Chapter III

THE MALCONTENT OUTSIDER

Dramatists use various situations and attitudes as dramatic equivalents of the Outsider's alienation from men, society, God and religion, the human predicament in the universe and from self. In Elizabethan drama, the aspiration for supreme power, when crossed with alienation, produced the power-seeking Outsider. Jacobean drama uses the Malcontent character-type to represent various levels of alienation. However all malcontents are not Outsiders. Only if the malcontent goes through the experience of alienation from men, society, life and self, he can be called an Outsider. Alienation from society takes the form of bitter criticism, condemnation and vituperation. But the Jacobean malcontent is often fascinated by the very evil which he condemns. His critique of society's follies and crimes does not arise from a disinterested love of virtue. Very often it is his retaliation on society for some injury, real or imagined, which he has received from society. When the malcontent is not just a stereotype satirist but is also an Outsider, he experiences alienation from existence and from self also. He moves from a specific condemnation of his society's faults to a hatred of life itself. From being a Zeitkritiker or stringent critic of his own age and society he moves to a position of world-weariness. He experiences the futility of human existence, the hostility of the universe around him and is filled with a profound despair and disgust. His railing at society is an image of a deeper alienation from the nature of things and from the human condition. This is what distinguishes the malcontent Outsider from the usual satirists and anatomizers of social folly such as the self-righteous satirist-presenters of Ben Jonson. The Jacobean malcontent Outsider experiences self-alienation too, which is dramatically expressed as a tension between his public role as malcontent and his personal identity as an individual. He develops the technique of viewing himself and his actions ironically. As a performer he dissociates his actions from his judgement. The dichotomy between the role and the individual is an effective image of the self-division inherent in the alienated individual. Thus, when the alienation theme crosses
the stock-type, new life is infused into the malcontent stereotype, making him an Outsider in every sense and not merely a vituperative figure railing at society.

The power-seeker of Elizabethan drama is replaced by the malcontent in Jacobean drama as the most recurrent representative figure of the age. This shift from power-seeker to malcontent indicates a general modulation in the tone of literature from the heroic to the satiric. Harry Levin attributes this change of tone in literature to the transition from the reign of Elizabeth to that of the Stuarts.

The last few years of Elizabeth's reign heralded the Stuarts with a waning of political hopes and a tightening of economic opportunities. Literature reversed its heroic trend; satire flourished.1

The Malcontent mood in late Elizabethan and Jacobean drama may be traced to the economic, political, social and intellectual conditions of the age. L.C. Knights2 points out that the rising cost of living and the tightening of the money-market brought about a steep cut in the hospitality of the gentry and aristocracy, which rendered homeless a large band of retainers and professional men depending on patronage. The increase in educational facilities without a corresponding increase in preferments left many disappointed men of thwarted ambition in its trail. The instability of courtly favour and the existence of corrupt practices in political and public life gave rise to bitter discontent. Thus a growing number of younger sons, scholars, soldiers, minor officials and would-be politicians and courtiers found themselves to be the superfluous men of society and the hangers-on and caterpillars of the commonwealth. These became the scoffing malcontents of the age who are also reflected in its literature. They are usually accomplished young men full of self-esteem. Not finding opportunities commensurate with their abilities, they feel deprived of their legitimate rights and nurse a grudge against society.

The uncertainty about the royal succession during the last years of Elizabeth and the instability of the early reign of James I gave rise to fears and disillusionments. Una Ellis-Fermor3 relates the age's sense of the futility of human achievement and its pre-occupation with death to its political and social conditions.
The Jacobean age witnessed the disintegration of the chivalric code and courtly values. These were being replaced gradually by commercial values and pragmatism. The malcontent is a character who is aware of the death of one culture and watches the emergence of another. He records the change. But he himself is not committed to either scale of values. He is revolted and repelled by the ruthless self-seeking and corruption of his society. But he is unable to reject its values and take a firm stand in favour of the past idealistic code. He is a very ambiguous figure. He condemns the corruption of his society and yet he too partakes of it. He deludes himself that the corruption of the present is the only reality and yet feels an inner subconscious revulsion from it. He is self-divided between what he knows ought to be done and what he actually does. This is dramatically represented in Bosola, Vindice and Malevole as a dichotomy between the person and the role.

The tradition of melancholy as an intellectual attitude in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be related to the emergence of the malcontent character. Agnes Latham regards the melancholic stance as a legitimate response to the stresses of an age of transition. "It marked one off from the coarse-fibred mindless crowd". The early Shakespearean malcontents like Jaques belong to this tradition of melancholy. The later malcontents like Flammeo, Bosola and Vindice reveal the influence of Machiavellian cynicism about human weakness. The malcontent's vision is distorted by cynicism which comes close to the Machiavellian stance. The malcontent thinks the worst of people because he is aware of the vast gulf between what man believes he ought to be and what man actually is. Thus changes in the economic, social and political conditions of the age and the prevalent intellectual stances of the age can be seen to have contributed to the creation of the malcontent character.

Three phases may be identified in the development of the malcontent Outsider in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. There are disgruntled courtier figures like Jaques and Thersites who are on the fringe of the dramatic action. There are complex figures like Hamlet and Edmund in King Lear, whose discontent arising from a
sense of injured merit is only one facet of their many-sided personality. The third and last stage reveals the malcontent as a disgruntled courtier with a sense of injured merit. He is used in demeaning services as a tool-villain, pander and spy. Such usage forces him finally to view his existence as being futile, consisting of meaningless actions in a mist. This is the malcontent Outsider par excellence and is exemplified in Bosola, Vindice and Malevole. His predicament is a metaphor of the Outsider’s position in the world. Colin Wilson says,

Spiritual hell is to place a man of high abilities and great talent in a position where he will be frustrated and bored, denied self-expression. It is, in short, the Outsider’s position in the world. The malcontent’s dissatisfaction with the role forced on him by society brings about a tension between the public role and the private self. The dichotomy between the role and the person is an image of the self-alienation of the malcontent Outsider.

In this chapter Jaques and Thersites are considered briefly as Elizabethan precursors of the Jacobean malcontent proper. Hamlet and Edmund are merely glanced at to identify the malcontent characteristics in them which form only a minor motif in the total design of their personality. The Jacobean malcontent Outsiders Malevole, Vindice, Flamineo and Bosola are studied in detail, examining their alienation at various levels and also the impact of the alienation theme and the Outsider figure on the dramatic structure and language.

Jaques in As You Like It may be regarded as an early version of the malcontent Outsider. He rails at individuals and society and paints a somber picture of human existence. He views the Duke and his courtiers with ironic detachment. In his colloquy with the deer, he satirizes human ingratitude and the callousness of man towards the impoverished. His speech on the ‘seven ages’ of man (II.vii. 138-166) presents a dismal vision of human life with a touch of the grotesque. In this speech man’s life is pictured as a succession of roles to be played out on the stage of the world. Childhood, learning, love, war, justice and venerable age are all stripped of their traditional glamour and exposed in their unsavoury aspects. He turns a merciless search-light to focus on the infant’s helpless-
ness and inability to attend to its bodily needs and keep itself clean; the schoolboy on whom adult authority weighs heavily, compelling him to go to school much against his will; the agony of a lover creating sorrows for himself and expending his energy on trivialities such as composing "a woeful ballad" on his "mistress' eye-brow;" the absolute meaninglessness of the soldier's pursuit of "the bubble reputation" courting death in the process; the corruption and bribery implied in the role of a judge; and the ridiculous appearance of old age devoid of the usual dignity ascribed to it. This sixth stage of man described briefly by Shakespeare is elaborated later in Nagg and Nell in Beckett's *End-Game*. The last stage of all approaches complete oblivion and nothingness. The entire speech evokes the disgust, helplessness, folly, corruption and futility involved in the human condition. It is a vision as old as Ecclesiastes and as modern as the absurdist view of the world.

Jaques' alienation cannot be traced to external circumstances. He does not suffer from any sense of injured merit and bears no personal grudge against society. His contemplation has perhaps given him a glimpse into the futility of human existence. However his vision cannot be called a consistent existential vision. He seems to believe in the possibility of reforming people through criticism:

> Invest me in my motley; give me leave  
> To speak my mind, and I will through and through  
> Cleanse the body of th' infected world,  
> If they will patiently receive my medicine. (II.vii.58-61)

His aspiration to the role of world-reformer and the imagery of disease, medicine and cure suggests belief in the curability of human ills and the perfectibility of human nature. However Duke Senior exposes Jaques' presumption in setting himself up as social critic when he himself is guilty of the same faults or worse. A similar charge is levelled against Bosola by Antonio in *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Jaques' view of life is only a partial picture and does not constitute the total vision of the play. He is only a peripheral observer and his isolation is made structurally visible by placing him on the fringe of the action. He is mostly a detached commentator
uninvolved in the main action. His deliberate withdrawal from the festivity at the end of the play is also a structural device to emphasize his social aloofness. Linguistically Jaques has a predilection for monologues. This disinclination to participate in the give-and-take of dialogue and the indulgence in monologue is another device to bring out his alienation at the interpersonal and social levels. A powerful image to convey the disharmony caused by the malcontent is the identification of the malcontent with discord. His refusal to conform and his insistence on sounding his own note independently produce discord. Jaques, Thersites and Malevole are all identified with discord by one of the other characters. Since Jaques is only a partial Outsider and a minor character in the play, his appearance does not bring about any appreciable alteration in the basic structure of the play. But his alienation is conveyed structurally and linguistically.

The portrayal of Jaques as a malcontent is indebted to the contemporary Elizabethan pose of Melancholy, as seen in Overbury's description of the melancholy man. This pose was a favourite with those who affected intellect, sensitivity and culture. Orlando recognizes the element of posturing in Jaques and calls him "Monsieur Melancholy" (III.ii.292).

This admixture of melancholy differentiates Jaques from the extremely bitter and fiercely vituperative malcontents like Flamino, Vindice and Bosola. He is entirely devoid of any sense of personal injustice which must be revenged on society. His positive enjoyment of his melancholy differentiates his malcontent mood from the world-weariness of existential alienation.

Thersites in Troilus and Cressida is a notorious railing malcontent who is described by Agamemnon as the "rank Thersites" who "opes his mastic jaws" (I.iii.73) only to rail. He is alienated from men and society both at the interpersonal and social level. He is incapable of holding a reciprocal conversation with anyone. He owes no allegiance to any individual or group. His alienated sensibility is seen in his cynical and sneering attitude towards both the sides in the Trojan war and towards all factions on his own side. He directs his battery of abuse at everyone without exception. War and love, the cherished ideals of traditional society are
presented ingloriously by him. George Steiner calls him the first of the Dostoevskyan underground men:

The mirror which Thersites holds up to the chivalric action is clouded and distorting. But there is a certain basic truth in the image.

He reviles society for being hypocritical in its professed ideals and pours over others the dregs of his self-contempt.12

The futility and illusory glamour of two of the seven ages of man - that of soldier and lover - are exposed by Thersites. The alienating force of war which uses men only as objects is realised by him, as when he describes Ajax and Achilles as "draught-oxen" used by Nestor and Ulysses to "plough up the wars" (II.i.115-116). He sees no glory in war but only inglorious argument - "All the argument is a whore and a cuckold" (II.iii.78-79).

In the morbid and distorted vision of Thersites there is no such thing as love in the world. What he sees is only lechery. "Noting but lechery: All incontinent varlets" (V.i.108-109). But he reveals a fascination for the very thing he condemns. After railing at lechery, he follows Diomed to play the voyeur, muttering "lechery, lechery; still, wars and lechery; nothing else holds fashion" (V.ii.191-193).

Thersites' railing is not just directed at individuals. It arises from a vision of the world which is ruled by disgust and futility. His disgust is not just for individuals but for Man. In his view all men are fools and every human act or impulse is foolish. An almost 'absurd' vision of the folly and futility of human affairs and activity underlies the wholesale breaking of idols and ideals in his railing. He is an iconoclast because for him all idols have feet of clay. His withering contempt towards everyone arises from a basic disgust for man.

Thersites' self-portrait to Hector - "I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave; a very filthy rogue" (V.iv.31-32) - reveals an intense self-revulsion which is not just a pose. He is completely out of love with himself. His self-hatred and his contempt for Man probably promote each other mutually. However this self-revulsion does not lead to separation between the person and the role.
There is no tangible reason for his warped outlook on life. There is no sense of injured merit in him which drives him to a hatred of society and the world for any injustice done to him personally. However once in the play Patroclus ascribes his railing to envy: "Why thou damnable box of envy," (V.1.29-30). Lechery, cuckoldry and pederasty evoke intense responses from him and may point to a sexual origin of his revulsion.

Since Thersites is only a peripheral character in the play's action, his being an Outsider does not much affect the structure of the play. But his derisive vision of life is central to an understanding of the play. The dramatist's ambivalent presentation of both the Greeks and the Trojans, exposing both to ridicule is in tune with the mocking laughter of Thersites. Almost all the characters and the twin action of war and love in the play are viewed through the distorting lens of Thersites. He is the medium through which the absurd vision of the play is seen. The shapelessness of the play which suggests a chaotic world of unresolved experience is paralleled by the haphazard railing of Thersites directed against all and arising from a Weltanschauung of folly and confusion. The essential conflict in the play is not the external one between the Trojans and the Greeks. The real issue is between mankind of which both the Trojans and the Greeks are representatives and the irrationality and meaninglessness of earthly life of which Thersites is the seer and interpreter;

This vision of anarchy may have arisen from the dramatist's perception of the turmoil in his own age. The gradual disappearance of definite values, the rise of a commercialized outlook on life, the resultant progressive degeneration of society, the undermining of Tudor stability, moral and religious uncertainty, the ferment in the ecclesiastical sphere, must have all caused concern and the play might be a means of coming to grips with the altered world-picture. At the heart of the play there is a search for norms which must have been the quest of the intellectuals of the age.

The alienation of Thersites from the men around him is conveyed by his rejection of the typical rhetoric used by the Trojans as well as the Greeks. He discards both the heroic-romantic
tone of the Trojans with their decadent ideals and the pseudo-intellectual, rationalistic rhetoric of Ulysses and Nestor with all their wisdom. His language is the measure of his social isolation.

