

Editorial: Practical Philosophy

Stoicism is once more fashionable, or about to be. So we learn from Tom Wolfe, that infallible barometer of fashion. In *A Man in Full*, Wolfe's latest despatch from the Zeitgeist's front line, the main character ends up directing his life by the sayings of Epictetus. There is even talk of *A Stoic's Hour* on nationwide television.

Is it a contradiction in terms for the thoughts of the former slave to be bandied about the salons of Manhattan and Mayfair? No more, one suspects, that it is for Hollywood, that other great source of contemporary *maya*, to be obsessed by Buddhism.

The ultimate in chic is to enjoy your cake, while convincing yourself and those around you that you do not really need it. It is those who are possessed of body, rank and estate who assent most easily to their insignificance. Stoic self-examination (in strict moderation, of course) would be the perfect accessory to the health farms, cosmetic surgery and exercise bicycles of to-day's gilded middle aged.