

**Making of New Worlds:  
the Crisis of the Infinite and Late English Renaissance Theatre**

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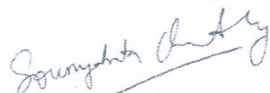
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To the memory of  
Giordano Bruno and Rohith Vemula,  
thinkers of infinite worlds

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Parul and I would sometimes look at the night sky and wonder endlessly. On one such night, she held my hand, and that's when I finally understood that the infinite is here, with us.

No other question has ever moved so profoundly the spirit of man; no other idea has so fruitfully stimulated his intellect; yet no other concept stands in greater need of clarification than that of the infinite.

— David Hilbert

The will is infinite  
and the execution confin'd,  
the desire is boundless  
and the act a slave  
to limit.

— William Shakespeare

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## Introduction

The year 2020 didn't just begin normally like other years usually do, in the sense of welcoming by someone while remaining just another year for others. Because of the coronavirus situation which soon reached a global pandemic situation, this year seemed not just like others. Moreover, the situation was on a global scale, such that it brought across a challenge to be faced by the human species itself, and not just any specific region or nation or community or even class. So, it was unwanted or even unpleasant to the extent of being a life threatening encounter, not just as a person's encounter with a viral body but as if the human species faced an encounter with the virus. The global leaders also declared a war on the virus, however absurd it may seem. In the context of this situation the word "crisis" gained renewed attention because the whole world was in a moment of crisis. There were crises before this, the most discussed of which is the economic crisis, which also affects on a global scale. But it was as if the economic crisis was internal to the system of the world, how the world works, the economic model being Capitalism. The new crisis seemed to be different, but one may rightly say that there were pandemics before also, and we managed to overcome them, despite the significant losses of lives. It's true, but the coronavirus being something of *now*, also brought with it something unknown, and so ungraspable. And this was not just for the people in medical profession, who had to deal with lives in different ways possible, governments who took different measures which both succeeded or failed, philosophers who tried to think about the situation through their own systems of thought or demanded to think otherwise, activists who did try to think of organising themselves despite unfavourable

situations, the migrant who walked miles to go back home, an artist trying to manage out mechanisms to create new art in these times; but also everyone else faced with the uncertainty, the contagion, the impositions by government, the lockdowns and many more external factors, the most crucial probably being death. In a sense, the crisis also brought out various other crises, be that of economic livelihood or the problem of digital teaching and even isolation. In this way the crisis is not just a crisis of a situation but also a crisis of not knowing or understanding. Thus, a crisis also demands thinking, and yes *action*. But it is not just about thinking about the crisis brought out by the virus, specifically to think of the virus, but it becomes important to think about the other crises also, that is the existent crises in human society that the pandemic situation makes visible and exposes them in shattering ways. In the last stance, thinking about the crisis may also go in two directions: either to think that the crisis will be overcome automatically or even through actions which try to *manage* the crisis. Following the second way one thinks of a crisis only as a diversion or even an anomaly in the system, which can finally be managed. It is like a mechanical or even in a certain way, technological method. This follows from thinking of *the* crisis. The second way, demands that one must think through the crisis about the existing conditions that are exposed and the possibility of altering the conditions themselves. In this manner, it is also about thinking *change* which urges one to think of the future. But firstly one must start with a critique, in the sense that the crisis becomes a point of critique and both of them are inseparable from each other. We discover these from their etymologies also. Both share the common root of *krinein*, which means to decide. Thus, a crisis also allows for or provides the conditions for a new thinking.



If new thinking can emerge only at a point of crisis through a certain reflection on it, should philosophy leave out the so-called eternal questions? Moreover, when philosophy looks at history, is history imagined only as various points of crisis? By this way, a certain philosophy of history is also a philosophy of the various crises in history. But what about the history of philosophy or thinking as such? It seems that there are moments of crises in this history as well, in the sense of a moment of crisis of thinking itself, or in other words a crisis of critique. Only on the basis of a critique of earlier forms of knowledge, can the new system of thinking establish itself. In doing so it also reflects on its contemporary times. Does this mean that there is a specific thought for a given time? It seems that if this is the case, it cannot evade the eternal questions also, as certain eternal questions are specific to every temporal division. One such question is that of the infinite, which is both as the problem of infinite as such but also its relation to the finite, man being finite and mortal, one who recognises his own finiteness and mortality. Through our inquiry we attempt to see whether there is a certain crisis of the infinite, in the sense of an understanding of the infinite but also as the thought of the infinite arising as a point of crisis in existing systems of knowledge. But firstly, it would be necessary to take a brief historical trajectory.

## 1

We have been gazing at the star for ages. Anaximander the Greek philosopher said that man must be grateful for he can look at the stars while staying on the ground. This *pleasure* of contemplating the stars provided a reason for man to live. He would probably confront the chorus which speaks at the end of *Oedipus at Colonus*: “Not to be born is, beyond all

estimation, best”, saying that one *must* be born to contemplate the heavens<sup>1</sup>. Such is the power of the stars or the Heavens, which can after all provide a meaning of life itself. In our times, we find such notions even in famous comic strips like Calvin & Hobbes where Calvin claims that if we would look at the sky we would understand the infinity and understand how small or insignificant we are. This notion seems to be a common one which takes various forms even to include a self-help strategy such that one reflects on the infinity of the universe just to realise how small one's problems are. In the first case, Anaximander's words do affirm man's existence as a condition for looking at the stars, and also the stars being a condition for existence of man but finally it goes towards a tragic moment when one realises that one can never be as perfect or even , infinite as the stars. Both of these examples indicate a common idea, that we are caught in our finitude. Both of these instances are exemplary of what can be called a relation between one's finitude and an infinite universe. Though there was no significant conception of an infinite universe in Greece, as it remained only in the margins, though Anaximander was one of those few who believed in the indefiniteness of the universe and plurality of worlds, it elucidates a superimposition of the category of eternity on the stars. So apart from the relation between finite and infinite, there is also the relation between man's mortality and the eternity of the stars. In the second instance, infinity acts only as a measure which guarantees that all problems on earth are small in relation to the universe. This is like thinking that the actions on earth seem too trivial compared to that of the stars. We also find a similar version where any problem one has is compared to that of the universe, via a chain of

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Blumenberg brings out a relation between the Greek understanding of cosmology with that of tragedy. The Greek condition is tragic because it lacks the perfection of the Heavens. Mortality against eternity is also an essential point here. However, Anaxagoras' understanding relies on a positive understanding of the infinite. For him the heavens are both eternal and infinite, while the human condition is finite. Only escape from this tragic condition is to contemplate the heavens that provide a sense of joy to man even for his finite, imperfect self. See. Blumenberg , 1987: 9-21

mediations. We may think of this ascending relation from one's problems to oneself, to the earth, galaxy and so on. As if by this comparison one's problem becomes progressively smaller. A kind of tragic notion of one's finitude moves towards something else: in affirming finitude it finally takes up a position for positivity. As our problems are infinitely small in comparison to the universe, they can be easily solved. These are some responses towards the problem, but the commonality is the question of an infinite universe, and not just *any* form of infinity.

Though the aforementioned examples bring the universe into context, the relation between finitude and infinite is not just a relation which has been thought along with the universe. We find that the different concepts of infinite come up in responses to the various paradoxes of infinite, be that of the infinitely small or the infinitely big and even to the extent of just the thought of the infinity as such. The famous Zeno's paradoxes and the speculations to resolve them show such a tendency<sup>2</sup>. But apart from these exercises, there are also paradoxes in thought of infinite. One may simply ask, how can a finite man think of the infinite? The question however remains that whether this relation remains a fixed one or does it historically change, that is to take up our earlier example with reference to the universe, does Anaximander and Calvin, given the sameness of their finitude, have the same relation to infinite? In our examples we find varied responses, but to put it in general terms, we may ask whether they are not just separate singular examples but representative of their own historical

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<sup>2</sup> None of the writings of Zeno has originally survived, except the famous paradox of Achilles and the tortoise. This can be said to be a "paradox of the infinitely small." With the tortoise already some steps ahead, Achilles can never overcome him, as the moment he reaches the original distances traversed by the tortoise, the tortoise moves forward. And so, this goes on infinitely and though the distances separating them decrease, the tortoise is already some steps ahead of Achilles. See. Moore, 2003: 3-13

times. This is to ask if a historical period has a specific understanding of the relation between finitude and infinity? Or to put it from the position of any possible relation, can we separate historical periods, marking two specific ends, based on the change of this relation? It seems that any division in history into specific periods is always from the outside as we see that in reality one period moves into the other, socially and culturally. In this sense, any internal division within history seems difficult. But we will eventually try to find if the people in a given period claim the newness of the period, in our case this relates to the specificity of “renaissance”. But firstly we take the initial task of dividing the period from an external point, while trying to look for any changes in history to mark the two ends we require. The question of breaks brings several problems, like the legitimacy of a period or the marking of ends. This remains a humongous task, and quite impossible to be dealt with here, but some initial clearings are required to show the ground of the project we undertake. Let us start with our divisions and we will try to deal with some basic assumptions here.

Based on the relation between finitude and infinite, which is also connected to man and the world we may think of three historical sequences. Our division is also the basic division of Western history: the antiquity, medieval and the modern. Though there are marginal figures within these traditions, our categories try to avoid these. For example, the notion of heliocentric system was probably first proposed by Aristarchus of Samos, but we consider Copernicus as the break in a new theory of the cosmos, also because of the specificity of his theory and the effects it produced for Western thinking, such that it gains the force of a “revolution.”<sup>3</sup> So, the first sequence is the Greco-Roman Antiquity. In Greece there existed a

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<sup>3</sup> Kuhn’s work on the nature of scientific revolutions is significant here. While in his specific work on the Copernican Revolution he shows that the idea of an heliocentric world had existed even in the Greeks and Copernicus also derives influence from his predecessors, most importantly Nicholas of

dubious relation with the infinity. There is no conception of infinity as such but what can be called the indefinite or limitless, developed by the Pythagoreans, as something without limits or to use the Greek word *to apeiron*, that is without limit (*peras*). This developed in response to the problem of the root in case of the hypotenuse in Pythagoras theorem, where if the number is not a perfect square the approximation would go on limitlessly. They further attributed qualities to *peras* and *apeiron*: all good qualities belonged to *peras* while negative ones belonged to *apeiron*. One can also think that only the *peras* can be perfect and beautiful while *apeiron* is chaotic and imperfect, similar to the imperfect roots. They even qualified the limit as masculine and limitless as feminine. However we find a proper formalisation of the categories of finite and infinite in Aristotle, and also a conception of these with the world. In Aristotle's *Physics*, there are two notions of the indefinite: one that is indefinitely large and the indefinitely small or infinitesimally small. For the first one must proceed as one proceeds in number by the summation of parts ( $1+2+3+\dots+n$ ) but he rejects this as something impossible to exist in actuality. For the second one must divide a whole body into an indefinite number of smaller parts and this proceeds but the body is nonetheless whole. In case of time however, there is a possibility of infinitely large as the moment it is counted it has already moved forward, that is for Aristotle this can only happen when it has passed on and not culminated. So time is potentially infinite. But in regards to space, this is impossible, because then it'll be accumulative, and also because it challenges the perfection of the

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Cusa, who was not an astronomer or scientist in the rigorous sense of the term. But with Copernicus there is a shift in the concept of the world structure. This is also because of the consideration of the anomaly in the normal science, accepted by the scientific community. Copernicus' formalisation opens up the possibilities for others to develop concepts of even plurality of worlds and infinite universe. One must also note that in the preface written by Osiander, who in a sense made Copernicus acceptable, he considers Copernicus' theory only as a hypothesis, and not as a claim to truth, and he further urges the reader to do so. Years later both Bruno and Kepler would confront Osiander saying that the preface is rather a betrayal for the *original* Copernican project. See. Kuhn, 1990

heavens. Here, the mathematical meets the cosmological. Through this idea the conception of infinite space, which proposes that a body is surrounded by space, and space by further space and so on, is also challenged. But an example is used here, like an object can exist in itself, the world can also exist in itself as a closed entity. There is a certain doubling here, the world like an object, the object like a world: the perfection of the Heavens is retained. The stars or heavenly bodies just like the Greek gods are eternal or immortal and not infinite. Also, the gods shared the same space with men, just higher in Olympus, but there is no conception of transcendental gods. Only the Idea transcends the given world. We must note that the Aristotelian conception remains a dominant one, even in the next sequence, though in Theology there is an attempt to retain the Aristotelian notions along with that of a new idea of God. In the second sequence or the Christian sequence the conception of infinite and merges it with One, that is of God who is transcendence, are brought together. Thomas Aquinas reconciles the Christian notion of an Infinite God with the Aristotelian conception of infinite, by a method of separation. He categorises Infinite into mathematical infinite and metaphysical infinite. According to him what Aristotle deals with is the mathematical infinite and so he tries to resolve the paradoxes, but what God represents is metaphysical infinite. Now we have the finite man in his finite world, which is supported by the infinite transcendental God and He negatively supports the immanent world. In other words, God is what the world is not. The Infinite One is also the Eternal. The coming of Christ marks an important event, as if an impossibility, where he who is both man and God is in the world. In the third sequence, the one we are part of, the conception of the world itself becomes infinite. This can be related to the event of the new Galilean science — unlike the Copernican one which nevertheless has a centre and also propagates the closed and harmonic nature of the cosmos — demands the infinitaization of the universe. And this we must note is not just

because of his astronomical discoveries but also his physics itself demands so. For example, if we take one of his laws of motion which were later developed by Newton, that a body must continue in the state of rest or motion in absence of any external force. So, hypothetically a moving body in a space without resistance must continue to move infinitely. There is an imagination of infinite thought that is then transposed on the world. We are concerned with this specific historical sequence, and more specifically the implications of such an imagination on theatre. But let us first delve more into the conception of an infinite universe.

## 2

Alexander Koyre notes that the several changes that happen from the Medieval to the modern can be accommodated into a common theme and the changes are in a way implications of this general change. He argues that in the 15th to 17th century what is noticeable is a certain kind of scientific revolution or a revolution in thought, where man moves “from the closed world to the infinite universe”. The earlier ordered cosmos of the Greeks or the Christians cannot coexist with this notion of an infinite universe. According to him, the revolution is both the root and fruit of a spiritual revolution. An important figure like Nicholas of Cusa may be cited here, who superimposes the mathematical infinity with the metaphysical infinity of God along with that of the world, that is God is the world and is also infinite. This will be argued in detail later. Koyre goes on to show how an infinite universe as an imagination existed in several philosophers and scientists at this time ranging from Cusanus, Descartes to Galileo and Newton. But only with Galileo there is a clearer affirmation of an infinite universe, who goes for the infinite rather than the ambiguous notion of the indefinite. So, what are the other

propositions that Koyre's thesis accommodates? The most significant shift is perhaps the one from the Medieval *vita contemplativa* to the modern *vita activa*. In philosophy, Descartes is such a figure who attempts to develop a philosophy which also has practical applications. Moreover, he shifts from latin, the language of the elites to a vernacular one. Similar patterns may be seen in Alberti, where mathematics is put to practical use by the artists for the creation of a painting, and also his use of language like Descartes. This also implies a new relation between *theoria* and *praxis*. Secondly, the earlier notion of the world as a organismic whole whose justification is teleological, that is by the concepts of perfection, is dismantled. From the organismic whole we move to a mechanical view of the world. There are traces that remain even in someone like Copernicus but the dominant element is the development of a causal mechanical view of the world such that one can discover the causes of the workings of *this* machine. Descartes is again an example here. Koyre by this move gives an upper hand to the sciences, and this too illustrates the specificity of the metaphor of "root." Thirdly, a general skepticism regarding the world develops. The destruction of the cosmos also brings about the destruction of man's position, like Nietzsche would also claim that since the Copernican revolution man has been falling from their position to an unknown place. This is an essential issue even now. And we can relate this to the development of postmodernism. As Karsten Harries notes, postmodernism is a reaction to the bad side of modernity and also an attempt to do away with it. The horrors of modernity are seen as results of modernity, as man's loss of meaning and alienation. The response then goes in two directions: either one chooses to deny modernity and there is a going back to the earlier "happier" times, to a primitive self or there is an attempt to jump forward towards newer technological developments, which would make the world better<sup>4</sup>. In this way, postmodernism is always

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<sup>4</sup> It seems that return to a primitive self and also towards a technological future is quite evident in contemporary art. There are also correlations made between the two to the extent that the



going back but also jumping forward. The next implication is related to the question of secularization, that is how we move from the medieval Christian world to modern secularism. The last implication is the new subjectivity of modern man. The medieval objectivity is replaced by modern subjectivity. This is also because there is no assured foundation like that of God. The earlier idea of the perfection of the Heavens or God as the guarantor of worldly existence is lost. Because of this loss of external support, the foundation is more interiorised. Finally, with Descartes there is a conceptualisation of this notion, in the form of the *cogito*.

### 3

Taking Koyre's thesis as a background we propose the following: the thinking of an infinite universe brings forth the possibility of construction of multiple worlds. We no longer have a closed world where man has his position but in turn, one can think of multiple worlds which we consider to be closed and self-sustained structures. Further, as there is no external foundation man can try to create these different worlds. This can be vividly seen in the case of arts, as Mazzotta proposes by his concept of *cosmopoiesis*. Though this will be discussed in detail later, let us clear Mazzotta's methodological position. He argues that there are two dominant strains in reading the renaissance: the first is the philological and rhetorical one which focuses on the history and politics of the time, the second is a kind of Hegelian way propagated by Burckhardt which focuses on individualism as the most important aspect of Renaissance. In this way, it sees Renaissance as a precursor of rationalism of the

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technological meets the primitive, as if machines existing in a forest. Though a proper analysis is required to grasp this symptom, it seems that one can imagine the visual image of machines existing in the forest, or the technological apparatus of surveillance, becomes like the eye of the bird in a Shamanistic ritual, one that surveys the land.

Enlightenment. Mazzotta wants to move beyond both of these by a superposition of these two strains as the second strain would ignore the inconsistent elements of the Renaissance like that of magic or superstition in favour of rationality<sup>5</sup>. And this is why he goes back to Giambattista Vico and his ideas in *New Science* to give an alternate way to read the period. For Mazzotta, Vico becomes important because of several reasons. Firstly, he theorized art as poiesis or making and as a work of imagination. Secondly, he understood the Renaissance as an ambiguous time of extraordinary achievements and inexorable decadence. Thirdly, Vico suggests a way to move beyond the current understanding of Renaissance. Thus, through Vico's thinking Mazzotta tries to move beyond the abstract dualism of the two dominant strains and he suggests that "One can do so by linking up philosophy's abstractions with philology's historical facts, politics with science, rhetoric and imagination, knowing and making."(2001:xi) Vico conceptualises history as both linear and circular, meaning time moves in a linear way but the internal movements within history are circular: a kind of superimposition of the Christian idea of linear history and the Greek idea of the circular one. Each period is marked by a beginning and an end and moreover a period also imitates the earlier one. In this respect Renaissance is an imitation of the Greeks but with a certain difference. The guiding force of history, for him, nonetheless remains Divine Providence. The frontispiece from his book depicts the exact relation between the arts and knowledge and to this extent practice and theory, under the guiding light of Providence. Knowledge resides in the arts and one must decipher it from them. He mentions Homer as the greatest poet and his work as a model for later works. So, Renaissance is not just a given period of time but a

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<sup>5</sup> But in an interesting move Foucault showed that magic or superstition is not the other side of the Renaissance but an integral part of the system of thought. Both science and magic were attempts to decipher "the book of Nature." In this sense, what is important in the Renaissance, is its attempt at interpretation. In this form of hermeneutics, science and magic were elements of a unity of the world order, and not contradictory aspects. See. Foucault, 2005

period which carries the spirit of the Greeks. His specific focus on the arts as the place of knowledge also corresponds to a poetic structure of the world itself, that is the world as a closed totality and all perfect. We differ with this view as the creation or making of worlds is not an attempt to reproduce such perfection but making only takes place because such perfection does not exist anymore. To this extent, perfection is no longer a category for making but what becomes an important aspect of making is the question of absolute beginning or how to make from *nothing*.