Thersites does more than speak prose; he is the incarnation of the anti-poetic. His prose flourishes on the refuse of language. It is rank with gall and seeks to strip away the ornamental and discretionary conventions of the courtly style.14 The very first speech of Thersites reveals an imagination which dwells on disgusting images and derives relish from them. This obsession with the nasty and the revolting is perhaps meant to suggest the speaker's prevailing sense of nausea.

Hamlet, prince of Denmark, is a complex and versatile Outsider who could perhaps be considered under almost every category of the Outsider classified under this thesis. He has been seen by Salvador de Madariaga15 as a ruthless and egoistic power-seeking Renaissance prince, a typical example of Machiavellian practice. P.S.Conklin suggests that to the earliest onlookers Hamlet was "most decidedly a malcontent avenger".16 Hamlet regards himself as a reformer who was born to set right the time which was out of joint. Post-Freudian thinkers work out the hypothesis that the clue to Hamlet's mystery lies in a subconscious Oedipus Complex.17 Many critics of the twentieth century regard Hamlet as an anticipation of the modern alienated intellectual.18 It is possible to study Hamlet as an early existential Outsider who has encountered the absurd and is filled with nausea and disgust at human existence. Interpretation could even be stretched so far as to see Hamlet as an absurd protagonist who finds relief in clowning and folly, the grotesque providing the release from the horror of the absurd. Thus Hamlet seems to be a combination of half a dozen types of Outsiders.19 Perhaps a careful study of Hamlet-criticism down the ages might reveal a correlation between the dominant Outsider figure of an age and the most strongly projected image of Hamlet in that age.20 In this study he will be considered primarily as a forerunner of the existential Outsider, in a later chapter. In the present chapter his affinity to the malcontent Outsider is briefly indicated.

Hamlet, like other malcontent Outsiders, is a bitter critic of the society in the midst of which he is placed. His uncle Claudius represents to Hamlet the concrete embodiment of the present
corruption, while his father is presented as a paragon and god-like figure from an idealised past. Hamlet's criticism of the drunken and dissolute ways of Denmark reveals his derisive attitude towards his milieu.

The worst fault of Hamlet's society is its reduction of men to objects to be used. Hamlet is infuriated by the attempt of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to pluck the heart of his mystery because he finds himself being reduced to an object to be dissected and analysed by them. But he himself is the product of such an alienating culture. His summary disposal of Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and his callous reference to their deaths reveal that he is also infected by his society's corruption. This is a characteristic which he shares with all malcontents before and after him.

A favourite target of criticism of most malcontent Outsiders is Woman. Hamlet joins the ranks of Malevole, Bosola, Flamineo, Vindice and later Jimmy Porter in this. Feminine use of cosmetics, female coquetry and sexuality are obsessive topics of vituperation in malcontents, signifying a fundamental alienation from Woman, the female principle of life. The tone in such cases usually suggests a fascination for that which is reviled. Hamlet directs his general indictment of the sex on the fragile Ophelia, thus deflecting his horror and disgust at his mother's speedy remarriage away from the original cause.

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough. God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another; you jig, you amble, and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance; go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. (III.i.145-150) Hamlet's estrangement from women may be traced to Gertrude. Her speedy remarriage leaves him with an unpleasant impression of female sexuality and unreasoning passion. He generalises this as "Frailty, thy name is woman," and the fragile Ophelia is made to bear the brunt of his misogyny.

The malcontent's vilification of women may perhaps be traced to the emergence of women during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages from a sheltered and passive image in which they had been held captive as patient Griselds. Queen Elizabeth I herself had been a
paradigm for this social change. While women took an increasingly prominent role in society, there was a plethora of pamphlets condemning forward women. These were often written by Puritans who believed that the devil urged the women on and even identified such women with the devil. It is curious that though the stage was continually at loggerheads with the Puritans, it assigned this particular Puritan attitude of deriding women to the popular stage figure of the malcontent Outsider. Perhaps the Puritan attitude represented the secret fear and hostility of all men towards the New Woman. Hitherto Woman had been held as a symbol of purity and passive piety. Conformity to that role was admired but stepping out of this frame was castigated as evil or devilry. It is significant that Jimmy Porter's tirade against women should also be contemporaneous with a movement for the liberation of women in the twentieth century after their subjection to the stern Victorian code of lady-like conduct. Is then the denunciation of women in drama a symptom of deep-seated fear and insecurity in the male ego? Is it the result of the inability of men to adjust to the new role of women?

As a malcontent, Hamlet rails against the court society in Denmark and against women. But what qualifies him as an Outsider is his passing from an alienation from his particular society to a mood of world-weariness when he feels alienated from life itself and human existence. It is not only Denmark which disgusts him but the whole world. Thus his alienation goes beyond the social to the metaphysical level as he sighs,

*How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!* (I.ii.133-134)

Hamlet's sense of estrangement from himself finds expression in the form of bitter self-abuse, both in soliloquy and in the hearing of others. Hamlet's alienation can be traced to many possible causes. If he is taken only as a malcontent, his alienation may be said to have originated from a sense of injured merit and thwarted ambition. Ambition is one of the faults he accuses himself of to Ophelia (III.i.125). He assumes the cynical air of the disgruntled
malcontent disappointed in his hopes of advancement—"I eat the air promise-crammed" (III.ii.91-92). He tells Rosencrantz, "I lack advancement," (III.ii.341), knowing very well that the news would be carried. However this is not only a pose. The disappointment regarding the crown is glanced at even when he is alone with Gertrude or Horatio when there is no need to dissemble. He speaks of Claudius as "a cutpurse of the empire" (III.iv.99), who has stolen the crown of the Hamlets, father and son. While cataloguing all his grievances against Claudius to Horatio he makes usurpation the third.

He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother,
Popped in between th' election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life. (V.ii.65-67)

This is perhaps his only admission to himself of being thwarted in his hope of succession by Claudius. Claudius had won the courtiers' approval and had almost wheedled them into accepting him as the king with Gertrude as his consort. So even if there was no other motive, this choice of the drunken reveller by the courtiers and the people in preference to himself, the university scholar and the son of the dead king, would be sufficient to alienate Hamlet from his society.

However the issue is not as simple as that. The origin of his metaphysical alienation may be traced to his father's death, closely followed by his mother's second marriage, both of which could be seen as 'frontier situations' or 'boundary situations' (Grenzsituationen) which forced him to face the absurdity of existence. This suggestion is developed in chapter VI, where Hamlet is examined as a precursor of the existential Outsider but with an important difference. While later existential Outsiders belong to a fragmented universe where the absurd vision prevails, Hamlet moves from an experience of fragmentation to reintegration by arriving at a providential vision of the universe.

Edmund in King Lear begins as a malcontent with a grouse against society for its prejudicial treatment of bastards, discriminating against them for no fault of their own. This grievance is settled soon and he inherits his father's title and possessions after ousting the legitimate brother. Then he no longer rails at society, but begins to assert his power over his surroundings. The
will to power replaces social criticism and the malcontent role. Henceforth he is no longer the malcontent venting his spleen on society out of a basic sense of powerlessness. Rather he modulates into a power-seeker who imposes his will on the situation by manipulating people as tools for his own purpose and not regarding them as individuals at all. He succeeds in imposing his individual will on his world at least for a brief interval. There is no experience of powerlessness in him such as is undergone by the later malcontent Outsider Bosola.

Edmund is alienated from men both at the social and individual level. He rejects society's laws concerning legitimacy of birth and inheritance. He flouts the accepted moral norms of filial duty and marital fidelity. Apparently all this is his way of hitting out at society for its injustice to bastards. He reveals an alienated sensibility in his dealings with everyone around him. There is a breakdown of family affection and natural bonds between father and son and between brothers. Everyone including his partners in crime, Regan and Goneril, is viewed by him merely as an instrument to be wielded to serve his own purpose. He has the Outsider's alienated vision of reducing men to mere objects to be manipulated.

Edmund's aspiration to power excludes the existential vision of the futility of human endeavour or the meaninglessness of the universe. Only for a passing moment does he feel an estrangement from "whoremaster Man". Neither is there any noticeable self-alienation, self-division or inner conflict in him. Thus although Edmund is a malcontent who becomes a power-seeker and is alienated from society, other individuals and traditional moral norms, he is not a full-fledged Outsider. He lacks an awareness of his alienation and further does not reach the phase of self-estrangement and an alienation from existence.

In John Marston's The Malcontent, the malcontent Outsider is no longer a peripheral figure or detached commentator. He moves to the centre of the stage so that the play itself is entitled after him. The malcontent is viewed here as a role-player. The role of the malcontent Malevole is claimed to have been adopted to further the aims of the individual, Altofronto. But in the course of the
play a subtle transformation takes place, making one wonder if continual role-play has eaten into the inner self leaving only an empty shell.

In the first act of the play, the audience is repeatedly assured that the malcontent role of Malevole is only a disguise assumed by Duke Altofronto as a means of regaining his kingdom by non-violent measures, by working men to repentance, if possible. In the early scenes all the traditional characteristics of the malcontent are assumed by Malevole and noted and commented on by others. The elements of discontent, railing and self-division in his nature are brought out in Pietro's preliminary sketch:

It is his position, whosoever in this earth can be contented is a slave and damn'd; therefore does he afflict all in that to which they are most affected. Th' elements struggle within him; his own soul is at variance with herself; (I.ii.22-26)24 he levels his battery of abuse at the usual targets of a malcontent — religion, court-follies and women. The church, according to him, is "the public place of much dissimulation", (I.iii.4) where hypocrisy and usury are practised. He sees courtiers being addicted to "flattery, pride and venery" (I.iii.25-26). He abuses the court society in general and also empties his invective on individuals like Bilioso, Ferrando and Maquerella. He accuses Ferrando of being the "Duke's Ganymede" (I.ii.5-6), just as Thersites called Patroclus "Achilles' male varlet" and "his masculine whore", both revealing a morbid revelling in the perversion of others. Like many another malcontent, Malevole also pillories woman and condemns female sexuality. Another malcontent characteristic reproduced in him is sleeplessness. Like Bosola who keeps awake at night and prowls around the court, Malevole too is on night-watch at court. He himself describes this peculiarity of the malcontent, almost standing outside the role and referring to it in the third person:

..... In night all creatures sleep;
    Only the malcontent, that 'gainst his fate
    Repines and quarrels, alas, he's goodman tell-clock!
    His sallow jawbones sink with wasting moan;
    Whilst others' beds are down, his pillow's stone. (III.ii.10-14)

Thus it is seen that all the conventional attributes of a malcontent are assumed by Malevole, so that apparently he is a malcontent estranged from the court society in which he is placed and from the individuals around him.
Though Malevole fulfils all the requirements of the malcontent character, whenever he is alone or with Celsq he is at pains to clarify that he is only playing a role. He refers to his malcontent pose as "this disguise" (I.iv.30) and "this affected strain" (I.iii.161). He asks Celsq, "What, play - is well the free-breathed discontent?" (I.iv.31). When Bilioso enters, the stage-direction says, "Malevole shifteth his speech", implying that Malevole is only a role adopted by the real person Altofronto. The role is meant to help the individual. Malevole's railing, by prompting internal quarrels in court, will hopefully pave the way for the re-ascent of Altofronto to the throne - "When the ranks are burst, then scuffle Altofronto" (I.iv.39). Thus on the basis of his own claims it is possible to view Malevole as "a mask for survival for Altofronto, a mask that is necessary in a society where everyone dons one".

Taken at his own valuation, Altofronto is the instrument of Providence who not only gains his lost dukedom, but also reclaims lost souls by bringing them to repentance. He works Ferneze, Pietro and Auxilia to contrition for their wrong-doings. He seems to be quite a constructive force, bringing order into chaos and attempting to reform a corrupt society. The impression which Malevole/Altofronto strives to convey is that of a positive, active reformer masquerading as a negative railing malcontent. If this were true, then the condemnation of corruption by the malcontent must arise from a genuine love of virtue in the reformer duke. If Malevole's railing had its origin only in Altofronto's desire for reform, there should be no evidence of an attraction towards the very evil that is being attacked. But in the play, Malevole reveals a fascination for the abomination under attack. For example, Malevole's description of the cuckold's plight to Pietro in I.iii. and his portrayal of the seductive pleasures of the palace in III.ii. are couched in language which reveals the speaker's excited involvement in the corruption that is being depicted.

In I.iii. Malevole describes the cuckold's plight to Pietro with verve and vigour. The fooling of the cuckold is expressed in a lively game-image of hoodman-blind. The tone of flushed narr intent is unmistakable. The virile language suggests an active involvement of Malevole's imagination:
Carried away by his "hideous imagination", Malevole conjures up the unfaithful wife's adultery with a mixture of horror and fascination, not fully warranted by the purpose of rousing up Pietro.

Later also Malevole's description of the seductive influence of palace pleasures is set out in language which partakes of the evil fascination attributed to the palace atmosphere. The alluring power of that which is condemned becomes clear.

When in an Italian lascivious palace, a lady guardianless, Left to the push of all allurement, The strongest insights to immodesty— To have her bound, incensed with wanton sweets, Her veins filled high with heating delicates, Soft rest, sweet music, amorous masquerers, Lascivious banquets, sin itself gilt o'er, Strong fantasy tricking up strange delights, Presenting it dressed pleasingly to sense, Sense leading it unto the soul, confirm'd With potent example, impudent custom, Entic'd by that great band, opportunity— (III.ii.33-44)

The language describing the temptations to the various senses is itself intensely sensuous and suggestive. Malevole obviously enjoys himself, carried away by his own eloquence and by what he describes. As G.K. Hunter claims, Malevole "is essentially immersed in the world he condemns;" "his immersion in vice is integral to his character and to the play". It is this ambivalence of being attracted by what he condemns that makes him a malcontent Outsider despite his reform aspirations.

