

Tomorrow And Tomorrow

-William Shakespeare

TOMORROW AND TOMORROW has been extracted from Act V, scene V of the play *Macbeth* written by William Shakespeare. Macbeth, Seyton and soldiers with drum and colours enter the castle at Dunsinane. While he is giving orders for the defence of the castle a cry resounds from within the Queen's chamber and servants announce the death of Lady Macbeth. The tragedy points the way to the unknown future which lies beyond the mysterious portal of death. Then Macbeth says, "She should have died hereafter." The news is the last straw. Men always look forward to better things in the future. One dreary day follows another in a slow pace. Time is compared to a scroll. Each passing day escorts poor souls to their grave. They prove the Biblical truth of the twenty-second Psalm 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return'. Macbeth feels that life is as short as the flame of a candle or like a shadow. Life is like a poor actor who walks pompously on the stage. Life is a tale told by a fool. When a man is alive he wants to do many things in a gorgeous manner. But he lies in the dust after death. So life signifies nothing. It is but an empty dream.

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Theatrum Mundi means the Great Theatre of the World. It is a metaphorical concept developed throughout Western literature and thought. It is apparent in theories of the world such as [Plato's Allegory of the Cave](#). It was a popular idea in the [Baroque Period](#) among certain writers. This metaphysical explanation of the world portrays the world as a theatre. It is apparent in Shakespeare's saying that "all the world's a stage". People are characters and their actions form a drama, with God as the author, specifically for some [Christian](#) thinkers. This metaphor can take various forms, some more [deterministic](#) than others. It has also been formulated in different fashions, such as the world as chess game by the Persian philosopher [Omar Khayyam](#). In each formulation of the *theatrum mundi*, though, the world is a sum greater than its parts. Here various roles are played by different actors.

The world as a stage was expressed among the ancient Greeks. It gained popularity among [Stoic](#) and [Neoplatonist](#) philosophers. Neoplatonism, influenced Christianity. The belief of the separate realm of the soul and its transcendence above the instability of worldly affairs influenced philosophers. Important Christian figures like [St. Augustine](#) view the world as a theatrical spectacle.

The relation of God to humanity and the world was expressed throughout the Middle Ages. [John of Salisbury](#), a 12th-century theologian especially coined the term *theatrum mundi*. In several chapters of

the third book of his [Polycraticus](#), he meditates on the fact that "the life of man on earth is a comedy, where each forgetting his own plays another's role". The comedy takes place in the world. The *auditorium* is associated with the Christian paradise. Only a few sages are able to accept the role given by God. This acceptance allows them to adopt a celestial position in the *auditorium*. They watch and understand the roles played in the comedy.¹

Tomorrow And Tomorrow shows that Macbeth has the imagination of a poet and mind of a criminal.