# Malcontent and Stoic: Elizabethan Responses to Fortune

by

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## Abstract

Though malcontent and Stoic types in Elizabethan drama appear to be opposites, there is an underlying affinity between them. They represent two alternative responses to the blows of Fortune. Both perceive the world as corrupt and man as mortal, but they have adopted different strategies for survival in the face of this awareness. The first chapter explores the background of the Stoic figure in Stoic and Neo-Stoic philosophy, while the second surveys the sources and tradition of the malcontent type, to establish a basis for comparing and contrasting the two attitudes. The third chapter defines the dramatic context in which these figures appear, concentrating on a nucleus of plays by Marston, Chapman, Jonson, Webster, Tourneur and Shakespeare in which malcontent and Stoic are figures of central importance. The final chapter, drawing on the same plays, considers malcontent and Stoic from the point of view of dramaturgy.

## Résumé

Quoique le stoicien et le malcontent, tels qu'ils se présentent dans le théâtre élisabéthain, semblent s'opposer l'un à l'autre, un lien fondamental les relie. Ils manifestent deux réactions possibles aux revers de la Fortune. Ils cherchent à survivre, chacun à sa façon, face à la corruption du monde et à la mortalité de l'homme, dont ils sont très conscients tous les deux. Le premier chapitre définit le type du stoicien selon la philosophie des stoiciens et des néo-stoiciens, alors que le deuxième explore les origines et la tradition du type du malcontent, afin de nous permettre de bien comparer et différencier leurs attitudes respectives. Dans le troisième chapitre nous examinons le contexte dramatique où ces deux figures apparaissent, en nous rapportant à un groupe restreint de pièces de Marston, Chapman, Jonson, Webster, Tourneur et Shakespeare, dans lesquelles ils jouent un rôle capital. Dans le dernier chapitre nous étudions, dans les mêmes pièces, le malcontent et le stoicien du point de vue de la dramaturgie.

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## Introduction

At the beginning of Jonson's Every Man Out of his Humour, Macilente enters reading a book, which provokes his first utterance:

> Viri est, fortunae caecitatem facilè ferre.
> 'Tis true; but, Stoique, where (in the vast world)
> Doth that man breathe, that can so much command
> His bloud, and his affection? well: I see,
> I strive in vaine to cure my wounded soule.[1]

The Latin tag might be translated as "It is the part of a man to bear with equanimity the blindness of Fortune," which is one of the key tenets of Stoicism. It seems obvious that the book is a treatise of Stoic philosophy. Macilente, however, cannot endure the blindness of Fortune; he is obsessed with the thought that Fortune has unjustly neglected him, while favouring others far less deserving. "Who can endure to see blinde Fortune dote thus?" is a typical outburst of his (I.ii.157). Since Macilente is one version of the malcontent type, it is of considerable interest that his malcontentedness is initially defined as the very opposite of Stoicism. This sense of the two attitudes as strongly contrasting, indeed absolutely antithetical, recurs in a variety of contexts. When Robert Burton wishes to describe the everyday melancholy which all men feel, he emphasizes its universality by saying that not even the Stoic escapes: "And from these melancholy dispositions no man living is free, no Stoick, none so wise, none so happy, none so patient."[2] Clearly, Stoic content is for him the state of mind furthest removed from melancholy discontent. "Preach not the Stoickes patience to me," cries the malcontent satirist of Marston's Scourge of Villanie, for whom patience is the antithesis of his satiric rage.[3] The contrast may be illustrated at its most extreme by comparing Jonson's malcontent Macilente with his Stoic Crites. Where

Macilente feels slighted by Fortune, Crites, being self-sufficient, is indifferent to Fortune, who "could never breake him, nor make him lesse."[4] Where Macilente's "wounded soule," racked by passion, is full of discord, Crites possesses inner calm. No two characters could appear more unlike.

Nevertheless, to say that the malcontent is the opposite of the Stoic, or vice-versa, does not sufficiently define the relationship between them. Studying the two types together reveals a whole web of crosscurrents and affinities; malcontentedness and Stoicism co-exist in a kind of fruitful tension, feeding each other. Macilente, after all, admits the truth of the Stoic position, rejecting it not because it is false but because he cannot live up to it. Of the options available to him, he chooses malcontentedness over Stoicism. Though their reactions are very different, Crites and Macilente are both responding to the same stimulus -- a world desperately in need of satiric correction. Each plays the role of the satirist within the play; this alternation of malcontent and Stoic in the same role is but one of many connections between the two types. Indeed, malcontent and Stoic attitudes sometimes alternate within the same character, as they do in Marston's Feliche, who plays the satirist's role in Antonio and Mellida.

Malcontent and Stoic are linked by a shared vision of the world which may be identified by three of its key terms: Fortune, Evil and Death. Both see Fortune as a dominant influence in human affairs, and characterize Fortune as hostile, untrustworthy and neglectful. Both perceive the world as corrupt, diseased and decaying, and are highly conscious of man's mortality. Malcontentedness and Stoicism may therefore be defined as two alternative responses to the blows of Fortune, or as two different strategies for survival in this evil world. While Hamlet and Charlemont both are disinherited and both face the duty of revenge for a murdered father, Hamlet responds as a malcontent, Charlemont as a Stoic. Malevole, dispossessed of dukedom and wife, turns malcontent; Masinissa, dispossessed of kingdom and

wife, remains Stoic. Clermont D'Ambois and Bosola are both poor soldier-scholars whom Fortune has neglected, hangers-on at court, but Clermont survives there by Stoicism and Bosola by malcontentedness. Both malcontent and Stoic face the dilemma of surviving with some integrity in a world where innocence dies or is imprisoned and virtue must hide or disguise itself. For both alike are often characterized as honest, blunt and truthful; they are moral, however sinful, rather than amoral, and nowhere is the connection between them more strikingly demonstrated than in their common antagonism to the truly amoral man, the Machiavellian or "politic" villain.

My object is to explore the relationship between malcontent and Stoic in all its complexity -- both the contrasts and the affinities. Such an exploration is valuable for the light it throws on both figures and, incidentally, on many important themes and preoccupations of Elizabethan drama. The subject is a rich one, capable of development in several directions. Had space permitted, I should have liked to say more about most of the plays and issues I discuss. The Renaissance interpretation of Stoicism, the relationship of the stage-Stoics to the classical texts, the conflict of malcontent and Stoic with the Machiavel, questions of tone, rhetoric, dramatic structure and staging in relation to these figures -- all deserve further investigation. This thesis is itself in the nature of an introduction.

## Notes to Introduction

[1] Every Man Out of his Humour, I.i.1-5, in Ben Jonson, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 442. Further references to this, cited as EMOH, appear in the text.

[2] The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. A.R. Shilleto (London: Bell, 1893), I, 164. Further references to this, cited as Anatomy, appear in the text. I give volume and page number.

[3] The Scourge of Villanie, Satire II line 5, in The Poems of John Marston, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1961), p. 106. Further references to this, cited as SV, appear in the text.

[4] Cynthia's Revels, II.iii.139-40, in Ben Jonson, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), 74. All references to Cynthia's Revels are to this edition.

## Chapter 1

## The Stoic

"During the latter part of the sixteenth century, Stoicism in a more or less Christianized form achieved a popularity such as it had not enjoyed since the first century A.D."[1] The presence of Stoic figures in the English drama of the period is but one sign of this popularity. Neo-Stoicism, as this revived Stoicism is generally labelled, has been described in detail by several scholars.[2] Though some have thought it more a continental phenomenon than an English one, there is evidence that it did spread to England.[3] Montaigne, Lipsius, Du Vair, their translators and Joseph Hall were amongst those responsible for its transmission. The Essais of Montaigne, who was much influenced by -- and also highly critical of -- Stoicism, were translated into English by Florio and published in 1603. The De Constantia of the Flemish scholar Lipsius, an adaptation of Stoic philosophy for his own age, was first published in 1584 and translated into English by Sir John Stradling in 1594. Guillaume Du Vair's Philosophie Morale des Stoiques, written in French in 1585, was Englished by Thomas James in 1598. This Thomas James knew and corresponded with Joseph Hall,[4] who in the early seventeenth century produced several works with a Stoic flavour (Meditations and Vowes, 1605, Heaven upon Earth, 1606, Characters of Vertues and Vices, 1608), while earlier he had been Marston's opponent in satire. There is direct evidence, in the quotations and paraphrases from Seneca and Epictetus which are scattered through their non-dramatic and dramatic works, and in their creation of Stoic figures for the stage, that Marston, Jonson and Chapman, at least, shared this interest in Stoicism.

The main classical sources for this revival were the works of Seneca and Epictetus, but above all Seneca, "the source of

most Stoic doctrine during the entire Renascence," according to Rudolf Kirk.[5] Renaissance readers were primarily interested in the Stoics as ethical and moral teachers; it is therefore not surprising that they responded so readily to Seneca and Epictetus, who both concentrate on ethics rather than other aspects of philosophy. Lipsius, Montaigne and Hall all acknowledge their indebtedness to Seneca, while Du Vair's Philosophie is based on the Manual of Epictetus.[6] The extent of Seneca's reputation is shown by the curious use of his name as a term of high praise. Montaigne was hailed as "un autre Seneque en nostre langue" by his friend Etienne Pasquier, and Joseph Hall "was commonly called our English Seneca," according to Fuller.[7] It seems safe to say that Seneca was the favourite Stoic of the Renaissance.

The sources of information about Stoicism available to the Elizabethan dramatists and their audience were, in the main, the original Latin and Greek texts. One contributory cause of Seneca's popularity may have been that he was simply more accessible than Epictetus in an age when knowledge of Greek was still rare, while every educated man knew Latin.[8] It is, significantly, the learned dramatists writing for an educated audience who reveal the most detailed knowledge of Stoicism. The complete works of Seneca were not translated into English until 1614, when Thomas Lodge's version appeared -- itself evidence of the contemporary interest in Stoicism.[9] Before that date there had been Whittinton's 1547 translation of De Remediis Fortuitorum (a work of doubtful authenticity), Arthur Golding's 1578 translation of De Beneficiis, and one or two pseudo-Senecan works. The tragedies had of course been translated over a period of time beginning in 1559 and ending with the publication of Newton's Tenne Tragedies in 1581. Epictetus' Manual was Englished by James Sanford in 1567 and again by John Healey in 1610; the rest of his work was accessible either in Greek, or in a Latin or French translation. Though Seneca's Tragedies were the only work by a Stoic author published in Latin in England during this period, in 1589 and in 1613, that does not necessarily mean lack of public interest in

other Stoic works. It means, rather, that continental printing-presses had long had a near-monopoly of classical texts, and therefore the Latin and Greek texts would have come from abroad.[10] That all Seneca's works were plentifully available in a variety of continental editions is shown by even a cursory check of the British Museum Catalogue, which lists twenty editions of the Works and twenty-four of the Tragedies between 1475 and 1613, besides numerous editions of individual works.

The enormous popularity of Seneca justifies basing a brief account of Stoicism on his works, with some reference to Epictetus. I shall use Seneca to define the characteristic Stoic world-view, and the characteristic Stoic response to the world. Since the Neo-Stoics, though they read the same Seneca as we do, often interpreted him very differently, I shall then try to analyse the characteristic Renaissance response to the Stoics. A reading of several Neo-Stoic treatises and translations leads me to the conclusion that their authors took what they wanted from Stoicism and adapted it to fit their own world-view. Though they admired the Stoics, they nevertheless rejected many Stoic concepts. The conventional definition of Neo-Stoicism as Christianized Stoicism puts the emphasis in the wrong place, for the Stoic elements are generally subordinated to the Christian elements. Indeed, the very term Neo-Stoicism is somewhat misleading, since it suggests a rigid adherence to the ancient philosophy which never existed. Because it is the established critical term and a convenient piece of shorthand, however, I shall continue to use it.

The Stoic believes firmly that the world is governed by a divine Providence, and that everything ultimately serves a good purpose. Seneca takes it for granted that "a Providence does preside over the universe, and that God concerns himself with us."[11] As proof of this, he cites the argument from design; the very orderliness of the physical universe implies a principle of reason behind it. This organizing principle is not necessarily defined as a personal and anthropomorphic God. It may be called Zeus, God, the gods, Nature, Fate, Reason, Providence; the one

divine force underlies all these concepts, and is the truth towards which men grope through these interchangeable names (Ad Helv.VIII.3). Even more than Seneca, Epictetus seems to adore and reverence that beneficent and all-wise Providence which "assigns each thing its place."[12]

This divine force is most commonly identified with the element of fire, though it is also thought of as "breath" or "spirit," and in some sense it is present in all things. Thus there is a fiery spark of the divine nature inside every man. This "something of divinity" in man naturally strives to return whence it came, Seneca explains, and therefore a virtuous man is "equal to the gods."[13] However, though the mind is free and godlike, it is weighed down by the "poor body, the prison and fetter of the soul" (Ad Helv.XI.7). This dualism is the basic condition of life in this world.

Stoicism, in laying stress on the divine spark in every human soul, emphasizes that all are parts of one whole. In Epictetus' words, man is "a citizen of the universe and a son of God" (Discourses bk.I,ch.ix;p.240). Believing that there should be no distinctions of sex or rank in the ideal world-community, the Stoics regard women and slaves as equal to men. They also have an exalted concept of friendship. The universal brotherhood of man is one of the noblest Stoic doctrines. A man must consider himself at home in any part of the world, says Seneca, not merely in his own city or country: "I am not born for any one corner of the universe; this whole world is my country" (Epistle XXVIII. 4-5). Therefore exile is not an evil to be feared, since a man is never truly banished from his home or fatherland. "All places that the eye of heaven visits / Are to a wise man ports and happy havens" is one of the great Stoic and Senecan commonplaces.[14]

"Man is a social creature, begotten for the common good" (De Clem.I.ii.2). Seneca defines this as the Stoic position in contrast to the Epicurean, which is that each man looks after his own interests. Living in the world-community, a man has obligations to his fellow-men. Though Seneca feels the pull of

the contemplative life, many of his heroes are types of active virtue such as Ulysses and Hercules, and above all Cato, who "stood alone against the vices of a degenerate state" (De Const. II.2). The Stoic ideal requires a man to serve the public good, which may be done by following a political career. His motive, however, must be love of others, not love of power (De Trang.I. 10).

Of course, the reality of existence fails to correspond to this ideal vision of a reasonable world filled with brotherly love. Indeed, the Stoic has to have faith that everything serves a good purpose precisely because most of the things that happen to him seem to contradict such a hypothesis. The concepts of Evil, Fortune and Death dominate Seneca's vision of the world; his object in all his writings is to teach his readers how to live under such conditions.

Men are mostly evil; Seneca leaves us in no doubt of the omnipresence of vice. "Every place is full of crime and vice; . . . Men struggle in a mighty rivalry of wickedness. . . . innocence is not rare -- it is non-existent." When crowds of men meet in the forum, "It is a community of wild beasts" (De Ira II.ix.1,II.viii.3). In the face of this universal corruption, Seneca tries to remain calm. Though he knows the temptation to despair of humankind, he will not yield to it, because "it is better to accept calmly the ways of the public and the vices of man, and be thrown neither into laughter nor into tears" (De Trang.XV.5). The key word is "accept." The Stoic must accept the predominance of evil as something he has not the power to change. Elsewhere Seneca advises the wise man not to waste his time being angry with sinners, for then he will have to spend his whole life being so; it is better to forgive them, because we are all born sinners: "no one is born wise but becomes so." Seneca rejects both the tears of Heraclitus and the laughter of Democritus (De Ira II.x.5-6).

Though the course of the universe may be directed by Providence, this world of men is ruled by Fortune -- who, in Seneca's

eyes, is a hostile power. When we are born, he says, "We have come into the realm of Fortune, and harsh and invincible is her power; things deserved and undeserved must we suffer just as she wills" (Ad Marc.X.6). In another context, he observes that "All of us are chained to Fortune" (De Trang.X.3). Fortune is harsh, cruel, fickle, capricious and frequently destructive. Even when she is apparently kind and generous, she is not to be trusted. To Seneca Fortune is the great enemy, the adversary who must be fought or at least resisted. He frequently uses military metaphors to define the attitude the Stoic should take to Fortune: "They have ordered me to stand ever watching, like a soldier placed on guard, and to anticipate all the attempts and all the assaults of Fortune before she strikes" (Ad Helv.V. 3). It is scarcely possible to exaggerate Seneca's preoccupation with the hostility of Fortune.

Nothing is permanent in this world ruled by changeable Fortune; all earthly things are transient or, in Seneca's own words, "all the works of mortal man have been doomed to mortality" (Epistle XCI.12). Seneca writes a whole essay, De Brevitate Vitae ("On the Shortness of Life"), in which he exhorts the reader to live each day as if it were his last. He returns again and again to the exemplary deaths of his heroes, because the manner in which a man meets his death will affect posterity's judgement on his life: "That man will live ill who will not know how to die well" (De Trang.XI.4). He frequently debates the question of suicide. In short, the shadow of Death lies over Seneca's picture of the world.

Facing the question of how man is to live in such a world, the Stoic answers that, first, he must live according to nature and to reason. Man is a rational animal; therefore reason must guide his actions. Living according to reason means living virtuously. Virtue is the sole good; all other apparent goods, such as riches, health, fame or rank are to the Stoics "indifferent" and no man should set his heart on them. Seneca admits that they are in some sense desirable, so that the Stoic would

rather have them than not, but he is not moved by their loss. Nature needs little, and the life most in accordance with nature is the simplest life (Epistle LXXVI;De V.B.XXI.3-XXII).