It is subtly conveyed in the course of the play that the malcontent role gains the upper hand over the inner self. The satiric view of the world as put forward by Malevole is assigned more effective language and offered more scope than the providential vision of the universe, glimpses of which Altofronto tries to communicate. If originally Malevole had only been a role assumed by the individual Altofronto, the play reveals the subtle subconscious influence which continual role-play has had over the individual. His inner self, like the dyer's hand, is subdued to the role it works in. Malevole the role-identity dominates, reducing
Altofronto almost to a non-entity, a structural frame to hold the play together and draw it to a morally satisfactory close. We see here a subtle form of self-alienation, where the assumption of a role gradually alienates the individual from his inner self.

World-weariness and disgust which distinguish an Outsider's Weltanschauung are expressed by Malevole, especially in his speeches to Pietro. Malevole presents to Pietro a near-existential vision of the world as a prison with death as the only mode of release:

World! 'Tis the only region of death, the greatest shop of the devil, the cruel 'st prison of man, out of the which none pass without paying their dearest breath for a fee. There's nothing perfect in it but extreme, extreme calamity. (IV.iv.27-30)

Apparently this speech may be meant to work repentance in Pietro by detaching him from the world through a realisation of its vanity. But the tone and language suggest personal involvement. The opening expletive ("world"), the superlative adjectives suggesting extremity ("greatest", "cruel' st", "dearest"), and the words of sweeping negation ("none", "nothing") convey a sense of urgency and desperation. There is something Hamlet-like in Malevole's speeches of de contempta Mundi to Pietro. This is not only a pose of a malcontent, intended to leave a particular impression on the listener. There is a ring of sincerity in the speeches, arising from a personal experience of alienation. The same strain is taken up again in the next scene where the tone of revulsion approaches nausea in the rapid succession of excretory images. Here Marston uses an imitative or organic form in style by expressing existential nausea in terms of images of physical disgust. The description of the world and man as "draught", "muck-hill", "slime", and "dung-pit" suggest a violent retching impulse in the speaker. Then suddenly from a disgust with the whole universe the spotlight is turned to focus on the vanity of kingship. It is as if the world-weary Outsider remembered his duty as Altofronto to draw the usurper to repentance and a voluntary resignation of the dukedom.

Think this: this earth is the only grave and Golgotha wherein all things that live must rot; 'Tis but the draught wherein the heavenly bodies discharge their corruption; the very muck-hill on which the sublunary orbs cast their excrements. Man is the slime of this dung-pit, and princes are the governors of these men; for, for our souls, they are as free as emperors, all of one piece; there goes but a pair of shears betwixt an emperor
and the son of a bagpiper; only the dying, dressing, pressing, glossing makes the difference. Now, what art thou like to lose? A jailor's office to keep men in bonds, whilst toil and treason all life's good confounds. (IV.v.107-118)

Perhaps Malevole exaggerates, as his malcontent role allows him to, but the entire speech cannot be dismissed as mere acting. There is in it a savage irony that is born out of embittered estrangement. The existential alienation and the absurd vision of the Outsider are conveyed through the very language that he uses. Malevole's rhetoric—the disordered images, sudden shifts in stylistic level, and phantasmagoric processions of satiric figures—provides a mirror of the corrupted world. Thus in Malevole we have a man who claims that he is only playing at being a malcontent for some lofty purpose. But in the course of the play he turns out to be a genuine malcontent Outsider, self-alienated and estranged from the universe.

In Act V Malevole/Altofronto suddenly becomes weary of his role. It is almost a 'boundary situation' where the individual becomes aware of the absurdity of his own existence—

O God how loathsome this toying is to me! That a duke should be forced to fool it! (V.iii.41-42)

This passage is not to be interpreted only as a proof that Altofronto is merely acting the role of Malevole. Rather it expresses a legitimate horror of the duke at seeing the role overwhelming the real self. It expresses a helplessness and an inability to shake off the role. The least he can do is to justify the role and rationalise the whole situation—"Better play the fool lord than be the fool lord" (V.ii.43-44). Finally when he has to step out of the role and take on the identity of Altofronto, the play-universe is, as it were, rapidly dismantled and put away. His last speech is a summary distribution of rewards and punishments assigning each one to his place. This is done in a very perfunctory manner. The mechanical rhythm of the speech suggests the jerky movements of a puppet playing at duke rather than a real person triumphantly restored to his dukedom.

Hence with this man! (Kicks out Mendoza) An eagle takes not flies,—

(To Pietro and Aurelia) You to your vows. — (To Maquerelle) And thou to the suburbs

(To Bilioso) You to my worst friend I would hardly give:
Thou art a perfect old knave. - (To Celso and the Captain) All pleased, live
You two unto my breast. - (To Maria) Thou to my heart.

(V.vi.155-159)

Then comes the casually spoken line which pricks the balloon, breaks the illusion and makes it obvious that this is only a play and all these are actors impersonating roles - "The rest of idle actors idly part" (V.vi.160). It looks as if when the mask of Malevole is removed it is not Altofronto but the actor who steps out along with the others.

The alienation of this malcontent Outsider affects the structure of the play. The related themes of role-play, the relationship between the role and the person and the comparative reality of the two are all reflected in the very structure of the play. The Pirandello-like beginning of the play arises out of the theme of role-play. The Induction emphasizes the essentially theatrical nature of the entire spectacle and introduces the actors in their own identities at first. Dramatic illusion is deliberately undermined at the very beginning so as to emphasize the quality of theatrical performance involved in role-play. The insubstantiality of Malevole the malcontent is brought out by showing that he is just a theatrical role in more than one sense - the role assumed by Altofronto in the play and by Burbage in real life. This emphasis on the theatricality of the action is the structural equivalent of the role-playing by the self-estranged malcontent Outsider. According to Martin Wine,

The evident theatrical humour of plays like The Malcontent turns plot into a dramatic metaphor of absurdity. As an intuition of the absurd, The Malcontent is not an ordinary Tudor-Stuart revenge play or play of intrigue: The intrigue and the counter-intrigue are themselves metaphors of absurdity. This transformation of the traditional revenge structure is wrought by the introduction of an Outsider as the protagonist. The alienation of the malcontent Outsider from court-society and from the world which seems a Golgotha to him, makes him view everything around him as a nightmare. The entire play could be taken as Malevole's dream. He is the central consciousness brooding over the play and overwhelming it. The play is what he sees in dreams. This structural point is made in I.iii. in an exchange between Pietro and Malevole:
PIETRO. Dream! What dream'st?

MALEVOL. Why methinks I see that signior pawn his footcloth, that metzera her plate; this madam takes physic that t' other monsieur may minister to her. Here is a pander jewel'd: there is a fellow in shift of satin this day that could not shift a shirt t' other night. Here a Paris supports that Helen; there's a Lady Guinevere bears up that Sir Lancelot. Dreams, dreams, visions, fantasies, chimeras, imagination, tricks, conceits. (I.iii.47-55)

Every degenerate aspect of court-life is seen in his dream - extravagant expenditure resulting in pawning, underhand means of getting rich quickly through pandering or spying and the clandestine affairs and adultery of court-ladies. The hurried ending in a disordered tumble of words suggests that the dream has become a nightmare. If he is the dreamer and the play his dream, then this accounts for the tone of urgency and his passionate involvement in the corruption which he conjures up and describes. The traditional revenge structure is here subverted into an absurd phantasmagoria by the conversion of the revenger into a self-estranged Outsider alienated from the universe and human existence.

In The Malcontent we have come a long way from the earlier Malcontent Outsiders like Jaques and Thersites who were detached commentators on the periphery of the action. Here the malcontent moves to the centre of the play and gives it its title. The theatricality of the play and its faintly suggested dream structure must be traced to the introduction of this Outsider figure in the conventional revenge structure. The protagonist does not wish to take revenge on society by punishing it but rather wishes to correct and reform it. He indeed starts as an active reformer who aspires to bring his court into the path of goodness. But the malcontent role which he assumes corrodes this inner self. Hence, though he begins with the pretence of being a malcontent, he finally ends up as a self-estranged and world-weary Outsider. The self-estrangement is so extreme as to almost destroy the former identity of reformer, reducing him to a puppet which makes appropriate gestures while doling out rewards and punishments at the end.

In Cyril Tourneur's The Revenger's Tragedy as in Marston's The Malcontent, the play is named after its malcontent Outsider,
indicating his central position in the play. In Vindice the protagonist of Tourneur's play, the figure of the malcontent Outsider is super-imposed over the traditional revenger's role. The opening soliloquy of the play focuses on the triple function of Vindice as a malcontent condemning the licentiousness of the court, as a revenger resolved on avenging the murder of his mistress by the lustful old Duke and an Outsider alienated from human existence and his own inner self.

Vindice's condemnation of court-society and his alienation from it, his estrangement from his better self and his gradual alienation from the human predicament, all of which qualify him as a malcontent Outsider are revealed even in the very first scene. The opening situation is a visual image of Vindice's isolation in the court. His lone figure holding a colloquy with a skull is in stark contrast to the gaily attired court-procession which passes by with torchlight. He is alienated from the court-figures whose immorality is attacked by him above all other court-evil. He rails:

Duke, royal lecher; go, grey-haired adultery;
And thou his son, as impious steep'd as he;
And thou his bastard, true-begot in evil;
And thou his duchess, that will do with the devil. (I.i.1-4)

Vindice's first soliloquy reveals that constant brooding over his proposed revenge on the Duke had gradually alienated him from his better nature. Nurturing hatred within him has poisoned whatever was good and noble in his love for Floriana. Rather than taking pride in her virtue, he gloats over her beauty for its capacity to seduce even "the uprightest man" (I.i.23). This unconscious alienation from the better self is expressed later in the gradual encroachment of the inner self by the assumed role. The soliloquy addressed to the skull contains also a hint of Vindice's later alienation from human existence. The skull is a reminder that prosperity, wealth, luxury and pleasure will all be ultimately reduced to bare bones, making all human enjoyment meaningless and absurd. He apostrophizes the skull:

Advance thee, 0 thou terror to fat folks,
To have their costly three pil'd flesh worn off
As bare as this - for banquets, ease and laughter.
Can make great men, as greatness goes by clay. (I.i.45-48)

Thus the opening speech sounds the three main strains in the composition of the malcontent Outsider - denunciation of court
morals, alienation from the inner self and from the human condition. Each of these three themes is taken up again and developed in the course of the play.

Vindice's vision of court corruption is essentially bifocal. He condemns the lechery and immorality prevalent at court. Yet at the same time the evil which he condemns exercises over him the fascination of the abomination. He is irresistibly drawn towards a contemplation of it and his imagination is fired at the very thought of it. This may be illustrated through two passages. Both when he plays the role of a malcontent pander with Lussurioso and when he is himself with his brother he rails at night under whose cover lechery thrives. To Lussurioso he describes the midnight hour as "the Judas of the hours" which betrays people into sin, especially lechery. The tone is one of ironic mockery appropriate to the role of the cynical malcontent that he has assumed (I.iii.56-90). But later when he is alone with Hippolito and when there is no need to sustain the role, he makes another apostrophe to night as the onlooker of sins of lust. The language here reveals that the imagination is quickened and brings forth phantasmagoric apparitions in rapid succession. The speech rhythm gains some momentum until it explodes in feverish repetition and then resumes its pace again.

He is evidently obsessed with the lechery that he condemns. He fantasizes a whole host of lustful figures revealing his own passionate involvement in the subject, though his own pleasure may be only vicarious. Juxtaposing the above two addresses to Night against each other we find the increasing power exercised by the role over the individual without even himself realizing it fully.

The alienation of the individual from his inner self because of the assumption of a role is worked out in the play. When Vindice
at first disguises himself as Piatto the malcontent pander, he carefully keeps his role away from his inner self, as when he asks Hippolito, "What brother? am I far enough from myself?" (I.iii.1). On being commissioned by Lussurioso to act as pander between his sister Castiza and his new master, his first reaction is righteous indignation. But soon this gives way to a horribly fascinating thought - why not "try the faith of both" mother and sister? Thus the honourable anger of the inner self is polluted by the corrupt vocation of the assumed role.

Piatto/Vindice's speeches in the Temptation scene II.i. illustrate the self-division between the brother-son anxious about the integrity of his sister and mother and the pander who is the devil's advocate. The dangerous attractiveness of the seductive arguments reveals that Vindice is alienated from his better self. Vindice at first rejoices over his sister's constancy and curt dismissal of him. But there is a craving in him to test his mother also. The excuse he gives himself is that he should be true to his oath to his employer. Here he takes himself seriously and lacks the ironic self-awareness of Webster's Bosoia who would have added wryly that thus the devil candies all sins over. When Gratiana the mother rejects his suit at first, he does not give up the attempt thankfully. Instead he lingers on and presses forward. He conjures up a seductive picture of Gratiana's life of splendour, intimately connecting it with Castiza's beauty in a causal sequence.

I would raise my state upon her breast,
    And call her eyes my tenants; I would count
My yearly maintenance upon her cheeks,
    Take coach upon her lip, and all parts
Should keep men after men, and I would ride
In pleasure upon pleasure. (II.i.95-100)

Castiza's body - her breast, eyes, cheeks, lips and all parts - is envisaged as the rich source of income which could maintain Gratiana in luxury and pleasure. Her beauty is inventoried and each part would bring in revenue to the mother, as vassals and tenants brought to their feudal overlord. In this passage, a commercial transaction, the sale of a daughter, is described in feudal phraseology - "tenants" and "yearly maintenance". Thus the very language and imagery bring out the inner tension between allegiance to old values and ways of life and the lure of the temptation to prosper through
commercialization. As indicated earlier in this chapter, it is out of this tension that the malcontent arose in the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. When Vindice sees his mother wavering, the asides express the inner self's fear about continuing the attack lest she should surrender. Yet he feels compelled by the role to press forward with greater urgency. He uses arguments reinforced with sententiae to convince his mother that nothing is wrong. The clinching argument which wins her is gold. The triumph of the role is also the agony of the inner self, but the latter sounds exaggerated and lacks the vitality of the earlier language of temptation.

O suff'ring heaven, with thy invisible finger,  
E'en at this instant turn the precious side  
Of both mine eyeballs inward, not to see myself! (II.i.129-131)

When Castiza comes back he begins to paint the pleasures of the palace in glamorous colours, revealing their fatal attraction to himself.

