# Lipsian Neostoicism and Shakespeare's Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*

John Sullivan
Riverside City College

Friar Laurence's admonishment to Romeo in act 3, scene 3 of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, when Romeo draws his dagger in an attempt to kill himself over his banishment for killing Tybalt, sets up a dichotomy between rationality and passion: "Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art. / Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote / The unreasonable fury of a beast, / Unseemly woman in a seeming man, / And ill-beseeming beast in seeming both!" (3.3.119-23).[1] For Friar Laurence and Renaissance English society, a man should be controlled by reason. Laurence reasons that while Romeo's natural form "cries out" that he is a man, his tears and actions demonstrate passions that are unseemly. The *OED*'s definition of *seeming*, "of fine or stately proportion," refers most frequently to appearance and implies balanced looks; however, the *OED* also relates the word to behavior: "Of conduct, speech, appearance: Conformable to propriety or good taste; becoming, decorous."[2] Friar Laurence's lines combine these definitions, using *seeming*, *unseemly*, and *ill-beseeming*, to comment on and advocate for Romeo's need to return to a balanced rationality. The Friar's speech reflects what was for Shakespeare and his contemporaries a new debate about Stoicism—what was eventually called Neostoicism—and the philosophies of Justus Lipsius, who sought to rectify Stoicism's secularism with sixteenth-century Christian thought.

In *Justus Lipsius: The Philosophy of Renaissance Stoicism*, Jason Lewis Saunders references Lipsius's 1584 publication of *De Constantia libri duo* as "a systematic re-evaluation and comparison

of the doctrines of Stoicism with those of Christianity" in what Lipsius labels as his attempt to "adapt the ancient philosophy to Christian truth."[3] One can hardly blame him, or others—notably Michel de Montaigne, Peter Paul Rubens, and Francis Bacon—for the effort to rationalize the popularity of classical Stoic philosophy and sixteenth-century religious thought, especially in light of the religious upheavals and ensuing bloodshed that occupied much of the West. Despite the exploration of Greek and Roman philosophies by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scholars, the churches, Catholic and Protestant, remained staunchly traditional and enforced this traditionalism. For Lipsius, this was a fine line to walk, but, according to Saunders, Lipsius found "vindication of the right to make use of the Graeco-Roman literature in the interests and honor of true Faith," and he did this by turning to St. Jerome and St. Augustine.[4] Lipsius bases his argument on Jerome's idea that "the Christian, who has been seduced by the beauty of the *sapientia secularis*, must make a beginning by cleansing it of all that it holds of death, idolatry, voluptuousness, error, and passion, and, when so purified and suitably prepared, it will become worthy for the service of God." He couples this spiritual justification with a biblical justification used first by Augustine: that like the Jews who took all the gold and silver they could when they fled Egypt, Christianity should also, and "employ them for her own uses."[5]

With these justifications, Lipsius then proceeds to integrate Stoicism and Christianity, first by establishing Aristotle's ideas of natural philosophy as the "necessary prerequisite for a correct understanding of God's Will, as manifest in His Works," and then by defining his own role as that of an "Eclectic" with the mission "to choose those precepts which are most in conformity with the principles of the Christian religion."[6] His ultimate goal hinged on the Stoic belief that "philosophy is the Law or Art of Living Well," which he modifies into the "inquiry into and study of wisdom" to the end that "wisdom is the perfect food of the human mind; philosophy is the love of wisdom and is the endeavor to attain it."[7] Hence, by pursuing wisdom, one "studies the laws of nature and learns the reciprocal relationship between these natural laws (which are the will of God) and rules of conduct" and, by doing so, becomes "truly wise."[8] By reaching that plateau of wisdom, one reaches a full understanding of perfection, ergo God.

While the political, social, and religious climates of Europe during the Renaissance sparked interest in Stoic ideals, Renaissance thinkers found contradictions with Christian theology that made the relationship between the two problematic. Stoicism came under attack in many ways, most notably by Augustinian scholars who saw it as anti-Christian. By the mid-sixteenth century, with political and religious revolutions occurring around the continent, Dutch thinkers like Lipsius began working out these contradictions. Lipsius put himself in the forefront of these debates with the publication of his *First and Second Books of Constancy*, in Latin in 1584 and in English in 1590. In these texts, he modifies Stoic philosophy by combining it with "scholarship, religious piety, and sophisticated statecraft" and re-envisioning Stoic ideas of isolation and friendship.[9] Halvard Leira, in his article "Justus Lipsius, Political Humanism and the Disciplining of 17th Century Statecraft," states that "Lipsius tried to combine Stoicism and Christianity, more specifically fusing a rewrought Senecan moral philosophy and Tacitean insights into disenchanted political practice."[10] He sought to reconcile the differences between Stoicism and Christianity that earlier Renaissance thinkers found so troubling: "By linking together Seneca and Tacitus, Lipsius promoted a distinctive approach to society, privileging the role of ancient wisdom as the means to understand the demands of the contemporary world."[11] Stoics believed that men (and women) needed to seek constant harmony with nature in the way they lived. As a result, they "should be free from passion, unmoved by joy or grief, and submit without complaint to unavoidable necessity," and that to this end, they should remain apart from the temptations brought on by the general society and culture and instead embrace rationality and wisdom.[12] In order to live in harmony in such a way, Stoics tended to be isolationist so as to maintain Aristotelian rationality and to reach a higher self-awareness and spirituality, thus permitting themselves to explore their own connections with the natural universe without distractions.