Since living by reason means living by the divine force that drives the universe, the Stoic is comforted by the feeling that he participates in this movement. As Seneca puts it, "It is a great consolation that it is together with the universe we are swept along" (De Prov.V.8). Epictetus defines this consolation more precisely:

> All things obey and serve the Universe . . . For the Universe is strong and superior to us and has provided for us better than we can, ordering our goings along with all things. And, besides, to act against it is to side with unreason, and brings nothing with it but vain struggle, involving us in miseries and pains. (Fragments 3;pp.458-59)

This explains why the Stoic sees a positive advantage to co-operating with the order of things, rather than rebelling and raging against it.

The Stoic, then, accepts that he cannot change the world; he can only change himself. Seneca holds out no hope that the terms of human existence can be altered, but he does suggest a stance to adopt: "And we cannot change this order of things; but what we can do is to acquire stout hearts, worthy of good men, thereby courageously enduring chance and placing ourselves in harmony with Nature" (Epistle CVII.7). That sums up the Stoic position. Similarly, the first section of Epictetus' Manual states the basic premise of all that follows, which is that man must learn to distinguish between what is in his power and what is not in his power. Since all external things are beyond his control, it is futile to try to influence events; what he can and must control are his own thoughts. Like Seneca, Epictetus urges his readers to accept what is, by a conscious effort of will. The Stoic does not escape ambivalence; his attitude of passive resignation to events is not altogether compatible with the ideal of active virtue and civic duty, which is equally Stoic.

However, the Stoic stance is clearly defensive, rather than offensive. It does not leave much scope for action.

The only way to happiness in this transitory, Fortune-ruled world is to depend on nothing and no-body but oneself. Self-sufficiency alone leads to tranquillity. The wise man is characterized as the man complete in himself: "Prosperity does not exalt the wise man, nor does adversity cast him down; for he has always endeavoured to rely entirely upon himself, to derive all of his joy from himself" (Ad Helv.V.1). One image often used for the self-sufficient man is that of the king; Seneca is much concerned with the nature of kingship, though this interest emerges in his tragedies rather than in his philosophical works. The true king is the man of "upright mind" who controls his own passions and is king over himself: "A king is he who has no fear; a king is he who shall naught desire. Such kingdom on himself each man bestows."[15]

For with self-sufficiency goes self-control -- control of thoughts and feelings as well as of outward behaviour. If the Stoic is helpless to act, he is yet able to choose how he will react to the conditions of his existence. Poverty, for instance, is a relative term; the man who is perpetually greedy and dissatisfied will consider himself poor even when he lives in what seems opulence to others, because "It is the mind that makes us rich" -- or poor (Ad Helv.XI.5). In other words, "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so" (Ham.II.ii. 249-50). What the Stoic must learn is how to control his thoughts, to think of death, exile, pain and other evils in a way which will not disturb his inner peace. He must, as Epictetus says, learn to conform his mind to events (Discourses bk.I,ch.xii;p.248).

Peace, calm, tranquillity -- these are the Stoic names for happiness. Clearly, this state of security can only be achieved if the Stoic eliminates or severely controls all the unruly emotions which might wreck it from within; hence the often misunderstood doctrine of "apatheia." Neither Seneca nor the other Stoics think that complete absence of feeling is possible or desirable.

J.M. Rist observes, "The Stoics never proposed insensibility, or anything like it, as an ideal, but they were thought to have proposed it even in antiquity."[16] The misunderstanding was certainly current in the early seventeenth century, as we may see from Joseph Hall's assertion, "I will not be a Stoic, to have no passions . . . but a Christian, to order those I have."[17] In fact the Stoic ideal, just as much as the Christian, had always been an ordering of passion. When Seneca consoles his mother Helvia, he does not suggest that she should feel no grief at his exile, but rather that she should limit its expression. In attempting to define "apatheia," he emphasizes the difference between Stoic and Epicurean, which is that "our ideal wise man feels his troubles, but overcomes them," whereas the Epicurean does not feel at all (Epistle IX.3). The Stoic sage is not utterly impervious to pain or loss; "we do not claim for him the hardness of stone or of steel. There is no virtue that fails to realize that it does endure" (De Const.X.4). Epictetus uses a strikingly similar image to make the same distinction: "I must not be without feeling like a statue, but must maintain my natural and acquired relations, as a religious man, as son, brother, father, citizen" (Discourses bk.III,ch.ii;pp.347-48). Yet Seneca has to defend the wise man against the charge of insensibility, and if Epictetus has to exhort himself not to be a statue, the danger of petrification must exist. It is hardly surprising that the Stoic has so often been called stony. To an observer, lack of emotion and rigid control of emotion are apt to seem the same; and certainly the Stoic code restricts the expression of emotion.

"Bear and forbear" are Epictetus' watchwords; he is reported as saying that the two worst faults are "want of endurance and want of self-control" (Fragments 10;p.461). Of all the virtues, fortitude is the most characteristically Stoic. Though misfortune, suffering and death are the unalterable facts of life, there is a kind of victory to be won by enduring them bravely and without complaining. Epictetus refuses to whine or groan because by so doing he retains his human dignity and asserts some

control over a situation in which he is powerless (Discourses bk.I,ch.i;p.225). There is no reward for fortitude, except perhaps in the currency of fame. Heroic endurance is its own reward.

The Stoic must go into training for adversity, like an athlete. Much of Seneca's advice might be summed up in three words -- expect the worst. The Stoic must anticipate misfortune and prepare himself for it, so that he will be able to endure it more easily when it does come. Habit inures men to suffering, however harsh: "it is only at first that prisoners are worried by the burdens and shackles upon their legs; later, when they have determined not to chafe against them, but to endure them, necessity teaches them to bear them bravely, habit to bear them easily" (De Trang.X.1).[18]

In particular, the Stoic must expect the worst of Fortune. The only way he can defend himself against her blows is to be indifferent to her gifts. The wise man does not become attached to any external thing, for he knows that the goods of Fortune may be taken away at any moment. When you kiss your child or your wife, says Epictetus, remind yourself that you are kissing a mortal creature, so that you will not be distressed at their death (Manual 3;p.469). This detachment is the corollary to the doctrine of self-suffiency. Seneca illustrates it by the example of the philosopher Stilbo who, after the capture of Megara, said that he had lost "nothing" although his estate had been plundered and his daughters raped. According to common opinion he had lost everything, yet "he wrested the victory from the conqueror" by his Stoic endurance of defeat, for which his name will be remembered (De Const.V.6-7).

"Disaster is Virtue's opportunity" (De Prov.IV.6); adversity, viewed rightly, offers the Stoic a chance to prove himself. Virtue is not virtue unless it has been tested. This is the answer Seneca gives, in De Providentia, to his friend Lucilius who has asked why evils befall good men if Providence governs the world. Providence, like a stern but loving father, sends those evils to

test and harden the good man.[19] Indeed, misfortune should be regarded as a sign of God's favour; it is an honour to be chosen to suffer. Seneca offers a positive view of suffering as a refining and purifying process, for "Fire tests gold, misfortune brave men" (De Prov.V.10). Another consolation is the fame to be won by heroic endurance: "the greater his torture is, the greater shall be his glory" (De Prov.III.9). Furthermore, the good man who suffers has been chosen to serve as a model, to teach others the way to endure. Seneca goes so far as to exalt the Stoic above God because of his fortitude (a piece of pride which never fails to shock his Christian readers): "In this you may outstrip God; he is exempt from enduring evil, while you are superior to it" (De Prov.VI.6).

It comes as something of an anticlimax to this eulogy of fortitude to find Seneca saying that, if life proves too hard after all, the Stoic may free himself by committing suicide. To take one's own life in order to escape worse suffering hardly seems an act of courage.[20] Yet Seneca frequently equates suicide with freedom. Death, the one thing all men must face, is the supreme test for the Stoic, since the manner of a man's death sets a seal on his whole life. The Stoic must live each day as if it were his last not because he may go to hell if he dies unprepared, but because he must be always ready to die well. Though it is unclear what sort of afterlife, if any, Seneca envisages, in his writings there is no hell or heaven, no punishment or reward for the deeds of this life, and no sense of suicide as sin. The approval of suicide, which seems at first to undermine the whole concept of endurance, may be explained by the central Stoic doctrine of self-sufficiency. A man must control the manner of his own death, as he has his life; it is a matter of pride, as it is for Shakespeare's Antony:

> Not Caesar's valor hath o'erthrown Antony,
> But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself.
> (Ant.IV.xv.14-15)

All these attitudes meet in the Stoic ideal of the wise man

or sage. Neither Seneca nor any other Stoic philosopher claims to be a wise man himself; in fact all agree that such a creature is "as rare as the phoenix."[21] Yet Seneca believes that the wise man does exist, instancing as historical examples Stilbo and, above all, Cato, for "in Cato the immortal gods had given to us a truer exemplar of the wise man than earlier ages had in Ulysses and Hercules" (De Const.II.i). These, with Socrates, Zeno and the other Stoic philosophers, embody Seneca's ideal. In his De Vita Beata Seneca answers the charge that he does not practise what he preaches, that he does not live up to his own philosophy, by saying that he is not a wise man; he is a sinner struggling to correct his faults. If he is guilty, so are other moral philosophers, "for all these told, not how they themselves were living, but how they ought to live" (De V.B.XVIII.1). Seneca, though confessing his own weakness, takes an uncompromisingly idealist stance: "What wonder that those who essay the steep path do not mount to the summit? But if you are a man, look up to those who are attempting great things, even though they fall" (De V.B.XX.2). For the Stoic, it is better to live by this almost unattainable ideal than to accept the standards of the world.

"Laugh at the absurdities, pitie his ignorance, embrace the best"; that is one of Thomas Lodge's marginal notes to his translation of Seneca, added when he feels the reader needs warning that "too Stoically speaketh he of the end of the world."[22] The attitude is common to Renaissance readers of the Stoics; they take what they want, they embrace what they feel is the best, and discard the remainder. They feel no obligation to accept the Stoic system of philosophy in its entirety. Though Neo-Stoicism is usually described as Christianized Stoicism, it would be fairer to call it stoicized Christianity, because it is the orthodox Christian world-view of the Renaissance which predominates. Despite wide variations in opinion amongst the various interpreters of Stoicism, there are certain common denominators, elements of a shared attitude towards Stoicism which may, perhaps, be seen as typical of the Renaissance.

There is always great admiration for the ethical teaching of the Stoics. Their writings are recommended as practical aids to living a virtuous life, and as sources of comfort and consolation in adversity. Sanford, for instance, praises the Manual as a work "than the which there can be no Booke to the wel framing of our life more profitable and necessary."[23] In his prefatory epistle, Stradling hopes that Lipsius' De Constantia will teach the reader how to "stand immoveable against all the blastes of fortune," and also to "remaine a conquerour of those selfe affections, which do tirannize over the greatest tyrants" (pp. 69-70). As Rudolf Kirk says, "The belief that the Stoic books of antiquity would help men to lead virtuous lives runs through every dedication and preface of the translators" (Lipsius, p.23). Without this admiration and this sense of the real ethical value of the Stoic ideal, there would have been no translations, and no attempts to transmit Stoic tenets to a new audience.

The Stoics are perceived as austere and strict, and to these qualities there is an ambivalent reaction, compounded of admiration and a shrinking from such inhuman rigour. To Montaigne they are "that roughly-severe, and severely-strict Sect" (Essays III, ch.ix; p.223), while Thomas James, in the dedication to his translation of Du Vair, laments that "the licentious loosenes of our times cannot well brooke the strictnes of this sect." James further observes, "they call the professors hereof in their gibing manner stockes, and not Stoicks, because of the affinitie of their names" (p.45). This pun was a popular and long-lasting joke. It occurs in The Taming of the Shrew, usually dated to the early fifteen-nineties:

> Only, good master, while we do admire
> This virtue and this moral discipline,
> Let's be no Stoics nor no stocks, I pray.
> (I.i.29-31)

It is still current in 1610, when John Healey plays on it to recommend his translation of Epictetus: "He is more senceles then a stocke that hath no good sence of this Stoick."[24] The pun implies that the Stoics are stony, unfeeling and inhuman, and that

the Stoic ideal is an unnatural one, too severe for any human being to live up to. Admiration is tempered by doubt.

Montaigne is perhaps the most extreme example of this mixed attitude of emulation and scepticism. He kept adding to his Essays, which were composed and published over a lengthy period of time, during which his attitude to Stoicism changed. His early admiration, which prompts several highly Stoical essays, modulates into considerable scepticism. Fascinated by the inconsistencies and contradictions of human behaviour, he cannot believe in Stoic self-control and constancy: "We float and waver betweene divers opinions: we will nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly" (Essays II,ch.i;p.9). Wavering between opinions himself, Montaigne lets the inconsistencies in his work stand, so that Stoicism and criticism of Stoicism coexist. For instance, in the early essay titled "That to philosophie, is to learne how to die," Montaigne accepts the Stoic idea that a man must train and prepare himself for death, whereas in the "Apologie of Raymond Sebond" he questions the value of such preparation, having come to the opposite conclusion, that ignorance helps men endure misfortunes more than knowledge does.[25] Yet even in his later essays Montaigne continues to borrow copiously from Seneca, who remains one of his favourite authors. Montaigne's ambivalence towards Stoicism is typical of his age, though in him it exists to an extraordinary degree.

The Neo-Stoics never lose their consciousness that they are Christian and their admired philosophers pagan. This difference, which cannot be forgotten or ignored, is always commented on, and colours most of the objections to specific doctrines. Seneca and Epictetus are often praised as "really" Christian, and the praise coupled with regret that they are not. Sanford's preface to Epictetus is typical: "The Authoure whereof, although he were an Ethnicke, yet he wrote very godly and christianly" (sig.A3$^{v}$). It is often said that their pagan virtue puts Christians to shame (Du Vair,p.50). Hall envies what the Stoics have achieved through nature, but pities their lack of grace: "If Seneca could have had

grace to his wit, what wonders would he have done in this kinde?" (p.85) The translators all warn their readers that the Stoics must be read by the light of Christian revelation. "What a Stoicke hath written, Reade thou like a Christian," as Thomas Lodge puts it.[26] Joseph Hall describes his use of Seneca in these terms: "I have followed Seneca and gone beyond him; followed him as a philosopher, gone beyond him as a Christian, as a Divine" (p.84). This emphatic rejection of paganism illustrates how Neo-Stoicism is dominated by its Christian elements.

It is reading the Stoics from a Christian viewpoint which causes most of the specific Renaissance objections to their doctrines. For instance, Stoic teachings about destiny and fate are rejected as deterministic, since they clash with the Christian concepts of God's omnipotence and man's free-will. Lipsius devotes considerable attention in his De Constantia to "this Charybdis, which hath swallowed up so manie mens wittes" (p.122), trying to reconcile Stoicism and Christianity as far as he can. Again, the Stoic allowance of suicide is overtly rejected, although at a deeper level it fascinates Renaissance readers. The engraved title-page of Lodge's translation depicts Seneca's suicide with, at the sides, smaller figures of Zeno, Chrysippus, Socrates drinking the hemlock and Cato falling on his sword. When Seneca praises Cato's suicide, however, Lodge adds this note:

> But this which Seneca praiseth so highly in a man that slew himselfe, is but a Paradox of the Stoicks, refuted expressely by Nature, by the law of Nations, and condemned by the expresse word of God: for it is unlawfull for a living man to forsake this prison of his bodie, at his owne indirect pleasure. (p.500)

Stoic attitudes to suicide and to death conflict with Christian belief in an afterlife where men are rewarded or punished for the deeds of this life.

There is also a general rejection of what is perceived as Stoic pride: that is, any suggestion that man can achieve virtue alone, by his own efforts, without the grace of God. Where

Seneca asserts that the wise man can actually rise above God, Lodge comments: "This, according to the proud doctrine of Stoicks; but is a litle too high: Christ has taught us otherwise" (p.248). The universal Renaissance rejection of the Stoic theory of the passions, to which I have already referred, is related to this rejection of self-sufficiency. Preoccupied as they are with the conflict between reason and the passions, Renaissance moralists nevertheless perceive the passions as essentially human and man as too weak to control them without divine aid. The terms in which Hall discusses the passions show that he thinks them "necessary in their best use" and "naturall to us as men." They must, of course, "be restrained by a strong and yet temperate command of Reason and Religion," and Hall insists that Christianity alone gives man the power to do this (p.100). Like all the Neo-Stoics, he cannot accept that "apatheia" is either possible or desirable.

Even when the Neo-Stoics borrow Stoic ideas, they often subtly transform them -- perhaps unconsciously. Lipsius repeats Seneca's argument that calamities are sent by God to test man's virtue, but when he summarizes the uses of adversity as "Exercising, Chastising, Punishment" he is importing his own assumptions, for Seneca never says that the good man is punished (p. 148). Hall borrows the Stoic commonplace that there is no exile, asking "Am I wandring in banishment?" -- only to change it by adding, "Can I goe whither God is not?" (p.125) The very use of the word "God," instead of the variety of Stoic terms for the divine power, effects a radical shift of meaning, as is evident throughout Sanford's translation of Epictetus. Perhaps Hall's character of the Happy Man may serve to illustrate the curious eclecticism which is typical of Neo-Stoic writers. It begins as a thoroughly Senecan description of the wise man, who is "equally armed for all events" and knows "contentment lies not in the things he hath, but in the mind that values them." Yet gradually this wise man undergoes a transformation into a Christian saint, whose "eyes stick so fast in heaven, that no earthly

object can remove them" (pp.164-66).