O, think upon the pleasure of the palace,  
Secured ease and state; the stirring meats,  
Ready to move out of the dishes, that  
E'en now quicken when they're eaten;  
Banquets abroad by torch-light, music, sports,  
Bare-headed vassals, that had ne'er the fortune  
To keep on their own hats, but let horns wear 'em,  
Nine coaches waiting, - hurry, hurry, hurry. (II.i.199-206)

The luxury of the palace is described with a sensual appeal in terms of food and banquets, using images of movement - "stirring", "move", "quicken", "sport". Then comes the ironic hit at cuckold's which debunks the glowing description of pleasure. But before the conflicting responses are sorted out, the last line tries to sweep the listener off her feet and render her breathless with the evocation of wealth, luxury, surfeit and the great demand for a beautiful woman amid court circles - "Nine coaches waiting, - hurry, hurry, hurry". In comparison with the energy and vitality of these passages of temptation, his praise of Castiza's virtue sounds cold and stiltedly rhetorical.

O angels, clap your wings upon the skies  
And give this virgin crystal plaudities! (II.i.245-246)

Just as Altofronto's vision is less compelling than Malevole's so also Vindice's virtuous inclinations are feebler than his assumed evil which becomes an obsession with him.
Yindice is thus a malcontent Outsider alienated from the corrupt society in which he lives. Yet in his attempt to thrive in this society by pretending to subscribe to its degenerate values, he allows himself to be tainted by the very evil that he condemns. This estranges him from the inner self and its integrity, which are overruled by the tyrannical demands of the public role.

The third strain in Vindice's alienation, a few notes of which had been sounded in his opening soliloquy with the skull, swells into a somber aria in Act III. Constant contemplation over the skull of his dead mistress has led Vindice to thoughts about the vanity of life. The skull has traditionally been a memento mori. To Vindice too the skull is a visible symbol of the horror and dissolution of Death, which makes all human endeavour seem absurd. Feminine vanity and face painting, the target of malcontents from Hamlet and Bosola up to Jimmy Porter, is shown to be an image of the absurd, when juxtaposed with the grinning mockery of the skull to which all their complexion care must ultimately be reduced.

... and is not she absurd,
Whose fortunes are upon their faces set,
That fear no other god but wind and wet? (III.v.63-55)

Even Vindice's love for Gloriana is unable to stand the test of the skull. He now seems willing to regard his love for her as mere dotage.

And now methinks I could e'en chide myself
For doting on her beauty. (III.v.69-70)

Death, which is the most potent force in driving a person towards an encounter with the absurd has cast a spell over him which estranges him from love and from life itself. Vindice then launches into his famous "silk-worm" speech, where the vanity of human life is exposed. The skull is shown to be the only ultimate reality towards which everything is directed, in exchange for which everything else is lost. He waxes eloquent on the futility of all labour, especially the care lavished over a woman, which has to face the absurd impasse of the skull. It is a vision of the world as Golgotha, the place of skulls, but the tone is not horror-struck but witty, a legacy of the metaphysical poets. Though the actual skull in Vindice's hand is that of his dead mistress, this fact is soon eclipsed by a generalized apprehension of the skull as
depicting Death, the ironic and inevitable end of all vanity.

Does the silk-worm expend her yellow labours
For thee? for thee does she undo herself?
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
For the poor benefit of a bewitching minute?
Why does yon fellow falsify high-ways,
And put his life between the judge's lips,
To refine such a thing? Keeps horse and men
To beat their valours for her? (III.v.72-79)

The toil involved in getting wealth and luxury is futile when set against the skeleton to which the woman once draped in yellow silk is finally reduced. She who was beautified by the labour of the silk-worm has now been reduced to bare bones by other worms. Male infatuation and the consequent sale of ancestral property to buy a lady's favour, becomes a grotesque mockery, for the pleasure so dearly bought is momentary. When his imagination is fired, Vindice moves in another world of his own, peopled with phantom figures like "yon fellow". In that world the only inevitable reality is the skull. Everything else - wealth and luxury lavished on woman, pleasure derived from woman, risking one's life to enrich woman and all the derring-do indulged in for the sake of woman - is shown to be the height of folly and futility, when confronted with the skull. The skull is the central symbol of Vindice's alienation from life, existence and woman in particular. It is also the means by which he arrived at an absurd vision of human existence as folly, futility or madness.

In the Contemptus Mundi homiletic tradition, the vanity of earthly life is evoked to warn men, drawing them away from sin and illusory pleasure, towards God as the only reality. Perhaps in this sense disillusionment with and detachment from life may also be regarded as "an important phase - even, if you like, a mystical experience - in life itself". But Vindice's vision differs from this because he is fully aware of the vitality and fascination of that which is rejected whether it be the silk-worm's "yellow labour" or the enchantment of the "bewitching minute". This dual awareness of world-weariness and the attraction of the world betokens a dichotomy of the self.

The alienation of Vindice reaches its culmination at the end of the play. He is so completely infected by the evil which both
attracted and repelled him that he is no longer aware of his own moral
degradation. His exultant boast about the murder of the old Duke
brings down speedy punishment. Hippolito's mild reproach, "'Sfoot,
brother, you begun," (V.iii.106) draws from Vindice the self-justifying retort:

May not we set as well as the duke's son?
Thou hast no conscience; are we not revenged?
Is there one enemy left alive amongst those?
'Tis time to die, when we are ourselves our foes. (V.iii.107-110)

This speech may be just an attempt to excuse his fault and defend his
foolish verbosity. In the first line he assumes a nonchalant attitude
towards death. In the second he seems to imply that according to
conscience it is just that they themselves should die after having
killed all their enemies. It is the last line which reveals Vindice's
alienation. Plotting revenge had made up his entire existence. Once
the revenge had become a reality and there was no one else to be
revenge upon, life became purposeless and then it is time to die. When
a man's external enemies are dead, Vindice considers it inevitable that
man should turn against the enemy within and prey upon himself. It is
almost a Nietzschean35 idea that when man has no outlet for his cruelty
externally, he turns within to torture himself. According to Vindice
when a man has no enemies to grapple with and must make war upon
himself it is indeed time for him to die. When the life-long dream of
revenge comes true and there is nothing more to live for, the
subconscious death-wish may be imagined as hastening death through
self-betrayal.

Thus it is seen that the malcontent role assumed by Vindice to
enable him to carry out his revenge, soon dominates over the real self
causung self-estrangement. Exclusive concentration on the skull
retained as a spur to revenge, has led to an alienation from existence.
Finally after the revenge when there is no longer any need for role-
play, the inner self is unable to re-emerge, having been choked by
evil in the meantime. Thus having lost both role and inner self it is
indeed "time to die".

The Revenger's Tragedy may be seen as a gloss on the contempo-
rary social context which engendered the malcontent. The impoverish-
ment of the gentry led to the relinquishing of traditional values and
ideals and the adoption of commercial values and even corrupt methods.
The individual who is aware of this change being forced upon him is in a state of tension between the old and the new and rails at society for making this change necessary. L.G. Salingar describes this socio-economic process:

While the disproportion between honour and means become more glaring, large numbers of the lesser gentry, deprived of the security of the old order, found themselves landless men, dependent on an uncertain or an insufficient patronage, men without 'vocations'. Tourneur's Vindice is one of the dramatic spokesmen of these malcontents. His independence belongs to the past, the present is contaminated by the value of gold.  

In the play Vindice's father had been an impoverished and disappointed gentleman whose "estate" had not "been fellow to his mind". Deprived of former status and rebuffed by the Duke he had brooded over his disgrace and died of discontent in silence. Vindice had watched his father die because of his inability to fight the new order.

And through disgrace, oft smother'd in his spirit
When it would mount, surely I think he died
Of discontent, the nobleman's consumption. (V.i.125-127)

His father's death and all that it implied must have shaken him. It possibly impressed upon him the need to seek advancement through knavery, though this decision went against his nature. There may perhaps be some truth in his exaggerated claim that his father's death had made life unbearable to him.

For since my worthy father's funeral,
My life 'a unnatural to me, e'en compelled
As if I lived now when I should be dead. (I.i.119-121)

The play sets forth current notions about the genesis of the malcontent and the role-expectations from him. Lussurioso's request to Hippolito describes the malcontent's nature, the possible origin of his discontent and his readiness to become a villain in return for gold. He tells Hippolito

To seek some strange-digested fellow forth,
Of ill-contented nature, either disgrac'd
In former times, or by new grooms displac'd
Since his stepmother's nuptials; such a blood,
A man that were for evil only good. (I.i.76-80)

The same connection between a malcontent and villainy is made again by Lussurioso later in the play, when Hippolito speaks of his brother as one who "keeps at home, full of want and discontent". Lussurioso replies:
There's hope in him, for discontent and want
Is the best clay to mould a villain of. (IV.1.47-48)

In addition to the socio-economic background, Machiavellian thought, especially cynicism regarding human weakness, also contributed to the formation of this character. Vindice's insistent testing of his mother and sister may perhaps be related to this source.

As the title of the play indicates the basic genre to which the play belongs is the revenge tragedy. When the alienation theme and the Outsider figure cross the revenge structure, certain innovations follow. The introduction of the malcontent Outsider at court in a revenge play, necessitates the introduction of tirades against court-evils. But he himself is attracted by the evil that he condemns. So in order that his denunciations might be effective and not be totally reduced to burlesque because of his own attraction towards evil, it is necessary that his targets should be unequivocally blame-worthy, if possible even personifications of vices and follies. It is remarkable that in the court society depicted in The Malcontent, The Revenger's Tragedy and The Duchess of Malfi, there are at least a few characters who are type-figures with self-explanatory names tracing their ancestry back to the Morality tradition. These figures are among the favourite targets of the malcontent's attack. Would it be an exaggeration of the malcontent Outsider's structural importance to suggest that these emblematic characters were introduced into the revenge-action at least partly because of the malcontent Outsider?

In The Revenger's Tragedy the Outsider's alienation from the external world makes him lead a very active life of the imagination, in order that his denunciations be effective and not be totally reduced to burlesque because of his attraction towards evil, the imaginary world he conjured up through constant brooding becomes more real to him than the external world. He therefore constantly launches on flights of the most extravagant nature. His intended revenge on the old Duke, Vindice rapturously exclaims, "O sweet, delectable, rare, happy, ravishing;" Hippolito non-plussed by the rhapsody asks, "Why, what's the matter?" and insists on sharing his thoughts. But another question from Hippolito sends him off into a state of agitated ecstasy.
Hippolito: Where's that lady now?
Vindice: O at that word
I am lost again, you cannot find me yet;
I'm in a throng of happy apprehensions. (III.v.28-30)

When Vindice loses himself in a realm of speculation and eager excitement, Hippolito reminds him of practical difficulties as in IV.i.14-23. Hippolito tells Vindice—"You fetch about well, but let's talk in present" (IV.i.21). This recurring pattern of losing himself in fanciful flight followed by recall to earth by his brother is the direct result of Vindice's alienation. In IV.iv, Vindice for the first time stumbles upon the explanation for his frequent flights of self-forgetful imagination.

Hippolito: 0 brother, you forget our business.
Vindice: And well remember'd. Joy's a subtle elf;
I think man's happiest when he forgets himself. (IV.v.82-84)

Here he almost acknowledges that he seeks escape from his actual situation in life and finds happiness in self-forgetfulness. Perhaps his estrangement at various levels from society, individuals, his own family, human existence and self makes real life so intolerable that the only relief is to seek refuge in a world of imagination. Vindice populates that imaginary world with figures which seem to take on a curious life of their own. Such are "that bald madam opportunity," "the uprightest man that sins but seven times a day", the usurer's son who melts in a kiss the wealth accumulated for fifty years, the "bare headed vassals," "Grace, the bawd", "this woman in immodest thin apparel," the "careful sister," "yon fellow" and a host of others. His fertile imagination peoples the court with more characters than are in the cast.

When the basic revenge structure is crossed with the Outsider theme, the traditional figure of the Outsider gains in depth. He becomes a complex figure, self-estranged and alienated from the human predicament. The pattern of flight and recall, the structural tension between fascination and repulsion, the ambivalent irony of playing multiple roles and their shifting relationship to the inner self are all introduced into the revenge construct because of the Outsider theme.

Thus Vindice is a malcontent Outsider alienated from the corrupt court society, yet fascinated by its evil, self-divided between role
and inner self and finally self-estranged and alienated from human 
extistence itself, of which the skull, his constant companion, is an 
image. This Outsider arises from a contemporary socio-economic 
context and appears in a reigning dramatic structure affecting it 
considerably.

Flamineo in The White Devil could be taken as an early sketch 
of the Websterian malcontent Outsider brought to perfection in 
Bosola. He is a typical malcontent of Jacobean drama - the 
impoverished gentleman-scholar, who, when denied preferment by lawful 
means, stoops finally to the lowest forms of villainy in the hope 
of advancement.

It is almost inevitable that such a person should detest the 
social system and structure which have conspired to keep him down. 
Flamineo feels alienated from the society in the midst of which he 
is placed. He lashes out against social abuses with the rage of 
the malcontent who himself however has no moral code to stand by. 
He rails against bribery, the degeneration of religion adulterated 
with policy, usury among Christians, allotment of multiple benefices 
to favourites and the sale of titles and coats-of-arms. Like Bosola 
Flamineo also remains a discontented courtier till the end, complain­
ing about empty promises and shattered hopes.

The alienated sensibility of Flamineo becomes most apparent in 
his attitude towards his nearest blood relatives. He is an Outsider 
who has broken free from all human bonds. He acts as pander to his 
own sister. He resembles Richard III in besmirching his mother's 
honour by casting doubts on his brother's legitimacy. He finally 
murders his brother without even giving him a chance to defend 
himself. Like many another malcontent, Flamineo is also bitterly 
cynical about woman's virtue and attributes promiscuity to all. 
He seems to be estranged irrevocably from the feminine principle.