In contrast, Lipsius argued that "the perfect Wise Man of the Stoics is not found but is to be understood as an ideal only; the man, however, who is in a state of progress toward wisdom does exist."[13] Part of Lipsius's Neostoic philosophy centered on the need for harmonious and consistent living with nature, what he

termed *constancy*: "a right and immoveable strength of the minde, neither lifted up, nor pressed down with externall or casuall accidents."[14] According to Geoffrey Miles in *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans*, this Stoic view saw the universe as "perfectly harmonious, ordered, unified whole, animated and guided by a power which can be called, more or less synonymously, Reason (logos) or Nature or God."[15] To live a life of constancy, one lives, as Plato noted, according to "true knowledge" and not just beliefs or opinions; Plato reasoned that this life of constancy led to a virtuous, moral life and that "virtue depends on making correct judgments," as a result of which Stoics "normally speak not of 'good' and 'bad' men, but of 'wise' and 'foolish' ones."[16] Lipsius argued that *constancy* was not in opposition to God, but instead sought after the nature of God; and living a *constant* life meant living not for self-enlightenment but for a moral purpose. This moral purpose was achieved only if constancy was achieved.

According to Mark Morford in *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius*, "The outstanding characteristic of Lipsius's Stoicism is its practicality," and Lipsius's purpose was to "adapt Roman Stoicism to the realities of life in the sixteenth century."[17] Lipsius did this by returning to the Ciceronian idea of social roles and the value of friendship. In *De Amicitia*, Cicero's character, Laelius, the principle speaker, points out that "friendship can only be between good people," but for the practical men (and women), the conundrum of this interpretation of friendship is that "the wise man can be good . . . but [the Stoic's] definition of wisdom is one that no human being so far has been able to achieve."[18] Lipsius addresses this conundrum through his explanations of *contubernium*, "a military term for sharing a tent on a campaign [that is then] extended to the relationship of an inexperienced person living with and learning from an older man on campaign."[19] While most of the research centers on the military application of *contubernium*, which has then been applied to Shakespeare's Roman plays, Lipsius's philosophies can be more broadly applied, for as Morford notes, it is "easy for the notion of *contubernium* to be extended to non-military aspects of friendship,"[20] like the relationship between Romeo and Friar Laurence. For Cicero, the purpose of such friendship is that, as Laelius reasons, "one needs a person by whom to measure our moral behavior. You

cannot correct what is bad except by the measuring rod."[21] Seneca likewise advises that "we must love some good man and always have him before our eyes, so that we may live as if he is watching us and that all our actions may be as it were in his sight," from which Lipsius concludes that "Stoic contubernium, therefore, had moral improvement as its goal."[22] For Lipsius and Neostoicism, friendship "flows from Stoic doctrine: he who loves himself, that is, who makes himself good and wise, this man also loves other men in this way—'not for himself alone, but for the whole world does he believe he was born,'" with an emphasis, according to Morford, "upon the moral transformation of the younger friend, with the goal of attaining virtue and wisdom."[23]

Certainly, this friendship is evident in the relationship between Friar Laurence and Romeo. Romeo's passion is clearly established before we meet Friar Laurence, which sets up the contrast for Friar Laurence's introduction in act 2, scene 3, when Laurence philosophizes on the nature of nature:

> The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
> Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,
> And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
> From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels:
> Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,
> The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,
> I must up-fill this osier cage of ours
> With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers. (3.3.1-8)

Central to Laurence's comments is the need for a life lived in balance with nature, a Stoic ideal: "The Object, or End to be desired, is for the Stoics a life in accord with Nature . . . in agreement with Right Reason, or in accord with virtue."[24] Laurence's personification within these lines sets up a balance of contrasts: the "grey-eyed morn," "frowning night," "flecked darkness like a drunkard reels" contrasted with the "sun advance[s] his burning eye, / The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry." These lines pit the night against the day, and foolish human behavior—grey-eyed, frowning, drunkenness—against the positive traits of cheerfully eliminating the hold such foolishness can have on a person. One implication is that Laurence, by strolling through his garden, actually sets himself up as the day and the sun. It also underscores the greater conflict in Neostoicism. His words create a battle not just within nature, but

also within the person, specifically Romeo, and this analogy can be extended to greater human-kind. As Miles observes, "Lipsius links the struggle for constancy with the fundamental opposition between 'REASON' and 'OPINIONS.' Right Reason ('*A true sense and judgement of thinges humane and divine*') and Opinion ('*A false and frivolous conjecture of those thinges*') are for Lipsius mighty opposites, linked to the Platonic dichotomy of soul and body, the heavenly and earthly part of man."[25] Shakespeare sets up this dichotomy by using the heavenly sun and the earthly dew to illustrate the contrast between soul and body. This idea is reinforced with the emotion of the drunkard, an earthly, "opinion-driven" side of humanness that impedes the progress towards constancy, and the nature side of Right Reason, embodied in the "day's path," "Titan's fiery wheels," and the "burning eye." These descriptors are neither human nor subject to emotions. They are not opinion and cannot be denied; therefore, they illustrate the "true sense" of the divine found in nature that Lipsius talks about.

As Laurence continues, he uses Neostoic imagery to build on these contrasts, specifically addressing the paradox of nature that in death there is life:

> The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;
> What is her burying grave that is her womb,
> And from her womb children of divers kind
> We sucking on her natural bosom find,
> Many for many virtues excellent,
> None but for some and yet all different. (3.3.9-14)

Within this paradox, the Friar reveals his Stoic philosophy that by "sucking on [earth's] natural bosom" we find "many for many virtues excellent." This brings up Seneca's idea that for a man to be virtuous, he must suckle on nature. According to Lipsius, "That is good which rouses the soul's impulse toward itself *in accordance with Nature*."[26] To attain this Nature, the soul must be virtuous to seek good through the exercise of Reason. Seneca explained that "the only Good is Virtue itself . . . the sole means of achieving the good life. The Supreme Good is Moral Worth (*Honestum*)" and that "in each thing, that quality should be best for which the thing is brought into being, and by which it is judged."[27] Good, then, was the pursuit of a person's original purpose, and by living according to such purpose, according to Virtue, one achieved both *Supreme*

*Good* and *Moral Worth*. For Neostoics, embracing reason and virtue according to one's divine purpose enables the "manifestation of God's Will."[28] However, Laurence acknowledges in line 14 that not all men will do so: "None but for some and yet all different." In fact, he clearly sets up the exception, which implies that he (thereby Shakespeare) is aware of the absolutism that the Roman philosophers ascribed to and that the Augustinians criticized. Through this line, Shakespeare actually ascribes a practicality that Lipsius argues for, one that is not as arrogant as some who ascribed to Stoicism would have it, and one that adheres to the Senecan philosophical ideal rather than Cicero's.