Given this background, we consider the site of the English Renaissance, the period from the middle of 16th century to the middle of the 17th century, and two figures Shakespeare and Inigo Jones. Through Shakespeare's play and his Globe theatre and Jones' masques we see how the idea of world making works out. To do this several modern philosophers are evoked whose works provide background of the shift from the Medievals. In this way in each chapter there is deployment of a specific philosopher to provide an additional background. The specific fields that are used are also the ones which have been criticised vehemently in modernity as if they stand for the discontents of modernity. To divide the chapters by these fields we can say that the first deals with architecture, the second with the question of history and the third with the problem of perspective. Architecture has been criticised for its totalising aspect and also because it creates something based on principles (or laws?). Georges Bataille was one of the figures who proposed to do away with architecture because any form of architecture which also stands for a system prescribes given social norms and have always been used for certain control<sup>6</sup>. But it's also a question of meaning. Architecture

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<sup>6</sup> The title of the english translation of Denis Hollier's book on Bataille, '*Against Architecture: the Writings of Georges Bataille*', surely captures this point. It also puts into the forefront the central argument of Hollier, that for Bataille the metaphor of architecture stands for philosophy in its rational

attempts to prescribe a meaning by use of a form. We know that the metaphor of the architect was used to describe God. A response can be that the only way to go away from the qualms of modernity is to do away with architecture and hence with any form of meaning. Meaning also becomes essential in the second chapter as it relates to history and the problem of whether history has any meaning at all. So history becomes a question for modern man in two ways, either history could provide a justification for events happening in the present or history remains just as a series of violent events and makes no sense at all. There have been several attacks on the use of perspective which also relates to the problem of architecture. Similar to architecture, perspective is also guided by certain principles and it is mostly criticised for its control over the gaze and also dehumanising us, as the method is based on the reduction of vision to a painter, or man to an eye. In dealing with these three aspects, our attempt will be to both problematize these facets but also to affirm all of these and show what possibilities they open up.

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edifice. While the other metaphors are also architectural, that is the pyramid which symbolizes this rational enterprise and also the labyrinth which stands for a philosophical language. See. Hollier, 1992

## Chapter 1.

### The Question of Making and the Problem of Architecture: a study of the Globe Theatre

Many philosophers, starting from Plato have used the metaphor of architecture for their mode of thought. The metaphor serves philosophy to indicate a certain structure, or rather a system that must exist in thinking. It stands for a kind of *making* or, borrowing the word from Greeks, *poiesis* which is a creation leading to a new object out of nothing unlike *praxis* which is an end in itself. In Plato we see how he detests the actual builder who builds using real materials but calls the figure of the philosopher as an architect who builds in her thinking. This construction or making is essential to resist a certain *becoming* in the real world or the world of *simulacra*. For Plato, the world is that of constant becoming which constantly produces images and images of images, far removed from the truth or the idea. The philosopher then must work against *this* becoming and construct a system just like the architect does; founding the building on certain *principles*, as the etymology of the word “architecture” suggests. Descartes, in *Discourse on Method*, says that for someone working on a ground with existing objects he prefers the city planner, who has a plan in mind, against people who develop villages. The rhetorical significance of this preference certainly elevates the figure of the philosopher to someone who might not reform the world but her own thinking by placing it on a foundation which is uniquely her own, just like the architect. We find the metaphor again in Hegel, when he calls God as the divine architect and moreover

Hegel's philosophy itself is architectonic, that is it is said to be a systematic philosophy. Kojin Karatani calls this tendency the "will to architecture" and notes that to understand deconstruction which came up around the 1960s, we must understand *construction* which has been an underlying aspect of philosophy since its conception. "Western thought is marked by a will to architecture that is reiterated and renewed at times of *crisis*" (Karatani, 1995: 7). This renewal and change in meaning of the metaphor can be seen through history, where the concept of making takes different forms or gains varied meaning and is not restricted to the domain of philosophy. To take the specific case of the Renaissance we notice a new form of making: the making of worlds. Giuseppe Mazzotta terms this as *cosmopoeisis*: "the invention of the world and the notion of making through utopias, magic, science, art and the theatre. These are the imaginative elements that characterize the paradigm shift from the Middle Ages to the modern age ushered by the Renaissance" (Mazzotta, 2001:xiii). But Mazzotta specifies this making in literary texts, which we learn from Karatani, allies itself to becoming. Thus, in talking about deconstruction Karatani specifically mentions the shift from making to becoming as a shift in philosophy from architectonic to textual with figures like Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. Text is an open form unlike architecture which is a closed self-sustained system. So we may ask whether there is a specificity of the Renaissance where there is a making within the text, the literary text being the space where new fictional worlds are created? Moreover, can the form of making which Mazzotta proposes through the literary texts be seen within architecture of that time? Can architecture create a new world and if it does then what status does it have of its real existence? In other words, does architecture which as a metaphor stands for a form of making in thought, maintain the same status when it is actualized through real buildings? To address these issues, we must start from the "crisis" and take into account the paradigm shift which consequently leads to renewal and reinvention

in the relation not just between philosophy and architecture, but also other modes of making. The crisis can be marked as the new conception of an infinite universe which emerges at this time which leads to a shift from the *vita contemplativa* to *vita activa*. If we consider that there is a paradigm shift because of the crisis and it leads to a new understanding of making, we must try to understand the specificity of this paradigm shift at that point in history.

Understanding that situation we will try to inquire about the case of the English Renaissance, specifically that of Shakespeare where we may find ‘world-making’ and even making as such both in his text and the theatre architecture where his plays are performed. In this attempt, we may find a way to address the several problems as mentioned earlier. Maybe, in Shakespeare there lies a possibility for a new relation between the text and the architecture — by including a third category, of the *world*. Maybe it is not just a mere coincidence that Shakespeare, through Jacques, declares, “All the world’s a stage” and names his theatre the Globe.

### **Vita Activa: a brief trajectory**

The shift from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance which is also a shift from the *vita activa* to *vita contemplativa*, is not a simple change from the conception of a life of contemplation to that of activity. When we posit these categories in opposition to each other we ignore the various divisions within these categories which are subsumed under these broad divisions. To understand the shift in the categories it is essential to take these divisions into consideration. Moreover, what is significant is the conception of truth. Truth remains an important aspect as we shall see that in these shifts there is a certain relation towards *a desire for truth*. Hannah Arendt in *The Human Condition*, showed how by using the broad term *vita activa* for human activity we ignore the divisions within human activity. She divides human activity into three fundamental categories each of which corresponds to aspects of the human condition, which

is our condition of being on earth. These are labour, work and action. By labour she means the biological process which is the foundation of human existence itself and puts humans with other animals because of the commonality of life force. So, *life* is the human condition of labour. Work is something which man creates as something new in itself but staying in the world. The Heideggerian influence is quite visible here. In a way it is the unnaturalness of this creation, a certain artificiality that separates man from the world but yet living in the world. The human condition of work is *worldliness*. The third category, that is action, denotes the political aspect of man which puts him on plane with others of his kind. It affirms plurality as it affirms that it is men and not Man who live in the world. It also takes into account the singularity of every being in the multiplicity of the whole. As is evident, *plurality* remains the human condition for action. These divisions or categories within the term *vita activa* allow us to specify the changes that happen in the term and how the shifts happen from *vita contemplativa* to *vita activa*.

The term *vita activa* is specifically a medieval term loaded with political implications but has its origins in the Greeks. The political implication indicates a certain relation that it might have with the Greek polis. To be specific it is the translation of the Aristotelian conception of *bios politikos*, a version of which we also find in Augustine as *vita negotiosa* or *actuosa*, a life devoted to public-political affairs. According to Aristotle there are three ways of life which originate in freedom and not necessity. He rejects all forms of life that are based on necessity whether voluntary or involuntary, that is the slave who is meant to work based on the orders of the master, the craftsman who is forced to make objects and the merchant who devotes his life to accumulation of wealth. These conditions of necessity or working or producing the useful can never allow us to attain what he calls the “beautiful”. He distinguishes three forms of life that have the capacity for the beautiful: life of enjoying



bodily pleasures and consuming the beautiful, life which is devoted to the polis in which the excellence produces something beautiful and finally the life of the philosopher who contemplates things which are eternal and can never be affected by the interference of men, but can only be contemplated as in it lies all the beauty. Unlike the late medieval usage, in the Aristotelian notion, the *bios politikos* is specifically in the action of humans and hence *praxis* is needed to maintain such a life. In the Greek context of the term we see that it is already loaded with a political meaning because the life chosen for the *polis* is already a free choice devoid of any necessity. It considers politics as a realm of freedom rather than the politics of a despot where he is guided by necessity and a sense of usefulness to rule the polis. Action, rather than work or labour remains the significant aspect or the only aspect of the Greek version of *vita activa*. With the disappearance of the Ancients the term lost its political meaning. This does not mean that work or labour attained a higher position but action itself was subdued so that the world can now only be contemplated and it became the only way through which a life of freedom could exist. The Greek *bios theoretikos* translated into *vita contemplativa* in the Middle Ages.

Though this specific shift happened in the Middle Ages the Greeks already prioritized contemplation above all. It is in the Middle Ages that the activity loses its significant connection with politics, in the form of action and it is brought down from its hierarchy to be put among other forms of activity. Already in Plato we find how the philosopher is above all and it is under his guidance that the politics of the polis must function. The polis also provides the necessary condition for the philosopher to contemplate, to make her way of life possible. Along with the freedom from necessities which marks the three ways of life, the philosopher's life adds a separation from politics itself. This is like an additional freedom which the philosopher has. This notion of added freedom which is the privilege of the

philosophers, that is the few, translates into the Christian notion of separation from the worldly affairs which is a possibility that belongs to *all* Christian subjects. So, there is a universalization of freedom that comes up with Christianity. The Greek term *skhole* means separation from political life and not simply any form of leisure. Then, the term *vita activa* has more similarities with the Greek *askholia* in which Aristotle puts all kinds of activities together rather than *bios politikos*. Moreover, *askholia* is present in all the aspects of the *bios politikos*, or the three ways of life. This presence indicates that separation from any activity as such can allow contemplation. It is in contemplation that all kinds of activity must cease. In a different way, the activity itself is a ground for contemplation to take place. This does not mean that activity itself is the object of contemplation but all activity must finally culminate in contemplation, be it any mechanical activity or the activity of thought. It is only in contemplation that truth can reveal itself to man, be it the ancient truth of Being or the Christian truth of God. The primacy of contemplation is also because of the realization that nature cannot be changed by the work of man. The eternal *kosmos* has always been the same since the beginning of time, it is eternal and no activity by man can possibly change it. So, contemplation remains the only way in which the eternal can be comprehended and truth be realized. This primacy of contemplation gives *vita activa* a negative meaning and it is on that basis that the distinctions within the *vita activa* disappear. From the beginning itself, this hierarchy between the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* existed, which gets reversed in Modernity, specifically with figures like Marx and Nietzsche but within this reversal also the framework remains the same. Hannah Arendt shows how the term *vita activa* subsumes different categories under itself and makes itself a broad category and also that the hierarchy between the two or its reversal cannot exist and neither is superior or inferior to the other.

## **Modernity and the Reversal: the discovery of the Archimedean point**

Arendt points out that there is a reversal which is the mark of the modern age. She points out three major events that happened in the beginning of the modern age: man starts exploring the world and discovers new lands; the rise of Reformation, their move from the established Church and private accumulation of wealth; the invention of the telescope and the viewing of the heavens through this new device. The exploration of new lands signifies an attempt to understand the world and using mathematical methods to symbolize these discoveries. What actually happens through this going into the world is a separation from the world itself as the reduction of geography into measurements specifically point towards a distance which is necessary for certain objectivity and this in turn leads to alienation: staying in a world from which one is already separated because of mediation. The second event, that of Reformation tried to show that everyone has the possibility of realising God as He exists within man and this indicates a separation from the world and a focus on man himself: a certain removal from the world and concealing within himself. The third factor which seems to have the least effect compared to the other two has a significant effect if we look back from where we stand now and it will be our focus and object of elaboration.

Galileo is crucial at this juncture because he is able to empirically show a different world using the telescope. The invention of the telescope is important as it gives empirical proof of a given idea of a different kind of a system, which existed in the margins. Arendt contests for the importance of the empirical and how an idea may exist in history but only through the empirical can it come forward, or else it always remains marginal. This is quite true but observations and inferences from science have shown that for an observation, there can be different sets of inferences. To expand this, we can say that when we have a set of

observations, there are different possibilities or reasons that are coherent with the observation. Going for a certain argument or preferring one over the other cannot be dependent totally on empiricism.<sup>7</sup> But there is a certain philosophical grounding even in science which allows one to prefer one inference over the other. This might finally be a decision over the undecidable, a kind of force which assures the place of thinking. Even in Copernicus' theory which marks a shift from the geocentric world to the heliocentric world, we see it does not stand for just a world with a new centre but there is a decentring. Although he himself argued for a closed world system, his writings opened up a possibility towards an infinite universe.<sup>8</sup> This would be further taken up in other forms of thinking too, not just in "science" but also in Hermetic traditions, especially originating with Giordano Bruno. In Bruno we find dedication to Copernicus for his proposition and he would finally take this forward to propose the theory of infinite *worlds*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Koyre observes that science is not based on concrete objective data but there is a basis of positioning which determines the conclusion; that is for the same set of data or observation different scientists may give different conclusions. This is quite evident in the case of Galileo and Kepler. Both of them observed the indefinite number of stars which also varied in sizes. While Galileo favoured an infinite or indefinite space that holds the stars (which are of similar sizes) and hence we see the variations in size, Kepler assumed the variation in sizes of the stars itself. (Koyré, 1978)

<sup>8</sup> The Copernican model sets up the proposition of a heliocentric system but it not only acknowledges this de-centering of earth but also considers the problem of motions. Jean Laplanche argues that the Copernican model stands for an open system which, unlike the Ptolemaic one, assumes that the change in external world or new observations may allow in reconfiguration of the model. The Ptolemaic model subsumes all conditions under its structure and considers the variations as exceptions. So, the Copernican model being a kind of open model allowed the further development from an eccentric earth to a de-centered earth and further to a universe with no fixed centre. (Laplanche, 2005: 54-60)

<sup>9</sup> Giordano Bruno is essential in understanding the conception of an infinite universe. Taking up ideas from both Copernicus and Nicholas of Cusa, he extends it further to conceive an infinite universe with an infinite number of possible worlds. F.R. Johnson marks in his work(1968) the importance of Thomas Digges, an English scientist-philosopher who propagates the idea of an infinite universe. Though in this case, he still maintains a separation between the realm of God and the realm of man: the Paradise or Heavens and the earthly world. Koyre confronts this idea by making Giordano Bruno a

Giving a significant priority to the empirical invention of the telescope, Arendt further argues that the invention of the telescope allows earth bound humans to gaze into the heavens and discover things which were invisible to the bare eye. Humans encountered objects which were beyond reach and had existed only in imagination or speculation. The invention of the telescope makes the idea of a universe as a demonstrable fact which was done only in speculation. As a result of this, there is both despair and also triumph: despair because man can no longer comprehend the world as he has lost all ground, all he encounters is himself; triumph because of the rise of natural and experimental sciences. These two aspects of the invention are only possible if man is both bound to the earth but also has the possibility to go beyond it. Going beyond asserts that there must be a point outside earth from which man is able to view the world. Man is able to place himself at this point although he is on earth. This is the Archimedean point. Staying on the earth man is able to reach the point outside nature which Archimedes speculated. This Archimedean point shows that we are terrestrial only by existence and not by nature.

By this move we have shifted the Archimedean point from the world to a point outside. This point is our point of reference for viewing the world. This point is not a fixed point as it was earlier but putting it outside nature indicates that this point can be arbitrary. The arbitrariness

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central figure in this idea of an infinite universe. Also, in Lovejoy's seminal work we see a significant importance given to Giordano Bruno as the person who travelled across Europe to spread his new worldview. "Though the elements of the new cosmography had, then, found earlier expression in several quarters, it is Giordano Bruno who must be regarded as the principal representative of the doctrine of the decentralised, infinite and infinitely populous universe; for he not only preached it throughout western Europe with the fervour of an evangelist, but also first gave a thorough statement of the grounds on which it was to gain acceptance from the general public." (1990:116)

The importance of Bruno can be seen not only in this matter but also the spread of the Hermetic tradition across Europe. Yates notes that Bruno had visited England with these new ideas and concepts related to Hermeticism. Moreover, he remains an important and influential figure for people like John Dee who was, as we will later see, an initiator of the Vitruvian movement in England.

can exist in a universe which is already infinite because only in an infinite universe there can be no fixed point. We move from a terra-centric to not just a heliocentric world but to an infinite universe, which assumes no centre be it the earth or the sun. The separation between the earth and Heaven collapses and the same rule applies to all: a kind of universal law which was not possible earlier.

If the law applies for *all* there are these possibilities: either the earth is elevated to the level of Heavens, or the Heavens are lowered to the level of earth. But the Archimedean point is not just a point beyond earth but a point from where the assumption of this hierarchy is itself inexistent, which is the third possibility. This implies that all that exists is universal, and the new astronomy must be possible only from this point. This conception of an infinite space can be seen in Mathematics at that time, in the specific development of analytic geometry. The introduction of analytic geometry by Descartes brings two aspects inherent in the field itself: firstly, thinking of space and reducing it to algebraic expressions, mathematics could not reduce all that man is into patterns; secondly, all that is numerical can be expressed through space, physical science is mathematized, but in this science man in attempts to comprehend the world, encounters only himself as the world is represented only through the patterns already present in man's mind. The world now can be comprehended despite all its complexities, using the patterns of the mind.

The discovery of the Archimedean point and the further development in experimental science and analytical geometry would lead in reaffirming the Cartesian doubt which is inherent in the modern philosophy introduced by Descartes. The infinite space then becomes an extension of the mind itself. The realization of the Cartesian doubt leads to *vita activa* in which making becomes the essential aspect. This is because man can now affirm his meaning

or understand the world only through his own making. This relation is quite evident in the aspect of modern physics, where the experiment is done to prove a hypothesis already given by man.<sup>10</sup> An infinite universe presupposes an Archimedean point/s and different philosophers or scientists try to imagine the infinite universe in thinking and through propositions as mentioned earlier. Both Galileo and Descartes remain part of a greater tradition of thinkers who thought of an infinite universe which existed even in marginalized traditions. Especially in the occult and hermetic traditions to which Bruno and even John Dee belong, thought of an infinite universe. We are trying to say that the conception of *vita activa* comes up as a response to the imagining of an infinite world with no centre, or infinite number of arbitrary centers or points of references, and not just the invention of the telescope.

### **Renaissance and the “will to architecture”**

What is clear from this shift is that the notion of making that existed in philosophy as a mode of structuring thought gets actualized with the Renaissance. This trend can be seen throughout the Renaissance. The writings of one of the most important philosophers of the Italian Renaissance, Marsilio Ficino reiterates this will to architecture. In *Platonic Theology* he speculatively creates a totality of the universe which has its hierarchies. The foundation and the summit of this universe is the Divine One. The lowest layer includes all that is material or corporeal in the world which are infinitely divisible and originates from the grace

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<sup>10</sup> This also comes up with the conception of truth in an infinite world. Truth no more reveals itself to man but is active and mysterious which must be captured. But because of the ‘doubt’ man gives up this effort and what we see is not a desire for ‘truth’ but an attempt to prove a hypothesis. At this time we see the rise of experimental sciences which work on this basis. There exists a hypothesis which is determined by the patterns in the mind, and an experiment is done keeping this hypothesis in mind. The point of the experiment is thus to prove the hypothesis. The truth in this way exists as a hypothesis within the scientist herself but must be validated by the external world through the mediation of something like an experiment.

of the One. We ascend from this materiality of existence to the place of quality or individuated forms and the soul. Above the soul are the angels and at the final stage there is unity of the Godhead. These layers are bound together by the bonds of sympathy. It is clear from such a conception of hierarchy of being that there is the will to architecture in Ficino who himself was a Neo-Platonist and the major translator of Plato in Latin. Ficino's philosophy is not just a Christianization of Platonic concepts but he includes readings from the different hermetic and occult traditions. His philosophy indicates how Renaissance was a time not just of the revival of Antiquity but also the incorporation of other traditions which were marginalized in western thought.<sup>11</sup> These incorporations go hand in hand with the existing *will to architecture*, because the attempt to systematize exists. Moreover, there is an attempt towards a totalizing system to understand the world and in turn man himself, or to understand the world from the point of view of man, and to finally construct something like "the Book", which both displays structure of the world and even the movement in between the structures. The use of materials from traditions other than the Christian West, that is from antiquity as well as other parts, is also such an attempt towards an incorporation to make a totalizable model with a meaning.