The self-division in Bosola is hinted at from the beginning 
and worked out as a gradual self-estrangement in the course of the 
play. But in Flamineo there is just one momentary glimpse of 
something new and strange stirring within him when he sees his 
mother's madness.
I have a strange thing in mee, to th' which
I cannot give a name without it bee
Compassion.38 (V.iv.107-109)
He confesses that this is not the first time when he felt misgivings
about his own actions and way of life.

....... I have lived
Riotously ill, like some that live in court,
And sometimes, when my face was full of smiles,
Have felt the maze of conscience in my brest. (V.iv.112-115)
But these traces of remorse and self-division never deepen into an
alienation from self. In him there is no dichotomy between role and
self.

In his last moments Flamineo approaches what might be called
an alienation from human existence. This is seen in his attitude to
death. When Lodovico questions him, "What dost think on?" Flamineo
replies in a strange condition of quiescence,

Nothing; of nothing: leave thy idle questions,
I am i' th' way to study a long silence,
To prate were idle, I remember nothing.
Ther's nothing of so infinit vexation
As mans owne thoughts. (V.vi 203-207)
In this speech death is viewed as the negation of everything in life.
It is the ultimate nothingness. So when he goes into it Flamineo
empties himself of everything including thought. He goes with
nothing to meet nothing. The speech conveys a state of stasis where
even the movement of thought is abjured. There is a complete
detachment from life, thought, speech and movement. Death, the long
silence and Nothing assume a reality denied to life and "prating"
which are dismissed as "idle". When Flamineo says,

Wee cease to grieve, cease to be fortune's slaves,
Nay, cease to dye, by dying, (V.vi.252-253)
Death is seen as the final release from sorrow, from the vagaries of
capricious fortune and even from dying itself. In the manner of an
Outsider who rejects all precedent, example or pre-existent systems
and asserts instead the validity of only his individual existence,
Flamineo declares,

I doe not looke
Who went before, nor who shall follow mee;
Noe, at my selfe I will begin and end. (V.vi.256-258)
But soon he is forced to admit the inadequacy of man's stand of self-sufficiency and confesses bewilderment.

While we look up to Heaven, we confound Knowledge with knowledge. O, I am in a mist! (V.vi.259-260)

Here he realise that when man looks up to heaven he can get confused between the experiential and practical knowledge which he has derived from his own existence and the knowledge of religious revelation which can be accepted only in faith. As death approaches, man is unable to keep the two kinds of knowledge distinct and separate. They fuse in his mind and envelop him in confusion, chaos and a hazy mist which seems to prove that life is really unknowable. Here as Una Ellis-Fermor observes, "Flamineo makes an admission of the reality of the unseen world he resolves to exclude". 39

Flamineo's farewell speech is a curious mingling of world-weariness and self-assertion.

'Tis well yet there's some goodnesse in my death,
My life was a blacke charnell: I have caught
An everlasting could; I have lost my voice
Most irrecoverably: Farewell glorious villains,
This busie trade of life appears most vaine,
Since rest breeds rest, where all seeke paine by paine.
Let no harsh flattering Bels resound my knell,
Strike thunder, and strike loud to my farewell! (V.vi.269-276)

The image of the "everlasting cold" with the mention of one of the consequences of a cold, the loss of voice, suggests a blury-eyed catarrhal state sans taste, sans smell, sans hearing, a symbolic equivalent of the Nothingness which is death. In this speech there is a legitimate pride in the courageous manner in which he faced death, a frankness in viewing his past life as it was without any attempt at self-delusion, a profound world-weariness and a self-assertive demand for a grand exit note - thunder.

Thus in Flamineo, his alienation from society and individuals is emphasized. There is little evidence of any self-alienation, except for a fleeting moment of self-division and regret. Existential alienation or something approaching it is seen in the very last scene where the prospect of death draws forth a rich complexity of responses. It is this dimension of the Outsider which lifts Flamineo and Bosola above the level of the common run of malcontents-turned-
In Flamineo's portrayal as a malcontent Outsider, there is a greater emphasis on the sociological background which produced him than on the representation of his deeper alienation from self or from existence. The social and economic conditions which produced such malcontents from among the impoverished aristocrats are sketched in great detail in this play. Flamineo's description of his family background gives a picture of impoverished nobility trying to salvage itself from its ruins. His father had sold his landed property and lived regally out of the proceedings, leaving the son with a taste for high life but with no means to support it. He had sued for favour at court without result. Lacking preferment he had become a parasitical hunger-on. Disappointment had made him discontented and embittered, until he becomes willing to undertake the worst villainy provided he can gain advancement by it. Repeated failure in his struggle to uplift himself economically has hardened him into an amoral cynic and disbeliever in the older value system still upheld by his virtuous mother and brother. The play thus contains in itself a socio-economic explanation for Flamineo's rejection of the virtuous ways of the past which seem to him to be ineffectual and the corruption of the present which he condemns and yet adopts.

Bosola in Webster's The Duchess of Malfi is a fully developed malcontent Outsider alienated from society, individuals, self and human existence. The play works out his progressive alienation as an Outsider. Hence an act-by-act analysis of his alienation at various levels would not be out of place.

When the play begins Bosola is a recognized malcontent or "court-gall" as Antonio describes him. Antonio shrewdly diagnoses Bosola's discontent as arising "not for simple love of Piety," (I.i.24-25), but out of a foul melancholy caused by neglect and frustration. Bosola had been "a fantastical scholler" in Padua (III.iii.50), now impoverished and reduced to the position of a hired assassin and not rewarded by the Cardinal for the murder in which he had been employed. Hence Bosola expresses the malcontent's
usual grouse against individuals and society:
I have done you better service than to be slighted thus:
miserable age, where onely the reward of doing well, is the doing
of it! (I.i.32-34)

His personal animosity against the Cardinal who had cheated him is
soon generalised into a condemnation of the corrupt court practices
of his age. The "miserable dependencies" at court and the unfair
neglect of soldiers after war are criticised.

Such an embittered and frustrated character is proverbially
ripe for use as a hired villain, as Lussurioso had pointed out in
The Revenger's Tragedy, IV.i.47-48. Before the first act is over,
Bosola is commissioned by Ferdinand to act as a spy on the Duchess.
When Bosola hears the job-requirements, moved by some latent goodness
in himself, he tries to return the gold which is the press-money for
his betrayal of the Duchess. (The Judas motif is implicit here.)
Ferdinand's refusal to take back the money makes Bosola feel compelled
to commit evil in the name of gratitude.

Oh, that to avoid ingratitude
For the good deed you have done me, I must doe
All the ill man can invent! (I.i.297-299)
The hollowness of this argument is immediately exposed by the mocking
voice of the "unkind self", the detached critical self which is in
conflict with the performing self. This second self stands aside and
comments sardonically,

...... thus the Divell
Candies all sinnes (O'er) and what Heaven terms vile,
That he names complementall. (I.i.299-301)

This voice of self-disparagement which is an indication of self-
division is heard again in "Sometimes the Divell doth preach"
(I.i.317). Thus a tension is maintained between what he does and
what he thinks about it. The technique of ironic self-criticism is
perhaps developed to suppress self-revulsion. Wry comments on his
own villainy enable him to continue in it for subsistence by
dissociating his actions from his judgement. The irony is almost a
safety device which deflects the self-hatred which would otherwise
arise from a realization of having debased one's talents. The self-
mockery of a latter-day malcontent like George Dillon also serves a
similar purpose of relieving a sense of contemptuous self-loathing arising from a betrayal of one's own integrity. Thus in Act I Bosola appears as a genuine malcontent railing at society and individuals out of a sense of injured merit. His self-mockery reveals a detachment from self which later deepens into self-alienation in the dichotomy between the role and person. In Act II Bosola appears as a hired villain retaining "the old garbe of melancholly", (I.i.303) as instructed by his employer Ferdinand. The malcontent and hired villain roles are closely interrelated. Being a malcontent won for Bosola the post of spy and to be an effective spy he has to continue to appear as a malcontent. However this is not just a pose. It is a role which comes naturally to him. The vitality and energy of his vituperative language reveals relish for what he condemns. This characteristic could perhaps be traced to the Jacobean tendency "to gloat over the thing" one "condenme". He rails at the faults of eminent courtiers and launches on a venomous attack on women and their follies. His denunciation is directed at Castruccio and an old lady in whom he crucifies the sins of their class and species. The old lady is not so much an individual as a peg to hang his satire on. They are type-figures introduced for the sole purpose of being the malcontent's targets.

In this role as the railing malcontent in Act II Bosola affects the tone of disgust and nausea at the human condition. Though we are eaten up of lice and wormes, And though continually we beare about us A rotten and dead body, we delight To hide it in rich tissew. (II.i.57-60)

The peremptory manner in which this passage is foisted on the hearing of Castruccio and the old lady - "observe my meditation now" (II.i.45-46) - suggests that this is perhaps just a pose to keep up his reputation as a malcontent. But at the same time the sense of violent revulsion conveyed through the image of every man carrying along a rotting corpse fed upon by lice and worms bespeaks a fundamental horrified estrangement from the human predicament. Thus in Act II Bosola parades an alienation from society, individuals and
the human condition under his garb of melancholy which however fits
him as naturally as his own skin.

Act III reveals Bosola in his role of hired villain employed
by Ferdinand to spy on the Duchess. In this act he is seen least as
an Outsider except for a brief moment of self-depreciation from which
he rallies immediately.

..... Oh, this base quality
Of Intelligencer! why, every quality i' th' world
Preferres but gaine, or commendation. (III.ii.75-77)

In Act IV Bosola's self-alienation takes the form of a
dichotomy between the role and the person. Though he ruthlessly
executes cruelty on the Duchess in his role as Ferdinand's hired
villain, a new self seems to emerge, which is moved to feel
admiration and compassion for the Duchess. Thus he describes the
imprisoned Duchess to Ferdinand with sympathetic admiration and yet
he tortures her with the waxen show in obedience to Ferdinand's
orders. The lyrical tone of his description of her is a far cry from
his usual cynical railing.

..... a behaviour so noble
As gives a majestie to adversitie:
You may discorne the shape of lovelinesse
More perfect, in her teares, than in her smiles. (IV.i.6-9)

An inner tension between contending selves is evidenced, when at one
moment he dissuades her from "despair" and "vain sorrow", preaching
Christian resignation and in the next unfolds a pagan vision of man's
powerlessness before a universe which is totally indifferent to human
destiny - "Looke you, the starres shine still:" (IV.i.120). He
pleads with Ferdinand to have pity on her. Even Ferdinand observes
and comments upon the change. It is almost as if a new self is
emerging of whose existence Bosola himself may not have been aware.
The use of masks by Bosola in this act is just a visible symbol of
the various selves contending within him. He appears as tomb-maker,
bell-man and announcer of death who gradually and ritualistically
prepares her for death. Here his speeches may be interpreted as
helpful attempts to enable her to overcome all attachment to life
and accept death in resignation. Yet the actions are those of a
hired villain who executes murder in a detached manner.
In his guise as tomb-maker, Bosola expatiates on the fragility of human existence, especially on the corruption of the body. He presents a vision of man condemned to perpetual imprisonment in an alien and delimiting universe. He tells the Duchess:

Thou art a box of worme-seede, at best, but a salvatory of greene mummy. What’s this flesh? A little cruded milke, phantastical puffe-paste: our bodies are weaker than those paper prisons boyes use to keepe flies in: more contemptible: since ours is to preserve earth-wormes: Didst thou ever see a Larke in a cage? such is the soule in the body: This world is like her little turfe of grasse and the Heaven O'er our heads like her looking glasse, onely gives a miserable knowledge of the small compasse of our prison. (IV.ii.123-131)

The images of putrefaction, corruption, hollowness and imprisonment powerfully project an alienating vision of human existence on earth.

Next as the bell-man Bosola gives specific instructions to the Duchess to prepare herself for death, loosening her hold on life. That she may do it more willingly she is presented with a picture of life as mere futility, folly and vain struggle.

Of what is't fooles make such vaine keeping? Sin their conception, their birth, weeping: Their life, a general mist of error, Their death, a hideous storme of terror. (IV.ii.188-191)

It is ironical that this view of human existence as being a mist of error, which he now projects before the Duchess, is soon perceived by him in his own life.

Despite Bosola's admiration of her calm acceptance of death, he gives the order of strangling to the executioner, keeping his inner self apart from his role. When he demands his reward from Ferdinand, it is as if he views his part only as a professional service performed in return for payment in his role as a hired villain, his inner self being uninvolved. But Bosola is faced with disappointment and disillusionment in his hope of advancement. When Ferdinand, overcome with remorse, banishes Bosola from his sight, the wheel has come full circle and Bosola becomes the frustrated, neglected courtier once again.

..... Let me know Wherfore I should be thus neglected? Sir, I serv'd your tyranny: and rather strove To satisfy your selfe, than all the world;
And though I loath'd the evil, yet I lov'd
You that did counsel it; and rather sought
To appear a true servant than an honest man. (IV.ii.153-159)
The neglected malcontent who had faded into the background during
the dominance of the hired-villain role, now comes back into the limelight. But there is a difference. Here Bosola is aware of self-
division and expresses self-alienation. Bosola's claim that he
committed villainy out of love for Ferdinand is an extravagant
falsehood. But the last line is true and brings out Bosola's
loyalty to his role rather than to his inner self. This is the
essence of self-alienation — to reject and be estranged from a part
of one's essential self.

When left alone with the Duchess' corpse he tears off his mask
in a symbolic gesture and reveals his inner self. There is no need
for pretence or hypocrisy.

