during the period, especially among men interested in mathematical, mechanical, and occult problems: Thomas Harriot, for instance, read with interest Bacon's treatises on alchemy, his rejection of Democritian atomism, his experiments with burning mirrors, his defense of mathematics, and his comments on various aspects of legitimate experimental method (*arte experimentali*).[16] Mathematical practitioners such as Robert Recorde or Leonard and Thomas Digges wrote admiringly about Bacon's technical experiments with optical glasses and his theories of perspective;

14 On Bacon's reputation in general, see A.G. Molland, "Roger Bacon as Magician" *Traditio* 30 (1974): 445–60, esp. p. 450, with additional bibliography. Stories of speaking statues had long been associated with the ancient Egyptian priests who were believed to have authored the hermetic writings and had passed from Augustine to Aquinas, Ficino, Agrippa, Dee, Recorde, and many others; see Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, *passim*.

15 See Molland, "Roger Bacon as Magician"; Mebane, *Renaissance Magic*, p. 76, pp. 80–83; P.M. Rattansi, "Alchemy and natural magic in Raleigh's *History of the World*," *Ambix* 13 (1966): 122–38.

16 See Stephen Clucas, "Thomas Harriot and the Field of Knowledge in the English Renaissance," in Robert Fox (ed.) *Thomas Harriot: An Elizabethan Man of Science* (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 200), p. 100 and n. 33; p. 109 and n. 68, citing the mathematician Thomas Allen and Robert Payne as reading Bacon in manuscript; p. 117 and n. 103; p. 128 n. 141, on William Warner's interest in Bacon; also Hilary Gatti, "The natural philosophy of Thomas Harriot" also in Fox (ed.), *Thomas Harriot*, pp. 75–7. As Stephen Clulee has shown, Dee passed through a two-year period (1556–58) of fascination with Bacon's work during which he acquired manuscript copies of nearly all of Bacon's writings, wrote a defense of Bacon against the charge of necromancy (which he never published), and annotated Bacon's *Epistola de secretis operibus artis & naturae, & de nullitate magiae* (not printed until 1618). See Clulee, "Astrology, Magic, and Optics: Facets of John Dee's Early Natural Philosophy" *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977), esp.pp. 642–3 and n. 35, p. 663, pp. 669–72, pp. 672–5 and ns. 128–9 and Clulee, "At the Crossroads of Magic and Science: John Dee's Archemastrie," in Vickers (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*, pp. 57–71.

at the same time, editions of Bacon's own work (and spurious works attributed to him) gradually began to make their way into print.[17]

Like Cicero, Erasmus, and other key figures in Renaissance thought, although to a more circumscribed degree than these more famous writers, Roger Bacon was starting to emerge in early modern culture with what we call an "affective presence," a distinct discursive cultural force or vitalizing authority whom men such as Dee, Case, or Williams could imitate as they sought to define their own intellectual identities around novel, and often unorthodox, problems of inquiry. According to the transversal theory that guides our investigation, affective presence can be understood as the combined material, symbolic, and imaginary existence of a concept, object, subject, and/or event whose multiplicities radiate through and around environments.[18] As a result, affective presence often brings otherwise disparate constituents and forces into play with each other to produce at least one prominent formation, an "articulatory space" comprised of avenues for knowledge transfer, communication, and interfacing experiences and phenomena.[19] When encountering or embodying any media conceptually and/or materially imbued with the affective presence of icon, an event, or series of related events (a "movement"), we become a participant in a variety of articulatory spaces, in much the same way that subsets and their elements work in mathematical set theory.

17 In addition to the *Libellus* or *Epistola Rogerii Bacon ... de retardandis senectutis accidentibus et de senisbus conservandis* prepared by Williams, these include the *Epistola fratris Rogerii Baconis de secretis operibus naturae et de nullitate magieae* or *De mirabilis potestate artis et naturae*, published in Latin and two English translations. On Williams's interest in Bacon, see Schmitt, *John Case*, p. 112, p. 119, p. 195; the work was eventually printed in an English translation as *The Cure of Old Age, and Preservation of Youth* (London 1683), prefaced by a life of Bacon and a list of his writings. The *Epistola* ... first appeared in Paris (1542) and then at Oxford in an edition (1594) that no longer survives (see Little, in *Bacon Essays*, no. 18, and Schmitt, *John Case*, p. 195 n. 14); the work was translated into English and printed twice, first as part of the *Mirror of Alchemy* (London, 1597) and then again as *Frier Bacon his Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magick* (London, 1659). The title page of the 1659 edition announces that it is "Faithfully translated out of Dr. Dees own Copy" and prefaces the text with an account of Bacon's life and a list of authorities who approved his piety and learning. On the *Mirror* and its relation to Bacon see Nicoll, *The Chemical Theater*, pp. 23–32.