A similar yet distinct attempt can be found in a philosopher, Giulio Camillo, who was quite prominent at his time but was later forgotten until he was revived and given importance by historians like Frances Yates.<sup>12</sup> The project of Camillo was to make a system which can

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<sup>11</sup> Giordano Bruno is a crucial figure in this "movement" because of his conception of infinite worlds and also how he travelled across Europe to circulate his ideas especially in England. (Yates F. A., 1964) The influence of these traditions is prominent throughout Renaissance thinkers like Ficino, Pico, especially the incorporation of a certain kind of "magic".

<sup>12</sup> In the *Art of Memory*, Yates traces the mnemonic techniques which gained special attention during the Renaissance. There existed other mnemonic techniques in Greece but the specialty of Renaissance is the attempt to use an image for these techniques. The use of images may be seen as influences from the Cabbalistic traditions prevalent at that time. She draws a trajectory of *this* 'art of memory' (the



contain *all* knowledge as he discusses in *L'Idea del teatro (The Idea of the Theater)*. Through the use of rhetoric and the art of memory and invoking the image of the theatre he constructs such a system. But this system remained just a plan though he tried, throughout his life to create an actual model for this plan. He reinterprets Vitruvius' model for Roman theatre but turns it into a model for places of memory or knowledge. The theatre had seven pillars and seven steps each of which contained a certain form of knowledge. He classifies each into categories and further the process between each step and these were related to myths not just from the Greeks but also other traditions.<sup>13</sup> Without going into much detail, we can say that the new theatre indicates a change in the position of the spectator who now occupies the stage. He himself said that the theatre must be such that when present in the theatre, the philosopher becomes the spectator. Another essential point is that his theatre was not supposed to exist in thought but had to be actually created. With Camillo, it can be said that we find an attempt to translate the metaphor of architecture in the real world, as a work whose human condition would be *worldliness*.<sup>14</sup> The uniqueness of Camillo is not just his

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specificity of this way, by the use of image) and claims that it must have started with Camillo and we find its remnants (although in a unique way) in Fludd (Yates, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> In the different stages we find the use of terms both from the Homeric myths and also Cabbalistic tradition. The first grade consists of each of the Seven planets representing the supercelestial or the highest form. The second called the 'Banquet' representing the beginning, the second is called 'the Caves' and this has its relation to the caves of the Gorgon sisters, and Camillo describes this to differentiate it from the Platonic cave and so on. The spatial arrangement of these grades also has the temporal sense starting from the beginning of the world with 'the Banquet' and ending with the mechanical arts in the seventh grade of Prometheus. "Thus Camillo's Theatre represents the universe expanding from First Causes through the stages of creation. First is the appearance of the simple elements from the waters on the Banquet grade; then the mixture of the elements in the Cave; then the creation of man's *mens* in the image of God on the grade of the Gorgon Sisters; then the union of man's soul and body on the grade of Pasiphe and the Bull; then the whole world of man's activities; his natural activities on the grade of the Sandals of Mercury; his arts and sciences, religion and laws on the Prometheus grade. Though there are unorthodox elements in Camillo's system, his grades contain obvious reminiscences of the orthodox days of creation." (Yates F. , 2014:145)

<sup>14</sup> As mentioned earlier, the human condition of making is worldliness. (Arendt, 1999)

attempt to systematize all forms of existing knowledge but to make a real model. He aligns himself to the paradigm of the *vita activa* through his making, though it is true that for the spectator in his theatre must contemplate and move through the stages. The spectator then participates in both activity and contemplation.

The evocation of these two names from the early Renaissance allows us to start thinking about some problems we are faced with in thinking of a relation between architecture and philosophy. Although a form of making, Ficino's construction must undergo certain contemplation on the layers and the movements. Camillo thinks in a similar way but he uniquely tries to build a real model which is present before our eyes through the model of the theatre. "Making" in philosophy through the metaphor of architecture, gets an object of its own, a real architecture that exists in the building of theatre. The Camillo moment is essential because he shows a will to architecture not via contemplation but in his own making. Moreover, with him we get a new object for thinking: the theatre.

### **English Public Theatres, a Renewal of the Vitruvian model?**

Much has been researched and debated over the Elizabethan theatres especially the Globe, even many providing conjectural drawings of the Globe like that by C.W. Hodges. But all these studies consider that it was only with Inigo Jones that the Vitruvian influence started in England. Frances Yates' work provides a crucial intervention in this matter. Regarding the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres she has two crucial points which help us in rethinking about their architecture especially that of the Globe:

1. The Elizabethan theatres made of wood were adaptations of Vitruvius design of the Roman theatres, giving a primacy to the aural aspect as these theatres were primarily actor's theatres where voice was the most essential aspect. The influence of Vitruvius

can be traced back to a figure like John Dee who was an important mathematician, astrologer and even occult practitioner at that time. Yates places the Globe as a part of, what she terms as the “London theatre movement” which led to the construction of several *public* theatres in London (Yates, 1969). The first among these acted as a prototype and was built by James Burbage called simply ‘the Theatre’. Others followed, namely the Rose on Bankside in 1587, the Swan in 1595 and finally in 1595 the Globe was built. It is chiefly associated with Shakespeare because he, in later part of his career, did his major plays in the Globe. There were other theatres too like the Fortune built in 1600 in Cripplegate, the Red Bull in the same year in Clerkenwell and the Hope on the Bankside in 1614. John Dee wrote the Mathematical preface to the English translation of Euclid’s *Elements*, in which he discusses the Vitruvian categorization of Arts and how these are necessary for the Architect to know. In this text, he also mentions several important figures of the Italian Renaissance like Alberti and Durer. Yates speculates that this text by Dee was an opening of the English public to Italian Renaissance and the ideas of Antiquity, long before Inigo Jones, who is usually claimed to have been the first one to bring Italian influences into England. Moreover, Dee’s *preface* was meant for the common architect-joiners, as he himself mentions in the text, rather than someone supposedly very highly educated. This text must have been an inspiration for James Burbage and others to come after him to make theatres based on a Vitruvian model of Roman theatres, which as we know, were themselves public theatres. She further suggests the importance that the Vitruvian model placed on the propagation of sound in theatre which was obviously useful for the drama that was more text based, that is the actor’s theatre. Vitruvius mentioned the use of sound vessels below the seats of the audience so that sound can

propagate according to the principles given by the Pythagorean way of understanding sound. But the material of wood itself had the quality for resonating and the vessels were not required in the theatres made of wood, which we find in the London theatres. Apart from all these, she also goes on to describe the musical basis of architecture during the Renaissance. Renaissance buildings were built on architectural principles which related to the idea or structure in music as the universe itself must be in harmony. This basis of music provided a certain sense of harmony in buildings and they symbolically stand for buildings which are harmonious in themselves. The use of 'Heavens' was an adaptation of the awning as used in the Roman amphitheatres. These covers had detailed depictions of stars and zodiac signs as if representing the Heavens. In the Elizabethan theatres we see this depiction of Heavens being restricted to the stage only, like a 'shadow' or cover. With these reasons she finally concludes how the Elizabethan theatres must have been an adaptation of Vitruvius' model for Roman theatres.

2. Regarding the specificity of the stage she brings another important philosopher of the English Renaissance, Robert Fludd. Robert Fludd tried to develop a memory system, like that of Camillo, by using specific architectural models. The memory system can be found in his *Utriusque Cosmi, Maioris scilet et metaphysica, physica, atque technical Historia*<sup>15</sup>. This is his major work and this volume is supposed to cover the history of macrocosm which is that of the universe and the microcosm that is the world of man. In one of the chapters he describes the difference between different

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<sup>15</sup> "The 'greater and lesser worlds' which this history claims to cover are the great world of the macrocosm, the universe, and the little world of man, the microcosm." (Yates, 2014:311)

forms of arts: the *ars roundata* (round arts) and the *ars quadrata* (square arts) and this is important in context of both art of memory and the Elizabethan stage.

For the complete perfection of the art of memory the fantasy is operated in two ways. The first way is through *ideas*, which are forms separated from corporeal things, such as spirits, shadows (*umbrae*), souls and so on, also angels, which we chiefly use in our *ars rotunda*. We do not use this word 'ideas' in the same way that Plato does, who is accustomed to use it of the mind of God, but for anything which is not composed of the four elements, that is to say for things spiritual and simple conceived in the imagination; for example angels, demons, the effigies of stars, the images of gods and goddesses to whom celestial powers are attributed and which partake more of a spiritual than of a corporeal nature; similarly virtues and vices conceived in the imagination and made into shadows, which were also to be held as demons.' (Yates, 199:327)

So the round arts stand for things which are not accessible in material forms, directly as some substance. The square arts on the other hand stand for something which actually exists in the realm of man. As Fludd suggests, these are the two methods by which the art of memory can be practiced. But he places a special preference for the round arts, as he dismisses the use of square arts which may seem easier but round arts is “infinitely more superior” (Yates, 1999:316). He goes on to argue that one must use real places against fictitious places for practicing art of memory. The real places that he uses and also illustrates in the book are the theatres and by ‘theatre’ he means not the whole architecture of the theatre but the stage on which “all actions of words, of sentences, of particulars of a speech or of subjects are shown, as in *a public theatre in which comedies and tragedies are acted*” (319). The use of these public theatres is important because these are real places, and Yates suggests that the reference from which Fludd is describing these spaces must have been the public theatres — constructed because of the London theatre movement — of which Fludd himself was a

spectator. Moreover, Fludd's illustration of the theatre also consists of the title 'theatrum orbis' or theatre of the world and on the other page there is a drawing of the Zodiac sign just like the Heavens. This is as if, the pages can be seen together as a reference to each other, the drawing of the Zodiac sign merges with the drawing of the memory palace or the stage. From this, Yates further suggests that this might be like the Heavens above the stage in Elizabethan theatres. With all these references, she concludes that the Elizabethan stage can be understood through Fludd's memory system.

To use the specific case of Globe theatre and putting Yates' complex and meticulous work very simply, it can be said that she suggests that the Globe theatre was modeled on Vitruvius' depiction of Roman theatres and through Fludd's memory system we can understand the stage of the Globe. From Yates' work we get a new conception of the Globe theatre and also the influences of the occult and Hermetic traditions during this period and these traditions play an important role in thinking about theatre and philosophy at this time. Both John Dee and Robert Fludd are thinkers in this tradition. In their rereading of the Antique philosophers like Plato, the influence of the occult traditions are quite prominent. This can even be seen in someone like Ficino as mentioned earlier.

Yates' work provides us with a new way of thinking not just about the architecture of the Globe but also about different philosophical ideas in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. If we consider the revival of Vitruvius during the "Theatre movement" in England, then even the architecture of these theatres can be placed within the Renaissance tradition. The English Renaissance can then be read as not just a literary Renaissance with someone like Shakespeare, but also an artistic Renaissance even prior to Inigo Jones. The theatre buildings of that time,

though they may not indicate the same sophistication or ornamentation like buildings in Italy or even buildings by Inigo Jones in England, can be placed within the field Renaissance art or architecture. This tradition of Renaissance architects was constantly devoted in thinking of a harmonious relation in the architecture itself. They were of the belief that there exists harmony in the world and the basis of all this is number. But we find in their work that this conception of a world based on numbers is not derived from the world itself. This means that it is not their discovery that the world is based on principles of numbers. Or that there exists a harmony based on numbers which corresponds both to the microcosm and the macrocosm. The harmony that Renaissance artists and architects claim is an invented harmony, the basis of which is number. Various numerical figures were mobilised to maintain such a unity between nature and their work, to show a correlation. And so different traditions like the texts from Hermetic traditions or Cabbalistic traditions were mobilized, where the number in its numerical sense and in its symbolic significance remains indistinguishable. So, what they were trying to do in their learning from nature and applying them to the buildings was the reverse way round. In using the basis of numbers for proportions and harmony, they created buildings which actually gave a sense of harmony to the world itself. In giving sense to the world itself, they created new worlds through their architecture. This world making is different from cosmopoiesis in literary texts, but nonetheless, in the Renaissance we see this different form of cosmopoiesis through actual making itself. In this light, the Globe itself is a new world, which substantiates its naming.

Let us try to illustrate this point further by taking an example of another type of building which was very significant: the Church. One of the debates during the Renaissance was the shape of the Church. Two views were prevalent: first, that the Church must be rectangular, with the altar placed at the end of it, denoting that God is infinitely far away from us; second, the shape must

be circular with altar placed in the middle, which represents God as being centre of the universe and also omnipotent. Someone like Alberti favored the circular shape of the Church, abiding to the second version of representation. The prominence of the circle was already there in Plato who called it the perfect shape. Even later in Galileo we would find that he argues for circular orbits rather than elliptical which was proposed by Kepler<sup>16</sup>. This was mainly because of his Platonic idea of circle being the perfect shape<sup>17</sup>. The use of the circular shape or rather sphere can be found in Nicholas of Cusa where he employs this shape to define God. Cusanus in *On Learned Ignorance* defines God as the infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere.<sup>18</sup> This means that God, though the least tangible is a perfect geometrical shape but because of Him being like an infinite sphere, the circumference, diameter, centre are indistinguishable. Cusanus changes the traditional scholastic hierarchy of the Heavens with fixed immovable objects and earth as centre into a uniform and homogenized

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<sup>16</sup> One of the propositions regarding the distinction and choice between the circle and the elliptical can be their views regarding the type of astronomy. Panofsky assumed that this was because of Galileo's vision of a static astronomy with fixed bodies whereas in Kepler we find a view of a kind of dynamic body. Moreover, he argues that such a vision also bases itself on a prioritization of the type of movement itself: Galileo favours the circular movement whereas Kepler supports the rectilinear, which makes it easier for him to think of a movement which is *not circular*. This point was however contradicted by Koyre who showed how the rectilinear and circular, static and dynamic is present in both of their developments and ideas regarding astronomy. (Panofsky, 1956)

<sup>17</sup> The point here is not to establish Galileo as a Platonist and Kepler as not one. However, both can be viewed as Platonist but as the Renaissance tradition already was, as interpreters of Plato. In Galileo, the ideal of Plato remains as we see that he tries to relate the orbits to being circular, or even favours certain paintings or movements which are 'perfect'. The 'mannerist' Kepler, favouring the elliptical may be an ardent Platonist believing in the perfectness of the circle but knowing that it is not possible for the perfect shape to be actualized in reality; hence he positions himself on the side of the elliptical, which his observations also favoured. Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> In this we find resonances of Hermes Trismegistus from which the term Hermeticism, which was very popular in the Renaissance, comes from. This definition of God is there in the *Book of the 24 Philosophers*. Cusanus must have taken the idea from Meister Eckhart who in turn found the formulation in the *book*. But Cusanus transfers this metaphor of God into a conception of the universe. (Harries, 1990:94)



infinite space with no physical object as an ideal centre. For him, mathematics is important because only through the tools of mathematics we can understand God. Karsten Harries notes how in Cusanus there is certain *transference* of the metaphor of God as an Infinite sphere, which had existed before in other thinkers to the actual world condition, that of an infinite universe. “Implicit in the metaphor of the infinite sphere is a view of creation as a homogeneous whole. Cusanus' transference of the metaphor to the universe only makes this explicit” (Harries, 1975). A similar idea can be seen in Marsilio Ficino who, taking from Hermetic sources and also inspired by Plotinus, regards God as the centre and core of the universe but also considers that His circumference is infinite. “Renaissance architects were aware of all of this. Their own treatises leave not a shadow of doubt” (Wittkower, 1971:28). But Wittkower goes on to put more emphasis on the Platonic influences rather on this new development. The new thinking in philosophy redefines for us the understanding of God. To go a step forward, it must have influenced the understanding of the world itself, as an infinite universe. The circular shape of the Church is not just a symbolization of God through the perfect shape of the circle but also a response to the new world condition. This signifies another aspect which we can think of as a way of understanding God through this new formed Church, where it is not just a symbol of God's nature through the perfect shape and harmony. In the making of the architecture of the church there is a possibility of understanding God. By making corporeal objects in the world, which materializes by means of abstract and intelligible mathematical symbols and also drawing a relation between the abstract higher form of mathematics and its possible applied forms, Renaissance architects attempted to understand God. It is only in a creation that is so perfect can the Truth of God be revealed. What is important in this is that the Christian idea is not totally abandoned, but we find inventions of the Christian idea of truth. This period may not be marked as a period where the Cartesian

doubt has taken control as Arendt mentions but nonetheless the ideas do not relate completely to the Medieval notions. Here, we see both *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa* in a different relation. *Making* is the most crucial aspect of *vita activa* in this period but *vita contemplativa* is not completely given up. This is because the notion that Truth reveals itself still pervades but now truth can reveal itself not just through contemplation but must be mediated through a kind of activity, that of making. This new world view is quite relevant in the new philosophy of Cusanus and Ficino as mentioned earlier, and also through the shift in the architecture of the Church. The plan of the Medieval Church was laid out 'in modum crucis' that is the Latin Cross which symbolized Jesus on the Cross. The centralized Renaissance Church shows a new philosophical interpretation of both God and the world. He who is all perfect and in harmony replaced He who suffered on the Cross: "the Pantocrator replaced the Man of Sorrows" (Wittkower, 1971:30)

### **Theatre as a model**

We have taken a detour from the field of public theatre to that of Church and the new religious idea just to come back. The conceptualization of a new model of Church indicates a new view of both God and world. This view is crucial also for theatre. With regard to the Globe we see its circular plan which is like that of the centralized Churches but it is more than just this similarity. In Alberti's thesis on architecture he goes against those puritans who were against theatre by calling the theatre as a temple of humanity and comparing it to the temple for Jews. In Renaissance England we see a similar problem faced by people of theatre from the puritans who call theatre as the place of the Devil. Against these views we also find people who were defenders of the theatre. Thomas Heywood was one such figure. When we place the English theatres within the trajectory of the 'Theatre movement' influenced by John Dee, we can assure

that defenders of theatres must have also read Alberti's writings on theatre. "Thomas Heywood had certainly been reading Alberti on the ancient theatre when he wrote his *Apology for Actor*, published in 1612; he constantly has in mind Alberti on the ancient theatre when speaking of the new ancient theatres of London" (Yates, 1969: 162). Alberti mentions three types of buildings in Ancient Rome, theatres where plays are performed, amphitheatres which are mainly for animal baiting shows, and circuses for body exercises and other forms of entertainment. For him, all these buildings are closely related except that they vary in position of the stage. His descriptions help in dismissing the common confusion during the Renaissance and especially in England about amphitheatres and theatres. He further goes on to describe the specificities of these buildings like the circuses can also be oblong shaped. Heywood is majorly concerned about the theatres where plays happen and his writing can be seen as a project against the puritans or more like a task to raise the actors and the plays to a level of high respect as that of the Antiquity he imagined. We find in him this constant comparison between his contemporary theatres and the theatres of Antiquity. He goes on to describe how magnificent the amphitheatres erected by Julius Caesar were and these theatres also had flags flying from the turret. We know that in ancient theatres there were no flags. Flags are present in Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres where the beginning of a play is announced by flaying of the flag. "Julius Caesar's gorgeous amphitheatre, with its flag, its elaborate representation of the heavens in its covering over the stage, may well be an allusion to a more modern theatre-amphitheatre, the Globe" (1969: 164). In the beginning *Apology for Actor*, he writes a poem which clearly shows his idea of a cosmic theatre where men play their parts in presence of God, and this becomes the moral testing ground.

Then ours play begun  
When we are borne, and to the world first enter,  
An all finde exits when their parts are done,

If then the world a theater present,  
As by the roundnesse it appears most fit,  
Built with starre galleries of hie ascent,  
In which Jehove doth as spectator sit,  
And chiefe determiner to applaud the best,  
And their indevours crowne with more than merit  
But by their evil actions doomes the rest  
To end discrac't, whilst others praise inherit;  
He that denyes when theatres should be,  
He may as well deny a world to me.<sup>19</sup> (Yates, 1966)

With Heywood we find a shift from theatre being a 'theatre of the world' to a kind of moral emblem or allegory. The puritans attacked theatre because they considered it a place of tricks and illusions which is actually separated from truth. This in a way reminds us about the anti-theatrical prejudice in Plato about the poets and theatre. In the Medieval age we also find the use of theatre as a metaphor for the world and its different variations, where it is used also in a pedagogic way against the world of illusions<sup>20</sup>. Even in Shakespeare, we find the representation of the world as a theatre where everyone plays their part. In *As you Like it* we find the melancholic Jacques declaring "All the world's a stage" and goes on to describe the seven stages of man. In *Merchant of Venice*, Anotonio speaks

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;  
A stage where every man must play a part,  
And mine a sad one.