What would I do, were this to do again?
I would not change my peace of conscience
For all the wealth of Europe: (IV.ii.365-367)

Given a chance to re-live his life he would be true to his inner self
and not adopt any role in the hope of reward. But the impossibility
of undoing by one's own efforts what has already been done as a
result of one's own deliberate choice of evil is brought home to him.
The Duchess who briefly revives cannot be brought back to life in
spite of Bosola's efforts and ardent wish. He attributes this to
some sadistic power "that we cannot be suffered / To do good when
we have a mind to it!" (IV.ii.387-388). This is worked out more
fully in Act V, leading Bosola to an almost absurd vision of a
hostile and perverse universe which thwarts man's desires. Thus in
Act IV Bosola projects an existential view of the human condition
before the Duchess to promote a detachment from life in her. But
this is a view that he himself approaches in the next act. In Act IV
the gulf between the inner self and the role is increasingly widened
until finally Bosola claims to have chosen the role of hired villain
and suppressed the inner self because of Ferdinand. The act ends
with Bosola reverting to his malcontent grievance of non-payment of
service as in Act I.
The Duchess of Malfi is rather unique in being almost the only play where the protagonist dies in Act IV and the play continues for one full act after that. This has often been regarded as a dramatic flaw. But the fifth act can be seen as essential in working out the progressive alienation of Outsiders like Ferdinand and Bosola. Upto Act IV, the theme of alienation, as worked out in Bosola the malcontent Outsider and Ferdinand the incestuous Outsider, is subordinated to the tragic heroic theme centering on the Duchess. After her death the play continues for one more act because the Outsider theme has become too absorbing to be hastily wound up with the protagonist's death. The alienation of Bosola and Ferdinand is pushed to the utmost limit in the last act. Act V is an evidence of the tremendous impact which the Outsider figure has on dramatic structure even when the Outsider is not the protagonist.

In the case of Bosola the last act draws together all the various kinds of alienation revealed by him throughout the play. Here again he appears as an alienated malcontent smarting under a sense of injustice. The complaint that his "service" goes unrewarded is a leit-motif in the characterization of Bosola from the first scene of the play till the last. In the soliloquy at the end of this scene he decides to put an end to his self-estrangement. All these years he had lived up to his public role as malcontent and hired assassin ignoring the inner self. Now he decides to follow the inner voice and help Antonio. But it is not only the promptings of goodness but also hatred for the cardinal and a desire for revenge which impel him. His native good nature has been poisoned beyond remedy by the evil that he has followed till now. He learns to his great agony in V.iv. that it is too late to change his course. The original choice of evil seems irrevocable. Despite all his good intentions to help Antonio, Bosola finds himself to be the unwitting murderer of Antonio. The killing of Antonio against his will brings him to a confrontation with the absurdity of existence. It seems to prove to him the helplessness of man in the face of irrational and blind forces in the universe which sway him as they please.
Bosola: Antonio?
The man I would have sav'd 'bove mine owne life!
We are meerely the starres tennis-balls (strooke and
banded./Which way please them). (V.iv.61-64)

For Bosola this is almost the equivalent of the "boundary situation"
which brings man face to face with the absurd. The routine work of
a malcontent employed as tool-villain had not brought him the
expected advancement. The attempt to undo or compensate for the
former evil also meets with frustration. Finally he decides to be
his own example and exist as himself, denying all sense of history
or precedent in the Outsider manner.

I will not imitate things glorious,
No more than base: I'll be mine owne example. (V.iv.94-95)

This is a loud assertion of the absolute independence of the
individual. The dramatist's interest in the Outsider and his
concerns carries him on to explore Bosola's experiment in individual
existence through another scene until he reaches the clouded
boundary which separates life on earth from the beyond.

In the last two speeches of Bosola his social alienation as
the neglected man of merit, his experience of self-alienation in
acting against his own good nature and his vision of existential
alienation, are all brought into sharp focus. The latter speech is
no longer the pose of a malcontent as in Act II, nor is it evoked
to enable someone else to be detached from life and accept death
willingly as in Act IV. It is a desolate vision arising from a
personal encounter with the absurdity of existence. Though he
describes his action as counter-revenge, his picture of himself is
not as an average man but as an Outsider, self-alienated and
neglected.

That was an actor in the maine of all,
Much 'gainst mine owne good nature, yet i' th' end
Neglected. (V.v.106-108)

In his last speech he confesses to being enshrouded "In a mist".
He becomes aware of a theatrical element in his life. There is
complete estrangement from the human predicament. Death seems to
reduce man to a state of nothingness, while life is shown to be
unknown and unknowable. But he has no regrets about his own life.
(V.v.118-129).
Thus Bosola enters the basic revenge structure of the play as a malcontent, who in the Jacobean age was considered eminently suitable to be employed as a tool-villain; but being an Outsider who is also alienated from the universe and from self, the exploration of these themes alters the structure also. In the traditional revenge structure the role of the hired assassin is mechanical – he kills at the behest of others and is killed finally like Pedringano in *The Spanish Tragedy*. He does not have an existence of his own apart from the role. But Bosola, being self-alienated, is a tool-villain only in his public role, whereas his inner self views this role ironically. He is an ironic performer who directs his satire against himself and his role. The traditional malcontent comments on the main action in a detached manner. Apart from his contempt and scorn for others, we have no inkling into the workings of his mind. Bosola is shown not merely as a satirist or an automaton killer but as an Outsider alienated from self and from human existence in the universe. It is the exploration of the Outsider's alienation that must account for Act V of this play. When the traditional structure is crossed by the alienation theme, the malcontent confronts the irrationality of the universe and experiences the futility of existence and becomes an Outsider.

From the beginning of the play till the end Bosola remains a neglected malcontent, alienated from society and individuals. The strain of self-mockery in him at the beginning deepens into self-estrangement in the dichotomy between role and self. When at the end he tries to banish the role and be true to the inner self, his efforts meet with failure. The disaffection with life exhibited in the role of malcontent at the beginning and then adopted to draw the Duchess to an acceptance of death, becomes a personal experience at the end as he apprehends man as a helpless creature in a hostile universe. While in *Flamineo* the emphasis is on the contemporary socio-economic conditions which produced the malcontent, in *Bosola*, though the context is the same, the progressive alienation of the malcontent from self and existence are extensively probed, etching the social context in just a few graphic phrases like "a fantastical
The introduction of the alienation theme is seen to metamorphose the conventional malcontent-cum-tool-villain into an Outsider. The absorbing interest in the development of the Outsider figure makes Act V an integral part of the play's dramatic structure, even though the protagonist is dead by the end of Act IV.

The present review of the malcontent Outsider in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama reveals a development of the figure in three phases. Jaques and Thersites exemplify the emergence of the malcontent Outsider as a detached, discontented courtier. Though Hamlet and Edmund are discontented figures in court, the malcontent strain is just a minor theme in the total orchestration of their characters. Hamlet is primarily a fore-runner of the existential Outsider. Edmund who begins as a malcontent soon modulates into a power-seeker. Malevole, Vindice, Flamineo and Bosola in Jacobean drama are fully developed examples of the malcontent Outsider with a social bias.

In Jaques and Thersites there is no sense of having suffered personal injury and hence there is no desire to take revenge on society. There is in them an almost congenital element of cynicism and disgust for human existence. Theirs is a vision of the folly and futility of human existence. In the Jacobean malcontents the sense of personal injustice predominates. They rail at a society which neglected them or did not do justice to them. Except for Malevole who attempts to reform society the others are totally negative in their attitude to society.

There is a difference in the dramatic role assigned to the Elizabethan and Jacobean malcontent Outsiders. Jaques and Thersites are mostly peripheral observers, detached from the play's main action, though in *Troilus and Cressida* the malcontent's vision is relevant to the overall vision of the play. The Jacobean Outsider takes an active part in the main action. He may even occupy the central position in the play, as Malevole and Vindice do, indicated by the very titles. Or as in Flamineo and Bosola, his discontent may be exploited by those in power who use him as a tool-villain.
Thus the malcontent Outsider is seen to develop from a passive to an active role.

The early Elizabethan malcontent exists only in relation to his role. He has no independent existence apart from his role. He is not an ironical performer who views his own role in a detached manner from outside. But in the later malcontents like Bosola, Vindice and Malevole there is a widening gulf between the public role and the private inclinations. This separation of the role from the person is an effective dramatic image of the Outsider's alienation from self. It is as if a part of the divided self stands aloof and comments on the performing self.

It is the theme of alienation which lifts the dramatic stereotype of the malcontent above his average villainous role and makes him a complex creature, self-divided, self-estranged and alienated from the human predicament in the universe. The malcontent figure therefore reaches his optimum development as an Outsider in the plays of the Jacobean age. He experiences alienation at all levels, from society, from individuals, from the human predicament and from self. The Outsider theme imposes order on the changing social scene and highlights the tensions of the individual caught in a transitional society, aware of the flux, unlike the semi-conscious majority. The figure of the self-divided Outsider separated into role-player and a complex human person dramatically portrays the tension between an outdated set of norms and a state of anomie preceding the setting up of new norms.

The influence of the intellectual background of the age is seen in the passive and active manifestations of the malcontent Outsider. The tradition of melancholy in the Elizabethan age contributes to the passive malcontent figure like Jaques and Thersites. The Machiavellian attitude of cynicism and ruthlessness is closely related to the active villainous malcontents like Vindice, Flamineo and Bosola.

The bitterness and anger towards life expressed by the Jacobean malcontent Outsiders may be traced to the post-Renaissance gloom and disillusionment. After the glory and the dream of the Renaissance with its infinite aspirations and the apotheosis of the individual, the reaction set in. F.L. Lucas describes the change of mood vividly:
This new unseen world had seemed an eternal feast of beauty and now the worm was there. Amid all the new conquests of the unchained intellect death remained still unconquered. The socio-economic background which gave birth to the Jacobean malcontent Outsider has already been indicated earlier in the chapter. The many references to this background and the attention paid to it in drama suggests an attempt on the part of the age to understand the malcontent and examine what went wrong with him. When the malcontent is not portrayed stereotypically but is probed sensitively, there is an amazing objectivity in the portrayal. He is neither condemned outright as a villain nor glorified nor apotheosized. He cannot be said to project the secret desires and fears of the age like the power-seeking Outsider in the Elizabethan age.

Comparing the delineation of the malcontent Outsider's alienation with that of the power-seeking Outsider, there is a noticeable silence on his alienation from God; whereas this had been an important element in the power-seeking Outsider's total alienation. The shift of emphasis from man's estrangement from God to his alienation from society is a symptom of the increasing secularization of drama. Another significant difference is that the power-seeking Outsider uses others as tools while the later Jacobean malcontent Outsider allows himself to be used by others as a tool. While the former is himself an alienating force, the latter is the instrument and victim of such exploitation. Due to the generally subsidiary role of the malcontent Outsider, the structural changes triggered by him are in general less radical than those initiated by the introduction of the power-seeking Outsider in the existing structures.

*  *  *  *  *  *

In drama too, as in human events, sometimes history repeats itself. Certain archetypal patterns, structures, themes, characters or images may be featured repeatedly in the theatre, with interesting and sometimes original variations. There might be a principle of eternal recurrence at work in dramatic figures! The Angry Young Man of the 1950's may perhaps be taken as a modern variant or a latter-day reincarnation of the earlier malcontent Outsider.
The angry heroes of modern drama like Osborne's Jimmy Porter and George Dillon are indeed discontented young men alienated from their society and railing at its faults in virile language. They are educated and perhaps talented young men unable to secure employment commensurate with their qualifications. This fundamental frustration due to non-recognition of merit impels them to attack the social order which has failed to give them fulfilment. Their intelligence and sensitivity may make them aware of the futility of their existence. The monotony and mechanical duplication of day-to-day life may lead to at least a glimpse of an absurd vision. But they try to assuage the anguish by assuming a pose of angry vituperation at others and/or self-mockery. Thus they progress from social alienation to an estrangement from existence and to attitudinizing which signifies at least a slight alienation from self. The causes for the emergence of such malcontent figures in the twentieth century may be sought in the background of the age.

The similarity between the Jacobean vision and the modern predicament has been often pointed out. The crumbling of the medieval framework and stability in the Elizabethan and Jacobean age was paralleled by the destruction of the Victorian class structures and smugness by World War II. The post-war situation was similar to that of the Jacobean age in its normlessness, cynicism, disappointment and disillusionment.

The horror of the Second World War, the atrocities committed on man by man and the devastating effect of the atom bomb had shaken the faith and almost destroyed the hope of thinking and feeling individuals. Shock and disgust were felt at the inhumanity of man which would have been enough to make any sensitive individual a malcontent Outsider, profoundly alienated from Man and human nature and from his fellow human beings.

Britain's loss of empire and power and the disillusionment with the Labourite dream of a New Jerusalem which never came true left both the older and the younger generations in Britain in a state of bewilderment, disappointment and dissatisfaction. These vague feeling:
of unrest gradually found outlets in demonstrations and protest-marches. The year 1956 which witnessed the staging of Look Back in Anger was a year of political unrest. The despotic suppression of the Hungarian freedom struggle which was watched by the whole world in silence, Britain's loss of face in the Suez debacle, the mass campaigns in England against capital punishment and the demand for nuclear disarmament were some of the significant happenings of the year. Protest was therefore in the air and the emergence of the malcontent Outsider as the Angry Young Man merely crystallized what was already in solution in contemporary society. According to George E. Wellwarth, "the second world war has stimulated a philosophy of protest against the social order (in the English and German speaking drama) and against the human condition (in the French speaking drama and in a few English speaking ones)." When protest is not followed by commitment to alternative ideals, but instead precipitates the complete cutting away of the individual from society, it produces an Outsider, alienated from society, the human condition and self.

The rise of the red-brick universities led to the mass-production of graduates who could not be absorbed in the white-collar professions, traditionally considered to be respectable for university men. The situation is similar to that described by L.C. Knights as prevalent in the Elizabethan-Jacobean age. These educated young men who were denied adequate employment regarded themselves as the victims of social injustice and faulty social structure. Burning with resentment they deliberately and voluntarily resorted to non-intellectual manual work or set up small scale business units which would not demand much capital. Jimmy Porter in Look Back in Anger who had graduated from a "white tile university" runs a sweet-stall after having tried journalism, advertising and a travelling salesmanship in vacuum cleaners.

Thus the prevalent social, political and intellectual climate in the late 1950's aided the brief resurrection of the malcontent Outsider in British drama. The protagonists of two plays by John Osborne are taken up here for study as angry young men who are modern malcontent Outsiders. Jimmy Porter in Look Back in Anger and
George Dillon in *The Epitaph for George Dillon* by Osborne in collaboration with Anthony Creighton are presented as discontented young men railing at the society in the midst of which they have been placed.

