

Two Stoics

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (November 2018)



Engraving from a 1704 edition of *Meditations*, published in Oxford.

[1] Marcus Aurelius

Is our dear Marcus Aurelius
A pessimist for maintaining that
(Life being a balls-exploding brat)
At the day's demise, the only This
Upon which a man may hope to get

Some restraint is his own silly brain—

Or (indeed) an optimist for main-

Taining the very same postulate?

Philosophic epigrams may stamp

The air's hide: impotent as flowers,

Desperate as a note of copyright.

There's a grievance in the oil lamp.

My madness wakes me at all hours;

She's my infant, and can't sleep the night.



Artistic impression of Epictetus.

[2] Epictetus

The stoic Epictetus stated

In one of his philosophic drams
That "...the uneducated man blames
Others; the semi-educated

"Man blames himself; the educated
Man blames neither others nor himself."
Him and *Others* fall into the gulf.
Only *Blame* remains un-negated.

What I'm left with disengages sea
From her shape, trans- & counter-swerving.
What I'm left with is close to Irving
Layton's "...the cosmos enrages me."

Which it does. Up ahead, make a right.
I need pot roast. And croissants. Goodnight.

Jeffrey Burghauer is an English teacher in Columbus, Ohio. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo, the University of Leeds, and currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad

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