18 For more on "affective presence" and "transversal theory," see Bryan Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal*, pp. 1–22; *Performing Transversally: Reimagining Shakespeare and the Critical Future* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 1–28; and *Transversal Enterprises in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries: Fugitive Explorations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1–26; also Bryan Reynolds, "The Devil's House, 'or worse': Transversal Power and Antitheatrical Discourse in Early Modern England," *Theatre Journal* 49.2 (1997): 143–67.

19 For more on "articulatory spaces," see Bryan Reynolds, *Performing Transversally*, pp. 1–28 and *Transversal Enterprises*, pp. 1–26.

Like all celebrities with affective presence, the symbolic power of Friar Bacon—the icon and concepts associated with him—grew precisely *through* acts of reference, imitation, and efforts to become like him, thereby both endowing him with an authority that tended to reflect back on the historical figure and helping to legitimize those problems to which he had contributed solutions. The "Friar Bacon formation," as we call it, allowed Greene to bring into focus the two primary social positions that were fundamental to the emerging identity as *poeta publicus* that he sought to fashion for himself. As a poet, pamphleteer, and conspicuous university "master," Greene was himself becoming a sociopolitical conductor with new symbolic power, a power that grew to the degree that his celebrity, as a distinctive form of affective presence, also increased.[20] Because of its historical novelty and because the terms of its definition were changing by the year, the identity of the professional writer was difficult for Greene to imagine and to project with critical distance in his writing. With his play, Greene was able to capitalize on the distinct articulatory space that was beginning to form around the cultural figure of "Friar Bacon" and his affective presence, partly through the accident of existing source materials and partly through the growing awareness of Roger Bacon's legacy in university circles with which Greene himself was familiar. The position of *homo academicus*, particularly when imagined retrospectively and over a long historical trajectory, offered a familiar homological model that Greene could use to examine his own position as a professional writer, as well as that of contemporaries such as Harvey or Nashe, as they sought to establish themselves in the literary—and especially in the *dramatic*—marketplace.

Rivalry, Transversality, and Dramatic Form

The significance of "Friar Bacon" as an affective presence for Greene, we propose, lay chiefly in his marginal, embattled position within the university field and his longstanding affiliation with heterodox epistemologies. For this reason, Bacon provided Greene with a model for ways in which *homo academicus* might oppose official culture, journeying beyond the traditional parameters of his sanctioned subjective territory as academic or scholar and moving into alternatively subjective territories. In this way, the "Friar Bacon formation" demonstrates another aspect of *homo academicus*-becomings-*poeta publicus* that has been overlooked by scholarship on the so-called university wits: his *transversality*, his capacity to influence radical changes within himself and in society, which both generated and

20 In our analysis, "sociopolitical conductors" are the familial, educational, juridical, and religious structures that promote or oppose, often contradictorily, the prevailing ideology of the society in which they function. For detailed discussion on sociopolitical conductors, see Bryan Reynolds, "The Devil's House, 'or worse,'" pp. 143–67; *Becoming Criminal*, pp. 1–22; and *Performing Transversally*, pp. 1–28.

was generated by the new challenges he presented to the regulating endeavors of early modern English society's sociopolitical conductors and official culture.[21] The very field in which Greene sought to make his reputation and the very forms he employed to do so, after all, carried many of the same transversal associations and objections that were leveled against the occult sciences, with their mysterious symbols and incantations, their proximity to mathematics and assorted practical arts, and their seeming affiliation with the demonic.[22] The persistent objections to the public theatre by many of the city's aldermen are well-known, and the writings of antitheatricalists, such as by John Greene, John Northbrooke, Stephen Gosson, John Rainolds, and Phillip Stubbes, would have been very familiar to Greene, especially since many of these men were his teachers and peers at Oxford and Cambridge. Consider John Greene's *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615), which rebuts playwright Thomas Heywood's *An Apology for Actors* (1612) with a striking account of "a Christian woman [who] went into the Theater to behold the plaies":