Jimmy Porter, an angry young man is a modern malcontent Outsider who "offered a rallying point for a number of people from the post-war generation who felt that the world of today was not treating them according to their deserts". Within five minutes of the play's exposition Jimmy Porter comes alive as a complex malcontent Outsider alienated at various levels. The play opens with his speech revealing an agonized awareness of the monotony and mechanical reduplication of all human activity including his own—

Why do I do this every Sunday? Even the book reviews seem to be the same as last week's. Different books—same reviews. The sameness of the provincial Sunday depresses him and plunges him almost into existential despair over the human condition.

God, how I hate Sundays! It's always so depressing, always the same. We never seem to get any further, do we? Always the same ritual. Reading the papers, drinking tea, ironing. A few more hours and another week gone. Our youth is slipping away. (pp.14-15)

This speech reveals that Jimmy has had faint intimations of absurdity. He realizes that man's endless round of repetitious activity is rather like the eternally recurring futile task of Sisyphus. His weariness at the meaningless repetitive acts of a mechanical life, his acute and painful consciousness of being swept by the tide of time and flux, his realization that his youth is slipping away and that he belongs to time are all discoveries which betoken an Outsider who has had a glimpse of the absurd. Structurally this theme of the sameness of things is conveyed through the symmetry between the beginnings of Acts I and III - the same room, the same setting, the same two men hidden behind the Sunday newspapers, the same ironing board with a pile of clothes on it and a woman in Jimmy's shirt behind it. Jimmy's complaint about Sundays is also the same. "Why do I spend half of Sunday reading the papers?" (p.75). Jimmy wants others also to realize this horror and absurdity of existence. In order to shake them out of their slumber of unawareness and apathy he shouts and rages at
them. The lack of response maddens him and estranges him from others. He rails at his wife Alison and his friend Cliff:

Nobody can be bothered. No one can raise themselves out of their delicious sloth. You two will drive me round the bend soon - I know it, as sure as I'm sitting here. I know you're going to drive me mad. (p.15)

Though Alison his wife is the immediate target of abuse, as the play develops it is seen that he crucifies her family, her class and the contemporary malaise in her. His vicious attack on individuals reveals an alienation at the interpersonal level.

Jimmy Porter's discontent takes the form of rebellion. "He is the stuff of which perennial rebels are made". His rebellion is expressed as nonconformist behaviour which deliberately flouts all bourgeois conventions and as vituperative railing against the establishment. He runs a sweet shop which upsets middle-class notions about respectable jobs, shuns church-going like the plague and enjoys shocking people by openly flouting the conventional strictures on sin, adultery and "living in sin (pp.78-79). His verbal attack spreads far and wide bringing within its range almost every aspect of contemporary social life. Sunday papers, bishops, the H-bomb, evangelist revival meetings, lack of enthusiasm, romantic evocations of the Edwardian age, all forms of "phoneyness", the social structure, women, churchbells, researchers in anthropology and Shakespeare, people who cannot appreciate jazz, people who have not had the beneficial experience of watching someone die, "auntie Wordsworth" and "living in the American age" are all lashed at savagely by this irreverent young man. He is thus alienated from contemporary society at every point.

As an Outsider, Jimmy's alienation from religion and rejection of it are brought out in the play. Helena with her "book of rules", her religious and moral preconceptions represents to him a denial of life by escaping from painful reality. In attacking her he derides religion in general and Christian evangelical revivals in particular. He uses the imagery of the world of commerce and makes out religion to be a business venture. He describes Helena: "She is one of those apocalyptic share-pushers who are spreading all those rumours about
a transfer of power" (p.55). Jimmy presents religion as a drug which
deadens the pain of this life by providing a vision of the next life.
He tells Helena:

And if you can't bear the thought of messing up your nice, clean
soul, you'd better give up the whole idea of life and become a
saint. Because you'll never make it as a human being. It's either
this world or the next. (p.94)

The choice, according to him, is mutually exclusive. It has to be
either this world with its suffering and pain as the human lot or the
next world and sainthood. To Jimmy, religion and the leap of faith
mean a self-deluded denial of this world - a position very close to
what Camus calls "philosophical suicide".57

The remedy suggested by Jimmy Porter to shake people out of
their slumber of inert indifference or self-delusion, is to witness
the death of a dear one at close quarters. This experience would
force them to face reality as it is and would also humanize them.
When man is cut off from his spiritual moorings, Death fills him with
an overpowering sense of the futility and helplessness of man's
existence on earth. According to Jimmy, "Anyone who's never watched
somebody die is suffering from a pretty bad case of virginity". (p.57)
His first encounter with death had been when he was ten years old,
when he had watched his father die. The agonizing traumatic experienc
had prolonged for a year, leaving him permanently scarred for life.
It had also taught him more about life than anything else.

I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry - angry and
helpless. And I can never forget it. (sits) I knew more about
love..... betrayal..... and death, when I was ten years old than
you will know all your life. (p.58)

It is against this background that we can understand the terrible wish
that he makes for his wife Alison that she should conceive and then
lose her child. He believed that only death and the pain of loss
could jolt her out of her lethargy and complacent somnolence and force
her to feel the anguish of existence.

If only something - something would happen to you, and wake you
out of your sleep! (coming in close to her) if you could have a
child, and it would die. Let it grow, let a recognizable human
face emerge from that little mass of India-rubber and wrinkles.
(She retreats away from him) Please if only I could watch you
face yourself. But I doubt it. (p.37)
Thus in the opinion of Jimmy Porter the encounter with death and the pain of loss is a salutary experience which can arouse man out of his self-anaesthesia and compel him to face reality and feel the pain and suffering of human existence. However, at the end of the play, when his cruel wish for Alison comes true and she lies grovelling before him in pain, torn out of her neutrality and quiescent sleep, he is unable to bear the spectacle. Witnessing her agony makes him incoherent:

Don't. Please don't..... I can't - You're all right. You're all right now. Please, I- I.... Not any more...... (p.96)

A common criticism against Jimmy Porter is that his anger is too far-flung and lacking in focus. Osborne himself says, "To be as vehement as he is, is to be almost non-committal" (p.10). A corollary to the charge of non-commitment is the accusation that Jimmy pulls down existing structures without offering any alternative values. But a close study of the play reveals that there are some things which he does appreciate. He is capable of admiring certain qualities in people. The enthusiasm of "a warm, thrilling voice", crying out Hallelujah (p.15), the joy of living, "simply the delight of being awake and watching" that he found in his mistress Madeline (p.18), the simple appreciation of beauty as revealed in Hugh's mother's exclamation "She's so beautiful! She's so beautiful!" (p.62), fierce loyalty such as he expects from Alison, the acceptance of love with all its pain and suffering, such as he demands from Helena - these are the things he values in life. Bringing together these positive qualities admired by Jimmy and his conviction about the need to be aware of the monotony, futility, pain and suffering in human existence, we may sum up his unformulated gospel as a yea-saying to life. It is accepting life as a whole and as it is. It is a complex response which includes on the one hand the quality of being alive, human, enthusiastic, joyful, appreciative and loyal and on the other hand a consciousness of the tedium of bourgeois existence and the pain of loss involved in death.
It may be thus seen that Jimmy Porter's social and interpersonal alienation arise primarily from his vision of human life. His awareness of the futility and pain of existence makes him impatient of individuals and institutions, the middle class and religious teachings, all of which, according to him, deny the horror of existence and try to escape from the pain of living. He is estranged from everyone who continues in hibernation and everything which promotes a state of somnolence.

The self-division observed in the earlier malcontent Outsider between the inner self and the public role is seen also in Jimmy Porter. Most of the time he dons the mask of the vituperative railer behind which he hides his real face contorted in pain. But that mask slips occasionally revealing both the scars of old injuries and the raw nakedness of fresh wounds. The first glimpse we have of this hidden self is when he recalls the pain and bewilderment which he had suffered as a ten-year-old, watching his father die. The change of tone is perceptible from cynical wit to pathos. Compassion for the father's suffering is fused with self-pity and self-dramatization as he describes himself as "a small frightened boy", "one lonely, bewildered little boy". The need to wear a mask and enter into a condition of self-alienation probably arose from a desire to hide pain. When the news of Hugh's mother's illness reaches them, Jimmy appears in what Simon Trusler describes as his "real vulnerable self" with no trace of the assumed role. He pleads with Alison:

You're coming with me, aren't you? I... need you... to come with me. (p.62)

Her silent refusal and exit hurt him to the quick. Left alone he flings himself on the bed, face downward, for no mask will serve his turn now. But he has it on again when he returns after the death-bed vigil and lashes out at Alison's betrayal to Helena. Here again the tortured inner self aghast at Alison's betrayal is glimpsed at for a moment before the mockery takes over.

And you think I should be overcome with awe because that cruel stupid girl is going to have a baby! (Anguish in his voice). I can't believe it! I can't. (Grabbing her shoulder). Well, the performance is over. Now leave me alone, and get out, you evil-minded little virgin. (p.73)
This is the only place where he refers to his performing self. In
the stage-direction which follows this speech the mask disintegrates
and exposes the deeply hurt inner self:

She slaps his face savagely. An expression of horror and disbelief
floods his face. But it drains away, and all that is left is pain.
His hand goes up to his head, and a muffled cry of despair escapes
him. (pp.73-74)

The change from poignant sorrow and the pain of loss to an attempt to
camouflage this under a casual tone and a mask of bravado, of having
been used to suffering is seen again at the end when he sees Alison
after her miscarriage. "It was my child too, you know. But (he
shrugs) it isn't my first loss". (p.92). Here too the mask serves to
hide the pain suffered by the inner self. In the last tableau his
fantasy of bears and squirrels is spoken in a tone which fuses the
mockery of the mask with the tenderness of the man ("a kind of
mockery, tender irony"). Could this perhaps be taken as a sign that
at last the mask and the man coalesce?

A common feature in many malcontent Outsiders like Hamlet,
Vindice, Bosola and Jimmy Porter is a fundamental estrangement from
women. One of the ways in which this expresses itself in all of them
is as a savage condemnation of female face-painting. Sometimes this
is seen as an image of deception embodying male distrust of woman.
"God gave you one face and you make yourself another", says Hamlet.
Bosola associates women's make-up paraphernalia with witchcraft, thus
stressing the idea of trickery and delusion. When juxtaposed with
the skull and death by Hamlet and Vindice, the art of make-up brings
out the absurdity of existence. "Go tell my lady, that if she paint
an inch thick to this favour must she come". Jimmy Porter too in the
time-honoured fashion of the malcontent Outsider launches on an attack
on women at their dressing table.

Or have you watched them sitting at their dressing tables, dropping
their weapons and banging down their bits of boxes and brushes and
lipsticks? I've watched her doing it night after night: when you
see a woman in front of her bedroom-mirror, you realise what a
refined sort of a butcher she is. Did you ever see some dirty old
Arab, sticking his fingers into some mess of lamb fat and gristle?
Well she's just like that. (p.24)

Jimmy's attacks on women reveal a deep-seated, almost primitive fear
of them as a threat to his existence. What draws forth this first
vicious attack on women in the play is an utterly innocuous remark
of Alison—"Really, Jimmy, you're like a child". Possibly to Jimmy
this represents a sinister attempt to reduce his adult manhood to the
stature of a child and he violently reacts against it. "Don't try
and patronise me," he shouts and turning to Cliff he begins an
unwarranted, lengthy tirade on Alison's clumsiness, the noisy
destructiveness of women in general, their insensitiveness and "the
eternal flaming racket of the female". The war-imagery connected
with the ordinary actions of women is revealing. Drawing the
curtains is "like someone launching a battle ship". The articles on
the dressing-table are "weapons", everyday actions are "a sort of
assault course on your sensitivities", and a visit to the lavatory is
"like a medieval siege" (pp.24-25). Thus to Jimmy Porter, woman
appears to be a destructive aggressor. His subconscious terror of
women surfaces again in p.37, in the form of a sexual antagonism and
an obsessive fear of the womb: "She has the passion of a python.
She just devours me whole every time, as if I were some over-large
rabbit". He goes on, compulsively, adding more and more details to
the image of the sleeping python-female with the male alive and
struggling within her (pp.37-38). Alison's customary quiescence is
given a sinister twist by thus identifying it with the python's
immobility after swallowing its prey. "She'll go on sleeping and
devouring until there's nothing left of me". It is as if he is
trying to work out some irrational, archetypal terror this way.
Later he tries to exorcise this fear out of himself by introducing
it into "the lyrics" of a new song which he claims to have written.

So, to avoid that old python coil,
And pass me the celibate oil. (p.50)

His fear of women may perhaps be seen as a fear of betrayal and
destruction, both an archetypal subconscious fear and a lesson learnt
at his father's lonely and deserted death-bed, as he observed his
mother's attitude. About this he says:

As for my mother, all she could think about was the fact that
she had allied herself to a man who seemed to be on the wrong
side in all things. (p.57)
The play may be seen as a search for values by an Outsider alienated at the social, interpersonal and existential levels. The widespread prevalence of indifference and "phoniness" in society, the absence of values, the difficulty of maintaining a meaningful relationship with another and an awareness of the futility, pain and horror of existence give rise to despair. The measures by which he tries to overcome despair are by lashing out at society's faults, follies and self-delusions, by emphasizing the need for caring, loyalty and love in personal relationships and by enthusiastically accepting life as it is. Osborne's later protagonist Luther declares seems to me there are three ways out of despair. One is faith in Christ, the second is to become enraged by the world and make its nose bleed for it, and the third is the love of a woman. (p.95 Jimmy Porter rejects the first way out, though he reveals a wistful subconscious longing for it when he identifies the cry of "Hallelujah!" with joy and vitality. Charles Merowitz diagnoses Jimmy's malady as "loss of faith". He tries the second way by making a one man's crusade against society, but by the end of the play, "He's heartily sick of the whole campaign, tired out, hungry and dry" (p.86). The third measure against despair sends him from Alison to Helena and then back to a chastened Alison. The outcome of this life-long struggle is held delicately in poise in the concluding fantasy of bears and squirrels.