The representation of the world as a stage or the metaphor of theatre for the world remains also in theatre but with a different sense than it was for Christianity. With Shakespeare we find that the metaphor loses its specific religious meaning we are no more actors who act by the Divine

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<sup>19</sup> For the entire poem, see (Heywood, 1841)

<sup>20</sup> For a remarkable exposition of the use of the metaphor of theatre in Christianity. See. De, 2021

will of God but something like history becomes a guiding factor or a “Grand Mechanism”, to borrow from Jan Kott<sup>21</sup>.

Let us return to the case of the attack by Puritan’s and Heywood’s defense. The attacks by Puritans signify that theatre appears to them as an object of criticism viewing it as a place of trickeries and falsehood. In this sense they are then spectators who view theatre from the outside. In maintaining this specific distance from theatre it becomes an object of enquiry for them. This also reminds us of a similar relation Plato had with theatres where he was constantly troubled by the nature of theatre. He considered theatre to be far from the truth of the Idea but pretending to represent the truth by an *image* which is not possible for the Idea which is inherently consistent and One whereas the image is inconsistent multiple. But he was also troubled by the popularity of the theatres. The puritans saw theatres as a return of the decadent Roman culture where theatre and other forms of entertainment were very popular. This kind of “return” signified features which the Puritans could not accept: firstly, the architecture of the Globe and other theatres of the “movement” have the similar circular shape as the Roman amphitheatres; and secondly, the significant number of people these theatres were able to attract. A return would obviously mean a return of the *changed* Christian subject to an earlier view of God and the world as such. Regarding the first point, it is quite clear that specific critique of the shape of theatre relating it to Romans is possible only from a point outside as mentioned earlier. The whole architecture of the theatre appears to them to be a spatial configuration which allows the trickeries to take place. Their constant urge and appeal to shut the theatres cannot be seen only as an attack to the play which happens on the stage but the

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<sup>21</sup> There is a major role of history in Shakespeare’s plays. The historical plays about the Kings are especially considered by Kott to show how it is no more the Fate or Destiny which controls man but a violent Grand Mechanism of History that works throughout and men who seek for power perish under this. (Kott, 1967)

whole theatre architecture of the playhouse itself. The interesting case with Heywood's defense is that the specificity of the theatre architecture is core to his argument. The metaphor of the world as a theatre or *theatrum mundus* is not restricted to stage but encompasses the whole theatre architecture itself. "The world's a theatre, the earth's a stage." (Heywood, 1841: 13)

There is a distinction made between the world and earth. Humans existing on earth play their roles as actors on stage and "Jehove" occupies a position high above among the spectators and He judges the actor based on how well he plays his part and what part he plays in it. Heywood's distinction between the stage and the theatre shows a close link with the idea of Saint John of Salisbury regarding '*theatrum mundus*'. As Donalee Dox (2004) notes, he maintains that there is a realm where humans play their parts and another realm where saints and holy figures are given parts according to God. They have the possibility to transcend the earlier realm and move towards the spectator's seat. Saint John obviously had something like Roman amphitheatre in mind. With Heywood it is the specific architecture of a theatre like that of the Globe. Moreover, we find a primacy of theatre here: theatre becomes the foundation for the world. The analogy of the "roundness" of the world with that of theatre is determined by that of theatre, such that theatre itself becomes a ground of imagining the world itself. If the stage is a metaphor for the earth, theatre provides us with a *model* for the world. Someone who denies theatre denies the world. This kind of a relation in the architecture, which is the stage within a theatre, is seen as analogous to earth within the world. It is interesting to note that the same kind of structure is visible within Shakespeare's texts such as *Hamlet*, where the mousetrap sequence follows a play-within a play.

Introducing the conception of the world makes it possible to imagine a link between the Church and the theatre, in their specific architecture as structures and not just function. Though, with regard to function they provide a primary space for congregation or gathering for the *public*. As

of now let us focus primarily on the specificity of form. The importance of the circular shape is essential in both these buildings. We find a desire for perfection and harmony through the circle, as the most perfect shape. (This specific circular form includes all forms of polygons too as they can be accommodated within the perfect shape of the circle. These other forms are imagined to be based on that of the circle. So, whether the Globe was circular or hexagonal is not an issue here, as in both cases it corresponds to the same logic of the circle.) But what this also means is an attempt to imagine the world through these forms of *making*, in a world which is infinite. There may be variations in thinking of this infinite which also is indefinite, that is we do not get a positive definition of infinite. Infinite stays as indefinite, as a negation of something finite. A distinction is made in Descartes and even in Cusanus that this indefinite must not be confused with the infinity of God.<sup>22</sup> But, nonetheless we see an imagination of the world as *not finite*. The transference of the metaphor of the infinite sphere in the world may have been an influence in imagining a new world. What we find in the Church as a new representation of the Godhead through its building, can be seen in theatre as a representation of the world. But this is not just a mere representation. It is a creation of something new, an invention. In both these cases, there is no empirical evidence which can lead to a representation of the given, except an alignment to the “tradition”. The creation emerges out of a pure imagination of a new worldview. In a way, the architectural project emerges out of *nothing*. In this invention out of nothing, this attempt to build up a coherent model, the architect gives

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<sup>22</sup> Descartes mentions about Nicholas of Cusa in a letter to Chanut in which he writes about his conception of space. There he distinguishes his idea of an indefinite space as different from the infinite space as conceived by Nicholas of Cusa. He claims that the world is not infinite but infinitely great. This distinction is predominant in his other texts like *Principles of Philosophy*, where he identifies ‘indefinite’ as the one without any limits, that is defined only negatively as compared to God who is infinite in the positive sense. Karsten Harries shows that Descartes’ separation from Cusanus’ point is not quite valid because Cusanus himself shows this trait or position similar to Descartes in distinguishing between the two ideas of infinity. (Harries, 1990)

meaning to the world, certain coherence, which is not comprehensible in the world. To reiterate in a different way, man's function would no longer be a simulation of the divine *mimesis* by using the methods of *mathesis*, as we also see the overthrow of the figure of God as an architect.<sup>23</sup>

To go back to the case of Fludd and Camillo: in their unique attempts towards art of memory is the basis of theatre, specifically the architecture of the Roman theatres in case of Camillo and the stage of the Globe in case of Fludd. In Camillo, we move from the Planets or the Divine to the exact material world, through the seven steps. Within these seven steps there is a mixing of different elements. Let us take an example of the series of Jupiter. Jupiter stands for the element of air. So, we start with Jupiter in the first step and we move from the first step to the last, which stands for Prometheus or human forms of arts where the element of air is utilized, like the windmills<sup>24</sup>. In between there are mixing and various forms in which the element takes

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<sup>23</sup> This idea is quite prominent in Kepler. He envisioned God as an architect in a retrospective way by referring to the art of building. According to him, man does not copy the divine architect which is god, but God in His creation must have thought of the way in which man who was yet to come would have designed buildings. But through this he does not reduce the divinity to the level of man but a kind of relation is shown. Moreover, in *Mysterium Cosmographicum*, we find that when he realizes that the world is in motion rather than being static, he deploys a different metaphor for God, rather than architect the metaphor of musician is used. If the world is not static but in motion, the divine geometer must first and foremost be a holy musician. (Damisch, 2016) Moreover this issue about the dynamism of nature remains a pertinent problem of art regarding the issue of imitation of nature. This will be dealt with in detail in a later chapter.

<sup>24</sup>. "Jupiter as a planet is associated with the element of air. On the Banquet grade in the jupiter series, the image of Juno suspended means air as a simple element; under the Cave, the same image means air as a mixed element; with the Sandals of Mercury, it stands for the natural operations of breathing, sighing; on the Prometheus grade it means arts using air, such as windmills. Jupiter is a useful, benevolent planet whose influences are pacificatory. In the Jupiter series the image of the Three Graces means under the Cave, useful things; with Pasiphe and the Bull, a beneficent nature; with the Sandals of Mercury, exercising benevolence. The changing meaning of an image on different grades, without losing its basic theme, is a carefully thought out characteristic of the imagery of the Theatre. On the Gorgon Sisters grade, the elaborate image of the Stork and Caduceus represents Jovial characteristics in their purely spiritual or mental form, the heavenward flight of the tranquil soul . . . choice, judgment, counsel. Joined to the body under Pasiphae and the Bull, the Jovial personality is



form like breathing. His theatre is both a spatial representation and also temporal as the movement from first step to the last also signifies movement from when time begins to where the element takes form. But also in Camillo, the theatre which exists in the real world provides us with a model. Moreover, the Divine or the “idea”, to do an exchange of terms, is not separated from the material world but a connection is made between the two. As mentioned earlier, in philosophers like Ficino this is quite evident: the movement from one to other through different levels. In Fludd’s model the movement is quite the opposite. Fludd provides an emphasis on the use of real buildings for the *ars roundata* which is infinitely superior because by the use of these we can think of ideas which are not visible to human eyes and can only be thought of. In a way, these ideas transcend the existing realm of the human world. Fludd posits the *ars roundata* and *ars quadrata* in opposition as the opposition between a certain kind of transcendence and immanence: the realm of ideas and the realm of man. The realm of ideas has superiority above the realm of men, the realm of existing objects. But what we see with someone like Fludd is the possibility that the transcendence or the realm of ideas can be accessed only through the materiality of the realm of men. This is not a direct movement from the realm of one to the other but the human world provides us with a model to think about ideas. As we have already seen, Fludd’s model replicates the existing Globe. In using the stage as the model, what lies as an assumption or implicitly is the constitution of the stage as “earth” because of the existing material which is visible to the human eyes. The movement from the stage to the memory places through the doors is a movement from earth, the realm of the *visible* or *evidential* to what is outside earth: a kind of movement from the material to the ideal.

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represented by images suggestive of goodness, friendliness, good fortune and wealth. The natural Jovial operations appear on the grade of the Sandals of Mercury with images representing exercising virtue, exercising friendship. On the Prometheus level, the Jovial character is represented by images standing for religion and the law.” (Yates, 2014:146)

So, what happens through the process mentioned by Fludd is not just entering the doors of the *frons scenae* but also a movement to the rest of theatre, which represents the world. Though Fludd does not explicitly mention this and he just describes the movement through the *frons scenae*, what can be seen is that he attempts to represent a world beyond that of the stage. In constituting the stage as an image for mnemonic techniques, he also incorporates the complete architecture of theatre. Theatre then is not restricted to a metaphor but becomes a model for the world; and the architecture too moves beyond a metaphor for systematization or making: architecture in being present as a concrete material in the world attempts to show a structure or arrangement, a *tectonic* based on principles or *arche* which incorporates the thinking of an infinite world or rather world which is 'indefinite'.

### **Thinking otherwise**

If architecture stands as a model and not just a metaphor, does this making form a coherent model? In thinking about this we may attempt to think about philosophy which posits itself as a system as Karatani also mentioned. So, how can we think about architecture and its relation to text, which appears in opposition to architecture? Can we think about a new theory of architecture which is not in opposition to the text? Theatre, especially that of Shakespeare provides us with an interesting example: it is a theatre which is a building but it also hosts actual plays whose main ground lies on the basis of text, as it is the actor's theatre with primacy of the text. How can we think about the playing out of text (which allows a moment of *deconstruction*) in a building, which stands for *construction*? Andrew Benjamin provides us with an insight into the problem of architecture for a new possibility of architectural theory (2000: 127). Using primarily Blanchot and Bataille he addresses the question of this possibility. Blanchot in a short letter to Claire Nouvet responds to the question if there is an ethical

determinacy that comes before a form of literature. Blanchot takes the example of Mallarme in his version of Poe's thesis on the relation between architecture and literature. (It is well known that the symbolists like Mallarme, Poe, and Valery were interested in this idea of making within the text. They wanted literature to be architectonic in a certain sense. Valery's famous text 'Eupalinos, or the Architect' which is in the form of dialogue tries to argue for a relation between text and architecture, claiming that the text too must be based on a structure<sup>25</sup>). Mallarme discusses a 'magical architecture' where rules are involved but these are unknown. These rules make them mysterious on purpose. Moreover, Mallarme claims that there is a deviation in evocation of the rule and the mystery and positing of an anteriority which is both prior and productive. These do not indicate that there is no rule involved but the rule works within an anteriority, rather than being an external constraint. Blanchot in reading Mallarme always keeps this anteriority in mind which acts as 'the unworking of being'. This anteriority in being both prior and productive always acts towards its own unworking or *disouvrement*. This *disouvrement* may be understood as "a productive negativity resisting the logic of negation" (Benjamin, 2000: 129). In this way it does not question the *arche* but the nature of the *arche*, which is inherent in any architectural practice and also in philosophy understood as 'a will to architecture'. In this light the object cannot be reduced to its essentialism and presence because of the problem and hence questioning of the foundation itself. This kind of thinking then demands a new understanding of the object and the gaze through which theory functions: theory must then be delimited by the object as a different attempt to understand the foundation.

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<sup>25</sup> With symbolist writers we find a constant desire for a kind of making with textual itself. This is clear with Poe's constant references to architecture and writing; Mallarme's reworking of Poe and also in a new structure within his writing. In several works of Valery like *Eupalinos or the Architect*, we find him comparing the poet to an architect. It is quite interesting to see this in reference to Plato's attack on the poets who work towards a kind of *becoming*. Maybe these poets through *this* desire could reclaim back the polis from which they were long banished by Plato.

If architecture in basing itself on strong foundation or principle builds itself, what we find is a reconciliation or resolution of the contradictions inherent in such an attempt. This kind of reconciliation is a forced one. Considering this aspect, the metaphor of architecture for philosophy then can now be thought as a system which works within itself towards a forced resolution. In being complete, architecture does not take into account what can be called “fragmentary”. The analogy between architecture and the human body is an instance in this. The analogy works not because of the specificity of measurement and proportion but also because the body bases itself on something *complete*. Thinking of architecture in this way does not propose to move from the complete to the fragmentary but considers the influence of the “fragmentary” within the complete — ‘the exigency of the fragmentary’. Architecture then always remains *incomplete* by instituting this element. In this framework, we can see how within architecture there is a certain textuality which always has within itself a *potentiality* to be developed further on.

A similar problem was hinted at by Georges Bataille when he mentions “a painful tooth in Hegel’s mouth”.

Beyond all knowledge there is non-knowledge and the one who would be absorbed in the thought that beyond his knowledge he knows nothing - even were he to have within him Hegel's inexorable lucidity - would no longer be Hegel, but a painful tooth in Hegel's mouth. Would a sick tooth alone be missing from the great philosopher?<sup>26</sup>

Using an architectural term we can say that philosophy attempts to shelter or house this painful tooth. It represents a kind of lack or impossibility of a complete system and hence the inexhaustibility of any kind of complete epistemological model. This in turn leads to

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<sup>26</sup> quoted in Benjamin, 2000

repetitions and possibilities of different modes of philosophy or thinking or models. What is missing then is not the lack but a kind of inscription of the lack within philosophy. One of the responses to the crisis may be a kind of melancholia which holds that any form of completion is not possible. Another response may be to affirm this lack as a kind of “productive negativity” — in this regard what is essential against the earlier form of melancholia is a consideration of time—which makes the object a historical one. Be it philosophy or architecture, it must respond to their own times: a response to crisis in thinking. The architecture of the Globe responds to this concrete historical moment, a moment in time where people start thinking about the infinite universe in their own ways. The mechanism that it adopts as we have seen is the model of the theatre within a theatre, which is also done in the text of Shakespeare. It is not possible to understand the architecture separately without understanding how it works in being a place where the text is enacted. As we have seen certain textuality in architecture despite its ground on making, we find architectonic in the text a different kind of making which is structured: the play-within-play.

## Chapter 2.

### Shakespeare's Worlds: The Category of History and Invention of Metatheatre

The model of the theatre within a theatre that we see in the structure of the Globe is a common element in Shakespearean drama. In various plays this element takes different forms. To indicate a few, in *Hamlet*, we find the strictly structural model of the mousetrap sequence, which replicates the play-within-a play mode; in *Titus Andronicus* we see the different forms of plays, short sequences within the formal narrative of the play and the introduction of theatricality as a different form of play in the form of dreams separated from the performative daily life in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In an entirely different theme, in a more politically oriented move, we find a character like Prospero, from *the Tempest*, being exiled from the actual Politics of the State who goes on to build his own “utopia” in an island where he, through his magic, is able to *construct* a play of his own with characters like Ariel and Caliban. These instances indicate a creation within the created plays: we are again faced with the idea of ‘making’. This aspect of making is not just restricted to Shakespeare, where he, the playwright, makes new worlds through his plays. There is making, as the above examples indicate, within the plays themselves. We may ask ourselves why such a thing occurs in the play, that is, why are new plays created within the plays? Does the playwright Shakespeare respond to a certain problem in history such that his characters also try to ‘make’ like he does — that is they become creators or makers themselves? Giuseppe

Mazzotta argues that in Shakespeare we find a typical characteristic of the Renaissance: the *myth* of ‘cosmopoiesis’ or world making. Like Bacon’s *New Atlantis* and Campanella’s *City of the Sun*, Shakespeare’s *Tempest* attempts to construct utopias against the new political discourse introduced by Machiavelli.<sup>27</sup> In Mazzotta’s reading, the common thread that binds the literary world of Renaissance is Machiavelli’s politics and Alberti’s perspective. He goes on to show how different writers, be it Shakespeare or Cervantes or Ariosto, in very different and unique ways oppose Machiavellian principles of sovereignty. Machiavelli remains an important figure throughout this period and also a very controversial one — we have echoes in the contemporary world where the term Machiavellian is still associated to something ‘evil’<sup>28</sup>.

But can it be thought that though in opposition, Shakespeare and Machiavelli were responding to a third problem but in their varied responses it seems that they are in opposition to each other. We will try to describe this problem as a new conception of the world: the world as an infinite world. This problem emerges at a point in history, and as we will see changes the conception of history itself. History emerges as an important category both in Shakespeare’s plays, especially tragedies and histories and also in writings of Machiavelli. It

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<sup>27</sup>According to Mazzotta, the Machiavellian proposition of politics is that the prince may use deception and *performance*, to gain support of people, usurp his enemies and finally political power. Against this proposition a series of writers in the literary field respond in various ways. In the case of Shakespeare, it is specifically the alternate proposition of a utopia separated from the political state, and this is vividly brought out in the character Prospero — maybe whom we can call Shakespeare’s “new Prince”?

<sup>28</sup> Machiavelli’s association with evil is a common theme in the Elizabethan period. For example, In Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta* we find the character Machiavel who introduces the villainous character of the play’s character who follows Machiavelli’s ideas. But it is also acknowledged that to even hate Machiavelli one must have to read him, indicating that it was widely read at that time. A detailed discussion of these ideas can be found in Edward Meyer’s text. Claude Lefort also discusses the problem of this association in introduction to his book on Machiavelli. see. Meyer (1897) also Lefort (2012)

is important to think about why this category becomes a dominant one. As we have discussed earlier, in philosophy, Descartes becomes a central figure, in responding to this problem of an infinite or “indefinite” world. He formalises the cogito and marks himself as the first modern philosopher. In this respect, we get the conception of the subject with Descartes. Is it then possible to draw a triangulation between Machiavelli, Shakespeare and Descartes? In the attempt to do the same, we are drawn into a difficult yet fascinating terrain which pushes us to ask further questions: is there a subject in Shakespeare, specifically a historical one? What is the relation between history and politics and is there a problem of Sovereignty in Shakespeare; whether the play-within-a play structure features in this relation and how? And further on... We might try, if not to give a definitive answer or solution to these difficult problems but to engage in this difficulty and understand the problems. Let us start from a modest ground, with understanding specifically the new concept of history.