Any study of Stoic figures in the drama must begin by recognizing the eclecticism and complexity of Neo-Stoicism in general. Those dramatists who are interested in Stoicism share the attitude to it which I have attempted to describe. It is admiration for the Stoic ideal which leads to the creation of such heroes as Silius, Cato, Clermont, Charlemont, Masinissa and Sophonisba, and this admiration is based on real knowledge. Seneca and Epictetus frequently provide an illuminating commentary on the plays. Yet the admiration is often qualified by doubt and criticism, as we see from Marston's treatment of Feliche, Andrugio and Pandulpho. Even if it is not, the dramatists' Stoicism is likely to be infected by the assumptions they bring to it. Chapman expresses no doubt of Cato's heroism, but he endows him with an un-Stoic belief in life after death. Marston's ambivalent attitude -- now admiring, now sceptical -- is not unlike that of Montaigne, though Marston leans more to admiration. To understand that Marston's ambivalence and Chapman's syncretism are not unique, but can be paralleled in their contemporaries, enlarges our understanding of their work.

## Notes to Chapter 1

[1] G.M. Ross, "Seneca's Philosophical Influence," in Seneca, ed. C.D.N. Costa (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 145.

[2] I am particularly indebted to the following: Rudolf Kirk's introductions to his editions of Two Bookes of Constancie, by Justus Lipsius, Englished by Sir John Stradling (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1939), Heaven upon Earth and Characters of Vertues and Vices, by Joseph Hall (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1948) and The Moral Philosophie of the Stoicks, by Guillaume Du Vair, Englished by Thomas James (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1951); R.G. Palmer, Seneca's "De Remediis Fortuitorum" and the Elizabethans (Chicago: Institute of Elizabethan Studies, 1953); Jason Lewis Saunders, Justus Lipsius: The Philosophy of Renaissance Stoicism (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955); and G.M. Ross. The Neo-Stoic works edited by Kirk are hereafter referred to in this way: Two Bookes of Constancie as Lipsius, Heaven upon Earth and Characters of Vertues and Vices as Hall, and The Moral Philosophie of the Stoicks as Du Vair. Most further references to these appear in the text.

[3] Earl Miner, in "Patterns of Stoicism in Thought and Prose Styles, 1530-1700," PMLA, 85 (1970), 1023-34, argues that scholars have imposed the continental pattern on England, with insufficient evidence. However, his argument is largely concerned with the effect of Stoicism on prose style and, when he measures popularity by tabulating published Stoic works, he fails to take into account the importation of classical texts from the continent. I still think the evidence suggests considerable interest in Stoic philosophy even in England.

[4] Du Vair, pp. 20-21, p. 23.

[5] Lipsius, p. 15. See ibid. p. 14, and G.M. Ross, pp. 145-46.

[6] Lipsius, p. 207; Montaigne's Essays, trans. John Florio, introd. L.C. Harmer (London: Everyman's Library, Dent, 1965), I, ch. xxv (p. 149); Hall, p. 84; Du Vair, p. 26. Further references to Montaigne, cited as Essays, are given in the text by book / volume, chapter and page number.

[7] Donald M. Frame, Montaigne's "Essais": A Study (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 97; Hall, p. 64, and see

also Kirk's discussion of Hall's European reputation as a Christian Seneca, pp. 52-61.

[8] Even Lipsius, an eminent classical scholar, was far from fluent in Greek; Saunders, p. 5.

[9] This paragraph is based on H.B. Lathrop, Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman 1477-1620, Univ. of Wisconsin Studies in Lang. and Lit., No. 35 (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1933), and H.R. Palmer, List of English Editions and Translations of Greek and Latin Classics Printed before 1641 (London: Bibliographical Society, 1911).

[10] Cf. C.S. Lewis's comment on Caxton: "The absence of Sallusts and Plutarchs from his list does not therefore prove that no one wanted them: any who did would get them from abroad." English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 125.

[11] De Providentia I. i, in Seneca, Moral Essays, trans. J.W. Basore, I (London: Heinemann, 1928), 3. Since the Elizabethans mostly read their Seneca in Latin, I have thought it best to quote from a standard modern edition and translation, that in the Loeb Classical Library. Further references to the Moral Essays, by title, section and subsection, are given in the text. The titles are abbreviated as follows: De Providentia -- De Prov.; Ad Helviam -- Ad Helv.; De Clementia -- De Clem.; De Constantia Sapientis -- De Const.; De Tranquillitate Animi -- De Trang.; Ad Marciam -- Ad Marc.; De Vita Beata -- De V.B.

[12] Discourses bk. III, ch. xxii, in The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers, ed. W.J. Oates (New York: Modern Library, 1940), p. 377. See also Discourses bk. I, ch. xvi, "On Providence." Further references to Epictetus, by book, chapter and page number in Oates, are given in the text.

[13] Epistle XCII. 29-30, in Epistulae Morales, trans. R.M. Gummere, II (London: Heinemann, 1920), 467. Further references to Seneca's Epistles, by number and subsection, are given in the text.

[14] William Shakespeare, Richard II, I. iii. 275-76, in The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. 811. Further references to Shakespeare are to this edition and are given in the text, using the standard abbreviations for the titles of plays.

[15] Thyestes l. 380, ll. 388-90, in Seneca's Tragedies, trans. Frank Justus Miller, II (London: Heinemann, 1917), 123.

[16] Stoic Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), p. 52.

[17] Quoted in Audrey Chew, "Joseph Hall and Neo-Stoicism," PMLA, 65 (1950), 1137.

[18] Housman puts the Stoic case (though with a wry understated humour not found in Seneca) in his lines:

> Therefore, since the world has still
> Much good, but much less good than ill,
> And while the sun and moon endure
> Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
> I'd face it as a wise man would,
> And train for ill and not for good.

The true Stoic will be inoculated against adversity as Mithridates against poison in Housman's "tale." A Shropshire Lad, LXII, in Collected Poems (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1956), p. 99.

[19] While reading De Providentia, I found myself recalling Areopagitica: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, . . . that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary." John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 728. Though Milton would define "virtue" very differently from Seneca, both emphasize that it must be tested.

[20] Montaigne puts the objection well: "There is more constancie in using the chaine that holds us, than in breaking the same; and more triall of stedfastnesse in Regulus, than in Cato." Essays II, ch. iii (p. 29).

[21] Rist, p. 23. See De Trang. VII. 4-5.

[22] The Workes of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Both Morrall and Naturall, trans. Thomas Lodge (London, 1614), p. 732. Further references to this are given in the text. I have not attempted to determine which of these notes are Lodge's own, and which he has translated. Knud Sorensen, in "Thomas Lodge's Seneca," Archiv, 199 (1963), 313-324, shows that Lodge used the French translations of Goulart and Chalvet to help prepare his own, and that his marginal notes are sometimes translated from theirs (p. 314). But Sorensen also observes that "many of his marginal notes containing moral reflections and precepts are his own contribution" (p. 317). The question of authorship does not affect my argunent, since even if Lodge did not compose the notes, he chose to include them because they would help his readers to interpret Seneca. The same is true of James Sanford's notes to his 1567 translation of Epictetus' Manual, which according to Lathrop are taken from Wolfius (Lathrop, p. 206). Both sets of notes are fascinating examples of a Renaissance interpretation of a Stoic text.

[23] The Manuell of Epictetus, trans. James Sanford (London, 1567), sig. A3v. Further references to this are given in the text.

[24] Epictetus his Manuall and Cebes his Table, trans. John Healey (London, 1610), sig. A4r.

[25] Essays I, ch. xix (pp. 79-80); II ch. xii (pp. 189-90). I am indebted in this discussion of Montaigne to F.P. Bowman, Montaigne: Essays (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), especially pp. 35-36. See also Frame, pp. 1-2.

[26] In the Epistle to the 1620 revised edition of his Seneca; quoted in Lathrop, p. 259.

## Chapter 2

## The Malcontent

No such philosophical tradition as that which provided the material for the previous chapter lies behind the malcontent, whose origins are diverse and confused. Nevertheless, three elements of some importance may be distinguished in the background to the malcontent: first, the historical, social and economic factors which may have produced a crop of real-life malcontents and a mood of exceptional pessimism in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England; second, the melancholy tradition, with a long history of its own; and third, the resurgence of satire in the last decade of the sixteenth century. These are subjects which have received much scholarly attention, so I do not propose to repeat what has already been said.[1] Apart from briefly exploring the nature of the malcontent context, I shall attempt rather to sketch the malcontent's view of the world as it contrasts with that of the Stoic, defined in the previous chapter, and to deal with the malcontent-Stoic opposition as it appears in the satirists and in Robert Burton; for these writers clearly recognize that the choice for man lies between these two options.

"Malcontent" first appears as a new and fashionable word in the fifteen-eighties, with the basic meaning of "discontented" or "dissatisfied" -- a state of feeling that can have many causes.[2] There is no more precise definition which covers all uses of the word or all the persons who at one time or another are called "malcontents." Indeed, O.J. Campbell thinks that the word "was so inexactly used" that the Elizabethan malcontent is a scholarly illusion,[3] though he elsewhere offers a useful definition of the malcontent as "a man dissatisfied, to the point of disgust, with the entire human situation of his day."[4]

Scholars trace the origins of the malcontent to the importation into England of the Italian fashion of melancholy by the often-satirized "melancholy travaller."[5] The very words "malcontent" and "melancholy" are frequently paired: indeed, the phrase "malinconoso e mal contento" occurs in Boccaccio, which suggests that the association is a long-standing one.[6] Yet, important though melancholy is to the malcontent context, the malcontent cannot simply be classified as a sub-species of melancholic. What the treatises on melancholy, with their medical and ethical bias, lack is any sense of a political context for human behaviour, whereas the malcontent as he appears in real life, in satire and in the drama is very much a political figure. The word often means a rebel or a seditious person, "with no apparent implication of melancholy."[7] This sense is clearly important, and may well have predominated in Elizabethan usage. So the definition of a malcontent may be revised to read, in Bridget Gellert Lyons' words: "he was primarily one who was discontented, sometimes to the point of mutiny and rebellion, with the existing social and political order."[8] To conclude, the term "malcontent," far from being precise and limited, includes a variety of characteristics and allows for possible development in several directions.

"The Tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues, as this Chaos of Melancholy doth variety of symptoms," says Robert Burton, even as he struggles to bring order out of this chaos through the elaborate structure of his Anatomy (I,456). From time to time he expresses the feeling that the task is impossible: "Proteus himself is not so diverse; you may as well make the Moon a new coat, as a true character of a melancholy man" (I,469). To make a "true character" of a malcontent is as difficult, for he too is a Protean figure. The word "melancholy" covers a wide range of mental conditions.[9] Melancholy or black bile, as one of the four humours, must be present in every human body, and a man may legitimately be of a melancholy disposition or temperament without being diseased. However,

much more frequently the word implies some form of mental disease, caused either by an overabundance of the normal melancholy humour, or by excess of an abnormal humour, the so-called "melancholy adust." At worst, the sufferer is insane, for no clear line is drawn between melancholy and madness. This is the "Galenic" medical tradition, according to which melancholy is a diseased state of mind needing cure. Side by side with this exists the contradictory "Aristotelian" tradition, according to which melancholy is characteristic of genius; it accompanies high intelligence and unusual powers of perception. Hence melancholy is ambivalent, both good and evil. In Thomas Walkington's words, "The melancholick man is said of the wise to be 'aut Deus aut Daemon,' either angel of heaven or a fiend of hell."[10] At one extreme, the melancholic is a potential criminal. This tendency may be partly caused, and is certainly reinforced, by the association of melancholy with the sinister planet Saturn. At the other extreme the melancholic is a great man, a noble philosopher-scholar, distinguished from common men precisely by his melancholy. These confusions and ambiguities are inherited by the malcontent figure in drama. The melancholy tradition is not a restrictive, but rather a permissive, influence, encouraging many variations on the basic theme.

Malevole, Vindice and Bosola are malcontents who are also satirists; Pierce Penilesse and the Scourger of Villainy are satirists who are also malcontents; Democritus Junior is a melancholic who is also a satirist -- to take just a few examples. The melancholic, the malcontent and the typical Elizabethan satiric persona have much in common.[11] For the purposes of my argument, I shall treat them as aspects of the same personality-type. The malcontent in Hall's Characters "speakes nothing but Satyrs and Libels" (p.179). In his character of a "Discontented Man," John Earle probes the motivation of this satiric impulse: "His life is a perpetuall Satyre, and hee is still girding the ages vanity; when this very anger shewes he too much esteemes it."[12] Marston invokes melancholy as the appropriate muse for

his satire in the "Proemium" to The Scourge of Villanie, and he dismisses her when he has no more to say. When Burton calls himself Democritus Junior, he is in fact assuming the mask of a melancholy satirist, for the Democritean laughter at the madness and folly of the world is the same as the bitter splenetic laughter of the satirist -- both without humour.[13] To sum up, in Kernan's words, "there was a vague but tenacious link between the writing of satire and an abnormal mental state variously identified as saturnine, malcontent, pensive, and finally as melancholic."[14] I shall consider the malcontent, the melancholic and the satirist together, as one composite figure who contrasts with the Stoic.

The malcontent can be identified by his dress and manner, so much so that the phrase "enter malcontent" occurs as a stage direction.[15] The typical malcontent wears black, his clothes are dishevelled, his hat lacks a band, he walks along with his arms folded, his eyes on the ground and his hat pulled over his eyes. He does not speak and shuns company, preferring to be alone. His outer appearance may be interpreted as symbolic of his alienation; he is cut off or cuts himself off (depending on the point of view) from the rest of humanity. Preoccupied with his own grief or discontent, he refuses to talk, refuses to look at people, refuses even to touch or reach out to anyone else. The folded arms and lowered eyes signify a turning-in on himself. He is, by choice or chance, alone; he is an outsider in his society. Of course, the solitariness of the melancholy man, from which this derives, is a well-established trait. Timothy Bright describes him as "of pace slow, silent, negligent, refusing the light and frequency of men, delighted more in solitarines and obscurity."[16] But solitude, though he seeks it, is unhealthy for the melancholic; it is "cause and symptom both" of his disease (Anatomy I,282). His isolation is generally regarded with suspicion and distrust; for instance, Overbury describes the Melancholy Man as "a strayer from the drove: one that nature made sociable, because she made him man, and a crazed

disposition hath altered."[17] To be an outsider is interpreted as a sign of madness.

Stoicism, on the other hand, theoretically denies that any man can be an outsider in this world. Though self-sufficiency is a doctrine which perhaps tends to isolate the practitioner, Stoic belief in the brotherhood of man and the world-community is strong. By the spark of divine fire within him the Stoic is one with the force that drives the universe. He is a part of this great whole, not left outside or cut off as the malcontent is. The Stoic, being a citizen of the world, can never be exiled. The experience of the malcontent is directly contrary; wherever he is, he feels exiled, homeless, dispossessed.

Malcontent and Stoic look at the world in the same way; they share a common obsession with Fortune, Evil and Death. First of all, both see life as horribly insecure, at the mercy of chance and outward circumstance. This is expressed in terms of a Fortune who is fickle, untrustworthy and hostile. It is a powerful but narrow concept of Fortune, seen from the point of view of the individual suffering her attacks.

More than anything else, what defines the malcontent is his sense of "neglected worth," which is in fact a sense of resentment against his enemy Fortune.[18] Fortune, who controls the distribution of worldly rewards, has not given him the share he feels he deserves. "Fortune ha's deny'd him in something, and hee now takes pet, and will bee miserable in spite," says Earle of the discontented man, adding, "he is as great an enemie to an hat-band, as Fortune."[19] This sense of neglect is frequently attributed to melancholy travellers who feel that the knowledge they have acquired entitles them to advancement in the state; it is also often found in discontented scholars and writers. We have already met it in Macilente. The beginning of Nashe's Pierce Penilesse, in which Pierce the satirist describes how he came to write his supplication to the devil, sets out the malcontent situation and reaction in unusual detail. Pierce

has struggled in vain to make a living by his pen, for "my vulgar Muse was despised and neglected, my paines not regarded, or slightly rewarded, and I my selfe (in prime of my best wit) laid open to povertie." His response to this neglect is to blame Fortune and to rage: "Whereupon (in a malecontent humor) I accused my fortune, raild on my patrones, bit my pen, rent my papers, and ragde in all points like a mad man." To ease his passion, he writes verses complaining of his misery, but he still feels that he has been treated unjustly, while "many base men that wanted those parts which I had, enjoyed content at will, and had wealth at commaund."[20] All in all, he expresses the typical malcontent resentment of Fortune.

That scholars and poets suffer neglect is also a recurrent theme with Burton, especially in his "Digression of the Misery of Scholars, and why the Muses are Melancholy" (I, 348-78). It is only too characteristic of what he calls a "world turned upside downward" (I,73). In "Democritus Junior to the Reader," Burton argues at length and with copious illustration that all the world is mad, foolish, or melancholy and, not surprisingly, so are its inhabitants. Fortune rules this mad world, as Burton says in the words of Cicero: "Vitam regit fortuna, non sapientia" (I,46). Nothing in such a world is stable or secure. Just as Seneca taught that Fortune is not to be trusted even when she is kind, so Burton warns, with many classical and historical examples, that good fortune never lasts: "Fortuna nunquam perpetuò est bona" (II,149). He sums up the whole miserable state of man in these words: "so we rise and fall in this world, ebb and flow, in and out, reared and dejected, lead a troublesome life, subject to many accidents and casualties of fortunes, variety of passions, infirmities, as well from ourselves as others" (II,150). With that, malcontent and Stoic could both agree.