> She entered in well and sound, but she returned and came forth possessed of the Diuell. Wherevpon certaine Godly brethren demanded Sathan how he durst be so bould, as to enter into her a Christian. Whereto he answered, that *hee found her in his owne house*, and therefore took possession of her as his own.[23]

If the church is the house of God, the public theater is the Devil's "*owne house*": its "Sathans Synagogue."[24] But the many pamphlets, too, that began to flower in

21 According to transversal theory, "Becoming is a desiring process by which all things (energies, ideas, people, societies) change into something different from what they are. If the things had been identified and normalized by some dominant force, such as state law, religious credo, or official language, then any change in them is, in fact, becomings-other" (Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal*, pp. 20–21). On the other hand, as Reynolds explains in *Transversal Enterprises*, "comings-to-be occur when people lose control during the process of becomings-other and become more of/or something else than anticipated and/or desired. In other words, becomings are active processes, often self-inaugurated and pursued intentionally, whereas comings-to-be, however induced by becomings, are generated by the energies, ideas, people, societies, and so on to which the subject aspires, is drawn, or encounters by happenstance" (2–3).

22 On relations between poetics, drama, and practical mathematics more broadly during the period, see Henry S. Turner, "Plotting Early Modernity" in *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), and Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

23 John Greene, *A Refutation*, p. 44.

24 Ibid., p. 43. In *The Anatomie of Abuses*, Phillip Stubbes also refers to the theatre as "Sathan's Synagogue" (143) and in *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theatres* (London: 1580), Anthony Munday calls "the Theater" "the chappel of Satan" (quoted in Stubbes, p. 302). For a detailed account of antitheatricality in early modern England, see Bryan Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal*, pp. 95–125.

the 1580s, as Joad Raymond has recently demonstrated, and by which Greene made his enduring reputation, soon drew the anger of those who viewed the entire form as so much seditious waste paper and gutter trash from the suburbs. "A *Pen*!," Thomas Dekker would later write of pamphlets and pamphleteers, as he turned, for a moment, on his own company, with one of the many legends associated with Roger Bacon in mind: "the invention of that, and of *Inke* hath brought as many curses into the world as that damnable Witch-craft of the *Fryer*, who tore open the bowels of Hell, to find those murdering engines of mankind, *Guns* and *Powder*."[25]

One of the most significant mythical figures associated with both poetry and music in the period, furthermore—Orpheus—was also one of the most important figures in the hermetic genealogy of ancient magi, second, in some accounts, only to Hermes himself; the Orphic hymns sung by Ficino and Pico offered some of the most powerful modes of magical incantation: "in natural magic nothing is more efficacious than the Hymns of Orpheus," Pico affirmed,

> the names of the gods of which Orpheus sings are not those of deceiving demons, from whom comes evil and not good, but are names of natural and divine virtues distributed throughout the world by the true God for the advantage of man, if he knows how to use them.[26]

Thus when Sidney refers to Orpheus as "Father in learning" to all historians in the *Defense* or when he compares Orpheus's power to move trees to Stella's ability to "charm" men's ears in his lyric "If Orpheus voice had force to breath such music's love," his invocations draw the "art of poesy," through its associations with number, harmony, and song, more closely toward ancient occult knowledge than we might recognize if we hear only a more conventional mythic genealogy.[27] For Agrippa, who condemned the occult arts along with all other forms of human learning in his *De vanitate scientiarum* (1530)—and who promptly published his own compendia of magic, *De occulta philosophia libri tres*, only three years

25 Thomas Dekker, *The Dead Terme* (1608), in *Non-Dramatic Works*, ed. Grosart, 4 vols (privately printed, 1884–86), vol. 4, p. 65; cited by Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 53.

26 Cited by Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, p. 89; see pp. 78–80, pp. 89–91, pp. 136–7; also Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, pp. 12–24.