### **History as a New Category**

History as we know it in its linear structure itself originated in history. This linearity was a Christian invention which incorporates or *sees* history not just as the past but as a sight of or from the point of view of the future. Karl Lowith notes that there is a Christian or a Judeo-Christian basis of history as proposed by several thinkers of a kind of philosophy of history. A new understanding of history comes up not from something that exists within history but as a radical *outside*. The outside is the vision of the future that does not remain encapsulated in the past. This vision was possible only because of a Christian vision of history. The Greeks, as we see from Polybius, saw history as circular. This indicates that time is just like seasons which repeat periodically. And so in this periodic movement there are rise and fall of great men too. So, there is nothing new in it and the studying of history ensures



that one learns from it and does not repeat the same mistakes as his earlier predecessors. Unlike this, the Christian conception considers the coming of Christ on earth as the point which breaks this circularity and further divides history into two parts: the *before*- starting from the creation of man with Adam and the *after* - which starts from the birth of Christ and ends with the Judgement Day when all mankind would be redeemed from the original sin. Lowith argues that the understanding of history or something like a philosophy of history may be a modern idea—Voltaire being the one who quotes/first uses the term ‘philosophy of history’ — but it has its root in Judaic and Christian faith. He notes, “philosophy of history is used to mean a systematic interpretation of universal history in accordance with a principle by which historical events and successions are unified and directed toward ultimate meaning” (1949:1). There is indeed the concept of history even in the Greeks but there is no meaning in it. For example, a chair in all its process of making has no meaning in itself, the meaning is *added* to it by finding its purpose such as sitting. Similarly, history can have meaning only when there is a point outside history or a fulfilment of history at this point. Lowith's contestation indicates a Judeo-Christian basis of all understanding of history after antiquity and the modern idea just remains as a *secularisation* of this and he cites examples like Marx and Hegel and even the seventeenth century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico. In this way any philosophy of history remains as a variation or alternate configuration of the universal history of Christianity. Although Lowith's project is interesting, in his method of analysis of different philosophies of history what remains missing is the category of ‘modern’. There is a specific denial of modernity as a category, as the irrational basis of modernity because it cannot be founded on any ground. The concept of secularization shows such an irrational basis. If we agree on the category of modern and accept Lowith's conception, then we can conclude that modernity rests on a false consciousness. The

continuation of the Christian form substantiates such a false consciousness. Any vision of the future or hope then falls short and the rational way may be to go back to the Greek idea which has no place for hope. It can be said, this way Lowith stands as a stoic though he does not agree to such an accusation. Various problems arise from Lowith's idea: one such problem is the question of *what* is that which continues from the Christians to the moderns? Is it a specific substance which has been deprived of its religious significations and made into a secularised modern idea? And further, was this transformation totally one sided? To elaborate- were the moderns responsible for such a change and Christianity always remained outside such a transformation? Blumenberg posits such questions for Lowith<sup>29</sup>. We may

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<sup>29</sup> The concept of "secularisation" that Lowith mobilises to critique modernity, is at the heart of the debate between Lowith and Blumenberg. For Blumenberg the origin of secularisation relates to the expropriation of the ecclesiastical property to public property, or for the people, since the Peace of Westphalia. In this sense, there is a legal use of the term. However, this move was done by the Church itself. Further, the modern notions which Lowith relates to the original theological meaning (the idea of equality being related to the idea of all being equal in front of God, or political revolution in Marxist sense relating to the Kingdom of God etc ), are created in modernity itself. It is that Theology uses these modern terms and relates them to the concepts in religion. This means that secularisation is also historical. He explains this as a historical change in the meaning of redemption or second coming of Christ. The Bible prop[osed] that with the second coming of Chgrist, every Christian subject would be saved. So there was a hope and eagerness or waiting for the Judgement Day to come, as if it would come any moment. The annihilation of the world was just a step away. But as we know, historically this never happened, and this led to a problem. The Church Fathers esp[ecially] Tertullian then proposed an alternate version of the Judgement Day and the notion of judgement. This new idea meant that everyone would not be saved but everyone's sins and virtues would be measured accordingly. So, salvation was not guaranteed to each and every Christian subject. The hope associated with Judgement Day was soon changed to fear. In this way theology itself undergoes an effect of history. Similarly, the modern ideas which were developed historically were transposed with Christian ideas, and hence the appropriation is the other way round. Modern world can claim its legitimacy. On a different note, for Blumenberg there are no eternal questions like that of meaning. Each period can choose its own relevant questions and not share the burden to answer the earlier questions. The question of meaning, that Lowith says is impossible to think of without theology, is for Blumenberg not a relevant question in modernity. For him the important question is that of "making." In this sense the modern man wants to *make* history and not look for its meaning. See. "Secularization': Critique of a Category of Historical Illegitimacy (1964)." in Blumenberg, 2020: 53-82

further ask, along with the question of modernity- why does history become such an important object of study and in a way different from the Greeks and even Christians?

To address such a problem, we must in unison with Jacob Taubes accept a radical change which makes us rethink our position in the universe, which is the shift from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican world system<sup>30</sup>. Taubes argues that modern Theology must accept this change and rethink its basis. Copernicanism proposes the change in position of the earth from the centre and assigns the position to the Sun. Although the Copernican revolution conforms to a world order or a system which is well-ordered, there are traces of an universe without any structure — and this can be extrapolated— within the Copernican understanding itself. Later, Galileo becomes the *name* of the idea of such an universe, an infinite one without any structure<sup>31</sup>. So, the shift from Ptolemaic to the Copernican is not just about a shift in position of the earth but also a proposition for a world without structure and hence any form of hierarchy. Thus shift had profound implications, not in the sense of a direct cause-effect relation as if everything changed with this new cosmology but the theory also confirms a general change in man's attitude about his own position in the cosmos, which is quite relevant as we see in many philosophers and scientists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century the thought about an indefinite universe. It may be considered as a kind of parallel thinking at a point of time where the change in one field justifies the change in another, as in, they go hand in hand. In theology, this implies that the earlier distinction between Heaven and the Earth on which it bases itself no longer exists. Augustine made a distinction between *Civitas Dei*, the

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<sup>30</sup> see. Taubes, 'Dialectic and Analogy (1954)'. 2009: 165-176

<sup>31</sup> What is interesting is that if such an idea of the world is an epistemological break, then it is also necessary to ask whether anyone can constitute an epistemological break or are we always before or after an epistemological break. For Canguilhem, Galileo did not speak the true, he resided in the true. See. Francois Regnault, 'Thought of the Prince' in Hallward, 2012: 243)

city of God and *Civitas terrena*, the City of man. This distinction also helped in the conception of history. The foundations of the Church were threatened by the chiliastic prophecy of the Apocalypse of John, that paradise will occur on earth prior to the Judgement Day. Augustine's interpretation of history saves this by claiming that Christ's kingdom cannot be expected and the "thousand years" mark the reign of the Church and the saints. So the world history or the history of man becomes irrelevant after Christ. The importance is placed on the journey of the soul in the *Civitas Dei*, and so earthly journey remains as a transitory period. Cain becomes the symbol of world history attaining a creaturely status<sup>32</sup> and hence *Civitas terrena*, while Abel remains as the symbol of *Civitas Dei*.

In theology, this interpretation of history is radically challenged by Joachim of Fiore, who divides world history not into a before and an after but into a triad, in relation to the Holy Trinity: from Adam to Christ as the time of the Father; from Christ to "now" (around 1200 AD when Joachim writes) as the time of the Son; and from "now" to the future as the time of the Holy Ghost. In this way, the *imago trinitatis* of Christian theology turns into a historical process. The periods of history are marked by three persons of the trinity, and there also is a unity of the three. Joachim further marks these stages of history as levels of cognition which moves through time, from *scientia* or knowledge in the first stage through *sapientia ex parte* (wisdom in part) to the *plenitudo intellectus* or full understanding in the third. Joachim's interpretation has a strong correspondence to the new cosmology after Copernicus. The *unity* and yet the separation of the three indicates that history is unified together in the world, as one flowing into the other. History must then become a category for thought, with the

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<sup>32</sup> The creaturely status of man has also been noted by Benjamin, in reference to the tragedy of the baroque.

transformation of the substance into *process*.<sup>33</sup> From Augustine, but especially with Thomas Aquinas formalisation, the principle of *analogia entis* remains as a foundation of Catholic theology. But an analogic relation requires a distinction between objects, here Heaven and Earth, a separation that allows for such a relation. The Copernican revolution challenges this separation and as Taubes points out that after the Copernican revolution, any theology that bases itself on the principle of analogy can only remain just as a metaphor. Theology must be rethought and the new principle which must found theology is the principle of dialectics, and we find this in theologians like Karl Barthes. Not going into the depths of theology, what proves to be important for us is the notion of history, which stands in corollary with such a worldview and it is essential to note that dialectics as a *process* replaces *analogia* as a *substance*. It becomes a function and so history becomes an essential category with modernity. Resonances of Jaochim's idea of history can be found in Hegel in the movement of the Spirit or consciousness through time like Jaochim's levels of cognition. The correspondence between a new cosmology and a new theology shows us how history becomes so crucial. This importance of history can very well be seen within theatre, which we will try to understand. History or an understanding of history becomes the basis to understand the new theatre of that time and finally someone like Shakespeare, and also acts as a distinguishing factor from Ancient tragedy.

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<sup>33</sup> A similar understanding of the change from substance into process is provided by Hannah Arendt. This possibility of a transformation is precisely a modern phenomenon and the further developments in science, like the possibility to think that matter can be transformed into energy (Like in Einstein's famous formulation) can be linked to such a thinking of change which happens earlier. Arendt (2018, 262-267)

## **The New Tragedy: history as a basis?**

What we are simply trying to say is that a new conception of the world demands a new form of tragedy. Tragedy which existed in Greece with a closed world view cannot exist after the world has opened up to something like the infinite. Similar to the correspondence between a new theology with the new world view, there is a necessity to think of a new form of tragedy because tragedy which involves man cannot remain the same when the position of man is changed with the new cosmology.

Myths provided the basis of Ancient tragedy, though Benjamin refutes this direct connection between myth and tragedy. In his *Origin of German tragic Drama*, he acknowledges that myth is a factor in tragedy but does not directly influence as a matter of content. He argues that myth is a foundation for tragedy only when tragedy is moving away from myth. The beginning of tragedy, for him, marks an epochal transformation of a constellation constituted by myth to a new constellation which has a value of *truth*. In this way the death of Socrates is a crucial point in history as his death marks the beginning of tragedy. So the one who condemns theatre also becomes the one for whom theatre survives. The trial of Socrates is witnessed by the community and through it, a new community is formed based on the sacrifice. The chorus of the tragedy stands for the witness and any trial reimagines the structure of tragedy and vice versa. The martyr maintains the silence before gods, a silence not as an inability to speak or an interruption in speech but that which puts him on a higher pedestal than that of gods. Benjamin's reading of tragedy then infuses history even into the mythical structure of the Greek world. This reciprocates his conception of history and also the essentiality of truth rather than knowledge, and how truth can only be revealed through

the understanding of a given constellation<sup>34</sup>. Myth stands just as a system of knowledge, and the philosopher's task is to separate it from such a system and make the importance of truth of an idea visible. So, something like the fate drama is also marked in history but history does not become a factor regarding the tragedy's content. The modern tragedy, according to him, changes the space of the trial into the courtroom and so, the Sovereign becomes the core of the modern *trauerspiel*. Such a change signifies the loss of the cosmic order relevant in Greeks, and the stage becomes the earthly stage of history deprived of any cosmic significance. The courtroom ensures that the significance of a singularly important character is lost. Courtroom is a space which shows a set of relations between different characters, but it is finally in *trauerspiel* that the King becomes the sacrificial hero, a tyrant-martyr, which also has to do with historical content as Sovereign is the one who writes history<sup>35</sup>. Taking up from Rosensweig, he argues that a distinct feature that distinguishes modern tragedy from the ancients is the lack of any central character; many other characters, as distinct from each other in their uniqueness, become decisive in the movement of tragedy. Moreover, only proper historical subjects are suited to *Trauerspiel*.

In Shakespeare, we already find a separate category of historical dramas, apart from tragedies and comedies. While specific historical material- that of England and Rome is the content of

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<sup>34</sup> In the Epistemo-Critical Prologue of the book Benjamin introduces his difficult methodology. The use of certain metaphors can provide a glimpse to such an elusive method. He favours the constellation over a kind of a system, which is like a cobweb where truth might get caught by chance. The constellation on the other hand is like a mosaic where there is a beauty (understanding of beauty as truth is essential just like for Plato) in each part of it and also in the complete one as a relation established between each particular piece. Benjamin (2009, 27-29)

<sup>35</sup> Benjamin notes that according to Harsdorffer different types of theatre texts were suited for different types of classes of people, that is there is a correspondence between the form of the play and the estate. The pastoral was suited for the peasant, comedy for the middle class and *trauerspiel* along with the novel was for the prince. Ibid. 64.

the historical plays, Shakespeare's historical consciousness is not just restricted to the historic plays, but can also be found in tragedies and to a lesser extent but still present in comedies. "Time is out of joint", Agnes Heller notes in Shakespeare<sup>36</sup>. Providence has lost its meaning in Shakespeare and he secularises history to take away any assigned divine meaning from it. History moves according to its own internal logic. There is no cosmic time, only time on earth. Even Benjamin argues for this, that the cosmic setting of the Greeks no longer exists, the idea of transcendence in Christianity is also lost and man is now tied only to earth<sup>37</sup>. Man becomes the earthly *creature* devoid of any transcendental meaning which leads to a certain kind of tragedy. What the Histories and Tragedies show according to Heller is a confrontation between the legitimate King — the one who *naturally* possesses the qualities of being a King— and the King who is assigned the Throne by birth. Shakespearean drama is caught in this "double bind"<sup>38</sup>. The variation of this double bind can be seen between actions and morals. Taking this further, it also shows a distinction between the political and the historical. The political stands for all that man does to attain power and retain it whereas the historical shows what happens in the long run of history; one may win politically but lose historically. This idea of a 'long run of history' or something that History can *do* to people is what Jan Kott calls "the Grand Mechanism of history". The Ancients were guided by Fate, now we have a Grand Mechanism of history which crushes not only Kings but also intriguers and

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<sup>36</sup> Heller's book carries the same title. (2002)

<sup>37</sup> This impossibility of any transcendental substance becomes an essence of tragedy. Devoid of the Heavens man is reduced to his *creaturely* status.

<sup>38</sup> In another text, Heller notes that this double bind is specific to modernity. The modern man has no fixed foundation but only freedom which cannot be a substantive support. What this leads to is a kind of double bind, where man is caught up between the *two*. On one hand we see a kind of Romantic approach towards this problem, while on the other a technologically motivated one. see. 'The Three Logics of Modernity and the Double Bind of the Modern Imagination' Heller (2011, 141-158)



allies, all are “cogs of Grand Mechanism” (Kott, 1964: 34). In such a case history becomes such a strong force that it crushes all under it, there is no one specific whom it affects. An important distinction is visible with respect to the ancient drama of fate, where the ancient hero was bound by Fate declared by the Oracle. For the Ancient hero it is not possible to escape it and the conflict is made visible in the tragedy. Though Grand Mechanism appears as a necessity like Fate, it is not tied to the individual hero. There is no sacrificial hero whose death brings back the stability of the community like we see in *Oedipus Rex*, where the plague sent by Apollo in Thebes is bound to continue as long as the actual murderer of Laius, the former King, is not discovered. This discovery and Oedipus’ punishment finally resolves the crisis<sup>39</sup>. In *Antigone*, the conflict arises between Creon and Antigone, between the State and the Family, regarding the burial of Polyneices<sup>40</sup>. The death of Antigone brings back the stability of the State which stands as beyond and greater than the family.

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<sup>39</sup> In Schelling’s reading of the tragedy of Oedipus the tragic moment precisely lies not in the realisation of man’s incapacity under Fate which decides things for men, but the assertion of freedom even in this moment of complete unfreedom. So, what makes Oedipus a tragedy is the realisation but most importantly when Oedipus punishes himself and asserts his freedom in this process by blinding himself. See, Szondi (2002, 7-10)

<sup>40</sup> This is Hegel’s reading of tragedy in *Phenomenology*. For a brief discussion of the idea see. Ibid. 15-22. An interesting reading is done by Kierkegaard with the consideration of what the play Antigone would have been had it been a modern one or what is “ancient tragedy’s reflection on the modern”. If the Ancient tragedy is based on the category of guilt—which may be dialectical that is Antigone buries her brother but the guilt of Oedipus runs through the family, so there is a dialectic between the guilt and the particular subject; or the guilt may be personal, where Antigone realises the incapacity to completely master nature—the modern tragedy has the category of anxiety. It is through anxiety that the subject approaches sorrow and assimilates it in a constant becoming, which is also has a double function, that is either a moment of discovery, that constantly touches and by figuring it moves around the sorrow; Or anxiety is sudden regarding the whole sorrow in *here and now* such that it is overcome. In this way, Antigone is mortally in love with her tragic condition. Another aspect of Kierkegaard’s reading is fascinating and this in a way relates to something like a *renaissance*, though he does not mention the term. This is how he argues that every society demands a renewal, a kind of “rebirth” which allows it to work within its own productivity but also rejuvenates it. ‘Ancient Tragedy’s Reflection in the Modern’ in Kierkegaard (1992)

This is not the case in Shakespeare, although the Tragedies and Histories bear the specific name of the hero, the names themselves are very common, especially with regard to the Histories. What this delivers is a kind of anonymity through the intervention of the proper name but through repetition and common use. Although proper names, the commonality of it shifts the specificity of the hero with regard to fate and brings History which acts *equally for all*. This is quite relevant in *Richard III*, as mentioned by Kott.

*Queen Margaret.* I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;  
I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:  
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;  
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard kill'd him.

*Duchess of York.* I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him;  
I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.

.....  
*Queen Margaret.* Thy Edward he is dead, that kill'd my Edward;  
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;  
Young York he is but boot, because both they  
Match'd not the high perfection of my loss.  
Thy Clarence he is dead that stabb'd my Edward,  
And the beholders of this frantic play,  
Th' adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,  
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.

(*Richard III*, IV, 4)

If man is now no more bound to fate he is left with his actions. The actions must determine or even create a possibility for the future. It is no more the situation that the actions do not matter, because of the dominance of Fate. Man can try to write his own destiny and we must recognise that this is a modern idea. The destruction of Heavens and hierarchy along with it does provide a situation of formal equality. Any fixed position of man is no more valid and one can then think and work differently and not on the basis of a specific identity. E. M. W. Tillyard disagrees with such a *new* conception and in *The Elizabethan World Picture* tries to

show how the earlier Christian idea is still present in the Elizabethan Drama. He bases this concept of continuity by showing how the Christian notions tied along with the Platonic ideas lead to the idea of a “chain of being”<sup>41</sup>. This idea of a chain of being continues even in the Elizabethan period. The chain of being considers a movement of man from his fixed position, in this schema the positions of angels are fixed in celestial hierarchy but not of man. Such a movement then necessitates that man is able to transcend his own conditions. How is that even possible in a Christian world with a separation between the world and the Heavens? In consideration of the structure of a chain of being, there remains latent an idea of a movement but it is encapsulated with the further imposition of a hierarchical structure. Tillyward denies such latency and stands for a continuation of the Christian idea in the Elizabethan period. Moreover, it is interesting to note that this kind of argument for a continuation of the Old tradition also recognises that there is a break in history. To put it simply, the necessity for an argument in favour of the old acknowledges that there must have been a break and hence it becomes important to show that there have been none. In partial agreement with Tillyward, Fanco Moretti argues for a sociological understanding of the Elizabethan Drama<sup>42</sup>. He argues with Tillyward to the extent that there may not have been any concrete change during the Elizabethan period but the dramas act as a precursor to the change, with regard to

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<sup>41</sup> The specific term “chain of being” was coined by Arthur Lovejoy whose book—in which he introduces his conception of a history of ideas— bears the same name. Tillyard mentions his debt to Lovejoy in his book, though Tillyward’s specific interest lies in how the chain of being is a Christian idea with Platonic modifications or additions. This further indicates that the use of such conceptions reflected in the plays of Shakespeare or poetry of Milton assumes that the Christian idea continues even *after* the Renaissance. These references thus become crucial for Tillyard to show that it is the continuity of the older Christian idea and the denial of any *break* with the Medieval. (1959)

<sup>42</sup> Moretti’s reading remains sociological because he attempts to trace what must have been the possible relation between the tragedies in Elizabethan period and the social structure or society. So, he goes back not just to Shakespeare but also references through which he might have borrowed, most importantly *Gorboduc*, which acts as a precursor to *King Lear*. (1988, 42-82)

Sovereignty. Sovereignty does not fall during this period or the hierarchy along with it but in the dramas there is a “deconsecration of the sovereignty” which provides the ground for the final fall. These dramas then become allegorical in the way that history is also allegorical, to take from Benjamin. Here, it is quite clear to see a certain link between Moretti and Kott through this conception of a relation between history and sovereignty.