Malcontent and Stoic also share a sense of the inherent corruption of the flesh and the predominant viciousness of the world. It is the vision of disappointed idealists; they are

disgusted at what is because they judge it by what should be, or once was. In Stoic philosophy the ideal is explicit in such concepts as that of the perfect wise man and that of a beneficent Providence. The malcontent is less obviously an idealist, for he is rarely articulate about his vision of the Good, but his attitude to the world does make sense if he is judging it as fallen from an original brightness. The mood of loathing and revulsion dominates his utterances, as for instance it does in Elizabethan satire. "Everywhere the satirist turns he finds idiocy, foolishness, depravity and dirt," observes Alvin Kernan.[21] Yet, though his world is "sin-drownd,"[22] the satirist sees his task as being to cleanse or cure it, to "Check the mis-ordred world, and lawlesse times," in Hall's words.[23] This presupposes some concept of health and virtue, though what the satirist actually writes about are disease and vice. The setting of Marston's satires, in particular, seems totally corrupt. He describes human nature in terms of "foule filth" and "slime" (SV VII.194,197); reason has deserted the body, "our Intellectuall" has left "his smoakie house of mortall clay" (SV VIII. 189,194). For Marston, as for Seneca, man is a fiery spark of soul in the mortal prison of the body, but his conclusion in these satires is far more pessimistic than Seneca's; it is that man is completely depraved. While Burton does not go so far, he does depict the world as "A vast Chaos, . . . the theatre of hypocrisy, a shop of knavery, flattery, a nursery of villainy, . . . the academy of vice" (I,68-69). Men, who "delight to torment one another" and "are evil, wicked, malicious, treacherous," have contributed to this chaos (I,320). It is no wonder that melancholic and satirist alike are tempted to despair.

It is a curious but undoubted truth that melancholics and Stoics both have a high suicide rate. This is one symptom, it seems to me, of a common preoccupation with death which is inextricably bound up with the world-view so far described. For it is the knowledge of his own mortality that, above all, causes

man to see this life as transient and insecure. Hamlet in the graveyard, "considering the vanity of all human activity against the perspective provided by the skull that he holds," is at that moment a typical representation of Melancholy.[24] Suicide (associated with Saturn) and death frequently occupy the thoughts of the melancholy man. He suffers from bad dreams or hallucinations, supposedly caused by the fumes of surplus or diseased black bile which rise from the spleen to the brain; such dreams are full of tombs, graveyards, ghosts and other images of death.[25] Burton sums up the melancholic as follows:

> They are afraid of death, and yet weary of their lives; in their discontented humours they quarrel with all the world, bitterly inveigh, tax satirically, and because they cannot otherwise vent their passions, or redress what is amiss, as they mean, they will by violent death at last be revenged on themselves. (I,476)

This passage shows that, for Burton, the morbid fear of death is central to the melancholic state of mind; he relates it to the characteristic malcontent stance, to the satirical impulse, and to suicide. Whereas the Stoic chooses suicide as a means of controlling his own death, the malcontent is, rather, driven to it by despair; yet both come to it because they are "much possessed by death."[26]

While their views of the world are alike, the reactions of malcontent and Stoic to experience are completely different. The malcontent stance is the total opposite of the Stoic in almost every respect. Seneca advises the Stoic to accept the sight of vice and folly, which he is powerless to change, without despair and without anger, without either tears or laughter. But the malcontent refuses to accept things as they are and reacts in all those ways by turn, sometimes with the silent despair of the melancholic, sometimes with the raging fury of the satirist, sometimes weeping like Heraclitus and sometimes laughing like Democritus. So Burton describes the variety of his emotions as he observes the world: "I did sometimes laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus, lament

with Heraclitus, sometimes again I was petulanti splene cachinno, and then again, urere bilis jecur, I was much moved to see that abuse which I could not amend" (I,16). The last line is particularly significant. For the Stoic, there is no hope of reform; if all external things are beyond his control, then action is useless. The malcontent refuses to accept the impossibility of change, but that does not mean he is confident that he can make things better. The Elizabethan satirists, for example, often feel that the task of purging the world which they have set themselves is too difficult ever to be accomplished. In Marston's words, "Thou shalt as soone draw Nilus river dry, / As clense the world from foule impietie."[27] Nevertheless, the very fact that they write satire shows that they have some hope, however small, of effecting reform through their words; the writing is a form of action. Certainly the political malcontent, the "sparke that kindles the Commonwealth,"[28] the potential rebel or tool-villain, may act to influence events, though the moral status of such action is apt to be ambiguous. The core of the malcontent's attitude, however, is the refusal to accept the status quo, whether he can do anything to change it or not. Indeed, the despairing sense of his own impotence only increases the violence of his feelings and of his words. In contrast to the Stoic, he does not accept his fate with resignation; at the very least, he protests loudly.

"He is neither well full nor fasting," says Hall of the malcontent (p.178), whereas the Stoic, of course, is "well" whatever his circumstances, because he conforms his mind to events. The malcontent can never be self-sufficient, in the Stoic sense, because he cannot detach himself from externals; he wants too much, he is full of desire and fear, the two emotions considered most destructive by the Stoics. He is ambitious, he is not content to remain poor, he resents his dispossession and he wants recognition. Far from being indifferent to the gifts of Fortune, the malcontent desires them and is

therefore vulnerable to her blows; his failure to remain detached leads to his bitter resentment of her neglect.

Elizabethan writers often attribute malcontentedness or melancholy to certain social or economic causes, and modern historians and literary scholars seem to agree with them.[29] The causes most often cited are thwarted ambition, poverty, dispossession and idleness, with particular emphasis on the sufferings of poor and neglected scholars. For example, poverty and dispossession are linked as causes of melancholy in the following passage from Burton: "Poverty and want are generally corrosives to all kinds of men, especially to such as have been in good and flourishing estate, are suddenly distressed, nobly born, liberally brought up, and by some disaster and casualty miserably dejected" (I,406). This is convincing, and reminiscent of many dramatic malcontents; Malevole, Hamlet, Vindice, Flamineo and Bosola could all be related to this paradigm. Bacon explains the discontent of scholars by saying that there are "more scholars bred than the State can prefer and employ," so that many are unemployed, idle and consequently disaffected. L.C. Knights quotes this in his account of the genuine hardships suffered by Elizabethan scholars and writers, and concludes, "In consequence, disappointed scholars turned malcontents and satirists."[30]

Yet, though there is truth in all these explanations of malcontentedness, they miss out one crucial factor. It is not just thwarted ambition, poverty, or dispossession that makes the malcontent, but the fact that he cannot come to terms with these misfortunes. This becomes obvious if we contrast the malcontent brooding over poverty with the Stoic attitude. Believing that "It is the mind that makes us rich," the Stoic can train himself to be satisfied with little, and so accept poverty. The wilful nature of the malcontent reaction may be clarified by comparing Pierce Penilesse, Burton, Lampatho Doria, Macilente, and all those disgruntled Elizabethan malcontent-scholars with another poor scholar from a different age,

Chaucer's Clerk of Oxenford. He is undoubtedly poor, with his thin horse, underfed appearance and threadbare coat, and has not received preferment ("For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice"). However, he is content with his lot because he is devoted to study ("Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede"), and indifferent to the values of the world ("Ne was so worldly for to have office").[31] I cite him just to show that it is possible for a scholar who is poor to be also content, rather than filled with festering resentment.

The Stoic values self-sufficiency as a means of achieving inner tranquillity; it hardly needs saying that nothing could be further from tranquillity than the malcontent state of mind. He is ravaged by emotions he cannot control; "if there be an hell upon earth, it is to be found in a melancholy man's heart," says Burton (I,497). There is discord, not harmony, within him, as Pietro observes of Malevole; "The elements struggle within him; his own soul is at variance within herself."[32] His refusal to accept misfortune sometimes makes him vulnerable to evil and destructive passions, for he is liable to feel violent envy for those who do succeed, and a vengeful desire to hurt and destroy. Envy is often identified as the moving spirit of satire, as it is in Jonson's characterization of Macilente.[33] There is a strong element of cruelty in the Elizabethan satirist, who enjoys hurting people even while he is trying to cure them: "I will plague and torture whom I list," cries Marston (SV II.10).[34] Sometimes it seems as if the malcontent's object is simply to make others as miserable as he is himself, out of envy and the desire for revenge. That is analogous to the work of devils, such as Nashe describes, who "envy that any shall bee more happy than they; and therefore seeke all meanes possible, . . . to make other men as wretched as themselves."[35] Indeed it would be possible to construct a definition of the malcontent as a sub-species of devil, and in that light the hell within his soul is not surprising. It is certainly very far removed from Stoic tranquillity, and far more complex.

While the Stoic believes that he can discipline his own reactions to events, even if he cannot alter those events, the malcontent rejects this concept of self-control just as he rejects the Stoic passivity. We frquently come across the idea that the malcontent is compelled to act as he does; he does not have any choice and cannot exert any control over himself. When Burton is explaining how he embarked on the Anatomy to relieve his own melancholy, he adds, "Besides I might not well refrain, for ubi dolor, ibi digitus, one must needs scratch where it itches" (I, 18). He speaks of poverty as if it must inevitably drive men to crime: "Many poor men, younger brothers, etc., by reason of bad policy and idle education . . . are compelled /my emphasis/ to beg or steal, and then hanged for theft" (I,68). The satirist commonly protests that he is forced to write satire or, in Marston's words, "I cannot choose but bite" (SV VIII.50).[36] This rejection of self-control parallels the general Neo-Stoic rejection of "apatheia." Stoic ideas of self-sufficiency and self-control are theologically suspect to any Renaissance Christian who believes that man can only be saved by the grace of God, not by his own efforts. Marston accuses Zeno and his fellow-Stoics of presumption for asserting that man can achieve virtue through the exertion of his own will:

> I will, cryes Zeno, ô presumption!
> . . . To day vicious,
> List to their precepts, next day vertuous.
> (SV IV.145,147-48)

For Marston, the human will has no such power, and virtue must come from "sacred grace" (SV IV.142). But it is through his will that the Stoic makes himself Stoic; deny that the will has power and the whole structure of Stoic conduct collapses.

So all the Stoic virtues, the lengthy training for adversity, the heroic uncomplaining endurance, seem impossible and even irrelevant to the malcontent. As Earle points out, the malcontent suffers the more from Fortune because he has not trained himself to expect the worst: "Hee considered not the nature of the world till he felt it, and all blowes fall on him heavier, because

they light not first on his expectation."[37] Though the Stoic sees patience as noble and manly, it may well appear unmanly or cowardly to the Elizabethan mind, as in the following passage: "I'faith, Studioso, this dull patience of thine angers me. Why, can a man be gall'd by poverty, free spirits subjected to base fortune, and put it up like a Stoic?"[38] To rage against Fortune, like the malcontent, here seems the more heroic course; it is at least a question, for a reflective mind:

> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles.
> (Ham.III.i.56-58)

Where the Stoic, then, suffers in the mind, the malcontent rails openly at vice, folly and Fortune. This railing both relieves his own feelings and, more importantly, helps to purge society of evil; those are his justifications. There is a sense of intolerable emotional pressure behind much of Elizabethan satire: "O split my hart, least it doe breake with rage / To see th'immodest loosenes of our age" (SV II.104-05). Putting his feelings into words acts as a safety-valve, and gives the satirist some relief; as Marston says at the close of one satire, "My pate was great with child, and here tis eas'd" (SV VI.111). Burton too sees writing as purgative, a way of easing his mind and draining "a kind of imposthume in my head"; but at the same time he hopes to help others (I,18-19). Similarly, by venting his own rage, the railing malcontent serves the main purpose of satire, which is to "Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world" (AYL II.vii.60). His words at once define and discharge the infection. It is impossible to read much satire of this period without feeling that the satirists thoroughly enjoyed railing, for they attack their prey with such gusto. It seems clear that readers and audiences enjoyed the railing too, from the popularity of satire in print and on the stage.[39] The malcontent's words are cathartic, and they are also tonic in their effect. If the traditional figure of the Stoic represses all expression of emotion, the malcontent gives it free vent. Once more we find

that tradition restricts the malcontent less than the Stoic.

That the malcontent-Stoic contrast is a valid one is shown, I think, by its recurrence in the material on which this chapter has been based. Burton and the satirists are aware of Stoicism and malcontentedness as two options, two methods of survival in this world, between which man must choose. Sometimes they adopt one, sometimes the other. On the whole, of course, they have chosen the malcontent alternative, but there are surprisingly strong elements of Stoicism in satire and in the Anatomy of Melancholy.

Malcontent and Stoic can alternate in the role of satirist, as Crites and Macilente do. It is the conclusion of Alvin Kernan that "the majority of the Elizabethan authors of formal satire present their satirists as neo-Stoics."[40] He thinks that this is in imitation of Juvenal and Persius but, while reverence for these classical precedents is no doubt a factor, it cannot explain the wide knowledge of Stoicism and Neo-Stoicism evidenced by Marston, Hall and Guilpin. Even Marston's attacks on Stoicism in his satires demonstrate his knowledge of Seneca and Epictetus. When he laments the departure of reason from man's body, his description of reason's function is derived from Epictetus (SV VIII.173-78;p.346n.). The mottoes to the first three of Certaine Satyres, which define the themes, are taken from Epictetus. The whole work is signed, at the end, "Epictetus," because, as Arnold Davenport suggests, Marston is here resigning satire and turning Stoic (p.257n.). That explains why Stoicism must always remain in the background of these satires; when Marston chooses the Stoic option, he falls silent. It is clear from the outburst, "Preach not the Stoickes patience to me," that Marston sees Stoicism and malcontent satire as the two choices before him (SV II.5). Stoic patience is the alternative to satiric rage, but it means ceasing to write.

Stoicism hovers just off-stage in the satires of Guilpin and Hall, in the same way. Joseph Hall we already know as "our English Seneca," the author of various Neo-Stoic works. A typical

Stoic passage in his satires is the description of the Golden Age and the world's degeneration therefrom, derived largely from Seneca.[41] Everard Guilpin seems to have been well-read in Neo-Stoicism; his satire on Opinion has been called "thoroughly Neo-stoic in every respect" by his most recent editor, who suggests that Guilpin knew Seneca, Epictetus, Lipsius, and probably Du Vair.[42] There is, obviously, a strong connection between Stoicism and malcontent satire.

Burton, in the Anatomy, at times wears the mask of the malcontent satirist and at times that of the Stoic philosopher.[43] In his work we find the typically ambivalent Renaissance attitude towards Stoicism -- both the praise and the criticism. He thinks of the Stoics as strict and austere, "that severe family of Stoicks" (III,292), and he rather admires that rigid fortitude: "Servetus the heretick, . . . when he was brought to the stake, . . . roared so loud that he terrified the people. An old Stoick would have scorned this" (II,206). Their virtue puts us to shame: "Can Stoicks and Epicures thus contemn wealth, and shall not we that are Christians?" (II,194) However, it must not be forgotten that they are pagan philosophers, who "went as far as they could by the light of Nature" but still "groped in the dark" (III,387). He rejects Stoic apatheia and elimination of the passions (I, 81-82;I,184); he rejects Stoic determinism, because man has free will (I,191;III,441); he calls the approval of suicide "profane Stoical Paradoxes" (I,503). Nevertheless, in spite of all his objections, he advocates Stoicism as a cure for melancholy.

Since melancholy is a disease of the mind as well as of the body, it requires a "spiritual" cure as well as a "corporal" one (I,36). The "spiritual" cure that Burton recommends is Stoicism. His long "Consolatory Digression containing the Remedies of all manner of Discontents" is largely a digest of Stoic teaching, typically Neo-Stoic in the way it blends Stoic and Christian elements. It emphasizes all the familiar Stoic commonplaces: "we may frame ourselves as we will" (II,122); "make a virtue of necessity, and conform thyself to undergo it" (II,148); "be of

good courage; misery is virtue's whetstone" (II,189); "Let thy fortune be what it will, 'tis thy mind alone that makes thee poor or rich, miserable or happy" (II,197); "Banishment is no grievance at all, . . . that's a man's country where he is well at ease" (II,201); "accustom thyself, and harden before-hand, by seeing other men's calamities" (II,213). Many of the illustrative quotations and examples are drawn from Seneca and Epictetus. So, buried in the middle of the Anatomy of Melancholy, we find a Stoic treatise. Nothing could more clearly illustrate the strength of the connections between melancholy malcontentedness and Stoicism.

## Notes to Chapter 2

[1] I am particularly indebted to the following: Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, Saturn and Melancholy (London: Nelson, 1964), Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1951), Bridget Gellert Lyons, Voices of Melancholy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), O.J. Campbell, Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (San Marino, Calif: n.p., 1938), Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (1959; rpt. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1976), and L.C. Knights, Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937).

[2] 1581 is the date of the earliest quotation in the OED, which gives several from the fifteen-eighties and fifteen-nineties. William Rankins in 1588 calls it a "newe found name." The English Ape (London, 1588), p. 8.

[3] "Jaques," Huntington Library Bulletin, No. 8 (October, 1935), p. 71.

[4] Comicall Satyre, p. 144.

[5] Babb, Elizabethan Malady, pp. 73ff; Z.S Fink, "Jaques and the Malcontent Traveler," PQ, 14 (1935), 237-52.

[6] Saturn and Melancholy, p. 218.

[7] Babb, Elizabethan Malady, p. 75n.

[8] Lyons, pp. 17-18.

[9] This paragraph is based on Babb, Elizabethan Malady, ch. ii and ch. iii, and Saturn and Melancholy, parts I, II and III.

[10] The Optick Glasse of Humors (London, 1607), quoted in Saturn and Melancholy, p. 250.

[11] Alvin Kernan describes Marston's satiric persona as a "biting, snarling, despairing, contradictory malcontent who noses into all the filth of Elizabethan London and becomes nearly incoherent with rage while denouncing it on the street corners." Cankered Muse, p. 28. See especially "The Satirist," pp. 14-30, and ch. iii, "The English Satyr."