Shakespeare seems to use the relationship Lipsius sets up between himself and his narrator in his *First Book of Constancy* to define the relationship between Laurence and Romeo. In this book, Charles Langius says to Lipsius,

> Troubles are ever about thee yea in thee. For this distracted mind of thine wars, and ever will be at war with itself, in coveting, in flying, in hoping, in despairing. And as they that for fear turn their backs to their enemies are in the greater danger, having their face from their foe, and their backs unarmed. So fares it with these ignorant novices, who never have made any resistance against their affections: but by flight yielded unto them. But thou young man, if thou be advised by me, shalt stand to it, and set sure footing against this thy adversary, sorrow. Above all things it behooves thee to be constant; for by fighting many man has gotten the victory, but none by flying.[29]

The wisdom espoused by Langius is echoed by Laurence when Romeo enters. Laurence's greeting ("*Benedicite*," or blessings) is both religious and paternalistic, and draws on the teacher/student relationships that Lipsius advocated in his philosophy of *contubernium*. The Friar acts in accordance with Lipsius's ideal Neostoic, one who pursues wisdom and encourages others to do the same. The tone of each character, Langius in *Constancy* and Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*, is similar. After assessing Romeo's appearance, he begins, not chastising, but more so attempting to instill wisdom in the young man:

> Young son, it argues a distemper'd head
> So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:

> Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
> And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;
> But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain
> Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign:
> Therefore thy earliness doth me assure
> Thou art up-roused by some distemperature;
> Or if not so, then here I hit it right,
> Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night. (2.3.33-41)

By addressing Romeo as "young son," Laurence implies a closer relationship than that of a religious man to a noble.

In fact, Shakespeare's Laurence builds on the source character in the original 1562 narrative poem by Arthur Brooke, *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Iuliet*. Brooke's Laurence, according to Robert Stevenson in *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, was "unlike most members of his order"; he was a doctor of divinity, a popular confessor, the prince's chose counselor, a spiritual guide, devout churchman, and highly repentant for his role in the tragedy.[30] The earlier Laurence is a Franciscan and a friend to Romeus: "This barefoot friar girt with cord his grayish weed, / For he of Francis' order was, a friar, as I rede."[31] As a result, he would have taken a vow of poverty, and like the Stoics, shunned any materialism as an impediment to a close spiritual relationship.[32] In addition, Brooke's Friar is

> A secret and assuréd friend unto the Montague.
> Loved of this young man more than any other guest,
> The friar eke of Verone youth aye likéd Romeus best;
> For whom he ever hath in time of his distress,
> As erst you heard, by skilful lore found out his harm's redress:
> To him is Romeus gone, ne stay'th he till the morrow;
> To him he painteth all his case, his passéd joy and sorrow.[33]

However, in the 1562 preface to *Romeus and Juliet*, Brooke describes the problems facing the young lovers, in part, as "conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity)."[34] Granted the relationship between Laurence and Romeus is close, with Romeus telling Juliet that he will seek out Laurence, his "Ghostly sire," for "sage advice,"[35] Brooke's Laurence is far from Shakespeare's, who embodies the Neostoic desire to mentor others through a *contubernium*-type relationship. In the original, the Friar is

superstitious and thereby foolish and un-virtuous. In Shakespeare, he is a rational mentor, more fatherly than possibly Romeo's own father, but without the foolish nature, and much less like the negative portrayal of Brooke's Laurence.

Shakespeare creates Laurence as a more rational character than the typical sixteenth century characterization. Laurence is a character in flux, one who embodies the Neostoic patiently seeking wisdom, but not yet attaining the perfect understanding of God. He is flawed, sometimes giving in to his emotions, but he is also imbued with the Lipsian ideals of friendship. Shakespeare makes that friendship easier by making Laurence a friar, not a priest, which would be the next level of religious hierarchy. Likewise, he reduces Romeo's status to a lower echelon noble. By doing so, he places Laurence and Romeo on more equal footing. Yet the role for Laurence is tenuous because, as Stevenson points out, Laurence does not have the requisite authority to perform more than a cursory role of mentor in Romeo's life.[36] He is not able to legally marry the young lovers because neither is he ordained nor is Juliet of age.[37] However, he takes them off-stage to be married, and in act 5, scene 3 says, "I married them" (5.3.242); but this does not necessarily mean that he performed the ceremony.

Shakespeare could be using this ambiguity for several purposes. First, as an unordained friar or brother, Laurence occupies the lowest echelon of Catholic service. Friars typically did the grunt work of the church, the daily chores, and were typically more familiar with the congregants that priests, monks, or bishops. Priests had greater responsibilities, and these sometimes included traveling from church to church; because they could administer sacraments, they were more likely to be connected with noblemen, serving the surrounding community only as part of their general duties. Monks and their monastic leaders, the abbots, were the academics of the church, sequestering themselves, researching, translating, and studying to further the general church knowledge. They could not perform the sacraments unless they were ordained, but they were educated, unlike some of the priests who could be trained through oral memorization. Bishops were more aloof, the business managers of the region's churches, and answerable to cardinals and the pope.