It is a critical commonplace that Osborne's Look Back In Anger is traditional in construction and belongs to the realistic convention in drama. The three-act format, the careful exposition and background narration through Jimmy's monologues and through Alison's tete-a-tetes with Cliff and then with Helena, the theatrically effective identical openings of Acts I and III, the five meticulously planned curtain-falls, each one of which is a minor triumph in dramatic tableaus - all these reveal skill and experience in working within the "well-made" framework.

When the angry malcontent Outsider Jimmy Porter stalked through the "well-made" framework of naturalism, it was inevitable that his cannonading fiery rhetoric should affect the structure. The soliloqu
and monologue had served the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists in portraying the alienation and isolation of a character. Osborne in this play re-introduces the monologue as a major dramatic device, to convey his protagonist's inability to relate to and communicate with the world around him. For long stretches of time, his voice fills the stage with raging torrents which drown other voices and the action. These lengthy tirades disrupt the traditional naturalistic structure. These monologues are so forceful that some of the early reviewers found Jimmy's part and even the whole play as being made up almost entirely of tirades, which proves the power of the Outsider's consciousness to swamp and encompass everything around him.

The dramatic form being affected by the Outsider figure is parallel to the play's universe being shaken by the Outsider. The naturalistic structure being disrupted by the Outsider's long monologue and rhetoric is symbolic of the traditional society in the play being attacked by the Outsider. The traditional structure of the well-made play is restrictive in that it admits mainly the exploration of individual relationships. But the Outsider must give expression not only to his interpersonal alienation but also to his estrangement from society, self and existence itself. The monologue serves as the vehicle of his multiple alienation. Thus there is a correspondence between the thematic and structural levels of the play both of which have the pattern of tradition and break-through.

While the "well-made" framework forms the external structure, there is also a complex internal structure of recurring symbols and inter-woven images. The sound of church bells, heard in all the three acts and representing a call to religion, seems to be both a threat and a challenge to Jimmy. He rails at the "bloody bells" (p.20) in Act I like one demented. In Act II they ring in triumph as Alison walks out on him. In Act III they celebrate their victory over him a second time as Helena leaves him. Thus the bells are an image of the aggression of the establishment and its values into the Outsider's private world. If church bells are an intrusion into Jimmy's world, his jazz trumpet signifies his aural attack on the
"enemy" who dares invade his territory. He directs it against Helena in Act II and Alison in Act III. Twice in the play when the two women are together leaving him as an Outsider in his "brave new nothing-very-much-thank-you", he works out his rage by viciously playing on the trumpet "as if he wanted to kill someone with it". The trumpet here becomes the Outsider's weapon. The most significant image in the play is the "bears and squirrels game", which appears in all the three Acts (pp.34,47,96). In Act I it is a brief and joyful interlude in the marriage of Jimmy and Alison which looks like a battle-ground most of the time. It is an escape into a land of make-believe, leaving behind the resentments, hurts and agonizing doubts of their married life. It has a fragile and enchanting beauty while it lasts. But the spell is broken by Helena's phone-call and they get back to wrangling. In Act II Alison speaks of the game as a thing of the past. She describes it as "A silly symphony for people who couldn't bear the pain of being human beings any longer"(p.47). In Act III when they resume the game, it is not as before. Earlier it had been an escape and a refuge from their own incompatibility. His awareness of the futility and suffering of life learnt from his own experience had placed him at a different level from her unawakened condition. Their only common meeting-ground had been in love-play and sexual fantasy. But now Alison has suffered the pain of loss and Jimmy feels compassion for her. So now they can communicate at a deeper level than the sexual. While earlier (p.34) the note of admiration of physical beauty was predominant in the game, now a new note of sympathy and compassion for the other also enters it, a fellow-feeling born out of suffering and pain. While earlier it had been purely an escape from the threats of life, here, there is an awareness of the traps in the world and also a desire to shelter and protect each other from them.

We've got to be careful. There are cruel steel traps lying about everywhere, just waiting for rather mad, slightly satanic, and very timid little animals. (p.96)

The ending is rescued from sentimentality by the mild mockery, which perhaps conveys that Jimmy's mocking mask and sensitive self coalesce here. This may herald the end of self-estrangement. Now, hopefully,
the love of Alison chastened by suffering may be able to lead Jimmy out of despair. His earlier attempts with Alison and Helena had been failures. But the outcome of this latest attempt is held in a delicate balance as the curtain falls on Jimmy and Alison. Thus the three dominant images of the bells, the trumpet and the game suggest a dramatic movement of attack, retaliation and possible reconciliation.

Jimmy Porter is an Outsider who is overwhelmed by the meaninglessness of the mechanical rhythm of life. An early acquaintance with death, pain and loss precipitate his encounter with the absurd. Since he himself is painfully aware of the agony of existence, he lashes out in anger at the indifference, self-delusion and unawareness which he finds in the society and people around him. His alienation at the existential level is thus related to his estrangement as a malcontent at the social and interpersonal levels. There is also a hint of self-estrangement in his frequent attitudinizing and also in the tendency towards self-torture. The play dramatizes his attempt to grapple with his alienation. He is the product of the contemporary social context. The alienation theme and the Outsider figure affect the well-made framework by the re-introduction of the monologue as a major dramatic device. A carefully woven network of images draws the play together as a coherent work of art.

Epitaph for George Dillon written before but produced after Look Back in Anger has a protagonist who could be called a malcontent Outsider. George regards himself as a gifted young man wasting his talents in a soul-killing office job. As an actor in small parts he feels that the audience is hostile to him. He is thus seen to have the malcontent's grudge against society for not recognizing his merit. In working out his social and interpersonal alienation, the authors John Osborne and Anthony Creighton deliberately load the dice in his favour, by making the other characters who represent society into caricatures. The Elliotts with whom George lives are almost like cartoon figures of the newly rich petit bourgeois. "Watching the telly" is their daily entertainment and the installation of a telephone is a cause of celebration. Their conversation is inconsequential chatter larded with clichés. It is therefore no wonder that
George feels himself to be an Outsider in the midst of their middle-class suburban mediocrity. The visitors to the Elliott home stand for certain common social attitudes which further highlight George's alienation. Mr. Geoffrey Colwyn-Stuart represents the religious view from the standpoint of the Evangelical Revival. To George, who has lost his faith, religion seems to be a collection of "comforting myths" to deaden the pain of living. Colwyn-Stuart is pushed into the play just for a confrontation with George (pp. 47-48). So also Mr. Webb from the National Assistance Board and his long parting speech are introduced for the sole purpose of exposing the insider's self-congratulatory smugness, complacency and total incomprehension of the Outsider. The last visitor is Barney Evans, the successful producer of violent, sex-filled melodramas. His advice to George on play-writing is "Cut out all the high-brow stuff, give it pace — you know: dirty it up a bit, you see" (p. 76). Though George's part in this conversation consists of cryptic responses signifying his disagreement with Barney's views, the final triumph is Barney's. At the end of the play George is doomed to write pot-boilers to Barney's specifications for the rest of his life. He is the broken Outsider-artist who gives up the struggle and compromises with society.

The deeper levels of alienation in George Dillon become perceptible only in the presence of Ruth, Mrs. Elliott's educated and cultured sister who is herself quite an Outsider. But she is used only as a sounding board for George and is not developed in her own merit. It is to her that he confides his experiences of the absurd during the war when he was confronted with the futility of his own existence. It had been a boundary situation. The moment of awakening was in the middle of an air-raid when his companion asked him what his profession was.

'Actor', I said. The moment I uttered that word, machine-gun fire and bombs all around us, the name of my calling, my whole reason for existence — it sounded so hideously trivial, unimportant, so divorced from living and the real world, that my fear vanished. All I could feel was shame. (p. 63)

Perhaps this confrontation with the absurdity of his existence was the origin of his subsequent alienation.
George Dillon's self-estrangement becomes so acute that he seems to be performing all the time. Ruth comments on his constant play-acting and the consequent loss of touch with reality (p.64). But George claims that even play-acting and being 'phoney' can be "as serious and as complex as any other attitude". He defends it as being legitimate, real and sincere. It is only that "you just never stop standing outside" (p.64). His profession as an actor becomes almost second nature to him and he is constantly trying out roles. Simon Trussler says,

George is always at two removes from his real-life audience; he exists not only as a character in a play, but as a character playing a character.72

George gives his star performance before Ruth in the last act. Filled with anguish at his absurd situation as the Elliott's son-in-law turning out pot-boilers for Barney Evans, George seeks relief in tragic clowning - the strategy of the grotesque. He gives a tragic-absurd image of himself as a broken, mad Lear, who needs stronger elastic to keep his tights on. "The less sure we are of our pathetic little divine rights, the stronger the elastic we should use" (p.87). Here the Godot image of collapsed trousers as a symbol of man's loss of dignity seems to hang unspoken in the air. Then comes the disintegration of the play-actor's universe. He tells Ruth: "You've seen the whole, shabby, solemn pretence now. This is where you came in. For God's sake go" (p.87). But before the audience of one leaves, he cannot resist the temptation of making one more speech. In the absence of the traditional eulogizing companion of the hero, he speaks his own epitaph, a curious mixture of self-pity, self-glorification and self-mockery. It draws into focus his failure as an artist, his inability to communicate in interpersonal relationships, the overpowering sense of the futility and the meaninglessness of his own existence and his permanent self-estrangement.

Shall I recite my epitaph to you? Yes, do recite your epitaph to me. 'Here lies the body of George Dillon, aged 34—or thereabouts — who thought, who hoped, he was that mysterious, ridiculous being called an artist. He never allowed himself one day of peace. He worshipped the physical things of this world, and was betrayed by his own body. He loved also the things of the mind, but his own mind was a cripple from the waist down. He achieved nothing he set out to do. He made no
one happy, no one looked up with excitement when he entered the room. He was always troubled with wind around his heart, but he loved no one successfully. He was a bit of a bore, and frankly, rather useless. But the germs loved him (p.87).

In the extensive use of monologue the play is akin to Look Back in Anger where Jimmy's tirades break through the traditional structure. These long monologues of the Outsider arise from his inability to hold two-way conversations with others and from his self-estranged performing tendency. They are at variance with the tight structure of the naturalistic tradition.

George Dillon is thus presented as a defeated malcontent Outsider. He believes that he has talents but is frustrated at society's non-recognition of them. His war-experience has given him an inkling into the futility of human endeavour and he rejects the religious way out of despair. He is self-estranged, constantly dramatizes himself, and is finally forced to confront his inability to overcome the enervating circumstances and vindicate his idealised self-image. He therefore gives up his integrity and compromises with society.

A comparison of the Angry Young Men of the fifties with the Elizabethan and Jacobean malcontent Outsiders will illuminate the similarity between the two. Both are products of contemporary social situations whose striking similarity has already been pointed out. Vindice, Flamineo, Bosola, Jimmy and George Dillon are all educated and talented young men caught within a social structure which does not provide them with an employment commensurate with their education. Denied social recognition, the Jacobean malcontent finally stooped to the position of a hired villain for the sake of advancement. A similar self-debasement can be traced in Jimmy's running of a sweet-stall and George's success as a writer of pot-boilers which is a matter of cynical relish to him as Bosola's villainy was to him. All of them are discontented with their society which has not recognized their merit. They feel estranged from their society and attack it virulently. Their indictment of society is always expressed in energetic and lively language. The railing Outsider in both the ages is revealed as an ambivalent figure who may even carry the taint of society's faults which he himself had condemned. While Vindice and
Bosola are fascinated by the evil which they deride, Jimmy Porter and George Dillon are attracted by the society which they condemn. Jimmy feels drawn towards the peace of the Edwardian era and even enjoys the comforts and luxury of "Dame Alison's Mob" for a brief respite, by carrying out his barbarian raids on them. George Dillon is tempted by the unthinking but comfortable middle-class existence which may prove to be an escape from his torturing self-doubt as to whether he has genuine talent or not.

Hamlet, Vindice, Flamineo, Bosola and Jimmy all direct vitriolic abuse at women and seem to be deeply estranged from Woman. It is significant that in both the ages in which these plays appeared, a new image of woman was in the making, liberated from the restrictive medieval or Victorian stereotypes. The attacks may perhaps be traced to male resistance to the emerging new woman.

A common ground in the alienation of Hamlet, Vindice and Jimmy is the memory of a dead father, the wrong done to whom rankles in the memory of the son and embitters his outlook on life. The revengeful feelings of the earlier malcontents could find specific targets and definite enemies to be punished. But the anger in the modern Outsider cannot be focussed on any particular person because his grievance cannot be attributed to a few individuals. Lacking a concrete target, his hatred is diffused and he lashes out at everything almost indiscriminately. The entire social system comes under fire. Vindice had said that when a man's external enemies are all killed, it is time for him to die, because after that man would become his own worst enemy. Jimmy Porter and George Dillon seem to be placed in this condition, where lacking any concrete enemies, they turn against themselves and hurt themselves in a self-destructive manner. Thus Vindice's last stage may be seen as the modern Angry Young Man's first one.

Hamlet, Vindice, Malevole and Bosola are all role-players. A tension is maintained between the public role and the private self with some ambiguity about the relationship between the two. In George Dillon there is an awareness of enacting a role and his irony at his own expense is a measure of his self-alienation. Jimmy Porter's constant attitudinizing in a bitterly cynical vein is a mask
behind which he hides a sensitive personality, hurt by betrayal and pain. In both the ages the Outsider's self-estrangement and self-division are dramatically conveyed through role-play.

All these Outsiders arrive at a phase when they feel alienated from existence itself, from the human predicament in the universe. It is this together with the split consciousness of public and private self which differentiates them from other commonplace satirists, critics and railers.

The malcontent Outsider is thus found in the Elizabethan age, the Jacobean age and in the drama of the 1950's. He is observed most often in Jacobean drama and arises from the socio-economic conditions of the age. However he is not the only Outsider found in the Jacobean age. Jacobean drama contains incestuous Outsiders like Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi* and Giovanni in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Traces of power-seeking and incestuous desire are found in Arbaces in *A King and No king*. These characters are dealt with in detail in chapter V.