[12] John Earle, Micro-Cosmographie, ed. Edward Arber (1628; London: Constable, 1895), p. 28.

[13] On melancholy, Marston and Burton see Lyons, pp. 59-63. For the link between Democritus and satire see Lawrence Babb, Sanity in Bedlam (n.p.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1959), p. 32.

[14] Kernan, p. 113.

[15] Babb, Elizabethan Malady, pp. 119-20. On the malcontent pose, see pp. 76-78.

[16] Timothy Bright, A Treatise of Melancholie (1586; New York: Facsimile Text Society, 1940), p. 124.

[17] The Overburian Characters, ed. W.J. Paylor (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), p. 21.

[18] George Chapman, Bussy D'Ambois, ed. Robert J. Lordi, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (Lincoln, Neb.: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1964), I. i. 47 (p. 6). Further references to this, cited as Bussy, appear in the text.

[19] Earle, p. 27.

[20] The Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. R.B. McKerrow (1910; rpt. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), I, 157-58.

[21] Kernan, p. 8.

[22] Everard Guilpin, Epigram 70, in Skialetheia, ed. D. Allen Carroll (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 58.

[23] Virgidemiarum I. i. 24, in Collected Poems of Joseph Hall, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1949), p. 12.

[24] Lyons, p. 103.

[25] Lyons, p. 98; Anatomy I, 476.

[26] T.S. Eliot, "Whispers of Immortality," in Collected Poems 1909-1935 (London: Faber, 1958), p. 53.

[27] Certaine Satyres II. 159-60, in Poems, ed. Davenport, p. 76.

[28] Earle, p. 28.

[29] See, for instance, L.C. Knights, "Seventeenth-Century Melancholy," Appendix B in Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson, pp. 315-32, and O.J. Campbell, Comicall Satyre, pp. 15-21.

[30] Knights, pp. 324-26.

[31] Geoffrey Chaucer, the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, ll. 285-308, in Works, ed. F.N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957), p. 20.

[32] John Marston, The Malcontent, ed. Bernard Harris, New Mermaids (London: Benn, 1967), I. ii. 25-27 (p. 17). Further references to this, cited as Malc., appear in the text.

[33] Campbell, Comicall Satyre, pp. 59-61.

[34] Kernan, pp. 108-10.

[35] Works, ed. McKerrow, I, 217.

[36] Kernan, p. 19.

[37] Earle, p. 27.

[38] Return from Parnassus pt. I. ii. 614-16, quoted in Ernst Schoen-René, "The Malcontent Strain: A History of Malcontentedness in English Popular Drama from 1584 to 1614," Diss. Univ. of Washington 1976, p. 134.

[39] Kernan, pp. 150-52.

[40] Kernan, p. 118, p. 65.

[41] Virgidemiarum III. i, in Poems, pp. 33-35; see Davenport's note, p. 184.

[42] Skialetheia, ed. Carroll, pp. 216-17 and pp. 231-32.

## Chapter 3

### Malcontent and Stoic in the Drama

Those plays in which malcontents and Stoics are figures of central importance share, on the whole, a remarkably consistent background. The typical, though not invariable, setting is a corrupt court, dominated by a morally defective ruler, which serves as microcosm of a universe in decay. The context is that of politics and the struggle for power. In terms of genre, the plays range from "comicall satyre" through tragicomedy to tragedy. Where these conditions are lacking, malcontent and Stoic are not central figures.[1]

The importance of the political context is not surprising, given that a malcontent is a rebel or disaffected person, and that Stoicism emphasizes man's duty to the community. How necessary the political dimension is to the full development of malcontent and Stoic may be illustrated by the negative example of a play from which it is absent, The Dutch Courtesan. The action takes place in a fallen world, recognizably akin to that of The Malcontent. However, in The Dutch Courtesan Marston focusses on love and lust, on the private and domestic aspect of this fallen world. He ignores politics. Freevill, as commentator and disguised manipulator of events, much resembles Malevole; but he is not a malcontent. Though Gustav Cross calls Malheureux a "professed Stoic," his dilemma is never, in fact, defined in explicitly Stoic terms.[2] Neither the malcontent nor the Stoic stance is relevant, because the play lacks the political setting essential to their growth.

The world-view expressed in these plays is that common to malcontent satirist and Stoic philosopher alike. The earth is "this lodge / Of dirt's corruption,"[3] "crackt with the weight of sinne" (EMOH Induction 1.8), or "the only grave and Golgotha

wherein all things that live must rot" (Malc.IV.v.107-08). Man is "proud slime"[4]; the human soul is trapped in "A rotten and dead body . . . eaten up of lice, and worms."[5] Images of disease, decay and poison haunt such plays as The Revenger's Tragedy, Hamlet, The Malcontent, The Duchess of Malfi and The White Devil. Death is a leitmotif constantly repeated in action, imagery and sombre meditations. Hamlet in the graveyard with Yorick's skull; Antonio in St. Mark's church vowing revenge over his father's tomb; the preparation of Marcello's corpse for burial, and the long-drawn-out death of Brachiano; Bosola as tomb-maker and bellman, preparing the Duchess to die; Vindice with the skull of his mistress; Charlemont in the charnel-house, staggering as he loses his grip on a skull -- these are but a few of the ubiquitous reminders of mortality.

"Fortune, not reason, rules the state of things"; the first line of Bussy D'Ambois states a general truth about the world malcontent and Stoic inhabit. More than anywhere else, the court is subject to Fortune, for here men scramble for power, high office and riches, yet reward has nothing to do with desert. "Courtly reward, / And punishment! Fortune's a right whore," cries Lodovico in The White Devil, showing by the juxtaposition of these ideas that he considers Fortune the authoress of that courtly reward and punishment.[6] Even those who believe in a beneficent Providence have to concede the power of Fortune in worldly affairs. Malevole's initial comment on Pietro's repentance and submission is, "Who doubts of providence / That sees this change?" However, he then adds, invoking the image of the wheel of Fortune:

> He needs must rise, who can no lower fall,
> For still impetuous vicissitude
> Touseth the world. (Malc.IV.v.138-39,140-42)

The Stoic strives to arm himself against Fortune; so Andrugio proclaims "Fortune my fortunes, not my mind shall shake,"[7] Clermont is the man "To whom the day and fortune equal are,"[8] and Silius answers his accusers:

> Silius hath not placed
> His guards within him, against Fortune's spite,
> So weakly, but he can escape your grip
> That are but hands of Fortune: she herself
> When virtue doth oppose, must lose her threats.
> (Sej.III.i.321-25)

Sophonisba's virtue is truly tested, refined and glorified by the blows of Fortune, as Masinissa's words over her body confirm: "Thou whom like sparkling steele the strokes of Chance / Made hard and firme."[9] The malcontent, however, has no such resistance to Fortune; like Macilente, he pursues her rewards and resents her neglect: "I see no reason, why that dog (call'd Chaunce) / Should fawne upon this fellow, more then me" (EMOH II.iv.9-10). Flamineo and Bosola both seek avidly after courtly reward. It is only at the end of the play, after the Duchess' death, that Bosola realizes the folly of his long pursuit of Fortune, and rejects it: "Shall I go sue to Fortune any longer? / 'Tis the fool's pilgrimage" (DM V.ii.298-99). Whatever men's attitude towards her, Fortune is the presiding deity of the court.

The initial scenes of these plays are often highly significant; they strike the keynote for what follows, and so repay careful examination. There is something wrong, out-of-tune, topsy-turvy, about the world we enter, and the evil is focussed in the court, the centre of the political structure. Neither malcontent nor Stoic is of this world, though in it; frequently they are used to criticize it. So The Malcontent opens with the "vilest out-of-tune music" (I.i. stage direction), which expresses the loss of harmony in this disordered world and prefaces Malevole's equally discordant attacks on the vices of the court. The first scene of Hamlet immediately establishes a troubled and uneasy atmosphere; it is dark, cold, Francisco is "sick at heart" (I.i.9) and the apparition of the Ghost makes Horatio, rightly, fear that "This bodes some strange eruption to our state" (I.i. 69). After this mood has been created, we meet Hamlet, isolated by his black clothes and grief in the bustling court of Claudius. Thus Malevole and Hamlet are both introduced as misfits at court.

Sejanus likewise begins with a carefully detailed setting of

the scene, from which we learn that Stoics, no less than malcontents, are outsiders at court. "You're rarely met in court," Silius greets Sabinus, adding "this place is not our sphere" (I.i.2-3). They do not belong to the court because they are "no good enginers" and lack the arts to make them "favoured of the times" (I.i.4,6); they are not prepared to scheme, feign, flatter, be servile or commit crimes in order to rise. The whole scene conveys powerfully the sense of life at the court of a tyrant: "Our looks are called to question and our words, / How innocent soever, are made crimes" (I.i.67-68).

Silius and Sabinus feel that their times are degenerate; a similar choric denunciation of "this declining kingdom" is put into the mouths of Baligny and Renel at the beginning of The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois (I.i.1). Justice and law have vanished from a land where the murder of Bussy goes unpunished, and have been replaced by "policy" (I.i.7) and "th'inordinate swinge of downright power" (I.i.15). Baligny and Renel look back nostalgically to a golden age when men were virtuous and "kings sought common good" (I.i.20), whereas now kings have become tyrannical and virtue, paradoxically, a crime. The triumph of "policy" is shockingly demonstrated when Baligny is left alone on stage and we find that he is the King's agent; all he has said has been hypocritically designed to provoke Renel to treasonable utterance.

Such is the court, which serves as a microcosm or mirror of society as a whole. These functions are clearly stated by King Henry in Bussy D'Ambois, who contrasts the disorder of his own court with the ideal order of the English court under Elizabeth:

> But as courts should be th'abstracts of their kingdoms
> In all the beauty, state, and worth they hold,
> So is hers, amply, and by her inform'd.
> The world is not contracted in a man
> With more proportion and expression
> Than in her court, her kingdom. Our French court
> Is a mere mirror of confusion to it.
> The king and subject, lord and every slave,
> Dance a continual hay. (I.ii.21-29)

Bussy terms the court "that enchanted glass" (I.i.85). Whether as microcosm or as mirror, the court only reflects a greater reality. The court is corrupt because the world is corrupt. Often, indeed, no clear distinction is made between the court and the world; both terms are used indiscriminately, with the same pejorative implication.

Yet the court does more than reflect. It is an example which is imitated; it is therefore the source of good or evil in the kingdom. If the world is sick, then the court is the focus of infection. In the first scene of The Duchess of Malfi, Antonio explains the court's significance thus:

> Consid'ring duly, that a Prince's court
> Is like a common fountain, whence should flow
> Pure silver-drops in general. But if't chance
> Some curs'd example poison't near the head,
> Death and diseases through the whole land spread.
> (I.i.11-15)

The image of the pure or poisoned spring of water suggests how wide-spreading and insidious is the influence of the court. It is a recurrent image; Monsieur tempts Bussy to court in these terms: "Leave the troubled streams / And live where thrivers do, at the wellhead" (Bussy I.i.82-83). Again, Jonson dedicates Cynthia's Revels to "The Speciall Fountaine of Manners: The Court," with an exhortation to remember its moral responsibility.[10] "A vertuous Court a world to vertue drawes," says Cynthia at the end of the play (V.xi.173). This ideal is rarely fulfilled, though we sometimes see that it is attainable. For example, there is oblique testimony to the virtuous influence of a virtuous duchess in Maquerelle's scornful description of Maria:

> She had the vile trick on't, not only to be truly modestly honourable in her own conscience, but she would avoid the least wanton carriage that might incur suspect; as God bless me, she had almost brought bed-pressing out of fashion. (Malc.V.i.131-34)

But the spring is usually poisoned, not pure; the typical situation is an evil court drawing a world to evil.

The ultimate source of the poison is usually the ruler.[11]

It is, of course, an Elizabethan commonplace that the moral health of the realm depends on that of its prince. In Burton's words, "where good government is, prudent and wise Princes, there all things thrive and prosper, . . . where it is otherwise, all things are ugly to behold, incult, barbarous, uncivil, a Paradise is turned to a wilderness" (Anatomy I,95). What is rotten in the state of Denmark is Claudius, who has poisoned his brother and wrongfully taken that brother's crown and wife. The image of the poisoned spring, spreading death or disease through the land, parallels the imagery of poison and disease in Hamlet, where the focus of infection is the hidden murder of King Hamlet. That is the ulcer which, leaving no outward sign, eats away at the body politic of Denmark.

Such, then, is the hostile environment in which malcontent and Stoic must struggle to survive. How to live is a dilemma that has two aspects, the practical and the moral. There is, first of all, the practical problem of employment; how is a man with no secure position to find a place for himself in this world, and scope for his talents? We see the court not from the point of view of those in power, but from that of poor, out-of-work soldiers and scholars, and men dispossessed. These terms are usually thought to be characteristic of the malcontent, but they apply to the Stoic as well; Clermont and Bussy together were a "ragged couple of decay'd commanders" before they came to court (Revenge I.i.235), and Masinissa and Charlemont are dispossessed no less than Malevole and Hamlet. The poor scholar-malcontent Lampatho Doria memorably expresses the predicament in which he finds himself now that he has "crept abroad" from his studies into "this nimble age": "What shall I doe, what plot, what course persew?" The answer he gets from his friend Quadratus is, "Why turne a Temporist, row with the tide."[12] It is clearly a strong temptation. Webster presents a similar predicament tragically in the case of Flamineo, who also has been a poor scholar, and asks his mother bitterly: "Pray what means have you / To keep me from the galleys, or the gallows?" (WD I.ii.304-05) He will

do anything to escape poverty and achieve security. The practical inevitably involves the moral dilemma. The question for both malcontent and Stoic is whether there is any way of surviving without temporizing, without coming to terms with the court.

For a good man to retain his integrity in the court is almost impossible. Virtue and the court are incompatible, as we see from Piero's comment on the Stoic Pandulpho: "He is a virtuous man; what has our court to do / With virtue, in the devil's name!" (AR II.i.90-91) In Vindice's words, "to be honest is not to be i' the world."[13] The same theme is stressed in Caesar and Pompey, where Demetrius questions Cornelia about her husband Pompey, "You'll suppose him good?" "He is so," says Cornelia, and Demetrius continues, "Then must you needs suppose him wrong'd; for all goodness is wrong'd in this world."[14] In this play the wise man Cato must perforce commit suicide to remain true to himself, while the knave Fronto is prevented from committing suicide by the devil Ophioneus because this is "The only time that ever was for a rascal to live in" (II.i.25-26). The rascal thrives; the good man dies.

The good and the innocent are at a grave disadvantage, being handicapped by their very honesty. Even though Clermont is warned of the plot to capture him, he refuses to escape because he will not think ill of his brother-in-law Baligny, nor doubt Maillard's word. As the Countess of Cambrai observes, "He would believe, since he would be believ'd; / Your noblest natures are most credulous" (Revenge IV.iii.80-81). So Claudius and Laertes take advantage of the fact that Hamlet is "Most generous, and free from all contriving," to substitute the unbated and envenomed sword which kills him (Ham.IV.vii.135). Altofronto-Malevole, a just and impartial ruler, lost his dukedom because he was "Suspectless, too suspectless" (Malc.I.iv.14). Sophonisba trusts her maid Zanthia, the Duchess of Malfi trusts Bosola, Bussy accepts the disguised Montsurry as the Friar and so is led to his death; they are all betrayed because they have assumed others to be honest, as they are themselves.

In the cases of Vindice and Bussy, we see what happens to basically honest men who are drawn into the dangerous orbit of the court. Both plays begin at the very moment when the protagonist is offered an opportunity, which he accepts, to go to court.[15] Vindice as we first see him is outside the court, not part of it, for he has to ask Hippolito, "How go things at Court?" (RT I.i.51) Hearing of Lussurioso's search for a pandar, he decides to disguise himself: "And be a right man then, a man o' the time, / For to be honest is not to be i' the world" (RT I.i.93-94). But playing "a man o' the time" is hazardous, as is suggested by the ominous last line of the scene, "I'll quickly turn into another" (RT I.i.134). When he reappears in his disguise, now "the child o' the Court," Vindice asks "am I far enough from myself?" (RT I.iii.4,1). It would be far too simple to say that Vindice is corrupted by the court, for his motive in going there is to prosecute his revenge, which taints the enterprise from the start. Nevertheless he does deteriorate, morally speaking, in the course of the play, and his coming to court marks the beginning of this process.

Bussy D'Ambois, on the contrary, arrives at court with the best of intentions, yet the court destroys him nonetheless. When Monsieur tempts him from his "green retreat," Bussy chooses to go, but on his own terms (Bussy I.i.45). He will not compromise his honesty:

> I am for honest actions, not for great.
> If I may bring up a new fashion
> And rise in court for virtue, speed his plow.
> (Bussy I.i.128-30)

In taking this step, Bussy deliberately enters the realm of Fortune. This is made clear by the terms of Monsieur's offer: "Do thou but bring / Light to the banquet Fortune sets before thee" (Bussy I.i.61-62). Even though Bussy knows "Man's first hour's rise is first step to his fall," he takes the risk (Bussy I.i.141). The end is implicit in the beginning; "Fortune's proud mushroom shot up in a night" is as swiftly cut down (Bussy III.i.117). Despite his vow of honesty, Bussy is not altogether

unaffected by courtly values. He is forced into deceit by his intrigue with Tamyra and eventually resolves to behave like a "politician" (Bussy IV.ii.188). However, Bussy is destroyed, in the end, because his nature is too noble for the world, as it is mirrored in the court:

> So this whole man
> That will not wind with every crooked way
> Trod by the servile world shall reel and fall
> Before the frantic puffs of blind-born chance
> That pipes through empty men and makes them dance.
> (Bussy V.ii.41-45)

If he were an empty man, a man without integrity, a temporizer, he might survive. The attempt to rise in court by virtue fails.