Kott places an importance on History while Moretti gives the power to the people and makes tragedy the ground for creation of such a people. Moretti distinguishes himself from both Hegel and Goldmann in their understanding of tragedy. For Hegel, modern tragedy attempts for a firm and constituent character; the hero is caught up in his one sided particularity and hence cannot reconcile with the universality, thus leading to a tragic situation, conflict and finally end. In Goldmann’s understanding the hero demands for a totality but is unable to do so. We find in Goldmann a variation of the Hegelian thesis, yet opposed to it. According to Moretti, Shakespearean tragedy is the place where both of these theses meet. The Shakespearean hero demands both but they remain unreconciled and hence split. These forces try to fight against each other but there is no victory. What Hegel calls the “particularity” and Goldmann calls “totality”, Moretti calls them “will” and “reason”. What is then essential for Moretti is not the conflict between characters and also the world but the conflict within them, which goes on through the play. Moreover, he places the possibility of tragedy in the new historical moment where the *new prince* enters into the stage of history. Tragedies also mark that phase in History where the feudal order cannot sustain itself and we see the rise of an absolute monarch. Tragedy shows that the decision of the King is what constitutes the universe now and here we have a strong echo of Carl Schmitt but what tragedy actually does

culturally according to Moretti is that it sides with the people and shows a certain kind of prelude to the fall of the King.

In this respect it seems that Moretti's idea of tragedy clearly correlates to Mazzotta's reading of *The Tempest*. Mazzotta proposes that in *Tempest*, we find the constitution of a new world and he places Shakespeare along with Bacon and Campanella in their imagining of utopia. As discussed earlier these writers then belong to the same tradition of what Mazzotta calls "cosmopoiesis" and further stand against Machiavelli's idea that it is possible to gain power through deception. In *Tempest*, we find Prospero, the Duke of Milan stripped of his power by his brother, Antonio. Along with his daughter Miranda he is sent off to an island and using magic controls "beastly creatures" like Caliban and Ariel. He seeks revenge and causes a shipwreck, but what is interesting is that he finally gives up his power, sets Ariel free and breaks his staff. There are reflections about this even in the drama, where he vows to do this once his goal is accomplished. He says, "I'll break my staff," ( Act 5, Scene 1)

In this way he confronts Machiavelli though initially siding with him. The conjuring of the new world has a strong basis in Pico Della Mirandello's philosophy, where he claims that man is freer than the angels as he does not have a fixed position like the angels: he can freely do things and move in the chain of being; in such a situation the man is only what he makes and then this must be made from nothing. Prospero does the same in making the island his new world. There are strong correlations with Machiavelli in this. For Mazzotta, Prospero does indeed construct a Machiavellian world using magic but he takes a step further to give up this world, because he realises that if man conjures a world from nothing then he himself is nothing. So, through this realisation which we find at the end of the play, Shakespeare indeed shows the interdependence of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*.

## Shakespeare and Machiavelli: in betweenness and ambiguity

In this regard Shakespeare does stand in close relation with Machiavelli. The question that concerns Machiavelli is how to begin from *nothing*. In Althusser's reading of Machiavelli this remains a central problem. Machiavelli himself is confronted with a real problem that is the unity of Italy. He argues that for the unity of the Nation as a nation state or rather a state apparatus there is the necessity of a New Prince who is also a New Principality. This prince has never existed before and hence the Prince must become or be made? The prince is not a complete ideal because Machiavelli goes back to history to extract the name Cesare Borgia, who could have been one and in *The Prince* we find innumerable instances about Cesare Borgia. Similar to Cesare Borgia, who did not have any legitimacy for being the King but was just a private citizen, the Prince has no name and no place, any private citizen who has *virtú* in himself and *fortuna* by his side can become the New Prince: the prince is then anonymous. What is interesting is that the Prince is not a tyrant and Machiavelli strongly attacks the tyrant. Machiavelli discusses about the circular motion of history, where there is a tyrant who oppresses people and the nobles use this situation to make the tyrant fall and then they themselves rise to power leading to aristocracy; then the nobles oppress the people and the people revolt and there is a temporary moment of democracy but as people themselves are fickle minded such form of a state cannot be sustained and then they seek for a ruler and then there is tyranny again. There must be an interruption in this cyclical mode of history where different forms of governance come and go. What Machiavelli contends for is not a government but a State and it must *endure*, so he is concerned about the *duration* of the State. This is possible only through Law though not just the Law is not sufficient. It requires the army and the people. He denotes these three State apparatuses. The first being the coercive state apparatus that is the army, the second the ideological state apparatus of Law and third,

the use of people. He obviously places a major importance on the people taking their side against the nobles as it is better to side with the oppressed rather than the one who can become an oppressor. One must side with the people also because they are the most essential for the New Prince. But this does not make him a republican. Against Rousseau's republican reading of Machiavelli, Althusser takes a position that he stands both as republican and also an Absolutist. The *Discourses on Livy* and *the Prince* show these two aspects. Finally, though there is essentiality of the people, it is finally the solitary Prince who can unite the State. And so, Machiavelli is revolutionary but utopian, a categorization that Althusser borrows from Gramsci, for whom *The Prince* is a manifesto marking a break from the old order of feudalism to the Absolute monarch, which stands as a transition to the modern state. He is utopian because, in Marxist paradigm, it is the people or the workers who bring about change for themselves and do not rely on a *solitary* figure.

Further, the ambiguity present in Machiavelli seems to be a conscious one as he stands *in between* the two periods, as in a transition. This means the terms such as republican or absolutist come after him. To put it in a different way, he stands in between the feudal order and the absolute monarch. This kind of in-betweenness also allows a going back to history but not history as a form of noting down facts but thinking of a new theory of history itself. Going back to ancient Rome he does not derive from it the Renaissance humanist notions of beauty in fields of art but focuses on something which was much ignored, that is *politics*. History provides for Machiavelli a support but not as a given material which follows certain law<sup>43</sup>. Francois Regnault makes a distinction or rather shows a non-relation between

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<sup>43</sup> Regnault notes that there is a certain primitive historical materialism in Machiavelli which does not allow objects to be subsumed under the Law but object becomes the primacy through which new rules must be thought; a primacy over practice that it must determine theory like in readings of Marx. It is

Machiavelli and Descartes in their understanding of history and politics. The fixed point for Descartes is the Cogito and finally metaphysics allows the subsumption of empirical categories into a general model or rather laws. To use the a kind of mathematical denotations, we can formulate that for Descartes Nature or fortuna always provides us with either reflective situations that is

$xRx$  (the king is the king(for himself), and I must not judge him;

or symmetrical

$xRy$  implies  $yRx$  (the unjust prince has his throne in the same way as the unjust, then alas! — the just and the unjust are alike)

Cogito then must make these symmetrical situation into asymmetrical ( $xRy$  implies  $\sim(yRx)$ ) and then the difficulty of choice is made into a single decision

As is evident, Regnault shows by positing the Cartesian system against Descartes himself that such a situation finally ensures the status quo. Machiavelli, starting from nothing, takes history not as a model but instead as a reservoir for examples. This allows a materialist stand point. "In Machiavelli, it is materialism which makes it impossible the subsumption of examples under any rule and historicising it by employing it" (2012, 242). If history does not have a law it also indicates that it does not have any meaning. So, Machiavelli's confrontation with the Church may be read not just as against institutions that do not allow the possibility of a new politics but also because Christianity adds a definite meaning to history — that of redemption. At this juncture, we cannot but remind ourselves of Lowith-Blumenberg debate,

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not that Machiavelli is totally conscious of this or further invests to develop this point. His central problem remains a different one. Finally, what he lacks is the conception of dialectics.



where Blumenberg asserts that the so-called meaning in history and the over-ambitious "philosophies of history" was neither a necessary nor an inevitable one. For him, the experience of the empirical reality was extended or rather exaggerated into the formulation of a progress, by incorporating the faith about the future, thus searching for meaning which was not rational. The desire for a philosophy of history shows the question formulated was itself guided by an answer which was already given. So Blumenberg argues for asking questions for an epoch which are actually relevant and not just trying to establish a given answer.

Shakespeare in this light becomes an interesting object to think about. The History plays and the Tragedies of Shakespeare show an ambiguity. It is deprived of any meaning that can be substantially brought out of it. Agnes Heller indicated that there is no philosophy of history in Shakespeare that nothing is natural. Oracles do not deliver a declaration, all curses do not work but some do. Shakespeare removes the Divine presence from history and makes life into "tale told by an idiot signifying nothing"<sup>44</sup>.

Shakespeare's history does not have any grand vision, nothing is fixed. There are contingencies and irregularities. There is an unpredictability of history and yet there is a Shakespearean view about history. Although there is no overarching meaning in history, one can still learn things from it and in this way he comes very close to Machiavelli. His history plays constitute two main categories, the English and the Roman. The English Plays cover the year of Roses, but there is no linearity in it. In the Roman plays there is a sequential structure starting from *Coriolanus* in which plebeians rebel, then to *Julius Caesar* where he was killed

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<sup>44</sup>"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,/ Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,/ To the last syllable of recorded time;/ And all our yesterdays have lighted fools/ The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!/ 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." (*Macbeth*, Act 5, Scene 5)

by conspirators and the conspirators are chased away from Rome and killed and finally *Antony and Cleopatra*, where Octavius finally assumes the charge of Caesar. There is a finality, that of peace. This is also evident in the English Plays like Jan Kott mentions that at the end there is an empty stage and the dead characters indicating that earthly stage and the condition of man. Be it the sequential Roman plays or the English Plays, Shakespeare attempts to construct history and in this regard this is a possibility that there is no specific unity of time as many years are shown within minutes while a night takes a long time to pass. The mechanism does allow a construction of an irregularity but nonetheless remains essential. There are both things that are natural and things that are unnatural. One can possibly do what one tries as the actions get importance. Such is the realm of politics in Shakespeare according to Heller. While history may not be merciful, it remains as the Judge in the earthly stage with loss of the divine meaning or Providence. The conflict between the traditional and the non-traditional further shows that one is not willing to play the roles that they are assigned and one *desires* to move away. While tragedies and histories show a tragic end or impossibility to sustain such a transgression, comedies are different and allow such a possibility. The metaphorical ladders of history and politics merge in comedies.

### **Play within a Play: History and Making**

What we have tried to see is a relation between Shakespearean drama and history as a category. The importance of history is brought forward in a unique way in Schmitt's reading of Hamlet. He goes against both the overtly psychological interpretation of a play, which finally implies the free invention of an author, and this kind of reading becomes crucial after the German *Strum and Haupt*; and the historical reading of a play which assumes a direct relation between the play and the historical reality when it was written. In his reading of

Hamlet in *Hamlet Or Hecuba*, he specifies that Shakespeare was unlike the German "domestic worker" poets who wrote plays primarily as texts but Shakespearean plays had the primacy of being performed in front of a spectator which actually shared the same public space or historical reality of England at that time. So the play *Hamlet* was created because of a restriction on the free invention of the author by given historical reality. In this Schmitt assumes a position compatible with his idea of the political, about seriousness of history against the playfulness of art or aesthetics which in terms of the political translates into liberal democracy. There are references to contemporary history in *Hamlet*: mere *allusions* like the reference of the desert or true *mirrorings* like the case of the Earl of Essex. But what is important for Schmitt are the genuine intrusions from which he distinguishes the other two. The title of the text, *Hamlet or Hecuba: the intrusion of time into play*, indicates its importance. The two intrusions of historical time are the "taboo of the mother" and "the figure of the avenger". In *Hamlet*, we never get to know whether the mother is guilty or innocent, and this works out throughout the play. The ghost of Hamlet's father asks him to seek revenge by killing Claudius but not his mother, who should be left to her own conscience. We never know whether the mother planned the murder, took part in it or whether it was like the case we see in *Richard III* where the woman marries the murderer of her husband and father. Schmitt indicates that this ambiguity is because the mother, Gertrude, in *Hamlet*, had connections to Mary Stuart, the mother of King James who came to throne around 1603 after Elizabeth, when the play was performed. Mary's husband, James' father Lord Harry was killed by the Earl of Bothwell in February 1566 and Mary Stuart married the same Earl of Bothwell in May 1566. The taboo has context in the time and place where it was performed around 1600-1603 when a *dying* Elizabeth was awaiting a successor who would probably be King James. The case of Mary Stuart was a scandal known to the London public,

but Shakespeare's troop also received patronage from the Earls of Southampton and Essex who favoured King James as successor while Elizabeth was denying or delaying to name any. In such a situation it was difficult to portray the guilt of the mother while it was also difficult to remove this completely from the audience of London theatres. In these two aspects, Shakespeare kept it rather unclear, and so the separation of historical reality from art by a psychological or aesthetic representation. "The taboo of the queen is a powerful intrusion [*Einbruch*] of historical reality into Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Next to this taboo stands a second, still more powerful intrusion: the figure of the avenger into a reflective, self-conscious melancholic" (Schmitt, 2009:63). This indicates just like the historical reality of Mary, Queen of the Scots, the figure of King James intrudes into the play. Hamlet is then not completely subsumed by the *mask* of the character, but the historical reality persists. Other references are the confusion regarding the ghost of the father and James' book on Demonology and most importantly that James believed in the divine right of the king and a certain legitimate succession, which also appears in the particularity of the play<sup>45</sup>. King James was caught up between a Catholic mother and Protestant enemies, between intriguing courts and unruly nobles; a figure amidst a conflict. As was the figure of King James, such is Hamlet caught

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<sup>45</sup> King James' *Demonologie* seems to be an attempt by the new King to understand the existing conceptions regarding supernatural elements. What this also indicates is a variation in understanding according to the Catholic and Protestant conceptions which are in conflict in James. The text appears both as a theological and also political one, presenting ideas to inform people and also rules to persecute people who practice witchcraft and other forms of "dark magic". Donald Tyson, *The Demonology of King James I*, We must also note that a distinction was made between dark magic and white magic, that is magic which brings the soul closer to Divinity. Cornelius Agrippa becomes an important figure with this, showing how numbers or mathematical elements can be used for elevation of the soul. He too distinguishes between the two. What follows from this is a Hermetic tradition which includes Giordano Bruno and further John Dee and Robert Fludd in England whose influences remain significant for London. Yates, 2002

between situations, unable to take revenge and constantly philosophising the situation. As such there is a *Hamletization* of the avenger<sup>46</sup>.

This brings us back to the problem of myth in relation to tragedy. Schmitt relies on Benjamin's distinction between Tragedy and *trauerspiel*. While *trauerspiel* is embedded in history, a genuine tragedy must become a myth just like the ancient. The tragic core of the play is embedded in history such that it is possible for history to intrude as time within the play. History is the realm where seriousness is present as compared to the non-serious structure of the play. The structural part of the play that shows such a genuine intrusion is the play-within- a play sequence where he makes actors play the murder of his father implicating Claudius in Act III, the murder of Gonzano. The reference to Hecuba in the title shows a distinction between the two. Hamlet contemplates how the actor can cry for Hecuba, which is a fictional character, how they can feel for her and shed tears. The allusion to Hecuba by Schmitt distinguishes between play and tragedy. Just like Hecuba, a play does not have any historical contact and can completely be alienated from him. Shakespeare too is capable of making such plays but the reference to history makes Hamlet into a tragedy. Both the play and history are autonomous in themselves but the seriousness of history *intrudes* into the playfulness of the drama. Here Schmitt marks his differences also from the theological understanding of play like the world is God's play or the conception of *homo ludens* by Huizinga where it is for itself in an enclosed structure without any end result. The self-enclosed structure of the play opens up to history at moments. The relation between play and seriousness is not a dialectical one. What we can think of is a relation between the play

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<sup>46</sup> Schmitt argues that there is a necessity as a historical base for the hero to become a myth, like Hamlet. It must be noted that Schmitt makes a distinction between an ancient myth and modern one, which is explained further.

outside and within the theatre. Shakespeare's time marks a conception of the world as theatre, where people *can* play their roles. The London public also belongs to such a time and place. There is then a kind of *doubling*, which happened within the play *Hamlet* through the murder of Gonzago and the play *Hamlet* itself that happens and is viewed by the public which also share the world as play constituting the scandal of Mary and the avenger, King James.

This is the specificity of that time as an *in-between*. Voltaire calls Shakespeare a "drunken savage" and thus indicates that there is no proper formation of State which acts as a guiding force for the plays, unlike the plays of State that Corneille or Racine created, but Shakespeare is also not in the middle ages. The specific situation shows the importance of the public or people in a way that they saw the world itself as a theatre. The situation is both anterior and lateral to the State, as Carlo Galli in his reading of this text by Schmitt shows by placing it in the *Nomos of the Earth* period of Schmitt. What the given situation shows is an indecision on the part of King James regarding land and the sea, *Landhame* and *Seahame*<sup>47</sup>. Hamlet also indicates this situation and we finally know that it was not the Stuarts but merchants who opened up their ways to the sea. To relate this to Carl Schmitt in his conception of the political, we can clearly say that the state is then playful while exception marks the seriousness which in case of the play appears in the play-within-a play structure. The implications of this is obviously towards understanding of Hamlet as a modern myth and thus distinction must be made. Hamlet is not like an ancient myth which when performed, constitutes or acts as foundation for a new community but is a myth in the way that it is an object of collective memory, which marks the fate of Europe, the shift from land to the sea. Schmitt shows a relation between theatre and history, a contemporary reality, in an indirect

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<sup>47</sup> see Carlo Galli, 'Hamlet: Representation and the Concrete' in Hammill et al. 2012, 62-83

way or in a negative way through the two intrusions. As mentioned earlier this assumes that the world itself also becomes theatre in a way that no role is given to man and this specific problem may be speculated from earlier ideas. The theatre of the world retains itself but it does not continue as the fixed roles assigned to someone before but these roles can change as the theatre proceeds as there is no fixed position one occupies. The dismantling of the Heavens and the substance as Transcendence is lost. History for Schmitt is *transcendental* to the play but it is finally immanent in the world, so that it becomes the tragic core in the drama. In a different way, we can see that this consciousness remains not only on a historical level but enters the play as characters who refused to play their roles. Though this tendency is heightened in the modernist period with plays like Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in search of an author* or Genet's *Balcony*, the trace is present even in Shakespeare, where characters try finding their own roles which gives rise to conflict.

Lionel Abel's concept of metatheatre formalises such a problem. For Abel, Metatheatre is not just a structural device like the play-within-a play, but the whole drama can be defined as metatheatre. In discussing *Hamlet* he encounters a similar problem like Schmitt, that nothing specifically happened in it, there is no tragic force or motive of revenge. T.S. Eliot had already argued that Hamlet is defective as Tragedy, and Schmitt points out that Hamlet can be considered as tragedy only if the historical situation of King James is considered. Abel goes further to claim that *Hamlet* is not a tragedy at all but a metatheatre, which has aspects of theatricality within the play itself, and thus multiple types of theatres in a single play.