27 Cf. also Harvey's *Pierces supererogation, or A new prayse of the old asse* (1593), linking "Hermes ascending spirit" with "Orpheus enchanting harpe," "Homers diuine furie," "Tyrtaeus enraging trumpet," "Pericles bounsinge thunderclaps," and "Platos enthusiasticall rauishment" (24); also the Christianized treatment of Orpheus as ancient poet and mystical philosopher throughout the English translation (partially by Sidney) of Phillipe Du Plessis Mornay's *A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion* (1587), as observed by Yates (1964), p. 178, p. 188.

later—poets are first natural philosophers because they inquire into the secrets of nature.[28] For this reason, poetry was very similar to astrology: if poetry was the "Authore of lies, and the maintainer of peruerse opinions" (30), Agrippa maintained, and even the "mother of lies" (32)—here using a phrase that Sidney would also use in his *Defense*, where he alludes directly to Agrippa's work—then "... the Astrologers" were "themselues no lesse Fabulouse then Poetes," since they "haue written rules in their bookes of Elections, with whiche one seruice of bawdrie, al Astrologers, and diuinours make no small gaine: next vnto which magicke doth present her selue as healper" (214).[29] Like poetry, which "Augustine willeth ... shoulde be banished out of the Citte of God: Plato the Pagane diueth ... out of his Common Weale. Cicero forbiddeth ... to be admitted" (32), so also arithmetic or geometry should also banished from the commonwealth; rhetoric, too, is a lying discourse (43) and should have no place in the commonwealth (44); as an art of persuasion, it resembles nothing so much as magical incantations (128).

Not only did Greene's contemporaries perceive a fundamental homology between magic and poetry, therefore, but Greene himself had a demonstrable interest in the occult sciences even before writing his play and certainly was aware of the link between magic and poetry that Orpheus represented. In 1585 Greene had published his *Planetomachia*, a series of dialogues and tragic stories exchanged between the seven planets that illustrated the predominant astrological influences of Venus and Saturn;[30] Greene's "Apology" for astrology in that work maintains that

> The *Gretians* neither receiued the knowledge of Astrologie of the *Ethiopians* nor *Egiptians:* But *Orpheus* the sonne of *Aeagar* and *Calliope*, was there first Schoolemaister, who taught them no plaine way but in darke problemes and misteries: For he instituted certaine Feastes called *Orgia:* wherein vpon his Harpe he deliuered them in Sonnets the principles of Astrologie. Furthermore, by his Harpe which had seuen strings, he did represent the consent of the moueable Starres: which when he did strike he did ouercome all things, and mooued both Stones, Birds and Beastes. (2)

28 All following citations are from Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Of the Vanitie and Vncertaintie of Artes and Sciences*, English trans. by James Sanford (1569, 1575) ed. Catherine M. Dunn (Northridge, CA: California State University, 1974), p. 143.

29 For Sidney's attitudes to occult knowledge, see Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage*, Ch. 3, with additional bibliography.

30 Greene dedicated the book to the Earl of Leicester who took an interest in astrology and included two defenses of the science, one in English and one in the form of a Latin dialogue. See Don Cameron Allen, "Science and Invention in Greene's Prose," *PMLA* 53 (1938): 1007–18, who provides a detailed inventory of Greene's many "scientific" allusions and discusses the *Planetomachia* on pp. 1014–18, identifying his primary sources as Johannes Pontanus's "Aegidius Dialogus" (from which Greene has lifted *verbatim* his Latin defense, changing only the names of the interlocutors) and Melancthon's edition of Ptolemy's *De Praedictionibus Astronimicis* (Basel, 1543).

In the case of the *Planetomachia*, too, Greene's engagement with the occult sciences must be understood as an act of position-taking, as Bourdieu has described it, within the larger contest over defining the identity, expertise, and affective presence of *homo academicus*: Greene's biographer René Pruvost speculates that the *Planetomachia* may have been inspired by the fact that both Richard and John Harvey—Greene's exact contemporaries at Cambridge—had recently published books of astronomical predictions in 1583, and that Greene's book may also have provoked Gabriel Harvey's annoyance.[31]

Like many of his contemporaries, Greene was particularly attracted to the figure of Roger Bacon: many of the legendary stories associated with the "Friar"—his construction of automata, including the brazen head, his attempts to build a wall of brass around England, his collaborations with Bungay, and his debate with the foreign scholar Vandermast—were circulating in the anonymous mid-sixteenth century romance, the *Famous History of Fryer Bacon*, that served as an immediate source for Greene's own play; since the *Famous Historie* incorporated several passages from Bacon's *The Mirror of Alchemy*—itself circulating in manuscript well before its publication in 1597—we can assume that Greene had at least an indirect acquaintance with Bacon's work. As a model for contemporary *homo academicus*, the "Friar Bacon formation" is defined by the intersection and friction among positions that are partly intellectual and partly sociological. Having developed into a distinct affective presence, he represents a constellation of points distributed within a spectrum of ideas, methods, and vocabulary that were