As a Friar, Laurence inhabited a position like that of Romeo; both belonged to powerful organizations, but both occupied

positions of little real power. They could not do what they wanted to and were answerable to others who had more power over them. Coming from such a background would naturally draw them to one another, especially Romeo, the younger, to the older and wiser Friar. Morford states that "Lipsius introduces an important element in his theory of contubernium: the teacher, who has advanced towards sapientia [wisdom], loves his students because they are his friends and therefore leads them towards wisdom and virtue."[38] In the Friar, Lipsius would see someone similar: a teacher, a mentor, someone who exhibits constancy and who seeks to lead Romeo towards wisdom and virtue. Lipsius observes that "wisdom makes the good man a lover of the young, of those, however, who, because of good character, are more inclined towards virtuous living."[39]

*Romeo and Juliet* is a battle between what the Stoics called *rational* and *opinion*. Lipsius writes, "We define right reason to be a true sense and judgment of things human and divine (so far as the same pertains to us). But opinion being the contrary to it is defined to be a false and frivolous conjecture of those things."[40] He later states that "inconstancy is the companion of opinion and that the property of it is to be soon changed, and to wish that undone, which a little before it caused to be done. But constancy is a mate always matched with reason."[41] Shakespeare sets up part of the conflict within the play as between Laurence's reasoning/constancy and Romeo's opinion/inconstancy. The latter is clearly evident in the first two acts as Romeo and his friends run through Verona, engaging the Capulet clan in "false and frivolous conjecture[s]" as part of the ongoing mayhem between the Montague's and their rivals. Overlying this understory is the infatuation that consumes Juliet and Romeo. While Laurence's first appearance doesn't come until the middle of the second act, by then Shakespeare has embroiled the audience in the unbridled sixteenth-century teenaged angst and passion, all set against the backdrop of the familial/social/political/religious turmoils that were indicative of the larger English and European landscape. With so much chaos in the first two acts, by act 2, scene 3, audiences were probably hoping for some kind of rationality. Then in strolls Friar Laurence, bearing not so much religious doctrines intended to enforce self-discipline, but Neostoic constancy.

With his opening speech, Laurence establishes the natural balance, the ideal that must exist if a person is to reach perfection and thereby reach oneness with God. Yet this first introduction to the Friar, despite the seemingly negative impact of Romeo's immaturity on his rationality, has the opposite purpose. When Romeo enters in an obviously disheveled state, Laurence assumes he has been with a woman, probably Rosaline. Stevenson comments that "even when disabused of this idea, [Laurence] shows that he still considers Romeo crassly immature," and cites 2.3.74-85 as evidence; however, several of Laurence's comments dispute Stevenson, especially in light of the interpretive performance.[42] The first lines Laurence utters can be delivered with a serious or a playful tone—"Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here! / Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear, / So soon forsaken?" (2.3.69-71)—thus affecting the demonstration of Laurence's Neostoic condition. In the mind of a Neostoic who is balancing constancy with Christianity, Laurence understands that the uncontrolled passions that may have led to such an encounter would demand repentance in order to restore Romeo's natural moral balance; so when he initially exclaims, "God pardon sin!" (2.3.47), his purpose is to mentor his charge to repentance and perfection as evidenced in the wisdom he imparts when he observes, "Young men's love then lies / Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes" (2.3.70-71). Laurence's reactions reveal that Romeo has a history, and his indiscretions can appear to throw off the constancy that the Neostoic friar is supposed to be living; but Laurence maintains his composure and the hope of restoring the natural balance by turning not just Romeo's, but also the Montague and Capulet "households' rancor to pure love" (2.3.99).

Much of this is predicated on the artistic interpretation of the actor; however, Laurence's lines clearly reveal the Stoic philosophies of 1590s England. Seneca says, "I will tell you how to recognize the healthy [*sanum*] man; if he is content with himself, if he is self-confident, if he knows that all that men pray for, all good things that are granted or requested, have no weight in the good life . . . , [the wise man] is full; even if he meets with adversity, he meets it without anxiety and puts it in its place; the happiness that he enjoys is the greatest, unbroken, his own.[43] Laurence is readily content with himself and demonstrates self-confidence

through the wisdom he imparts. His final line of the scene conveys this Stoic ideal: "Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast" (2.3.101). Emboldened by the prospect of doing a moral good that has larger political and social ramifications, Laurence relies on the Lipsian merger of Stoicism and Christianity to calm himself and work through the irrationality that precedes his next major appearance in act 3, scene 3.

For a Neostoic confronting the endless litany of unencumbered passions of the first three acts, Laurence fares remarkably well. His first on-stage wavering is replaced by steady confidence when he makes a minor appearance to marry Romeo and Juliet in act 2, scene 6; and that confidence continues in the face of the turmoil of act 3, scene 3. In his rebuke of Romeo, Laurence is the play's embodiment of Lipsian ideals. He is the Neostoic wise man who "remains indifferent to everything which is outside his own mind and hence outside his control, and cares only about the one thing which is within his control: his own moral state."[44] For Laurence, who has already been informed of the fight with, death of, and subsequent political turmoil surrounding Tybalt's death and Romeo's escape from a death penalty, nature's course has favored Romeo:

> Thy Juliet is alive,
> For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead:
> There art thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,
> But thou slewest Tybalt: there art thou happy.
> The law that threatened death becomes thy friend
> And turns it to exile: there art thou happy. (3.3.145-50)

In the face of Romeo's irrational, immature rant, Laurence attempts to calm the hysterics with reason and logic. Three times he insists, "There art thou happy"; this is a clear plea for Romeo to be not just content, but to embrace the calm, Neostoic philosophy that would restore balance to his overwrought, impassioned behavior by replacing it with stability, harmony, and rationality. In other words, Romeo, "get a grip and be happy you won't die."

As Stephenson notes, for the Stoic "bare moral precepts are not sufficient, they must be reinforced by general doctrines and moral training. Good behavior and ethical righteousness demand doctrinal study," while for the Neostoic, Lipsius countered that "the works of God need no formal training in order to understand