Abel's refutation of a play like Hamlet starts from the consideration of the effect it generates. Hamlet in that sense fails to generate a *catharsis*, though Abel does not use the term. For him one does not feel any tragic emotion after we watch Hamlet. There are echoes of Schmitt's

understanding in this about the inability of the play itself to generate only false emotion. This consideration of certain tragic emotion also incorporates and reflects an understanding of Tragedy in the sense of ancients. This is quite obvious from his references to Greek writers of tragedy like Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. These three authors are compared to each other — this Abel borrows from H. D. F. Kitto— the plays dealing with murder of Clytemnestra and Aegesthus by Orestes and Electra. In this comparison, Aeschylus stands as religious as the order to kill Clytemnestra comes from a god and so it does not shock the Greek audience; Sophocles ends with murder of Aegesthus and Clytemnestra is murdered before, Sophocles being the less religious type but this also leads to "weakening of the tragic climax". Euripides stands as more rational than Sophocles and allows the god Apollo to be judged. The crime committed by Clytemnestra and Aegesthus seem to be in the past and they become victims in the end. So the present murder becomes worse and there is no cosmic piety in it, making us horrified at the action. Abel suggests that such a comparison along with Hamlet would have been an insightful endeavour. It "casts a new light on the difficulties faced by Shakespeare when he set out to make a tragedy of a story so similar to the one Aeschylus had treated greatly, the less religious Sophocles handled subtly, and the skeptical Euripides reduced to violent melodrama" (Abel, 1969:43). Shakespeare fails to write tragedies and ends up making metatheatre, in which characters themselves become actors and playwrights. Let us take the case of Hamlet. In this play, according to Abel, Hamlet, Polonius, Claudius and the ghost are the playwrights of different kinds whereas Ophelia, Gertrude and Laertes are the actors. The ghost, as the playwright tries to make Hamlet act but Hamlet being a greater playwright refuses to become an actor and instead dramatises other characters like Ophelia and Gertrude. Polonius tries to dramatise Ophelia and Laertes but he is not a strong playwright, so Ophelia fails to play her character well and finally ends up



unable to act, caught up between instructions of both her father and Hamlet. Polonius fails to be a good dramatist and finally gets killed in Act III by Hamlet. Polonius also attempts to dramatise Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to kill Hamlet but as we know Hamlet takes over the situation and changes the orders of the decree while on Ship which finally ends up leading to their death instead. The strongest of the dramatists is death, who takes control of the situation at the end of the play. It seems as if it becomes like the ancient fate under which the hero submits. Hamlet, finally, gives up being the playwright and becomes an actor in death's play. This example illustrates the conception of metatheatre as a category of drama itself just as tragedies and comedies though the effect it is supposed to produce remains unclear.

Such a dismissal of tragedy and invention of a new category does indicate how, for Abel, the categorisation is based on the effect that form is supposed to produce. Comparisons with ancient tragedies also brings back the question whether tragedy is something proper only to the Greeks. And further if modern Tragedy is at all possible—through a new core or basis like history—or whether modern tragedies are only failed attempts to make tragedy. The essence of metatheatre is that the characters are themselves theatrical and try to theatricalise the situation. The characters are not tied to dramatisation of the playwright but they themselves attempt to become so. Metatheatre as a form starts with Shakespeare and the forms are not just those of defective tragedies but also comedies. What metatheatre shows is that life is already theatricalised, as a play, which can then be staged. Characters can understand their own theatricality and unlike tragedies be guided by the theatrical presence of something else. This indicates an awareness of one's own situation and possibility to move away from it. This presumes that situations must be *thought of* and not merely observed. It can be said that this is a kind of modern consciousness being tied to the play and also to life, starting from Shakespeare: a possibility of change and a movement from one's situation also

indicates *making* within the given situation itself. What is it if not *making* of characters themselves attempt to be playwrights? Though the basis of such a making may be tied to earlier forms like myths or legends, the conception of making arises as something new, something possible only in a world rid of celestial hierarchies. Let us consider certain examples from Shakespearean characters mentioned by Heller. Though she does not argue for something like a metatheatre, the confrontation between old and new is visible as one willing to get rid of one's assigned role. Let us listen to Falstaff, Juliet and Edmund.

Speaking about dying for honour Falstaff says,

Honour pricks me on. Yea, but how is honour prick me off when I come on? How then? Can honour set a leg? No. An arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in the word "honour"? What is that "honour"? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No...Honour is a mere scutcheon. And so ends my catechism

*(Henry IV, Act V, Scene 2)*

Juliet speaks on the balcony:

Tis but thy name that is my enemy.  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's a Montague? It's nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as sweet.  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for that name, which is not part of thee  
Take all myself.

*(Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene 1)*

And finally Edward says:

Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me?  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines  
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? With baseness, bastardy? Base, base?

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Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.

(*King Lear*, Act I, Scene 2)

All of these characters show a defiance against the old traditional order rendering it obsolete while considering something new. All of them refuse to play their traditional roles. Falstaff goes a step further in acting truly as a dramatist. The problem in Henry IV remains who would determine the fate of Prince Hal, whether it would be King Henry IV or Jack Falstaff. The scenes between Falstaff and the Prince are pure dramas in themselves. Abel goes to the extent of calling Falstaff a completely self-referential character who as a dramatist surpasses that of Shakespeare and can have his independent existence as such. This makes him an universal character similar to Don Quixote who becomes a playwright and imagines a new world considering the windmills as monsters and goes on a journey being a knight, similar to Hamlet in this aspect at least, who tries to be a dramatist creating his own situation and placing people in it and making them act<sup>48</sup>. Similarly in a supposed comedy we see the case of Prospero, as mentioned earlier, who in separating himself from the politics of the State

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<sup>48</sup> It is interesting to note a comparison between Hamlet and Don Quixote. Both of them can be called as two of the most famous characters in modern literature, to the extent of becoming a metaphor. Both of them try to deal with a situation based on their ideas, in a sense both of them act as characters having autonomy. But another aspect that separates them, is how Hamlet keeps intellectualising a situation without proper action, whereas Don Quixote acts according to what he believes in. Turgenev's reading provides a great insight here. One may further enquire whether Don Quixote should be seen as paired with Sancho Panza, both being together as a single character.

creates his theatre in an island using magic. He theatricalises other moments in the play too, such as when the Duke and his son are placed on the island and they do not know how to act but are finally made to act according to Prospero. *The Tempest* speaks not of a utopia but rather a "utopian event" through which the Duke is restored but the power is precisely magical, a power of thought and imagination. But Prospero finally gives up this power as he claims to have understood the essence of this world (as a dream, of which we are made of).

### **Curious Perspectives<sup>49</sup>**

To become a playwright, one must not be totally grasped into the situation but must be beyond it. Hamlet or Falstaff do not fit into their situations whereas Caliban puts us at ease in his situation but nonetheless he tries to surpass his own situation. Prospero dramatises his own play but finally he sees the world and decides to give up his power. What is this seeing of the world and going beyond one's situation? Can the situation be thought of as staying within the situation and yet going beyond it? Becoming a playwright and making one's play then makes it essential to view the situation from a point of view beyond it. We noted earlier that an Archimedean point becomes crucial for the conception of making and that itself is a modern phenomenon — the discovery of such a point. In other words the viewing from a point at a distance also brings in the question of perspective.

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<sup>49</sup> This term has been borrowed from the title of a chapter in Harries' *Infinity and Perspective*, though the material with which it dealt with is quite different from the given contexts but has the similar problem of perspective or *seeing*. Harries' focus remains as how perspective or an artistic technique which attempted to produce a fictional reality as if it was magic, was used by the Church for its own purpose. Like, the case of using anamorphosis. Anamorphosis in painting which requires an alternate point of view rather than the fixed eye of Alberti breaks the illusion that the painting is a reality in itself, thus exposing its fictional nature. Thus these move away from Alberti's assigned task to a technique like perspective and are indeed "curious perspectives".

Let us take examples from a different source<sup>50</sup>:

1. Archimedes: Give me a place to stand and I'll move the world
2. Descartes: Descartes: 'Archimedes demanded just one firm and immovable point in order to shift the entire earth; so I too can hope for great things if I manage to find just one thing, however slight, that is certain and unshakeable'.
3. Machiavelli: Nor I hope will it be considered presumptuous for a man of low and humble status to dare discuss and lay down the law about how princes should rule; because, just as men who are sketching the landscape put themselves down in the plain to study the nature of the mountains and the highlands, and to study the low-lying land they put themselves high on the mountains, so, to comprehend fully the nature of the people, one must be a prince, and to comprehend fully the nature of princes one must be an ordinary citizen'
4. Descartes: 'As for the rest, I am also not of the opinion of this author in what he says in the preface: [the preceding text follows]. For the crayon represents only those things that are seen at a distance, but the principal motives and actions of princes are often such particular circumstances that one can imagine them only if one is a prince oneself, or perhaps if one has been party to their secrets for a very long time.'

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<sup>50</sup> We take the specific quotes from Francois Regnault's text. Hallward (2012, 238). Our attempt however is to develop an alternate aspect exemplified by these writers *forced* to be in conversation with each other.

Archimedes' consideration demands a work on the world if such a position is found outside earth. This stays as a case of perspective, with regard that if such a point is found then it is not just possible to view it but to *move* the earth. This then is also a point of knowledge, indicating that if there is knowledge then there is possibility of change. With Descartes we find that he wants a metaphysical point, a fixed one, the one of the cogito but he himself refuses to do great things in a later letter to the princess Elizabeth where he discusses Machiavelli. So, if there is the assumption that only the prince can understand what he is doing, then this remains a certain defense of status quo as also discussed earlier. The cogito then works on equivocal situations, or makes univocal situations into equivocal (the just Prince and the unjust might be the same). The world or history remains from the point of view of the cogito only as a given world. What becomes important with Machiavelli is that he invokes the thought of a political subject by two moves: firstly, the consideration of the perspective of the Prince involves a consideration of knowledge and the perspective of the people involves a consideration of application. With these moves, we find a point of science or theory which understands through history but is not restricted to such an understanding but demands that this knowledge may be applied to the earth or history for a change in the situation. So, there is both a point of support, as a point of science and a point of application in the situation, in both Archimedes and Machiavelli. While in Descartes, there is only one point of view or support that is metaphysics. Francois Regnault concludes from such a reading that there is a science of politics in Machiavelli but only strategy in Descartes. There is then an unstructured gap between the two figures.

In Shakespearean tragedies, we find an understanding of history probably for a knowledge or a warning to Elizabeth as Heller mentions. But specifically with the conception of metatheatre there are these double points (or even more) that are possible within the play.

Being a playwright also indicates having a view of the situation, a certain knowledge of it which can further lead on to an attempt to move away from it: it succeeds with Prospero but fails with Caliban. Metatheatre then assumes a concept of perspective, which is not just a contemplative one but also an active one. When characters become playwright they show this point of application. Karsten Harries' reading of perspective through Nicholas of Cusa's understanding in *Learned Ignorance* brings across what Harries calls *principle of perspective*. To put it simply, this principle assumes that if perspective is a fixed point of view, the knowledge of such a view also provides an understanding that more such views are possible. This frees one from the rigidity of perspective as a *fixed* point. This, then requires a contemplation on one's condition and one's perspective. But if such a position is considered, humans are themselves incapable of truth, that is truth must reside with God, one must assume that one is incapable of such truth and in learning this ignorance one can comprehend the infinite although being in a finite condition. Descartes' cogito is supported by God, as his frequent references to Providence but also to the extent that he does not want his cogito to replace God, claiming that he is not Daedalus but this thread of Adriane was provided by God Himself. It is not an attempt here to show the religious connotations of cogito as cogito finally assumes itself as an independent point of support, as mentioned earlier, even if Descartes balances it with Providence. The point however remains that whether contemplation is the finality or the only way to go away from the troubles of modernity. Mazzotta's reading of Prospero shows such a tendency, while he posits Shakespeare against Machiavelli, *his* Prospero finally goes towards contemplation by giving up his books. Then *vita contemplativa* and *activa* go hand in hand. But what remains important with Prospero is that the point of view of contemplation is something finally realised. To put Mazzotta against himself, in *making* there is a contemplation, with regard to the distance assumed in

perspective. It's not that it is reached as a finality. It's the understanding of the world as a play itself, which can be changed according to one's own. This seems paradoxical, but the play then becomes a *closed* world with characters who have realised that they have no bounds, that the world is not hierarchical and they can become playwrights themselves.

There is a sense of perspective in Shakespearean plays but perspective, as a concrete technique in theatre, does not get realized in the Globe. Perspective both as an idea and also a technique is indebted to the conception of an infinite universe and we shall see the specific case of perspective theatres in Late English Renaissance with the work of Inigo Jones, especially his masques, a form which develops after Shakespeare though we see the element of masque in his last play, as a variation of a play-within-a play structure.



## Chapter 3.

### **Perspectival Construction and the Legitimacy of the Tradition: the masques of Inigo Jones**

The representative of Renaissance in the field of art and architecture in England is most certainly Inigo Jones. Though the English Renaissance, which is quite late compared to the Florentine one and its spread to other parts of Europe, is considered majorly to be in the field of literature, Shakespeare being the most famous name, the influences can also be seen in art and architecture. Inigo Jones, a joiner, is said to have gone to Italy and was influenced by Vincenzo Scamozzi, a student of Palladio. He finally comes back to England with these new found ideas and is funded by the Crown for construction of several buildings<sup>51</sup>. It is also argued that he brought Vitruvius to England, though this is debated and in the earlier chapter we echoed with Frances Yates' claim that Vitruvian influences can be seen even in public theatres before Jones, during Shakespeare's time. But what is rather more interesting for us, with special attention to theatre, is that Inigo Jones also produced masques, along with Ben Jonson and in later part of his life with other poets/writers mostly. Masques were already popular in England, and even in Shakespeare's *Tempest* we see a scene where Prospero constructs and conducts a masque. But Inigo Jones uses various techniques he learnt in Italy to innovate the existing form of masque. One of the innovations was regarding the space of

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<sup>51</sup> Summerson's book provides a brief but authoritative description of Jones' life and his work, and also situates him within the tradition of the Italian Renaissance, but drawing on the influences and biographical notes on his travels and associations. See. Summerson, 2000.

the masques. Earlier the space of the masques constituted the entire space of the courtroom, such that there would be in a space the real *presence* of both the actors in the masques and also the people, or the spectators. We may perhaps remind ourselves, though as a passing remark, that masque is a Medieval form of drama, and so the presence is a substantial category here. With Inigo Jones we see that the space of the masques is reduced to one side of the courtroom such that it becomes like a proscenium stage of the modern theatre, that is seen even in the Globe<sup>52</sup>. That is, he creates a separation between the space of the actors and that of the spectators. But further, Jones introduces the technique or perspective into these masques, such that the masques become something like a pictorial theatre or perspective theatre. As Frances Yates has pointed out, with Jones we find a clear shift from a theatre which prioritised the actors voice, and so we find a specific architectural design of the Globe, to a imagistic theatre where vision becomes the primary sense to be captured even to the extent of making theatre into a spectacle. This obviously brings us to a set of problems, regarding what perspective is and its implication; whether something that is a technique in painting is at all relevant to the theatre, and finally may be to the question of the spectator, if any one actually has a privileged vision in the space of the court. Furthermore, what is the relation of perspective to a new world view, and whether this is actually a “rebirth” of the earlier form that existed in Greece. These are just a few problems from a larger set of problems such a change in space brings forth. But before going into the problems encountered in thinking about such a shift let us start with the specificity of the masques and how the visual element of it becomes a problem for the poet. In concrete historical terms, let

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<sup>52</sup> We find the descriptions of these stage settings in E. K. Chambers’ study of the Elizabethan stage. If one compares the study with his study of the medieval stage, we understand how the forms of the masques are changed and the specificity of Jones’ innovation. See. *Elizabethan Stage Vol.2* (2009). As the form of the masques become more popular after Elizabeth, a more detailed study of the courtroom dramas can be found in Bentley’s work on the Jacobean and Caroline stage (1948-68)

us start with the quarrel between the poet and the architect, the famous quarrel between Ben Johnson and Inigo Jones.

### **From Mechanical Arts to Liberal Arts: a stand for intelligibility in Visual Field**

The origins of the quarrel between Ben Johnson and Inigo Jones is not accurately known. They were long-time collaborators in “inventing” masques at the Courts. Their first collaboration was with the *Masque of Blacknesse* in 1605 and ended on a bitter note in 1631 with *Love’s Triumph over Callipolis*. Johnson had published the text of the masque and put his name before Jones on the title page in the manner “The Inuentors. Ben Ionson. Inigo Jones”. This was something that had made Jones angry, but this was not merely because of any personalised way of getting more priority than the other but what can be said, as D.J. Gordon points out, as a difference in understanding of their forms of art, each thinking that their art is more important than the other. This brings us to the question of the “intellectual setting of the quarrel” (1949:156). So, each of them is criticising not a man but a theory and each one has their specific positions which can be seen from their texts. So, this debate indicates an important and larger debate in history and cannot be seen as just a place of gossip. We see the poet and the architect face to face with each other, each defending one’s position and attacking the other vis-a-vis their own positions. Let us consider the poet, Ben Johnson. He accused Inigo Jones of deriving things and copying from the Italians, and even called him mockingly “Vitruvius Jones”. What is however hidden in such mockery, and may be derived from other writings of Ben Johnson is how he considered the masque as a form. According to him, the masque has two elements: the soul which appeals to the understanding and the body that appeals to the senses. The soul is then the intellectual part of it whereas the body is the mechanical one. So, the text corresponds to the soul, hence it is the intellectual

part whereas the presentation or the visual manifestation is the body or that which is mechanical. So we easily understand the basis of his problem with Inigo Jones. Finally, his problem entails the problem of invention, which according to him is most important. Invention is something that has to be created by the intellect, the text being the act of *pure invention* and poetry is the most important aspect of any play or masque. This act of creation, as we have seen in earlier chapters, is already a characteristic of the renaissance, but Johnson denies the possibility of such an intellectual creation to the architect, here Inigo Jones. He claims that the act of creation or “making” or the Greek *poiesis*, as he specifically mentions, is the power of the poet. To that extent the poet is the *only* inventor. Further, he notes that in the “mechanical age” there is a reversal, it seems that the visual becomes the soul of the masque; and this is what he critiques that how can a mechanical form attempt to be the soul, something that only intellect can possibly try to make. This problem is also evident from the support on the sides regarding the debate, that is we notice that Inigo Jones remains on the winning side according to the general public, an indication of the prioritizing of the visual rather than the text, that is a certain desire for the spectacle. And in this respect Yates is quite right in saying that there is a noticeable shift from the Shakespearean plays to the masques, a shift from the text to the visual, from the actors’s theatre to the imagistic theatre<sup>53</sup>.

But let's take the debate from the side of Inigo Jones’ own position. After the end of the collaboration, Jones worked with Aurelian Townshend, a minor poet for the masque *Albion’s Triumph*. It tells the story of the King as the heir to the glories of the Roman empire and his

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<sup>53</sup> But this notion of shift has not been completely agreed. For example Orgell argues that the distinction between the oratorical; theatre and spectatorial theatre is not always valid. The spectatorial; theatre was also oratorical, because its main function was to move the audience in favour of the monarch. so, it was also a didactic theatre. Thus, the audience must not only see the depictions of the King/Queen but also hear actors speak about them. *The Shepherd's Paradise* is such an example.

union with Goddess Albano. It has quite detailed architectural designs, like a Roman atrium, then a forum, then a landscape of London, finally the town hall<sup>54</sup>. From the writings of Townshend we find a description of a scene.

at the foot of the pillasters, on each side, stood two Women, the one young in a watchet Robe looking vpwards, and on her head, a paire of Compass of gold, the poynts standing towards Heaven: the other more ancient, a of a venerable aspect, apparreled in tawney, looking downwards; in tone hand a long ruler, and in the other, a great paire of iron Compasse one poynt whereof, stood on the ground, and the other touched part the ruler. Above their heads, were fixt, compertiments of a new compostion, and in that over the first, was written *Theorica*, and over the second *Practica*, shewing that by these two, all works of Architecture, and Inginin have their perfection (Gordon, 1949:163)

What this shows is that the masque was not just for the glorification of the King but Jones' himself, such that the detailed architectural design could show his mastery, against Johnson's criticism. Further, the description from Townshend shows that there is a desire for the coming together of theory and practice. So Jones adds intelligibility to what Johnson called "mechanical arts." This is already present in Vitruvius who mentions in quite some detail that the architect must be well versed in a variety of liberal arts, and it seems that Jones maintains this position from his Italian predecessors. But what is also interesting is the specificity of *Theorica* and *Practica*: Theory must be young as always there must be newness in the principles on which the invention is made, must point upwards because theory must be universal and then become particular; Practice is old because it requires the old ways or techniques of doing things and looks downwards because it is through practice that the particular is created but must appeal to the universal. These can also be found in the title page of Scamozzi's *L'Idea della Archittura Universalle*, so the connections are obvious. Further, in

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<sup>54</sup> Nicoll did a wonderful task of collecting the materials of the Stuart masques, with the details of each production and also sketches of Jones' design both for the stage and also costumes. For all such references to the design of masques, in our text, we go back to Nicoll. See. Nicoll, 1939

the second masque of the Queen, *Tempe Restored*, which is also suspected to have been written by Jones himself we find a description of the proscenium stage. He says “I will goe to the picture it selfe, and indeed these shoves are nothing else but pictures with Light and Motion” (164). Thus, Jones claims for himself and the architect what had been denied by Johnson. The architect or the scenographer is the maker, having the capacity of invention. So, there is a shift in thinking of painting or architecture from the mechanical arts to the liberal arts, but what is unique, and this is itself a historical change with the renaissance, is the autonomy of the visual field as an area where creation is possible. The visual form must not depend on any given *text* and just be a representation but it becomes a *practice* where the form results from within the practice itself. But one must notice that to claim its autonomy Jones has to go for the conception of an intellect or rather thinking within the visual field. It does not mean that there is a separation between the two. Rather, Jones claims that in his scenography, within the visual form there is a possibility of thought. So, the masques can well start with the scenography and make scenography the foundation rather than depending greatly on the poet. Finally, it is his claim that his work is *art* or creation. But let us go again to Johnson’s refutation. We must again notice that Johnson claims that his poetry or poetry in general is art, while Jones’ visual designs, or rather visual forms are not. This is because Johnson *creates* while Jones *imitates*. The question however remains whether Johnson is against imitating *other* artists or has a problem with *imitation* itself. But imitation of what? We find that the only probable answer is nature.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The concept of imitation remains a central issue, not just in the Renaissance but throughout the history of Western Philosophy starting Plato. He confronts the artist regarding the problem of imitation only, as for him Idea remains the basis. However, he distinguishes between mimesis and methexis. While mimesis is an imitation of the idea in the phenomenal world, carrying its own defects, methexis is a taking part in the realm of Ideas that is establishing a relation among material things and the realm of Ideas, and bears a positive connotation. Therefore his problem with imitation, it is precisely not that which is imitated. In Aristotle’s conception, nature becomes essential as a basis

Starting with the Renaissance we see a glimpse of the issue brought up by Johnson, that is a kind of opposition between imitation and creation, although it does not acquire proper force. In modernism, mostly with the surrealists we found a complete affirmation of this proposition. Art becomes a complete negation of nature where anything natural is perhaps inexistent. In the Renaissance, however, it remained in an almost intermediary stage. In the field of visual arts, we find Alberti, who might be called as the one who developed a theory of art during the Renaissance, asking the artist to create only by imitating. And this he believes can be done only by the use of perspective. But creation of what? With the “device” of perspective, the painter creates a *historia*, a fable, by imitating the principles of nature. It is then essential to understand what is the relation between imitation and creation, in Alberti but also a relation dominating the whole of Renaissance, if we say that a period thinks of certain ideas. This relation and also a detail of the use of perspective can be found directly in Alberti’s *On Painting*. Moreover, it also derives a relation between perspective and conception of an infinite homogeneous space.