31 See Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, pp. 207–18, discussing Richard Harvey's *Astrological Discourse* (1583) and John Harvey's *An Astrological Addition* ... (1583), with John's translation of the *Iatromathematica* attributed to Hermes Trismegistus and *An Almanacke, or annual Calender, with a compendious Prognostication* ... (1589). Their elder brother Gabriel's position on astrology seems to have varied throughout his life; he owned copies of several astrological works and made extensive astrological annotations during the period when he was studying civil law. Cf. Virginia F. Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: A Study of His Life, Marginalia, and Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 71, p. 93 and her discussion of Gabriel's changing attitudes to astrology, pp. 168–71 and n. 58. On July 26, 1578, Harvey participated in a three-hour disputation at Cambridge before Burghley and Elizabeth, in which he argued the opposing position to the question of whether "astra non imponunt necessitatem"; see Stern, *Gabriel Harvey*, p. 40, p. 204, p. 216, and p. 68 n. 61; Harvey's astrological books include Luca Gaurico's *Tractatus Astrologicus* (1552), which he was reading in 1580, and Bonetus de Lates's *Hebrei medici Provenzalis Annuli per eum compositi super astrologiam utilitates incipiunt* (Paris, 1527); cf. Harvey's *marginalia* to his edition of Dionysius Periegetes, *The Surveye of the World ... englished by T. Twine* (1572), in *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia*, ed. G.C. Moore Smith (Stratford-Upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), esp. pp. 159–62. Harvey also owned four manuscript treatises on magic that he annotated in approximately 1577 (now collected as BL Add. MS 36674). One had been passed to him via different Cambridge men, and Harvey associates it with "Agrippas Occulta philosophia"; another had been written by the astrologer Simon Foreman, and Harvey's copy was probably in Foreman's own hand; Stern, *Gabriel Harvey*, p. 242; Feingold, "Occult Tradition," p. 81–2.

competing for epistemological authority at the close of the sixteenth century: we may provisionally distinguish neoscholastic natural philosophy, occult philosophies and mathematics, and the humanist "arts of discourse," including rhetoric, dialectic, and poetics. At the same time, he operated as a sociopolitical conductor within the institutional structures and official territories of the college and the university at large, as these were defined internally among rivals and externally in relation to the state machinery of both domestic and foreign powers.[32]

Viewed in this light, the epic disputation between Friar Bacon and Vandermast in Greene's play is best understood as a hyperbolic representation of actual university practice, in which a contemporary interest in all aspects of mathematics and magic, natural and otherwise, have been accentuated and submitted to scrutiny. What is at stake in the debate between the two scholars is partially their own expertise (and thus their symbolic power) over a vocabulary, a set of concepts, and a series of well-defined problems, but also at stake is the very status of magic and mathematics in general as new fields of knowledge that might be of potential service to the emerging nation-state.[33] The stakes of the debate, as in the quarrel among Harvey, Greene, and Nashe, are precisely the affective presence of celebrity and the power that the recognition by others, whether colleagues or kings, endows. As Clement somewhat disingenuously claims:

> Bacon, we come not grieving at thy skill,
> But joying that our academy yields
> A man suppos'd the wonder of the world;
> For if thy cunning work these miracles,
> England and Europe shall admire thy fame,
> And Oxford shall in characters of brass,
> And statues, such as were built up in Rome,
> Eternize Friar Bacon for his art. (2.36–43)

32 On the institutional nature of Bacon's position, see Reynolds and Turner, "Performative Transversations: Collaborations Through and Beyond Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*," in Reynolds, *Transversal Enterprises*, pp. 240–50.

33 On this point see Reynolds and Turner, "Performative Transversations"; Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage*. Certainly there were several immediate models for Greene to draw upon, most famously Giordano Bruno's visit to Oxford in 1583, where he disputed (to his great disdain) with Dr. John Underhill before the Polish Count Laski and "others of the English nobility." Although Bruno later recounted a stunning victory over his opponent—"the wretched doctor who was put forward as the leader of the Academy on that grave occasion came to a halt fifteen times over fifteen syllogisms, like a chicken amongst stubble"—other evidence indicates that contemporaries viewed it as the public humiliation of a famous foreign scholar by the Oxford faculty, when one of them realized that much of Bruno's discourse consisted of unacknowledged quotation from Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*. See Robert McNulty, "Bruno at Oxford," *Renaissance News* 13 (1960): 300–305; Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, pp. 206–10, citing Bruno's account; Feingold, "The occult tradition," pp. 76–7.