and to follow them."[45] It is within this debate that Laurence finds himself trapped when confronted by Romeo's emotions. According to Cicero, "When there have been added reason and logical proof, plus the facts, then comes the clear perception of all these things; and this reason, having been by these stages made complete, finally attains to wisdom."[46] Romeo refuses to "add reason and logical proof" because he, once again, lets his emotions take over, thus driving him away from the reason Laurence advocates and towards an inevitable end. In fact, it is the specter of death hanging over Romeo that seems illogically to propel him to kill himself, and this heightens the contrast between his irrational passions and Neostoic virtue. Romeo's death at his own hand would serve no purpose and is, therefore, against the beliefs of Neostoic Laurence. However, it is not anti-Stoic because, as Saunders points out, Stoic orthodoxy believed that "there are times when it is incumbent upon the Wise Man to commit suicide rather than take part in some disgraceful action."[47] Cicero reasoned that "when a man's circumstances contain a majority of things in accord with Nature, it is his moral duty to remain alive; when he sees or possesses a majority of things contrary to Nature, he is morally obliged to take his life."[48] For Romeo, the death of Tybalt; his secret marriage to a Capulet, the sworn enemies of his own family, without the approval of the bride's father or a dowry to secure the marriage or even the ruler's approval; his banishment from Verona; and his return on penalty of death could all be used to argue that he has a "majority of things contrary to nature" and is thus obligated to commit suicide. Yet his lack of reason, virtue, and wisdom presents a compelling case that he does not meet the basic requirements for allowable suicide according to Stoic philosophy as outlined by Cicero: "It is on occasion, appropriate for the Wise Man to quit life although he is happy, and also of the Fool to remain in life although he is miserable."[49]

In act 2, Laurence set up the purpose of death as part of a cycle, the paradox of death giving life through birth in nature's womb. Lipsius presents this idea in Neostoic philosophy, arguing that "this 'Paradox' must be rejected, and the notion of the underlying liberty of man to decide his own fate be declared erroneous. As Pythagoras has said, 'Man must remain among the living until God gives the word.'"[50] In *Manuductionis ad Stoicam Philosophiam Libr III*,

Lipsius cites precedents laid out by Apuleius ("The Wise Man does not relinquish his bodily life, except at the behest of God"), Vergil ("those mourners, whose own hands dealt them death, who flung away their souls in hatred of the day"), and Aristotle ("such a man endures death not because it is good but to fly from evil") to argue in opposition to suicide. He also cites Seneca, who states that "I do not know which men give us greater courage—those who call for death or those who meet it cheerfully and tranquilly—for the former attitude is sometimes inspired by madness and anger, while the latter is the calm that results from fixed judgment."[51]

Shakespeare gives us both situations in *Romeo and Juliet*. In act 3, Laurence, having set up the natural role of death in his first appearance, tries to appeal to Romeo's rational side by using wisdom to confront Romeo's uncontrolled emotions: "Romeo, come forth: come forth, thou fearful man. / Affliction is enamored of thy parts, / And thou art wedded to calamity" (3.3.1-3). Modern psychologists advise that to resolve a conflict, one must first acknowledge the feelings the person is experiencing, and this Laurence does by calling him a "fearful man" and addressing the affliction and calamity that Romeo feels has been inflicted upon him, as evidenced by his response: "What is the Prince's doom?/ What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand/That I yet know not?" (3.3.4-6). Laurence remains calm, as evidenced by the commas and periods, and the lack of exclamation points. He evokes the wisdom of experience in knowing Romeo's past when he responds, "Too familiar / Is my dear son with such sour company" (3.3.7-8).

Following Neostoic philosophy, the Friar is attempting to show Romeo that wisdom has prevailed and that he should reject the "sour company" of fools that ultimately led him to this point. He couches the "Prince's doom" with the positive term "tidings," which Romeo seems to notice when he asks, "What less than doomsday is the Prince's doom?" (3.3.10), giving Laurence some hope, albeit short-lived, that Romeo may be transforming. His next lines seem less harsh: "A gentler judgment vanished from his lips: / Not body's death, but body's banishment" (3.3.11-12). In delivering these lines, again Laurence seems to embrace the wisdom of the ruling and is more concerned with Romeo's moral state. He terms it a "gentler judgment" because by sparing Romeo,

the Prince has given him a chance to find and follow that Neostoic path that will lead to an understanding of the nature of God so that when he does die naturally, he will already be in communion with God. In addition, for the Neostoics, death is natural and should not be feared if it occurs naturally; however, unnatural forms, like suicide or condemnation for bad acts, imperil the soul and need to be prevented. For Laurence, the duality of this belief stems from not just the Neostoic belief, but also the Catholic teaching that suicide or condemnation is a Cardinal sin resulting in eternal damnation. In effect, banishment serves both as an escape from hell and as nature's way of giving Romeo the chance to learn how to live a *constant* life.

For Friar Laurence, however, the tragedy of the play is that Romeo never understands the Neostoic philosophy no matter how much Laurence tries to explain and model it, but this doesn't stop the friar from trying, despite Romeo's call for his own death. As soon as Laurence utters the word "banishment," Romeo descends back into an irrationality that is the antithesis of constancy. Laurence advises, "Be patient, for the world is broad and wide" (3.3.17), so the panic and fear that Romeo seems intent on killing himself over denies his true purpose in life. Cicero defined the *constant* life as *homologia*, the "consistent playing of a part appropriate to human nature, one's personal character, and one's social role."[52] For Cicero, a person who is constant strikes a balance between human nature, personal character, and social role by maintaining proper decorum. Seneca added "strength and stability of mind, unmoved by passion, unshaken by disaster, always the same whatever the external circumstances."[53] Friar Laurence tries to reason with Romeo from this position:

> O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!
> Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind prince,
> Taking thy part, hath rush'd aside the law,
> And turn'd that black word death to banishment:
> This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not. (3.3.25-30)

His response demonstrates his strength and stability by getting straight to the point, that Romeo is being unthankful; that the law is absolute, but the prince was kind; that nature, and thereby God, has shown mercy by not allowing him to die while he is still immature.