It is equally impossible for an uncompromising Stoic to survive in a politic world. This is illustrated by the career of Clermont D'Ambois who, although so different from his brother, is like him destroyed by the court of France. Chapman pictures in considerable detail this place of power-worship, devious plotting and smiling hypocrisy. Though Clermont is "benetted round with villainies" (Ham.V.ii.29), he never abandons his Stoic principles. Finally he is driven to a Stoical suicide by the assassination of his patron the Guise. The significance of this act has not always been fully appreciated. Millar MacLure calls it "Hardly the last gesture of the self-sufficient man who is one with the All, but the passionate rejection of a world empty without his love."[16] But love for a friend, important though it is, is not the sole motive for Clermont's suicide.[17] Just as strong, I think, is Clermont's realization that his attempt to live as a Stoic in the court is at an end. He has a shrewd grasp of the political realities of his situation, now that his patron and protector is dead:

> I left negligent,
> To all the horrors of the vicious time, . . .
> None favouring goodness, none but he respecting
> Piety or manhood -- shall I here survive,
> Not cast me after him into the sea,
> Rather than here live, ready every hour
> To feed thieves, beasts, and be the slave of power?
> (Revenge V.v.185-92)

Earlier in the play, Clermont is attacked and imprisoned only (as he well knows) because he is a supporter of the Guise. Guise intervenes to set him free; the King would not have released him otherwise, and resents being obliged to do so. Now that Guise is dead, Clermont is utterly exposed to his enemies. The phrase "all the horrors of the vicious time" gains force when we recall that it is the King, supposedly the upholder of law, who has had Guise assassinated; with his dying breath, Guise warns "one drop of blood shed lawless / Will be the fountain to a purple sea" (Revenge V.iv.52-53). Clermont too foresees this chaos; he suspects, perhaps, that his turn will be next and, in true Stoic fashion, merely anticipates the executioner so that he may control the manner of his death. He dies to preserve his integrity, because he will not adopt the values of the world. As he says, "could I play the worldling . . . I should survive" (Revenge V.v.153,155). That statement reverberates beyond its immediate context.

Malcontentedness and Stoicism are equally strategies that men adopt in order to survive in this harsh and hostile environment. The Stoic response may be summed up as fortitude, refusal to compromise and, in extremity, suicide; the malcontent as satiric railing, readiness to temporize and revenge. The question of revenge is worth examining in detail for the light it throws on both, since the malcontent is often the same as the revenger, while Stoicism advocates clemency, not revenge. Revenge epitomizes the problems of action in this imperfect world.[18]

Whether to seek revenge or not presents an acute dilemma to malcontent and Stoic alike, one which arises from the evil nature of the world they inhabit, and which reveals their underlying affinity as well as their differing responses. The typical revenge situation is well described by J.W. Lever: "The hero is faced with iniquity on high, with crimes committed by a tyranny immune to criticism or protest."[19] It is no good Hamlet, or Vindice, or Antonio, or Clermont, or Malevole, appealing to the law to right them, because the source of authority is corrupt. In

this context the desire for revenge can be seen as a moral impulse, at least initially, and especially when it is in response to murder. A great wrong has been done which ought to be set right; if murder goes unpunished, then chaos is come. This sense of a moral imperative is what links malcontent and Stoic, as it does Antonio and Pandulpho in Antonio's Revenge. It is over whether to act on the impulse or not that they diverge.

Stoicism forbids revenge. Instead, it advocates clemency and trying to reform one's enemies. As the Stoic sees it, to seek revenge is to give way to a destructive passion, and a man should, rather, endure his wrongs in this world. Thus the Stoic attitude to revenge is very similar to the Christian. Clermont states it explicitly:

> All worthy men should ever bring their blood
> To bear all ill, not to be wreak'd with good:
> Do ill for no ill; never private cause
> Should take on it the part of public laws.
> (Revenge III.ii.113-16)

This is precisely the course of action followed by Charlemont in The Atheist's Tragedy, whose murdered father's ghost warns him not to seek revenge but rather leave it to heaven. Providence, which clearly controls events in this play, sees to it that justice is carried out and the murderer D'Amville punished, to teach the lesson that "patience is the honest man's revenge."[20] Here Stoic patience and refusal to revenge are rewarded in this world.

Chapman obviously finds the absolute rejection of revenge unsatisfactory, for in The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois he presents a different answer to the dilemma of the Stoic charged with the duty of revenge.[21] His hero, Clermont, does, in the end, revenge his brother Bussy. Many critics have felt that there is a basic inconsistency between Clermont's Stoicism and his role as revenger which seriously damages the play.[22] Yet what Chapman attempts here is to reconcile Stoicism and revenge, to find a Stoic rationale for revenge. Clermont has his orthodox Stoic doubts, quoted above, but he has no more after Bussy's ghost exhorts

him to act as the instrument of eternal justice, to restore the "proportion" of the world:

> And those deeds are the perfecting that justice
> That makes the world last, which proportion is
> Of punishment and wreak for every wrong.
> . . . What corrupted law
> Leaves unperformed in kings, do thou supply.
> (V.i.92-94,97-98)

Clermont therefore is following Stoic doctrine and submitting himself to the Universe in executing the revenge. It should be noted that he carries it out calmly, without passion, and in fair fight. Moreover, he cures Montsurry's soul, bringing him to die a good death which "makes full amends" for all he has done (V.v.115). Each forgives the other. Clermont thus fulfils the Stoic injunctions to reform your enemies and forgive them, at the same time as he exacts revenge for Bussy. His revenge is thoroughly Stoic, though such a precarious synthesis may be unique to this play.

Clemency and reform are the positive Stoic alternatives to revenge -- and the more usual ones. They are the answer to the dilemma endorsed by Marston in Sophonisba and in The Malcontent.[23] When Masinissa learns that Gisco has been sent to poison him, instead of retaliating he urges him to reform and forgives him because "The God-like part of Kings is to forgive" (Soph.II.i; p.26). The treatment is effective, for Gisco is dumbfounded by Masinissa's virtue. Masinissa's revenge on Syphax, like Clermont's on Montsurry, takes the form of a single combat; when he is victorious, Masinissa spares his enemy's life: "Heare a most deepe revenge, from us take life" (Soph.V.ii;p.55). In similar fashion Malevole reforms and brings to repentance Pietro, who usurped his dukedom, and, when restored to power, shows clemency to all, even Mendoza, because "an eagle takes not flies" (Malc.V.iv.155). It is perhaps significant that Marston shows forgiveness as possible only when no-one has died. The Stoic nature of these attitudes is confirmed by the marked parallels to Seneca's De Clementia. Seneca's anecdote of the Emperor

Augustus and his treatment of Lucius Cinna, whom he knew to be conspiring against him, strongly resembles Malevole's reform of Pietro, and Masinissa's of Gisco. Instead of punishing Cinna, Augustus rebuked him at length and spared his life, after which Cinna was devoted to him (De Clem.I.ix). The passage most strikingly relevant to Marston is as follows:

> Moreover, the peculiar marks of a lofty spirit are mildness and composure, and the lofty disregard of injustice and wrongs. . . . Cruel and inexorable anger is not seemly for a king, for thus he does not rise much above the other man, toward whose own level he descends by being angry at him. But if he grants life, if he grants position to those who have imperilled and deserve to lose them, he does what none but a sovereign may.
> (De Clem.I.v.5-6)

That explains why Malevole and Masinissa behave as they do. Later, Seneca observes that clemency defines the difference between a king and a tyrant, which is to say between Malevole and Mendoza, or Masinissa and Syphax (De Clem.I.xii.3). In these two plays we see how the Stoic can resist the temptation to revenge.

Yet the Malevole who so Stoically rejects revenge in the last scene of the play is he who in the first act tormented Pietro with the news of his wife's adultery and rejoiced at the subtlety of his revenge:

> The heart's disquiet is revenge most deep.
> He that gets blood, the life of flesh but spills,
> But he that breaks heart's peace, the dear soul kills.
> (Malc.I.iii.151-53)

Here Malevole (who is part-malcontent, part-Stoic) is the malcontent as revenger, a role also filled by Hamlet, Vindice, Antonio and Bosola. The revenger, after all, is a man who has cause to be discontented, for he has been wronged -- deprived of a father, a son, a mistress or a dukedom. He is isolated from others by the need for secrecy; it is not surprising to find him a melancholy malcontent.

Patience, in Elizabethan usage, is the antithesis of revenge[24]; where the Stoic practises patience, the malcontent

seeks revenge. He chooses action over passivity. Moreover, the particular act of revenge often acquires symbolic status, representing a general purging of evil in society. Yet the taking of revenge is almost bound to corrupt and destroy the revenger. If he acts, he is damned; nevertheless he feels a moral compulsion to act, sometimes dramatically expressed in the supernatural commands of ghosts. Stoic patience is a desperately difficult ideal; there is much to be said on the revenger's side, too. Antonio's Revenge displays an ambivalent attitude towards revenge which is typical of its period. Pandulpho's Stoic patience is balanced against Antonio's malcontent revenge, though the balance finally tilts towards revenge, which is perceived as evil -- yet praiseworthy. After Antonio, in pursuit of vengeance, has murdered an innocent child whose only crime is to be Piero's son, his bloody-handed appearance signifies that he has himself become like the monstrous Piero.[25] The revengers degenerate into beasts in the climactic scene where they torture and gloat over Piero before killing him. On the other side of the scale, they have the sympathy of the people, and Antonio is unequivocally praised by the nobles: "Thou art another Hercules to us / In ridding huge pollution from our state" (V.iii.129-30). Indeed, it is suggested that the revengers act as instruments of Providence, when Andrugio's Ghost says, "Now down looks providence / T'attend the last act of my son's revenge" (V.i.10-11). In destroying evil, Antonio and Pandulpho have inevitably been drawn into evil. At the close of the play they repudiate the corrupt world entirely and withdraw into "some religious order" for a life of prayer and repentance (V.iii.152). The revenger cannot survive his revenge; he either dies or withdraws from the world. So once again we see that men who try to be "honest," to act upon a moral impulse, are defeated by the very nature of the corrupt courtly world in which they must act.

There is a living tension between malcontent and Stoic in those characters who seem now one, now the other, such as Feliche, Malevole and Arruntius. No one tidy formula for the

relationship between these attitudes can be found; they alternate, shift, and blur into one another. But it is clear from their recurrence in similar situations and in the same persons that they do feed each other. Their kinship is also obliquely revealed by their antagonism to a common enemy, whom for brevity's sake I call the Machiavel.

In the Induction to Antonio and Mellida, Feliche ("the happy man") characterizes himself as the self-sufficient contented Stoic, indifferent to the good fortune of others; his nature is "steady, and must seem so impregnably fortress'd with his own content that no envious thought could ever invade his spirit" (ll. 104-06). We see him first as the blunt, honest, alienated critic in a corrupt court, fearlessly warning the tyrant Piero against pride. He next appears silently observing and "wondering" at the follies of the court (II.i.49.2), until he can contain his passionate disgust no longer:

> O that the stomach of this queasy age
> Digests or brooks such raw unseasoned gobs
> And vomits not them forth! (II.i.87-89)

Such violence of feeling and expression is decidedly un-Stoic; this is the familiar voice of the malcontent satirist. Feliche, in fact, exhibits the malcontent-Stoic alternation typical of the Elizabethan satirist, and when he breaks his silence to speak, the malcontent comes to the fore. Lines such as "I could break my spleen at his impatience" (III.ii.180) and "I hate not man, but man's lewd qualities" (III.ii.276) are satiric commonplaces. He cannot sleep in "these court lodgings" (III.ii.5), and such insomnia is usually a symptom of melancholy malcontentedness. Yet his name continually reminds us that he is contented, and he insists that he envies nothing about the court. Feliche tells Castilio that he is "amply suited with all full content" (III.ii.57); but within a few lines, provoked by Castilio's boasting about his mistresses, he cries out: "Confusion seize me, but I think thou liest. / Why should I not be sought to then as well?" (III.ii.68-69) He falls into the envy he has

so often repudiated. The whole play, as G.K. Hunter points out, is organized on the principle of contrast, of alternating opposite moods: "What Marston is interested in is not the way that one attitude forms itself out of another, but how one collapses to reveal the unexpected coexistence of another" (Introd.,p. xiv). When Feliche's Stoicism collapses, what it reveals is malcontentedness.

Since Malevole might be called the definitive malcontent, the presence of Stoic elements in him is of particular interest; and, while the malcontent persona obviously dominates, the traces of Stoicism are there. Though Malevole is tormented by conflicting passions, "his own soul is at variance within herself" (Malc. I.ii.26-27), he longs for tranquillity. The very nature of the revenge he seeks on Pietro, attacking his mind rather than his body, shows how high a value he sets on Stoical calm: "Beneath God, naught's so dear as a calm heart" (Malc.I.iii.165). He displays a Stoic faith in Providence -- indeed it is Providence that restores him to power -- and a corresponding immunity to Fortune: "For no disastrous chance can ever move him / That leaveth nothing but a God above him" (Malc.V.iii.89-90). The contempt for this world and indifference to external goods which he teaches Pietro are Stoic in flavour: "Come, be not confounded; thou art but in danger to lose a dukedom. . . . Now, what art thou like to lose?" (Malc.IV.v.105-06,116) Malevole even has a female Stoic for a wife, for Maria is presented as an example of constancy who endures all assaults on her virtue, speaks in Senecan maxims, and is prepared to kill herself rather than yield to Mendoza.[26] Malevole is most Stoical when he chooses clemency, not revenge. There is, perhaps, a movement from malcontentedness (and the desire for revenge) to Stoicism (and clemency) in the course of the play. It is tempting to identify the malcontentedness with the disguise and say that Malevole is the malcontent and Altofronto the Stoic.[27] There is truth in this, but still such formulations are too reductive of the complex reality. It is not so easy to separate the duke from the disguise; there is

one figure before us on the stage, not two. Like Hamlet's antic disposition and Vindice's disguise, the Malevole persona is something more than pretence. After all, Malevole seeks to revenge what Altofronto suffered. To act the spitting critic he taps the reservoirs of his own discontent, for which he has ample cause, having been robbed of his dukedom and cast out. Malevole is malcontent even when no-one is watching, as in his insomniac soliloquy (Malc.III.ii.1-14). Bilioso is present on stage, but occupied with his patent; Malevole's speech is clearly a soliloquy, for when Bilioso does address him, he "shifts his speech."[28] Malcontent and Stoic elements, in Malevole as in Feliche, are inextricably intertwined.

That this pattern is not unique to Marston is shown by its recurrence, for example, in Jonson's Arruntius. Together with Silius, Sabinus, Cordus and Lepidus, Arruntius is one of the group which forms the chorus in Sejanus. Jonson deliberately characterizes this group as Stoic, even departing from his sources to do so, and establishes them as the moral centre of the play.[29] In the political sense they are malcontents, since they are (justly) discontented with the reigning tyranny. Arruntius is always closely associated with this "discontented list" (II.ii.221); he shares their values, their view of the world. But Arruntius' response to it is less controlled than that of his friends. He has not abandoned all hope of reforming the evil he observes; he is ready to strike at Tiberius, or at least tell him what he thinks of him, until Sabinus calms him with the Epictetan watchword, "Forbear" (I.i.260). Arruntius would warn Tiberius against flatterers, but Sabinus again counsels patience with "Stay, Arruntius" (I.i.430). So violent is his reaction to the elevation of Sejanus' statue that Silius interrupts, saying "Check your passion" (I.i.547). Arruntius' passionate indignation and loathing of the vile world belong to the malcontent satirist, whose familiar accents we hear in his speeches: "Seest thou this, O sun, / And do we see thee after?" (I.i.197-98) Another typical outburst is:

> O, what is it, proud slime will not believe
> Of his own worth, to hear it equal praised
> Thus with the gods? (I.i.381-83)

Yet there is no doubt that Arruntius follows the Stoic ideal. To say that he is a malcontent whereas his friends are Stoics seems too crude a description of the subtle interplay of related responses to their situation which Jonson delineates in this group.

If I use the term "Machiavel" to refer to the common antagonist of Stoic and malcontent, it is in the sense defined by Irving Ribner: "the . . . well-established tradition of the stage 'Machiavel', itself derived . . . from a fusion of the Senecan villain-hero and the morality play Vice with popular misconceptions about the writings of Machiavelli."[30] This Machiavel is exemplified by such characters as Piero, Mendoza, Syphax, Asdrubal, Sejanus, Tiberius, D'Amville, Claudius, Monsieur and Baligny who, despite individual differences, have much in common. In the setting of the corrupt court, the Machiavel discards traditional morality and religion in favour of "policy." He is wholly unscrupulous in his pursuit of power, which to him is the sole good. While acknowledging the power of Fortune, he neither rails at her nor ignores her, but instead attempts to conquer her, boasting that "fortune dotes on impudence" (Malc. II.v.96). The Machiavel is supremely egotistical, asserting his own will above all else and recognizing no obligations to other men. Believing that "prosperous successe gives blackest actions glory, / The means are unremembred in most story" (Soph.II.i;p. 20), he does not hesitate to lie, break his word, and betray those who trust him. Characteristically, he works by secret plots, ingenious stratagems, poison and the knife in the back, and he revels in his own cunning.