The structure of Clement's disavowal as it unfolds across the first three lines of the passage converts the professional jealousy that flourished among Greene, Harvey, and Nashe into an affirmation of the institution that presided over *homo academicus*: paradoxically, rivalry no longer threatens to dissolve the academic field by pitting colleagues against one another but becomes instead a field-defining gesture. At the same time, however, Clement's comment reveals how insecure *homo academicus* remained within the walls of his institution, since the legitimacy of his research program, and thus of his entire field of expertise, depended on outside recognition and reward. Whatever the outcome of the disputation with Vandermast, Friar Bacon needs the imprimatur of an international community of scholars and of King Henry, who, as we have argued elsewhere,[34] stands ready to annex the epistemological authority of either Bacon or Vandermast for his own purposes:

> We'll progress to Oxford with our trains,
> And see what men our academy brings.—
> And, wonder Vandermast, welcome to me.
> In Oxford shalt thou find a jolly friar,
> Called Friar Bacon, England's only flower;
> Set him but nonplus in his magic spells,
> And make him yield in mathematic rules,
> And for thy glory I will bind thy brows,
> Not with a poet's garland made of bays,
> But with a coronet of choicest gold. (4.56–65)

The desirability of the "coronet" that Henry will bestow lies less in its precious substance than in the royal recognition of authority that it signifies, an authority that the King opposes to the "poet's garland" but which is, at root, of the same nature, bays and gold forming only two different material forms for the symbolic power that public recognition brings when it is bestowed by a recognized authority. The real difference between the two rewards is to be found in the two fields in which the consecrating authority is situated: the King's gesture asserts the field of politics over that of poetics, the authority of the monarch over scholars or poets. And he knows that while both scholars and poets are hungry for the recognition of colleagues, the real prize it to be found in the power, influence, and wealth that public legitimacy and celebrity made possible—and Greene knew it, too.

Indeed, the King's comparison between the "coronet of choicest gold" and the "poet's garland made of bays" reveals the full stakes of Green's play: for if we regard the entire struggle between Friar Bacon, Friar Bungay, and Vandermast as a homology for the kinds of struggles over reputation, recognition, and reward that also engaged Greene and his contemporaries, we may grasp that one of the significant prizes at stake is precisely the power that *homo academicus* might

34 See Reynolds and Turner, "Performative Transversations," pp. 240–50.

achieve by forging an alignment between university accreditation and expertise, on the one hand, and public celebrity in the literary marketplace, on the other. After all, Greene wrote *Friar Bacon* in the first place in order to strengthen his bid for the public favor that other dramatists of the 1580s were beginning to enjoy. Greene's most famous words are words of rivalry against an emerging professional competitor, a warning to university men such as Marlowe and Nashe to beware the "upstart crow" who had begun to stalk the boards among them. This commercial rivalry and the fragile, occasional collaborations that it sponsored among university men were a foundational condition of the emergence of the theatre as a public institution; in Greene's play, we find its homological image in the tenuous collaboration between Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay against Vandermast.

But we also find the traces of the market in professional theatre embedded within the very form—in the structure and stylistic features—of a play whose double action pits contemporary satire of academic life against the pastoral *topos* and romance phrasings that a playwright such as Lily had made popular. The result is a peculiar generic hybrid assembled out of literary conventions that were competing for the attention of audiences and playwrights alike in the 1580s, a play in which the classicism of university drama meets estates satire, revenge tragedy, romantic comedy, and the sonnet, as in the following description of Margaret:

> I tell thee, Lacy, that her sparkling eyes
> Do lighten forth sweet love's alluring fire;
> And in her tresses she doth fold the looks
> Of such as gaze upon her golden hair;
> Her bashful white mix'd with the morning's red,
> Luna doth boast upon her lovely cheeks;
> Her front is beauty's table, where she paints
> The glories of her gorgeous excellence;
> Her teeth are shelves of precious marguerites
> Richly enclosed with ruddy coral cleeves.
> Tush, Lacy, she is beauty's over-match,
> If thou survey'st her curious imagery. (1.50–61)