Laurence is unshaken by the disaster that is playing out. He also plays his social role as religious advisor, citing sin as the culprit, and demonstrates his own character by remaining calm, but steadfastly (another Neostoic trait) remaining adamant in his training of Romeo: "I'll give thee armor to keep off that word, / Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy, / To comfort thee, though thou art banished." (3.3.57-59). The philosophy Laurence speaks of is not the religion of tradition and humility. He doesn't demand Romeo kneel and pray for forgiveness and further repentance. Instead, he tries to teach, saying, "Let me dispute with thee of thy estate" (3.3.66); in other words, he advocates for Romeo to let them explore and seek to understand the nature of the situation, which is a Neostoic tactic. Yet Romeo refuses, seeking after his own demise when he says to Laurence that he is "taking the measure of an unmade grave" (3.3.68), at which point, the Nurse enters, and inflames the situation to the point that the Friar must intervene to prevent Romeo from killing himself. It is in this speech that Laurence best demonstrates his Neostoicism:

> Art thou a man? thy form cries out thou art:
> Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote
> The unreasonable fury of a beast:
> Unseemly woman in a seeming man!
> Or ill-beseeming beast in seeming both!
> Thou hast amazed me: by my holy order,
> I thought thy disposition better temper'd. (3.3.109-15)

The overall organization of his speech sets up the Neostoic argument, beginning when he addresses the irrational and emotional opinions that Romeo has given credence to by surrendering to "womanish" reactions and beast-like fury. The use of the word *disposition* is also significant in that it is defined as both "the action of setting in order, or condition of being set in order; arrangement, order; relative position of the parts or elements of a whole" and "the due arrangement of the parts of an argument or discussion."[54] Romeo has clearly failed in taking control of and ordering or arranging his situation in a manageable and logical manner so as to maintain his self-control. He refuses to see the connections between his actions, punishments, and pardons, and by not exercising control, he does not create a valid argument that would convince Laurence or anyone else of the logic of his

reactions. This distempered disposition lacks the Neostoic insight necessary to be rational, so Laurence tries to instill it in Romeo by laying out the rational argument embedded with Neostoic ideals of virtue that stem from Natural Law, which for the Neostoics was akin to God.

> Hast thou slain Tybalt? wilt thou slay thyself?
> And stay thy lady too that lives in thee,
> By doing damned hate upon thyself?
> Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?
> Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet
> In thee at once; which thou at once wouldst lose.
> (3.3.116-21)

As a part of the Natural Law, Romeo is, like all people in Neostoic philosophy, a triune entity, comprised of heaven, earth, and the physical and spiritual birthing that each represent—a form of spirit, physical body, and soul—"It is necessary not to oppose the universal laws of human nature . . . ; if man understands this relationship, it is solely by means of his use of Reason; and this Reason . . . conveys to him the easiest and simplest dictum to follow: life in accordance with his own nature."[55] Lipsius states that the "natural composition of the universe, which the Stoics called Fate, is inborn in all things, by means of 'the Common Nature,' i.e., God."[56] By being born, Romeo is a natural composition, and by destroying his own body, he destroys the work of God, which is divine and therefore a part of nature and subject to Natural Law that, according to Lipsius, extends into eternal nature: "For this disposition is in the Mind of God, and since this is eternal, so is the nature of Fate."[57]

> Fie, fie, thou shamest thy shape, thy love, thy wit;
> Which, like a usurer, abound'st in all,
> And usest none in that true use indeed
> Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit:
> Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
> Digressing from the valour of a man;
> Thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,
> Killing that love which thou hast vow'd to cherish;
> Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
> Misshapen in the conduct of them both,
> Like powder in a skilless soldier's flask,

> Is set afire by thine own ignorance,
> And thou dismember'd with thine own defence.
> What, rouse thee, man! thy Juliet is alive,
> For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead;
> There art thou happy. (3.3.122-37)

Laurence's references to shape, love, wit, true use, noble shape, and valour attest to the virtue that was essential to Neostoic living. The physical shape is subject to the natural laws and created as the image of God, and is therefore divine. Love and wit are to be ruled by reason and predicated on the person striving to understand nature. "Living according to Nature came to mean living according to Right Reason, or according to Virtue, and hence to mean seeking after God, who himself becomes the all-important Object or End."[58] By focusing thus, the individual develops the wit and ability to love that is absent from the foolish man. Seneca notes, "This is a sworn obligation by which we are bound to submit to the human lot, and not to be disquieted by those things which we have no power to avoid. We have been born into a kingdom; to obey God is freedom."[59]

Laurence then alludes to those unavoidable occurrences that Romeo faced:

> Tybalt would kill thee,
> But thou slew'st Tybalt; there are thou happy too:
> The law that threaten'd death becomes thy friend
> And turns it to exile; there art thou happy:
> A pack of blessings lights up upon thy back;
> Happiness courts thee in her best array;
> But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,
> Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love:
> Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.
> Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
> Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her:
> But look thou stay not till the watch be set,
> For then thou canst not pass to Mantua;
> Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time
> To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
> Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back
> With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
> Than thou went'st forth in lamentation. (3.3.137-54)

By laying out for Romeo the logical approach, Laurence demonstrates the Neostoic view that by applying Right Reason and Natural Law, man is freed from the cares he is subjected to by unforeseen or inescapable circumstances. He "gives himself over to God, or the fated Necessity which rules the world. [For] the wise man knows that whatever happens comes about by the law of nature."[60] Laurence's speech is intended to counter Romeo's desire to commit suicide and the resulting damnation of his soul and separation from God. He lays the plan rationally, logically, and according to reason, but the problem for Laurence is that his constancy does not work well with the unencumbered passions exhibited by both Romeo and Juliet. Both refuse to embrace the constancy exhibited and advocated by the Friar; and further complicating the Friar's attempts at introducing balance is the Nurse, whose emotionalism counters the Friar's rationality. The Nurse introduces an element of unpredictability that undermines the rationality of Laurence's plans, and this is, in fact, where the criticism of Stoicism is applicable.