These methods are not the exclusive property of the Machiavellian villain; the malcontent Malevole, for instance, is driven to employ deceit and to temporize. Indeed, Malevole more than once outwits the Machiavel Mendoza at his own game, as when he defeats an attempt to poison him by pretending to be "poisoned

with an empty box" (Malc.V.iii.84). But the differences between them help to define the essential nature of the Machiavel. Malevole never loses his belief in a Providence guiding events. He employs "Craft against vice" as the Duke does in Measure for Measure (III.ii.277); it is clearly for a good end, namely the restoration of order and his dukedom, and no-one is killed. His distaste for the methods he is forced to use is conveyed by his comment to Celso as he sets his plot in motion: "Phewt! I'll not shrink" (Malc.I.iv.41). Mendoza, on the other hand, believes in nothing but himself and schemes only to make himself great. There is a note of gleeful amorality to his speeches; far from shrinking, he plots with gusto and enjoys his own villainy.

The opposition between Machiavel and Stoic has often been remarked and discussed.[31] It is rooted in Seneca, in the contrast between the tyrants of his plays and the Stoic sage of his treatises. Machiavelli contributes something too, though the relationship of the stage-Machiavel to the actual writings of Machiavelli is a notoriously vexed question.[32] Yet it is not a misunderstanding of Machiavelli to oppose him to the Stoics, for there is a very deep division between the two philosophies. Stoicism is idealist; when Seneca is accused of not living up to his own precepts, he pleads that all philosophers write about "not how they themselves were living, but how they ought to live" (De V.B.XVIII.1). He exhorts his readers to struggle towards this ideal, however far they may fall short. Machiavelli, on the other hand, explicitly rejects the ideal; he is not concerned with life as it ought to be, but life as it is:

> For there is such a difference between how men live and how they ought to live that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done learns his destruction rather than his preservation, because any man who under all conditions insists on making it his business to be good will surely be destroyed among so many who are not good. Hence a prince, in order to hold his position, must acquire the power to be not good, and understand when to use it and when not to use it, in accord with necessity.[33]

It is precisely this conflict between the claims of political necessity and those of morality which is dramatized on the Elizabethan stage through the clash of Stoic and Machiavel. Thus the Stoic Charlemont is set against the atheist D'Amville; Clermont D'Ambois against Baligny, the King and their adherents; Sophonisba and Masinissa against Syphax and the council of Carthage; Andrugio and Pandulpho against Piero; and Silius, Arruntius and their Stoic friends against Sejanus and that consummate Machiavellian prince, Tiberius.

Moreover, the malcontent is no less the Machiavel's opponent. The most notable example of this is The Malcontent, where Malevole's true antagonist is Mendoza, not Pietro his nominal deposer. The pattern may also be seen in the clash of Hamlet and Claudius and in the opposition of Bussy to Monsieur. In Antonio's Revenge, Marston draws the complete triangle -- malcontent and Stoic united against their shared enemy the Machiavel. This is sketched also in Antonio and Mellida, where Feliche the malcontent-Stoic and Andrugio are, separately, opposed to Piero, and in Hamlet, where the Stoical Horatio is Hamlet's only friend and supporter against Claudius.

In Antonio's Revenge, Marston first explores the contrasting reactions of the Stoic Pandulpho and the malcontent Antonio to similar blows of Fortune, and then shows them joined in revenge on their enemy, the Machiavel Piero.[34] When the play opens, Piero has just murdered Antonio's father and Pandulpho's son; they are in similar situations and their reactions are carefully balanced against each other. Pandulpho behaves with exemplary Stoic patience and fortitude, refusing to "Stamp, curse, weep, rage" (I.ii.315), while Antonio does all these, and deliberately rejects patience as "slave to fools" (I.ii.271). In the first scene of the second act, Pandulpho emerges triumphant from a debate with Piero which is a classic confrontation between Stoic and Machiavel. Yet the succeeding scene appears equally to validate Antonio's continuing melancholy and his specific refusal of the Stoic stance, marked by his rejection of Seneca's

De Providentia. Fortune has struck at them both, but whereas Antonio is overthrown, "Stagger'd, stark fell'd with bruising stroke of chance" (IV.i.57), Pandulpho remains upright and undaunted by "fortune's loudest thunder" (I.ii.330). Though Marston plays Stoic against malcontent in this way, their underlying affinity becomes clear at the end of the play, when Pandulpho and Antonio combine to execute revenge on Piero. Antonio's Revenge epitomizes the characteristic malcontent-Stoic situation which I have tried to analyze in this chapter. The setting is the corrupt court of an evil tyrant, where Pandulpho and Antonio are equally outsiders. Battered by Fortune, struggling to survive in a world "too subtle / For honest natures to converse withal" (IV.i.299-300), Pandulpho takes refuge in Stoicism, and Antonio in melancholy malcontentedness. Yet they come together in a revenge which purges the state, though it destroys them, and together they withdraw to a life of prayer.

## Notes to Chapter 3

[1] The plays on which I have chiefly relied in this analysis are Antonio and Mellida, Antonio's Revenge, What You Will, The Malcontent, Sophonisba, Hamlet, As You Like It, Every Man Out of his Humour, Cynthia's Revels, Sejanus, The Revenger's Tragedy, The Atheist's Tragedy, Bussy D'Ambois, The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, Caesar and Pompey, The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi. I have included Bussy D'Ambois because Bussy, though not himself one, has much in common with the malcontent, and the courtly world of the play, which destroys him, is that common to most of these plays.

[2] "Marston, Montaigne and Morality: The Dutch Courtezan Reconsidered," ELH, 27 (1960), p. 36.

[3] John Marston, Antonio's Revenge, ed. G.K. Hunter, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), V. iii. 149-50 (p. 85). Further references to this, cited as AR, appear in the text.

[4] Ben Jonson, Sejanus, ed. W.F. Bolton, New Mermaids (London: Benn, 1966), I. i. 381 (p. 23). Further references to this, cited as Sej., appear in the text.

[5] John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan, New Mermaids (London: Benn, 1964), II. i. 60, 58 (p. 25). Further references to this, cited as DM, appear in the text.

[6] John Webster, The White Devil, ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan, New Mermaids (London: Benn, 1966), I. i. 3-4 (p. 7). Further references to this, cited as WD, appear in the text.

[7] John Marston, Antonio and Mellida, ed. G.K. Hunter, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (Lincoln, Neb.: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1965), III. i. 62 (p. 37). Further references to this, cited as A and M, appear in the text.

[8] George Chapman, The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, IV. iv. 44, in The Plays of George Chapman: The Tragedies, ed. T.M. Parrott (1910; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), I, 127. Further references to this, cited as Revenge, appear in the text.

[9] John Marston, Sophonisba, Act V sc. iii, in Plays, ed. H. Harvey Wood (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1938), II, 63. Further references to this, cited as Soph., appear in the text.

Since Harvey Wood does not number the lines, I give act, scene and page numbers.

[10] Herford and Simpson, IV, 33.

[11] Not always -- Antonio's "curs'd example . . . near the head" seems to refer to Ferdinand and the Cardinal rather than the Duchess; see E.M. Brennan, Introd., p. xii. The same pattern is found in Bussy D'Ambois, where King Henry is not vicious, though weak, but his brother, Monsieur, is called by Bussy the "curs'd fount" of all the evil in the kingdom (III. ii. 471).

[12] John Marston, What You Will, Act II sc. i, in Plays, ed. Harvey Wood, II, 258.

[13] Cyril Tourneur, The Revenger's Tragedy, ed. Brian Gibbons, New Mermaids (London: Benn, 1967), I. i. 94 (p. 8). Further references to this, cited as RT, appear in the text.

[14] George Chapman, Caesar and Pompey, V. i. 123-26, in Tragedies, ed. Parrott, II, 390.

[15] It is worth noting that The Duchess of Malfi begins at the moment when Bosola is offered, and accepts, a place at court.

[16] George Chapman, (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 131.

[17] If we are tempted to undervalue this motive, we should remember the Stoical Horatio, "more an antique Roman than a Dane," trying to snatch the poisoned cup from Hamlet (Ham. V. ii. 341).

[18] A point I owe to Philip Finkelpearl, who comments on "The choice of revenge as the metaphor for action" in Antonio's Revenge. John Marston of the Middle Temple (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969), p. 160.

[19] The Tragedy of State (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 12.

[20] Cyril Tourneur, The Atheist's Tragedy, ed. Brian Morris and Roma Gill, New Mermaids (London: Benn, 1976), V. ii. 278 (p. 103).

[21] It has been suggested that The Atheist's Tragedy was written in response to The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois; see Clifford Leech, "The Atheist's Tragedy as a Dramatic Comment on Chapman's Bussy Plays," JEGP, 52 (1953), 525-29.

[22] For example, Una Ellis-Fermor comments, "Chapman has brought him into the plot to fulfil an act of vengeance which no sixteenth-century gentleman could have neglected but no stoic would have considered worth performing." The Jacobean

Drama, 4th ed. (London: Methuen, 1958), p. 69.

[23] See Geoffrey D. Aggeler, "Stoicism and Revenge in Marston," English Studies, 51 (1970), p. 510. I am indebted to this discussion, though Aggeler does not mention Sophonisba, nor does he note the De Clementia parallels.

[24] See Eleanor Prosser, Hamlet and Revenge, 2nd ed. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 5, pp. 10-12. I am indebted to this book in general in my discussion of revenge.

[25] See G.K. Hunter's note to AR III. ii. 75, and Finkelpearl, p. 153.

[26] On the Senecan maxims, see The Malcontent, ed. G.K. Hunter, Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1975), notes to V. iii and V. vi.

[27] As does R.W. Ingram: "As Altofronto, he is the temporizer, the embodiment of sensible stoicism; as Malevole, he is the spitting critic and the energetic revenger." John Marston (Boston: Twayne, 1978), p. 106.

[28] Cf. Malc. I. iv. 42, stage direction: "Bilioso entering, Malevole shifteth his speech."

[29] See Ch. 4, p. 74.

[30] Cyril Tourneur, The Atheist's Tragedy, ed. Irving Ribner, Revels Plays (London: Methuen, 1964), Introd., p. xxxix.

[31] See especially Joseph S.M.J. Chang, "'Of Mighty Opposites': Stoicism and Machiavellianism," Renaissance Drama, 9 (1966), 37-57, and Mario Praz, "'The Politic Brain': Machiavelli and the Elizabethans," (first published 1928) in The Flaming Heart (1958; rpt. New York: Norton, 1973).

[32] See, for example, N.W. Bawcutt, "Machiavelli and Marlowe's The Jew of Malta," Renaissance Drama, NS 3 (1970), 3-49.

[33] Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, ch. 15, in Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others, trans. Allan H. Gilbert (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1965), I, 56-57.

[34] There is ample evidence to justify labelling Antonio "malcontent." He enters in black reading, the conventional melancholy pose (II.ii, initial stage direction); he expresses his grief in passionate words, and rails at human evil in the characteristic malcontent-satirist manner (III.i.110-24); he is cast out, alienated (IV.ii.14-16); he is a revenger, who exhibits many parallels to Hamlet and Malevole.

## Chapter 4

## Philosophy and Dramaturgy

Plays containing malcontents and Stoics frequently elicit the editorial comment, "No known source." The dramatist has either (apparently) invented a plot, or adapted an existing story in such a way as to emphasize malcontentedness or Stoicism. "No single source for Antonio and Mellida has ever been discovered," G.K. Hunter points out, adding that the play's structure seems too characteristic of Marston's philosophical preoccupations "to have originated anywhere outside the mind of its author," even though it is a "tissue of scraps and attitudes" borrowed from elsewhere.[1] Marston and his fellow-dramatists did not write in a vacuum, but rather drew on the rich literary and dramatic traditions which this thesis explores. In this sense they are highly derivative, though -- significantly -- no single narrative source is known for Antonio's Revenge, The Malcontent, Every Man Out of his Humour, The Atheist's Tragedy, The Revenger's Tragedy, or The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois. Each of these plays, reflecting its author's philosophical preoccupations, gives central importance to malcontent and/or Stoic.

Where a play's source is known, the author's handling of that source often reveals a determination to introduce or enhance malcontent or Stoic elements. Thus in As You Like It Shakespeare adds the melancholy Jaques to the story taken from Lodge's Rosalynde, while in What You Will Marston adds the malcontent scholar Lampatho to the plot derived from I Morti Vivi.[2] Marston says that he has tried "to inlarge every thing as a Poet" in telling the story of Sophonisba, and this enlargement includes turning Sophonisba and Masinissa into Stoics, and creating a new Stoic character in Gelosso.[3] Bussy D'Ambois was a historical personage, but Chapman's initial characterization of

Bussy as something of a malcontent is "quite unhistorical."[4] Clermont D'Ambois, however, is entirely fictional; Chapman "was apparently unable to find in history a man whose career would provide a model for the ethical principles the drama was intended to convey."[5] In Cato Chapman finds such a model, but even in Caesar and Pompey he reworks his sources in order to present Pompey and his wife Cornelia as Stoics.[6] Jonson's handling of the Stoic group in Sejanus is especially revealing. Despite his scholarly apparatus, he treats his sources with considerable freedom. In particular, he assigns Stoic qualities to Agrippina, Silius, Sabinus and Lepidus for which there is no historical warrant, while suppressing instances of un-Stoic behaviour, and he invents the manner of Silius' suicide before the Senate. Jonson is responsible for characterizing Arruntius as a malcontent-Stoic commentator, for the Arruntius of his sources is little more than a name.[7] Webster too transforms mere names into characters central to his plays, in the cases of Flamineo and Bosola.[8] All these examples demonstrate the deliberate inclusion or heightening of malcontent or Stoic elements. These do not occur by accident.

One reason for their occurrence is suggested by the critical consensus that malcontent and Stoic stand in a special relationship to the dramatist, and consequently to the play as a whole and to the audience. They are frequently identified as authorial mouthpieces, choric characters, commentators or observers. Flamineo, for instance, has been called "largely an author's mouthpiece," Bosola "the technical 'centre of consciousness'" of the play, and Arruntius the "author's proxy on the stage"; G.K. Hunter observes of Malevole, Vindice, Flamineo and Bosola alike that "the play is what they see."[9] Jonson defines one form this relationship can take when he causes Asper the author-satirist to assume the malcontent persona of Macilente within the play.

Malcontent and Stoic may both function as authorial spokesmen, but they fulfil this role in rather different ways. The malcontent, by virtue of being an outsider, stands between the

play and the audience. Both spectator and actor, he is in an excellent position to observe and interpret the action to those watching. The Stoic rarely stands between play and audience in just that way, though the examples of Feliche and the Sejanus chorus show that he can play such a part. Characters such as Clermont, Masinissa, Sophonisba, Cato and Charlemont are mouthpieces in the sense that they voice the ethical values endorsed by their respective plays. The moral judgements made, as author, by Tacitus are given by Jonson to the chorus of Arruntius and the Stoics.[10]

If the Stoic functions as a moral centre, the malcontent occupies a position less easy to define. It is clear that he is central, but not whether he is qualified to act as moral judge. Bosola may serve as an example. Comparison with the sources shows us that Webster created Bosola's malcontent character and gave him his central position. Bosola's name heads the cast list prefixed to the first edition of The Duchess of Malfi, although normally dramatis personae were given in order of rank; John Russell Brown thinks that "Webster may have been responsible for this . . . thus expressing his view of the play's dramatic structure."[11] Yet Bosola spies on the Duchess, betrays her to her brothers and superintends her murder. The moral ambiguity we find in him is present, to some extent, in all representations of the malcontent, and derives, of course, from the melancholy tradition. Within the range of dramatic malcontents, the tendency to evil is more fully developed in some than in others; thus Malevole and Hamlet seem better qualified to be moral judges than Flamineo, Bosola and Vindice. But, whatever his villainies, I think we usually find ourselves on the side of the malcontent; and I do not think this is to be explained purely in terms of the appeal of the villain-hero. However difficult to define, the malcontent's centrality is in some sense moral and philosophical.

To understand the malcontent's role as moral-philosophical interpreter, it is necessary to see him in his context. In a

corrupt and vicious court, he is the nearest thing to a moral judge that can be found.[12] He is not without moral awareness and even sensitivity, though his own actions may outrage this. Such is the case with Bosola, who comments wryly on his own moralizings, "Sometimes the devil doth preach" (DM I.ii.212). The fact that Vindice is morally tainted does not affect the truth of his moral indictment of the court. When the dramatists place the malcontent at centre-stage, they are choosing as their interpreter someone who understands the corrupt court and who experiences the moral dilemma of survival in it. They do not choose the purely virtuous or purely evil, who have resolved the dilemma, or those who have opted out of the world of politics. Even the Stoics who act as spokesmen are qualified to do so because they are political beings, and understand what is happening to them. Clermont attempts to influence events by influencing the Guise, and Silius penetrates Tiberius' motives for attacking him. Only someone who is of the court can know it; only someone who is outside it can see through it. The malcontent is thus uniquely fitted to transmit that vision of the world as mortal, diseased and subject to chance which is the common denominator of these plays. He can best convey -- as Bosola does -- that atmosphere of a "mist," a "shadow, or deep pit of darkness" as an image of the human condition (DM V.v.93,100).

In a different context, though, the malcontent vision may appear incomplete, simplistic and over-cynical. Jaques' vision is not that endorsed by the play as a whole, but, as Agnes Latham comments, "It is only in Arden that his cynicism looks ridiculous. At Elsinore it would be a different matter."[13] Iago affords another illuminating comparison. With his sense of neglected worth, his cynicism and humour, he seems to deserve the name malcontent; his view of the world is not so far removed from that of Flamineo. But he never admits, as Flamineo does, to having felt "the maze of conscience" in his breast, or that his life "was a black charnel" (WD V.iv.118,V.vi.267).

He lacks that moral awareness which, however buried, broadens Flamineo's perspective. And they exist in different worlds. The very presence of Desdemona confutes Iago's cynicism, whereas that of Vittoria, Brachiano and Francisco seems to confirm Flamineo's. From Othello we receive the impression that the world, despite the evil it contains, is basically healthy, not irremediably diseased -- and in such a context Iago appears nothing but a villain.