One of the most remarkable aspects of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is the way in which Greene attempts to demonstrate his currency as a playwright by containing stylistic variety within a single generic framework: that of the history play, a comparatively novel and specifically English dramatic genre that would eventually become the vehicle for Shakespeare's own emergence as a celebrity playwright. Having renounced his magic and embraced both "Mercy and Justice" and "pure devotion" (13.100, 107) at the end of the play, Bacon steps forward to declare "Old Plantagenet" the ruler of "Albion diadem" (16.6–7) and then offers a "prophecy ... mystical" (16.63):

That here where Brute did build his Troynovant,
From forth the royal garden of a king
Shall flourish out so rich and fair a bud
Whose brightness shall deface proud Pheobus's flower,
And over-shadow Albion with her leaves." (16.44–48)

By this point at the end of his play, Greene has begun to move beyond the competing genres of the history play or court romance and toward a new form—a fusion of native English historical traditions, popular prophecy, and mythological romance—that anticipates Shakespeare's much later *Cymbeline*.

But Greene's play finally has loftier ambitions than a garland of bays strung from assorted scenes, images, and turns of phrase: as we have been arguing, it stages a confrontation between two epistemological traditions out of which dramatic poesy itself, as a coherent intellectual system for generating knowledge about the world, might draw its power and legitimacy. These are the occult and quasi-occult sciences of magic, astrology, alchemy, and mathematics, on the one hand, and the classical, mythological tradition of the university humanist and his arts of discourse, on the other. Both epistemological traditions were aggressively textual, and both lend Greene a vocabulary, range of imagery, and set of proper names with which he could construct dramatic blank verse that might rival Marlowe's "mighty line." Compare the technical language of Vandermast in the first disputation with Friar Bungay (9.28–40),[35] or the self-importance of Bacon's account of his own scholarly labors, in the third person (10.11–20),[36] with Margaret's lines as she reads Lacy's letter (10.117–121)[37]: the passages, and others like them, demonstrate how Greene turns on the one hand to the classical mythological tradition and on the other to the occult sciences in order to generate a suitably "dramatic" line of blank verse. Indeed, the competing authority of these

35 "The cabalists that write of magic spells, / As Hermes, Melchie, and Pythagoras, / Affirm that, 'mongst the quadruplicity / Of elemental essence, *terra* is but thought / To be a *punctum* squared to the rest; / And that the compass of ascending elements / Exceed in bigness as they do in height; / Judging the concave circle of the sun / To hold the rest in his circumference. / If, then, as Hermes says, the fire be greatest, / Purest, and only giveth shape to spirits, / Then must these daemones that haunt that place / Be every way superior to the rest'" (9.28–40).

36 "The rafters of the earth rent from the poles, / And three-formed Luna hid her silver looks, / Trembling upon her concave continent, / When Bacon read upon his magic book. / With seven years' tossing necromantic charms, / Poring upon dark Hecat's principles, / I have framed out a monstrous head of brass, / That, by the enchanting forces of the devil, / Shall tell out strange and uncouth aphorisms / And girt fair England with a wall of brass" (10.11–20).

37 "The scrolls that Jove sent Danaë, / Wrapt in rich closures of fine burnished gold, / Were not more welcome than these lines to me. / Tell me, whilst that I do unrip the seals, / Lives Lacy well? How fares my lovely lord?" (10.117–121).

two traditions assumes a particularly spectacular *scenic* form at the center of the play, when Friar Bungay first conjures:

...the tree leav'd with refined gold,
Whereon the fearful dragon held his seat,
That watch'd the garden call'd Hesperides,
Subdued and won by conquering Hercules. (9.79–82)

and Vandermast responds by summoning Hercules himself to "pull off the sprigs from off the Hesperian tree" (9.95). But when Bacon finally enters the scene, Hercules stands powerless before the demons he commands:

Bacon, that bridles headstrong Belcephon,
And rules Asmenoth, guider of the north,
Binds me from yielding unto Vandermast. (9.141–43)

Here magic and mathematics have explicitly and literally triumphed over a separate humanist literary tradition, just as the English history play and vernacular romance rises to eclipse learned translations of the Senecan tragedies of Hercules, such as Thomas Newton's *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (London, 1581). The struggle—simultaneously formal, ideological, intellectual, and professional—may be summed up in the competing lists of proper names invoked throughout the play by characters distributed across its two actions: Jove, Danae, Daphne, Phoebus, Apollo, versus Pythagoras, Belcephon, Asmenoth, Hecat, Demogorgon, Lucifer, "Sother, Eloim, and Adonai/ Alpha, Manoth, and Tetragrammaton" (13.93–94).