For Laurence, whose philosophy is a Neostoic mixture of constancy in nature and constancy in God, the uncontrolled passions ultimately usurp all attempts to introduce practical rationality into the chaos, thus leading to the tragic consequences of the play. Yet Laurence exhibits until the very end of the play the constancy demanded by Neostoic philosophy. At the play's conclusion, he states,

> I am the greatest, able to do least,
> Yet most suspected, as the time and place
> Doth make against me of this direful murder;
> And here I stand, both to impeach and purge
> Myself condemned and myself excused. (5.3.232-36)

His statement that he is "the greatest" implies his self-assurance in his own constancy, as well as a bit of the arrogance of the Stoics. In his mind, he is in tune with nature and thereby God's will, is seeking true friendship, and is therefore being the Good, rational person that Neostoicism demands. He also expresses his confidence that he did all he could do in the circumstances, but was "able to do least," acknowledging the ineffectiveness of rational thought to circumvent the tragedy. His Neostoic stance, "And here I stand, both to impeach and purge / Myself condemned

and myself excused," reflects the Neostoic lesson that "man learns how trifling and inconsequential are the affairs and concerns of mankind."[61] According to Saunders, "The individual would do better to apply himself to understanding the world; the result would be less involvement in petty quarrels and the kind of strife and political chaos which Lipsius saw all around in the Europe of the sixteenth century"[62] —and the chaos that Shakespeare writes into *Romeo and Juliet*. This understanding comes from Cicero's assertions that the virtues of Self-Control and Loftiness of Mind are the result of studying natural philosophy: "The study of the heavenly phenomena bestows a power of Self-Control that arises from the perception of the consummate restraint and order that obtain even among the gods; also Loftiness of Mind is inspired by contemplating the creations and actions of the gods."[63] As a Neostoic, Laurence has attempted to maintain his constancy and steadfastness despite the results, and he has concluded that his involvement is the result of his own distraction from the study of nature that Romeo's entrance in act 3 interrupted. But he also engages in his own defense and the inevitability of the tragedy in his recounting of the events leading up to it.

Clearly, he was faced with Romeo's and Juliet's unfettered emotions, but he also lays out the moral and ethical dilemmas, particularly Juliet's proposed betrothal to Paris after having secretly married Romeo. The Neostoic, Catholic Laurence, was obligated "to rid her from this second marriage, / Or in my cell there would she kill herself" (5.3.250-51). He was confronted with a choice between bigamy and adultery or suicide, which are all Cardinal sins and would mean the destruction of Juliet's soul. Lipsius believed that "all good men must preserve their souls in the keeping of their bodies,"[64] which neither of the choices facing Laurence would achieve. By establishing this moral dilemma, Laurence provides the evidence that the situation was outside his control except in trying to preserve the eternal souls of Juliet and Romeo. The letter to Romeo that Friar John bore "was stayed by accident, and yesternight / Returned" undelivered (5.3.261-62), again without fault on Laurence's part. However, he does admit his own fear at the tomb—"But then a noise did scare me from the tomb" (5.3.271)—as part of the reason he was unable to save Juliet. He rallies an adequate defense, though some audiences may

not think so, but he also ends with the caveat that he could bear some fault: "If aught in this / Miscarried by my fault, let my old life / Be sacrificed, some hour before his time, / unto the rigour of severest law" (5.3.266-69). His statement adheres to the tenets of the Neostoics: he cannot kill himself, but if the society demands justice, he will, as a part of his nature and that of God's, submit himself to "the rigour of severest law."

Here, Shakespeare addresses the other side of the suicide debate that Lipsius struggled with between Stoic allowance and Christian prohibition of suicide. Laurence clearly does not intend to take his own life (unlike Romeo, whom he considered foolish), but if his actions demand his death under the law, then it is that law, in line with Natural Law and God, that he would follow, as commanded by the tenets of being a "Wise Man": "The Wise Man does not relinquish his bodily life, except at the behest of God."[65] In Laurence's final appeal in the play, he demonstrates a sense of peace that Seneca defined as an instrumental part of Stoicism: "No School is more kindly and gentle, none more full of love of man and more concerned for the common good, so that it is its avowed object to be of service and assistance, and to regard not merely self-interest, but the interest of each and all."[66] Lipsius argued that Seneca's view of Stoicism was a fundamental doctrine that was needed for the Wise Man to demonstrate his wisdom and "allegiance . . . to mankind," and it is this allegiance that Laurence cites in his defense.[67] Laurence conveys a peace drawn from his understanding of Neostoicism and his attempts to live by its tenets. Further, while he is clearly not the wisest of characters in the play, he does demonstrate that he attempts to travel the road to wisdom and the constancy that will ultimately lead him closer to God.

Had Justus Lipsius traveled to England and seen *Romeo and Juliet*, he would have surely recognized the dilemmas of his fellow Neostoicist in preventing tragedies in the face of uncontrolled passions. This is a dichotomy that Shakespeare explores in the context of the play, one that Elizabethans on both the continent and in England sought to better understand, and in some cases, survive. Laurence then provides an interesting lens through which to examine the application and potential successes and failures of Neostoicism. It, like Stoicism, is an interesting ideal, but, and in

spite of Lipsius's efforts to make it practical, neither philosophy adequately helps the individual deal with the consequences of political and religious chaos, at least not within the play.[68]

## Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Folger Edition, ed. B. A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992). All line references for *Romeo and Juliet* are to this edition.

2. *Oxford English Dicitonary Online*, s.v."seeming," http://.oed.com (retrieved September 8 2011).

3. Jason Lewis Saunders, *Justus Lipsius: The Philosophy of Renaissance Stoicism* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 955), 22-23.

4. Ibid., 73.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid, 75.

7. Ibid, 81-83.

8. Ibid, 85.

9. Halvard Leira, "Justus Lipsius, Political Humanism, and the Disciplining of the 17th Century Statecraft," *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 4 (Sept. 2008): 669-92.

10. Ibid., 671.

11. Ibid., 673.

12. *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "disposition," http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disposition (retrieved July 25, 2011).

13. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 69.

14. Geoffrey Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 71.

15. Ibid, 9.

16. Ibid, 10.

17. Mark Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 15.

18. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Laelius De Amicitia*, trans. W.A. Falconer, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917-25), verse:18; <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cicero/Laelius_de_Amicitia/home.html>; quoted in Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics*, 15. I chose to use Morford's wording as his analysis and interpretation, which I quote immediately after, is based on that. However, according to the 1923 volume from the Loeb Classical Library, the original line and context reads, "This, however, I do feel first of all—that *friendship cannot exist except among good men*; nor do I go into that too deeply, as is done by those who, in discussing this point with more than usual accuracy, and it may be correctly, but with too little view to practical results, say that no one is good unless he is wise" (emphasis mine). For those interested in an electronic version of the original Latin text, the Loeb provides one via hyperlink for each book.

19. Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics*, 15-16.

20. Ibid., 16.

21. Cicero, *Laelius De Amicitia*, quoted in Morford, 21.

22. Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, trans. Richard M. Gummere, 3 vols., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917-25), xi; <www.stoics.com>

23. Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics*, 22-23.

24. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 69.

25. Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans*, 71.

26. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 104.

27. Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, quoted in Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 104. Like Morford, Saunder's translation varies from others, specifically Gummere's in the Loeb. Keeping with the ideas that Saunders is positing, I chose to use his version; however, regarding the first quotation in the sentence, I have had some difficulty matching Saunder's translation to Gummere's. Saunder's translation uses elements within Seneca's vol. 2, letter 71, but I would be remiss if I didn't note that some of the wording is radically different, and I have had to parcel the ideas together from Gummere's translation. However, the second quotation from Saunders, from vol. 2, letter 76, is much closer to the Gummere; the latter reads, "In which thing that quality should be best for which the thing is brought into being and by which it is judged. And what quality is best in man?" The difference of "each" in Saunder's and "which" in Gummere's is not significant to the overall argument.

28. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 101.

29. Justus Lipsius, *His First Book of Constancy (Latin 1584, Englished by John Stradling 1594)*, ed. Jan Garrett (Bowling Green: Western Kentucky University, 1999), chapter 3, http://www.wku.edu/~jan.garrett/lipsius1.htm (retrieved September 22, 2011).

30. Robert Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier* (The Hague: Martinus Nyhoff, 1958), 31-32.

31. Arthur Brooke, *The Tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562, 1908), ed. Peter Weller, Romeo and Juliet Navigator: Shakespeare Navigators, n.d.: <http://www.shakespeare-navigators.com/romeo/BrookeIndex.htm> (retrieved October 19, 2011), lines 564-65.

32. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Laurence does appeal to St. Francis at 5.3.121, but there is no indication that he is actually a friar of the Franciscan order. See *OED Online* (oed.com): "In the *R.C. Church*: A brother or member of one of certain religious orders founded in the 13th c. and afterwards, of which the chief were the four mendicant orders: the Franciscans (*Friars minors* or *Grey Friars*); the Augustines (Austin Friars); the Dominicans (Friars Preachers, *Black Friars*); and the Carmelites (†Friars carims = French f*rères carmes; White Friars*)."

33. Brooke, *The Tragicall History of Romeus and Juliet*, 581-87.

34. Ibid., Preface, 2.

35. Ibid., 558-89.

36. Shakespeare's Laurence contrasts with Brooke's Friar, who is Romeus's confidant, a close friend, and someone with whom Romeus has and continues to stay overnight. (See Brooke, *The Tragicall History*, 585-87). It is also a characterization complicated by anti-Catholic sentiments.

37. According to Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, the age of consent for marrying was sixteen years. However, Shakespeare made Juliet fourteen

years old, which would require parental consent, according to sixteenth-century religious laws. Stevenson presents several interesting insights into the problems for both the characters and Shakespeare (32).

38. Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics*, 26.

39. Ibid.

40. Lipsius, *First Book of Constancy*, IV.

41. Ibid., VI.

42. Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, 32. One additional note: Stevenson's source is A Folio version of the play, so his line numbers (69-80) differ from the Folger edition that I am using (73-85).

43. Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, quoted in Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics*, 192-93.

44. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 10.

45. Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, 86.

46. Marcus Tullius Cicero, "Academic, II (Lucullus)," *De Natura Deorum Academica*, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. H. Rackham, 28 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 19:507, <http://archive.org/stream/denaturadeorumac00ciceuoft/ denaturadeorumac00ciceuoft_djvu.txt>; quoted in Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, 87.

47. Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, 111.

48. Cicero, *De Natura*, quoted in Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, 113.

49. Ibid., 113

50. Stevenson, *Shakespeare's Religious Frontier*, 113.

51. Ibid., 113-15.

52. Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans*, 13. qtd in Miles 1996, 13)

53. Ibid., 13

54. *OED Online*, s.v. "disposition," http://oed.com (accessed September 8, 2011).

55. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 99.

56. Ibid., 141.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., 96.

59. Ibid., 97.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., 121.

62. Ibid.

63. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. H. Rackham, 28 vols. (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1914), 5:313. The following gives the full context of this quote, and like Lipsius, links it to the neostoic ideal of constancy as a means of reaching or understand God: "Besides these benefits, the study of the heavenly phenomena bestows a power of self control that arises from the perception of the consummate restraint and order that obtain even among the gods; also loftiness of mind is inspired by contemplating the creations and actions of the gods, and justice by realizing the will, design and purpose of the Supreme Lord and Ruler to whose nature we are told by philosophers that the True Reason and Supreme Law are conformed."

64. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 113.

65. Lucius Annaeus Seneca, "On Mercy," *Moral Essays*, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. John W. Basore, 3 vols. (London: W. Heinemann, 1928-1935): 1: iv. 4-v. 4; <www.stoics.com>

66. Saunders, *Justus Lipsius*, 79.

67. Ibid.

68. While Shakespeare provides what could be called a practical application of Lipsian Neostoicism in the guise of Friar Laurence—with all of its rationalities and faults—such Neostoicism continues to be practiced. Today's American politics is rife with Neostoics in both liberal and conservative circles. What I find most enlightening about this study and the research it is based on is how four-hundred-year-old plays still demonstrate philosophies that are currently being practiced by political and religious groups. Is the Tea Party the new Puritans? Are the ultra-liberals the new friars? They both advocate Lipsius's constancy with a religious fervor under the guise of embracing a balance between their own morality and the nature of the universe. Lipsius would be intrigued, maybe even stymied.