The stage-malcontent has certain dramatic strengths which make him particularly effective in his role as moral-philosophical interpreter. He makes a good commentator on the action because he is highly intelligent, perceptive and thoughtful, characteristics which he inherits from the Aristotelian tradition of melancholy.[14] These qualities are, above all, manifest in the malcontent's language, in a wit, humour and energy of speech which focus attention on him. The Elizabethans attributed melancholy malcontentedness, in part, to "want of action" and neglected talents (DM I.i.79); it is as if all the frustrated energy of the malcontent finds an outlet in his words.

Such an explanation certainly seems to fit Flamineo, who, at the end of the second scene of The White Devil, complains bitterly to Cornelia about the poverty and neglect which have driven him to survive as he does. From the moment of his first appearance, in this same scene, Flamineo displays the energetic nimbleness of mind and tongue characteristic of the malcontent. He manipulates the other characters, triumphantly controlling a complex intrigue; this is particularly evident in the passage where he is ostensibly pleading Camillo's case with Vittoria while actually vilifying Camillo and furthering Brachiano's suit. Much of what he says has a double meaning. Flamineo is never at a loss for words; his speech is vigorous, fertile, laced with cynical humour, and full of memorable conceits.[15] As he observes Vittoria and Brachiano, standing between them and the audience, he comments in asides which bring out the moral implications of their words; for example, when Vittoria

recounts her supposed dream, saying that in it she could not pray, it is Flamineo who adds, "No the devil was in your dream" (I.ii.239). Altogether, Flamineo's intelligence, energy and wit contribute to his effectiveness as a commentator.

Jonson, too, exploits the energy and humour of malcontent language in his characterization of Arruntius. Though his is not the only choric voice in Sejanus, it is the one Jonson uses throughout and, as we have already seen, it has a distinct malcontent accent, compounded of vigorous indignation and a very attractive humour. For instance, Arruntius comments that he and his friends, "the good-dull-noble lookers on / Are only called to keep the marble warm" on the Senate benches (III.i. 16-17). When Tiberius, against all expectation, praises the family of Germanicus, Arruntius knows that he is up to something, though he doesn't yet know what, and expresses his -- and our -- bewilderment: "By Jove, I am not Oedipus enough, / To understand this Sphinx" (III.i.64-65). Like most of Arruntius' asides, these lines both direct and articulate the audience's response. Arruntius often says, forcefully, what we, watching, would like to say, so becoming a spokesman for the audience's indignation and disgust, as in this comment on flatterers: "Gods! how the sponges open, and take in! / And shut again!" (V.vi.506-07) This is important in the context of a play which seems to offer no hope of release from tyranny, since at the end Tiberius remains emperor and Sejanus has been replaced by Macro. Nevertheless the experience of tyranny has to some extent been understood, and that comprehension conveyed to the audience, by Arruntius and the rest of the chorus. In giving vent to his own feelings, Arruntius provides a safety-valve for those of the audience, in typical malcontent-satirist fashion. Though "he only talks," the very energy of his outbursts is purgative (II.ii.299).

The malcontent's sheer entertainment value was recognized by the Elizabethans, who tended to emphasize his talent for satiric denunciation. Malcontent railing drew audiences to the

theatres; though the fashion is often satirized, as in What You Will and As You Like It, it is not thereby explained. The malcontent's power of railing is the most energetic manifestation of his insight and skill with words. It attracts an audience because the expression of anger and disgust is theatrically very compelling. Not only does it offer considerable scope for the actor, but it also offers the audience a kind of vicarious release. That this is not solely an Elizabethan phenomenon may be illustrated by the modern parallel of John Osborne's Look Back in Anger. Jimmy Porter -- a figure of frustrated energy -- is a latter-day malcontent whose snarling and castigation of society the audience relishes just as a seventeenth-century audience relished that of a Malevole.

On the basis of his intelligence, wit, humour and energy, the dramatists develop a peculiarly intimate, even confiding, relationship between the malcontent and the audience. This relationship is largely built up through the use of soliloquy and aside, speech conventions which are obviously related to the malcontent's position as outsider. In the court of Elsinore, Hamlet can only speak freely in soliloquy; when others approach, he mutters "break my heart, for I must hold my tongue" (Ham.I. ii.159). The malcontent, constrained by disguise and the need for secrecy, may have one trusted friend (Horatio, Celso, Hippolito), but otherwise there is no-one to unburden himself to, except the audience. The effect of soliloquy, whether the audience is directly addressed or allowed to overhear inward thought, is to draw speaker and audience together. They share knowledge from which others are excluded. The running commentary on the action delivered in asides, such as that of Arruntius or Flamineo, also does much to establish a bond between speaker and hearers. Through soliloquy and aside the malcontent confides in the audience and, at times, even makes them accomplices in what he is about to do, as Hamlet does when he sets his mousetrap, or Bosola when he tries to discover whether the Duchess is pregnant:

> I have other work on foot: I observe our Duchess
> Is sick a-days, she pukes, her stomach seethes,
> . . . there's somewhat in't.
> I have a trick, may chance discover it,
> A pretty one; I have bought some apricocks,
> The first our spring yields. (DM II.i.66-67,71-74)

The malcontent sense of humour, evident in these lines, is an important factor in this relationship; there is nothing like a shared joke for fostering intimacy. This strange complicity between malcontent and audience extends even to a mutual awareness of the play as a play, which we see, for instance, when Vindice turns openly to the spectators, breaking the theatrical illusion to say: "If every trick were told that's dealt by night / There are few here that would not blush outright" (RT II.ii.148-49). Intelligence, verbal skill, humour, energy, the ability to rivet listeners and establish intimacy with them -- all these traits coalesce in the malcontent into a very effective moral and philosophical interpreter.

Though the malcontent may be a dramatic figure of greater variety and flexibility than the Stoic, comparison between them need not lead to the conclusion that the Stoic is "a static figure, essentially undramatic."[16] This view is widely-held, but I think it is mistaken, and needs refutation. While the passive Stoic sage of Seneca and Epictetus may seem an unpromising candidate for drama, Marston, Chapman, Jonson and Tourneur realize his potential and adapt him for the stage as freely as other Renaissance interpreters adapted Stoic philosophy. The dramatists share the eclectic, admiring and yet critical attitude towards Stoicism which is typical of their age, and which I attempted to analyze in the first chapter. They take what they want from the tradition to create recognizably Stoic figures who are also effective dramatic figures.

As we saw in chapter one, there is a tendency in Stoic philosophy towards an attitude of passive resignation; a man must accept that he cannot change events. But the Elizabethan stage-Stoics are not, in fact, the ineffectual saints we might have

expected on the basis of that knowledge. They are soldiers, men of action, kings. Cato forces his way into the Senate to oppose Caesar in debate. Masinissa, leading his troops into battle, forcing Jugurth to pluck the dart from his wound, fighting Syphax in single combat, shows himself a great general and a great king, while it is Sophonisba's boast that she will die like him, "A King and souldier" (Soph.V.iii;p.61). Silius too has been a brave and victorious general; Andrugio first appears in armour; Charlemont is, above all, a soldier, and so is Clermont D'Ambois. Chapman carefully distinguishes Clermont's Stoic acceptance of events from passivity by showing that it co-exists with "incredible valour" (Revenge IV.iii.36). Clermont violently resists a treacherous attempt to capture him, provoking all to admiration:

> What spirit breathes thus in this more than man,
> Turns flesh to air possess'd, and in a storm
> Tears men about the field like autumn leaves?
> (Revenge IV.i.11-13)

This incident increases in significance when we realize that Chapman altered his source, in which the original ambush victim did not struggle.[17] The image of the Stoic as soldier and king springs naturally from the Senecan tradition, from the emphasis on man's duty to the community and the obsession with true kingship; on the stage, it becomes the dominant image.

The perfect Stoic wise man is as rare on the Elizabethan stage as Seneca insisted he was in real life. We behold, rather, a series of imperfect human beings struggling, and sometimes failing, to maintain the Stoic stance. Feliche wavers between malcontentedness and Stoicism. Andrugio swerves violently between the exalted calm of such lines as "I never was a prince till now," and the uncontrolled passion of "that very word / Unkings me quite, makes me vile passion's slave" (A and M IV.i. 46,68-69). Pandulpho maintains a far more consistent Stoic stance than Andrugio, yet even he fails in the end. Stoicism is always a response to extreme pressure. Charlemont is not Stoic to begin with; he learns to be Stoic, painfully, in

adversity. Pompey, too, only becomes Stoic in defeat and cannot maintain his stance in the face of death. Even Clermont is not quite so inhumanly perfect a Stoic as he is usually taken to be. He agrees with Chalon that it is "passing hard" to "curb affections" (Revenge IV.v.27,31), and himself feels that he does not always live up to his ideals:

> I wonder much
> At my inconstancy in these decrees
> I every hour set down to guide my life.
> (Revenge III.iv.11-13)

The news of his mistress's blindness almost breaks down his resolution; Chapman makes us aware of the effort necessary, even for a Clermont, to be and to remain Stoic.

One aspect of this general refusal to dramatize the perfect Stoic is a rejection of the strict doctrine of "apatheia," in which again the dramatists agree with other Neo-Stoics. They do not present their stage-Stoics as "stocks," totally without feeling. In Sophonisba, for instance, Marston finds a convention for expressing the emotion underlying Stoic restraint. Scipio is amazed at the betrayed Masinissa's calm; he asks "Where is thy passion?" and accuses him, predictably, of being a "statue, not man." Masinissa's reply, however, shows that he is far from being made of stone. He will weep for Gelosso:

> But for the rest silence and secret anguish
> Shall wast: shall wast: -- Scipio he that can weepe,
> Greeves not like me, private deepe inward drops
> Of bloud. (III.ii;p.40)

Philip Finkelpearl thinks that Masinissa is a failed Stoic and Sophonisba's "moral inferior"[18]; yet Scipio's praise of his virtue, at the end of the play, is surely not bestowed on a failure. Rather, Marston depicts a man who has to struggle, but ultimately succeeds in controlling his passions and living Stoically. If Sophonisba is closer to the ideal than Masinissa, that is because the strutture of the play requires such counterpoint, to emphasize the perfection this wonder of women finally attains. However, even she has to subdue her human weakness:

> I can no more: yet hath my constant toung
> Let fall no weakenes, tho' my heart were wrung
> With pangs worth hell: whilst great thoghts stop our tears
> Sorrowe unseene, unpittied inward wears.
> (III.i;p.36)

Marston manages to convey the inward sorrow, and what it costs to "bear and forbear"; his presentation of Stoicism is in fact quite compatible with the Seneca who wrote "There is no virtue that fails to realize that it does endure" (De Const.X.4).

"The suffering of a patient man, though morally admirable, is not the stuff of drama."[19] Perhaps not -- but the testing of a patient man is certainly the stuff of drama, and the characteristic situation in which the dramatists place their Stoics is the test. Even if the Stoic initiates no action, placing him in a testing situation generates dramatic tension, because the audience is waiting to see how he will survive it. What Anthony Caputi says about Sophonisba, "The key structural strategy is the device of the test or trial," is relevant to all these plays about Stoicism.[20] The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, for example, may also be read as a series of tests (of which revenge is perhaps the severest) of Clermont's Stoicism, beginning with Monsieur's deliberate and of course unsuccessful attempt to "try that temper in him" (I.i.184). The interruption of Masinissa's and Sophonisba's wedding night by news of war is obviously designed as an extreme test of their self-control, which does not falter. Though the testing situation is hardly novel as dramaturgy, its frequent use in this context surely owes much to the Senecan insistence that virtue must be purified through trial. Sophonisba accepts her suffering in this spirit: "Without misfortune Vertue hath no glorie. / Opposed trees makes tempests shew their power" (Soph.II.i;p.23). The idea and the image both seem to be borrowed from Seneca's De Providentia, whose thesis is that "Disaster is Virtue's opportunity," and one argument supporting it, "No tree becomes rooted and sturdy unless many a wind assails it" (De Prov.IV.6,16). Jonson borrows the same image and puts it in the mouth of Agrippina: "And is a fortune sent

to exercise / Your virtue, as the wind doth try strong trees" (Sej.IV.i.68-69). If we look at the stage-Stoics in the light of that image, which Jonson and Marston clearly do, we see them as trees constantly buffeted by the storms of chance -- and their inaction no longer appears undramatic. The trees are static in the sense that they are rooted each in one place, but they are tossed about by the winds, and at any moment may be blown down. Their stasis is, paradoxically, full of movement.

In final refutation of the notion that Stoicism is inherently undramatic, I would add that the Stoic response is never presented in isolation, but as one element in a dramatic contrast or conflict. The indifference to death which enables Charlemont to sleep in a churchyard and cheerfully ascend the scaffold is contrasted with D'Amville's tormented fear of death. The calm with which Masinissa receives the news of the Roman attack stands out against the ignoble panic of the Carthaginian lords. Chapman's solution to the problem of dramatizing Cato's suicide is instructive here. There is no conflict within Cato, but he has to fight with those around him, who are determined to prevent him committing suicide; the scene of his death is structured around his struggle to get back his sword. Typically, the Stoic response is dramatized by being opposed to an alternative; the contrast of Stoic and malcontent, and the opposition of Stoic to Machiavel, are the dominant patterns.

Comparison with sources shows that both malcontent and Stoic appear on stage through deliberate authorial invention. Both function in some sense as proxies for the author or intermediaries with the audience; they are moral and philosophical commentators. By varying strategies, the dramatists create considerable dramatic tension around both figures. There are of course marked differences between them. Stoicism tends to distance the character from the audience; we look up to the Stoic, while the malcontent's eyes are on the same level as our own. The Stoic response moves towards the heroic and tragic, the malcontent towards the anti-heroic and satiric. Yet either

is rarely found in an absolutely pure form; they exist mingled within the same character or the same play, and to demonstrate their affinities has been the object of this thesis. Regarded dramaturgically, both malcontent and Stoic are vehicles for the transmission of that vision of the world which they both share, a vision of a corrupted courtly world dominated by Fortune and overshadowed by Death. Their voices define the terms of this world. Though their attitudes diverge, they are based on much the same philosophy; and, dramatically, they act as transmitters of that philosophy.

## Notes to Chapter 4

[1] A and M, p. x.

[2] As You Like It, ed. Agnes Latham, Arden ed. (London: Methuen, 1975), p. xlv; Anthony Caputi, John Marston, Satirist (1961; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1976), p. 168.

[3] "To the Generall Reader," Soph., p. 5. On the sources of Sophonisba see H. Harvey Wood, Introd. to vol. II; pp. xi-xv; Finkelpearl, p. 243; John Orrell, "The Sources of Marston's The Wonder of Women or The Tragedie of Sophonisba," N and Q, 10 (1963), 102-03.

[4] Tragedies, ed. Parrott, II, 548.

[5] Travis Bogard, The Tragic Satire of John Webster (1955; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 15.

[6] Tragedies, ed. Parrott, II, 659, 674-75.

[7] Sejanus, ed. Jonas A. Barish (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 11-15; Daniel C. Boughner, The Devil's Disciple: Ben Jonson's Debt to Machiavelli (New York: Philosophical Library, 1968), p. 245.

[8] The White Devil, ed. John Russell Brown, Revels Plays (London: Methuen, 1960), p. xxxiii; The Duchess of Malfi, ed. John Russell Brown, Revels Plays (London: Methuen, 1964), p. xxviii.

[9] Flamineo: M.C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (1935; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1960), p. 193; Bosola: Nigel Alexander, "Intelligence in 'The Duchess of Malfi,'" in John Webster, ed. Brian Morris, Mermaid Critical Commentaries (London: Benn, 1970), p. 99; Arruntius: Herford and Simpson, II, 14; G.K. Hunter, "English Folly and Italian Vice: the moral landscape of John Marston," in Jacobean Theatre, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies I (London: Edward Arnold, 1960), p. 105.

[10] Daniel C. Boughner, "Juvenal, Horace and Sejanus," MLN, 75 (1960), p. 550.

[11] Duchess of Malfi, ed. Brown, p. 6.

[12] Cf. Lyons, pp. 56-57.

[13] As You Like It, ed. Latham, p. lxxvi.

[14] Cf. R.A. Foakes' comment on Vindice: "His superiority over the other characters is a moral one only to a limited extent; it is much more a matter of intelligence." The Revenger's Tragedy, ed. R.A. Foakes, Revels Plays (London: Methuen, 1966), p. xxxiv.

[15] M.C. Bradbrook notes the characteristic malcontent use of "some detailed, vivid and unexpected comparison, which gives the impression of a trained observation and an alert darting intelligence." Themes and Conventions, p. 106.

[16] Roy W. Battenhouse, "Chapman and the Nature of Man," ELH, 12 (1945), pp. 87-107; rpt. in Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. R.J. Kaufmann (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 140. See also John W. Wieler, George Chapman: The Effect of Stoicism upon his Tragedies (New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia Univ., 1949), passim, and MacLure, p. 130. The view has been challenged, for instance by Ennis Rees, The Tragedies of George Chapman: Renaissance Ethics in Action (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1954), p. 94, and by K.M. Burton, who justly observes, "It is, of course, didacticism in general, not Stoicism in particular, which causes Chapman's occasional artistic failures." "The Political Tragedies of Chapman and Ben Jonson," Essays in Criticism, 2 (1952), pp. 405-06. I am indebted to this discussion.

[17] Tragedies, ed. Parrott, II, 584.

[18] Finkelpearl, pp. 245-46.

[19] Prosser, p. 70, referring to Charlemont.

[20] Caputi, p. 242.

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