Greene has written a play in which he uses Bacon's growing affective presence and the unique articulatory space his persona made available to comment on the nature of theatre as a distinct mode of representing and understanding the social world and to launch a vehicle in which his own power over this form is displayed as clearly as possible. The homologies are particularly visible in those moments when Bacon uses his famous "glass prospective" to structure viewing positions and reveal forces—the psychological forces of desire and ambition, as well as their moral implications—that lie hidden to characters and audience alike:

I will, my lord, strain out my magic spells;...
But come with me; we'll to my study straight,
And in a glass prospective I will show
What's done this day in merry Fressingfield. (5.100–106)
...
Now, frolic Edward, welcome to my cell;...
Within this glass prospective thou shalt see
This day what's done in merry Fressingfield
'Twixt lovely Peggy and the Lincoln Earl.
...

> Stand there and look directly in the glass. (6.1–10)
> ...
> Sit still, my lord, and mark the comedy. (6.48)

By juxtaposing the lines with one another, we can see the basic homology between magic and the theatre leap into focus, as the stage splits into two simultaneous scenes, ostensibly separated by hundreds of miles ("'Twere a long poniard, my lord, to reach between / Oxford and Fressingfield" [6.131–32]). Greene has literalized the definition of comedy traditionally ascribed to Cicero—*imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*—and recast it so that the audience is invited to understand the conventions of theatrical performance not in terms of a humanist literary tradition but as a distinct mode of occult mathematics and technology. The scenes are a theatrical demonstration of Sidney's famous mathematical metaphor in his *Defense*:

> as in geometry the oblique must be known as well as the right, and in arithmetic the odd as well as the even, so in the actions of our life who seeth not the filthiness of evil wanteth a great foil to perceive the beauty of virtue.[38]

Like a "great foil," these split scenes, too, imitate, mirror, and show, since Margaret appears in the glass, like Edward, in the company with a friar whose initials are also FB (Friar Bungay) and who uses his "art and cunning" (6.21) to reveal the real Earl of Lincoln beneath his disguise, just as Bacon has just done to Edward in an earlier scene and as he does now in real time. Bacon's power, in short, is nothing less than the power of Greene's theatre: the power to penetrate beneath superficial appearances to reveal occult processes that would be impossible to view directly. But for Greene these occult processes are finally social, political, and professional, and the image he makes of them is a projection of his own not-so-secret desires: a fantasy of social mobility and sudden transformation in status, as Margaret rises from the position of a pastoral buttery maid to become the rival of a Spanish princess; a fantasy of professional rivals vanquished and of international celebrity; a fantasy of grateful royalty, crossing the threshold of a humble lodging to sit at the sparsely furnished table of the scholar.

To a greater degree than his contemporaries, perhaps, Greene sought to forge a permanent identity that was somehow *between homo academicus* and *poeta publicus*, as a third position distinct from them: a university man-about-town who was as famous for his degrees as he was infamous for his dissolute habits. For Greene, the credibility, longevity, and profitability of this new identity depended on his ability to use the tokens of his past learning as capital for his current life. He attempted to legitimate his writing and his emerging position in the literary field by

38 Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*, in *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and Jan van Dorsten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 96.2–6.

invoking ethical imperatives that derived from the academic-theological field of the humanist university—an institution still strongly oriented toward the Church but increasingly organized around a distinct neoclassical textual tradition—and transporting them to the print marketplace, where they could form the dominant system of valuation by which "professional" writing might be evaluated and designated as "literary." His title pages register a convergence between two distinct cultural and economic systems of valuation—the currency of the college and the coin of the printing house—and attempt to convert the former into the latter: they parade the conspicuous *signs* of Greene's academic history in a bid to transform sensational topics into edifying material. For this reason, the recurring trope of repentance finally was significant to Greene's authorial self-definition, since it enacts rhetorically as autobiography the very process of ideological and institutional legitimation that his title pages announce for his written works. And it is no accident that the most conspicuous, homological similarity between Greene and the figure of Friar Bacon is the latter's sudden repentance at the end of Greene's play: his abjuration of magic in favor of a holy life, much the way Greene abjured romantic fictions—the *inventions* of a *poietic* mode—for a narrative of (putatively) authentic confession and spiritual awakening. This, finally, was Greene's most enduring hope: a fantasy of rehabilitated reputation as the favorite son of Oxford whose accomplishments might outlast the centuries.