### **Alberti and Artificiality**

Alberti had immense influences during the Renaissance as we have seen that even in England thinkers like John Dee would refer to him as Master Alberti. Further while reading the Florentine Renaissance Burckhardt would call Alberti the “Renaissance Man”. Alberti formalises the technique of perspective in his book *On Painting*, first written in Latin in 1435 and then republished in Italian with some changes. The Italian version was meant specifically

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of that which is to be imitated. According to him, “human skill [technē] either completes what nature is incapable of completing or imitates nature.” Nature has dual characteristics, as that which is to be imitated and is therefore a principle based on which all forms of imitation must take place; and Nature is also dynamic and that which is moved towards completion only by the works of men. See. Blumenberg, 2020

for painters to learn the technique of perspective, which he describes in quite some detail. But the book is not merely an exposition of techniques but also acts like a book of art theory. The Latin version which is more detailed contains discussion of other arts like poetry and also more sections on mathematics. Although the Italian version is conceived for “common” artists, it has significant sections<sup>56</sup>. The cannot but think of a certain commonality of the form between this text and John Dee’s preface, as we had discussed earlier. In both these texts, the task is not just to lay down the principles to be followed for the work to be done, that is they are not principles to be followed *mechanically*. Rather, one must understand the conditions of applications of the principles and even the relevance of them. To that extent these texts also appeal to the intellect, and we find a certain complementariness of both theory and practice. Now, it is quite clear how Inigo Jones’ position goes back to Alberti and his arguments for the intelligibility of art can be found in Alberti’s book. Alberti’s project in this book can be simply put, as he himself claims, as an attempt to understand what beauty is and how that beauty can be represented by the artist, precisely by the use of this newly *found* technique of perspective, which he assigns to Brunelleschi and mentions him in the preface. We’ll come to this point regarding Brunelleschi’s invention later.

Beauty according to Alberti is inherent in nature and must be imitated by the artist and thus the artists must be trained in practices that allow her to rightly imitate nature. Alberti’s concept of beauty is rooted in the idea that there is an inherent and divinely ordained rationale

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<sup>56</sup> We must notice the use of vernacular in the Renaissance and also later with Descartes. The use of vernacular is very common at this time as a means of reaching the common people, and also for a glorification of the vernacular or the local. In this sense we can also think that this assumes that the idea can be understood by anyone who wants to, and that languages like Latin cannot be a barrier for this. This bases itself on a certain anthropological philosophy of natural equality or capacity. Dante’s *De vulgari eloquentia* is a remarkable example of this. In Descartes’ *Discourse*, too we find his use of French rather than Latin as he wanted to appeal to reason rather than to only those who were trained in Latin.



in nature as the ultimate source of standards in art. Thus, in the first book in *On Painting*, 'which is entirely mathematical, shows how this noble and beautiful art arises from roots within nature herself'. By the time he wrote his treatise on Architecture, *On the Art of Building*, over twenty years later, he was able to express his conviction in the form of a precise definition of beauty:

Beauty is a form of sympathy and consonance of the parts within a body, according to definite number, outline and position, as dictated by *concinnitas*, the absolute and fundamental rule of Nature.

*Concinnitas*, 'the spouse of the soul and of reason', arose when the three visual properties- number, outline (or shape) and position (or location)- manifested in an indissoluble harmony or proportional correspondence in the parts and in the whole, 'so that nothing may be added, taken away or altered, but for the worse'.

(Book IX, Chapter V)

This beauty in nature must be translated into the painting but this direct mediation is not possible. So there is need of perspective, an artificiality, and we must note that Alberti recognises this artificiality of the construction as he distinguishes between natural perspective, as developed in optics by Aristotle and the Medievals, and artificial perspective, what he calls the *costruzione legittima*. But nature in its reality is not actually imitated, and this is the specific moment that arrives with the Renaissance. Similar to Aristotle's notion of *natura naturans* (nature as a productive principle) Alberti considers that art can imitate nature by following its principles, but he does not consider the second aspect of Aristotle's notion of nature as *natura naturata* that is the produced form. Thus, he distances himself away from a certain completion of nature. Nature for Alberti becomes an object. So in trying to imitate the principles of this object, there is already a different way of seeing this object. To that extent the principles considered to be existing in nature are assigned by the subject or man, rather

than being pre-existent in nature. One such principle is a new understanding of nature as an infinite space. And this is what allows him to declare the absolute necessity of perspective. Nature is considered as infinite space and therefore can be translated into the picture frame as an infinite space. This is because the lines in perspectival construction can be extended to an infinite point where they are supposed to meet, this point being the Vanishing Point in the picture frame<sup>57</sup>. It further presupposes a height and a distance where the eye must be placed for this artificial construction to work, to properly *see*. We can easily notice that all of these developments are possible based on the primary position of vision being the most important of all senses, a position that Jones maintains and which is a reason for the famous quarrel. To justify this, Alberti mentions Aristotle and his developments in optics, but now an artificiality is necessary, to see the construction. The problem of artificiality thus brings into question the presupposition of nature being harmonious and so there is a certain ambiguity in Alberti, as nature is not pre-given now but is mediated through man. There is an immanent position in Alberti, for *this* perfection of the world is itself a new idea, a desire for immanence, a position which relies on the perfection in the world and not a lamentation regarding the world's imperfection when one sees the perfection of the Heavens. It's quite ironic that Galileo would later observe that the all perfect Heavens move. This desire is also tied to what the Copernican revolution would later claim as truth in the world, and not a negation of the world for a Christian truth.

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<sup>57</sup> Alberti's construction is a simpler form of the use of perspective. It shows in detail the construction of a single point perspective and in this way is easier to use. In such an arrangement, he also makes it into a tool of application. For our study, we use the specific case of single point linear perspective, but we must also acknowledge the existence of other complex forms of construction like the double point perspective, which has two vanishing points.

The artificiality in construction is also based on the consideration of man as the perfect being, and the measure of all things in the world. The connection to Vitruvius is obvious and so from Vitruvius we are also brought to the Stoic philosopher Protagoras, whom Alberti mentions, who said “Man is the scale and measure of all things.” This rediscovery of Protagoras, according to Karsten Harries, is also because man is left with no one but himself. Man is infinitely separated from God and has no possibility of knowing him<sup>58</sup>. Left on his own he himself becomes the measure of all things present, via a method of comparison. Man can know only himself and so by comparison with each other things are known and with respect to history accidents of man can be known only by comparison with other accidents. So this method is both spatial and temporal and also with regard to other characteristics like the colour of skin, etc<sup>59</sup>. With respect to painting it gets a spatial significance as the measurement necessary for *costruzione legittima* is *braccio*, which is almost 58 centimetres and corresponds to the length of a man’s arm. The height of the eye is then at an elevation of three *braccia* from the bottom of the picture frame. The position of the eye then centres man’s position in the infinite space, which makes him lose his own position. Man finally gets a

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<sup>58</sup> As Harries argues that this conception of infinite distance between man and God primarily comes up with Meister Eckhart, according to whom the analogic relation between man and God is no more possible because of this separation. Thus, no absolute measure is possible for any *creature*, any measure will only be comparative and this is possible only through a mode of self reflection. This conception will also be taken up by Nicholas of Cusa, who goes back to Protagoras in his *De Beryllo*. Harries assigns Cusanus this development of a comparative method and it is embedded in the notion that only by knowing oneself can one know others. With regard to the question of Absolute, that is God, it is only through one's ignorance that must be learnt to at least have a clearing in understanding God. (2001, 160-183)

<sup>59</sup> The challenge for Alberti is to represent the three-dimensional worlds in the plane surface. For him, painting is important because of this new challenge it poses but also because of the use of colour that it allows, which is not possible in sculpture. The variation of colours also becomes a tool for him to imitate the spherical surfaces where the colour is not constant but has shades based on the position of light. The specific colour is then comparatively used in reference to the positioning of the object.

fixed position, but this also gives a vision like that of Cyclops, a point that was already in discussion during the Renaissance with someone like Leonardo Da Vinci claiming the oppressive nature of the perspective<sup>60</sup>. Durer's painting on the use of perspective is like a symbolic representation of the oppressive and limiting power of perspective<sup>61</sup>. We shall try to elucidate this point with various readings of perspectives later. But it is essential at this point to note that man's position is reinstated by the measure of man himself, an artificiality, something like a groundless ground. This is because the very legitimacy of one's position is based on an artificiality created by the position itself. In other words, this artificiality and the construction in perspective has its parallel in the problem of freedom in modernity. Now, having no substantial grounding provided earlier by religion, where freedom is tied directly to the will of God, freedom is now based on freedom itself and no other ground.

The second aspect of the construction relates to the object to be constructed, that is the painting. Nature remains as the important factor in Alberti, and also the most beautiful and the artist must learn from it, but he must not just imitate it. Alberti uses the myth of Narcissus to elucidate metaphorically the being of a painting.

“For this reason, I say among my friends that Narcissus who was changed into a flower, according to the poets, was the inventor of painting. Since painting is already the flower of every art, the story of Narcissus is most to the point. What else can you call

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<sup>60</sup> Damisch notes this point, borrowing it from Martin Kemp, that in Da Vinci's *Treatise On Painting* we already have this notion. “the premonitory symptoms of a critical trope that has scarcely changed since that time, one that holds that *costruzione legittima* reduces the viewing subject to a kind of cyclops, and obliges the eye to remain at one fixed, indivisible point—in other words, obliges it to adopt a stance that has nothing in common with the effective conditions of perception, any more than it does with the goals of painting, as properly understood.” (1995,35)

<sup>61</sup> Albrecht Dürer's ‘Artist Drawing a Nude in Perspective’ provides a visual metaphor for this reductive nature of perspective. While on the window on the model's (the nude figure) side we find a detailed scene of the city and the sea, it is reduced to smaller objects that we find on the window on the artist's side, that is it is just a plant.

painting, but a similar embracing with art of what is presented on the surface of the water in the fountain?"

To call Narcissus the inventor of painting is to claim that painting is born out of a moment of self love. The painter, then, is like Narcissus who creates the painting, not just an imitation but his own reflection. And this is the optimistic side of the painter's story, what awaits her is not death like Narcissus but the pure act of creation, where the painting will be made similar to how Narcissus transforms into a flower. The painting thus captures both the moment of contemplation, a kind of reflection and also the moment of creation. Through this creation the painter becomes like a "second god", a creator or maker. This is finally the task of the painter; a fine painter must use the techniques available to him and the mathematical methods like *costruzione legittima* to create what Alberti calls *historia*, rather than colossal paintings. The term *historia* is roughly equivalent to what later academic theorists would call 'history painting', that is to say, a human narrative drawn from some significant secular or Christian story. Alberti's use may also include allegorical representations. The importance of *historia* comes up time and again in Book II which discusses the three main components of painting: circumscription, composition and the reception of light. *Historia* allows the painter to show her talent but the use of human figures in the situations also elucidates man's position in Nature. The making of *historia* signifies that the painting must have a fiction inbuilt in it, that is something new and not just a copy. It is a fiction as the painting itself has a narrative and the representation must be according to that. The earlier understanding of art had been in the imitation of nature, as it is perfect and also because it was made by Demiurge, in Plato, as the first imitator of Ideas who had exhausted all possible things to be created. Or in Christianity there was the notion of only God as creator of things and ours being the best possible world.

Then with Alberti, by his use of Protagoras's second god and the notion of *historia*, we find that the stakes lie not just in a mere imitation of nature but in claiming to be the creator of possible worlds through art, that is the worlds that God did not create. And this is an attempt for a *pure creation* just like God as if out of nothing. To that extent the painting becomes an enclosed world, made by man, reasserting his position in it. It is self enclosed and all perfect by the logic of the *concinnitas*, such that nothing can be added or subtracted. Man thus has the capacity to make new worlds through the object of art. We find world making in the field of the visual. But this new world still cannot claim its own novelty and hence attaches itself to a "tradition", which has been the problem of the Renaissance itself. In this respect nature becomes a way of justification, but the device of perspective must also *prove* itself, as that which allows both creation and "imitation." For this exposition we must go back to Brunelleschi.

### **Brunelleschi's invention and the Question of Truth in Painting**

The term *costruzione legittima* literally means the "correct perspective" as if to attach it to the value of science. But more specifically it suggests that this specific method of construction has a legal force attached to it, and in that respect it is a method of construction by law. This question of legitimacy may be seen in two aspects which are obviously tied: first, the model of perspective is the only legitimate way to reconstruct nature in the painting, two, the model itself struggles to prove its legitimacy. The first shows a direct assertion in the mode of ascribing a law to the painters; while the second stands on a shaky ground, where it is not yet a law but something intermediary between a desire to construct a model and law to legitimize such a construction, so that it is given an objective status like that of science. When Alberti writes his *Della Pittura* we know the method of perspective is already a well accepted

convention, and Alberti reasserts this formulation, by invoking the name of Brunelleschi, who was primarily an architect<sup>62</sup>. We will come to this relation between architecture and perspective in a while. What is, however crucial in this matter is to give perspective the force of a tradition, because the tradition justifies itself as a matter of something like a common sense. Moreover tradition does not struggle, like any new form must do, to prove its legitimacy. In this way, it may be accepted as an established method. What we find here is a double bind with which this given method works, to claim its newness but still adding it up to the tradition, being an older form. And this in a sense is the specificity of not only perspective but the Renaissance as such. We find a similar *struggle* in Manetti's text on Brunelleschi<sup>63</sup>. He claims that he was present with Brunelleschi during his famous experiments, which laid the foundations for formalising this method of perspective. Not going into the details of the experiment, what can however be extracted is the way of demonstration that the experiment holds. To give a brief background, Brunelleschi takes a square canvas, with a painting of the cathedral about 1 braccia in length and makes a hole in it. On the other side of this plate is the mirror with a hole. He faces backwards against the Florence Cathedral and sees through the hole, where the painting is reflected and when he removes the mirror he sees the actual physical building. This experiment thus shows the reduction of an exact physical space into

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<sup>62</sup> The figure of the architect is again essential here. Being an architect himself provides a certain form of legitimacy, as she is the one who is actually a master in construction. It also signifies that as architecture is based on a foundation and also a real material object of use, it can be used as a basis for further construction.

<sup>63</sup> In Vasari's *Lives*, specifically, *The Life of Paolo Uccelli*, we find that Manetti was the biographer of Brunelleschi and the one who was with him during the famous experiment of perspectival construction. Although the entire text of Manetti's biography is not available, the existing text gives insight into the experiment. And in this regard, he is also a witness to the experiment. Also see. Damisch: 1994, 58-73. Here Damisch compares the writings of Vasari, Manetti and also Filarete to show the variation in their view of Brunelleschi though all of them agree with him being the inventor. For Damisch Manetti's text provides the most important material for his reading.

the limits of a painting. He would further carry on a series of experiments to finally formalise his method. It can be understood from the description of such an experiment that like any experiment, it has the power of *demonstration*. The mirror *demonstrates* for anyone who looks into the hole. Although quite distinct from this, one may think of Galileo at this moment who would, around two centuries later, ask his friend, the famous Aristotelian philosopher and astronomer, Cesare Cremonini to look into the telescope. The similarity in both cases remains that *anyone* can place her eye in the hole and check for herself the validity of the procedure. To know the reality of the matter one must then use a *device* or a construction, the mirror in case of Brunelleschi and the telescope for Galileo, to understand the physical reality.

This aspect of demonstration through experimentation is a modern notion, and we will find its implications in a wider sense later on with Descartes. This matter was elucidated in an earlier chapter. However, what is specific with Manetti's description of the experiment is not just this capacity of demonstration. The validity of the construction must have other aspects associated with it, and in this matter it gains a certain legal force and attaches itself to the tradition. These elements of the legal procedure (and for that matter any legal procedure even now must have these elements) are the witness, the space, time and the name. The name is that of Brunelleschi and Manetti is the witness to the experiment; even anyone can be the witness herself by *repeating* the experiment. But another layer is added to support and ground this experiment, the name of the place Florence and the time that is sometime around the quattrocento. Thus, the actors in the experiment are situated in concrete history and it provides a grounding to the construction; putting it into record that an experiment like this happened in actual time and place with the actor and the spectator(witness) present in it, as if like the documentation of a theatre play. History is further evoked by the relation made



between Brunelleschi and the Greeks in the matter of this invention. As Manetti notes “either this is a rediscovery of the Greeks or his invention”<sup>64</sup>. However he is not much interested in this question and what remains essential for him is the validity of the procedure. The name Greek then serves to solidify this validity, *as if* Brunelleschi saves this technique from being lost into oblivion, and resurrects the Greek technique.

Damisch compares Brunelleschi’s invention to that of Thales' invention of geometry, as noted by both Kant and Husserl, and in this sense his book *The Origin of Perspective* maintains the similarity with Husserl’s essay on geometry. It's interesting to note that Brunelleschi’s construction is partially based on Thales’ theorem. Thales removes all empirical substance from objects and converts them into pure thoughts of figures and that is the origin of geometry. This also relates to the name, place and time for Thales, as it was for Brunelleschi. Diogenes had done the same work as Manetti would do<sup>65</sup>. Brunelleschi makes it possible for the empirical world to be demonstrated such that a perspectival construction is made which allows the three dimensional space to be made into the two dimensional space of a painting. In that sense, his invention remains original and quite unlike the Greeks, as Panofsky would also claim in a different way, by relating the notion of space of a time to that time’s artistic creation<sup>66</sup>. What Panofsky specifically notes is that this perspective proposes a

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid. 118-120

<sup>65</sup> Following Damisch, a parallel can be made between Manetti’s *Vita (Life of Brunelleschi)* and Diogenes' *Lives of Philosophers*, where he writes about Thales. But for legitimacy of origin of geometry we just have a name, that of Thales. Further, we understand that Thales is to be read as the one with whom geometry originates, because he makes geometry, which is a field based on propositions, self-evident. This means that it is released from its empirical reality and made into a theory. The given axioms and propositions thus become important.

<sup>66</sup> Panofsky derives this notion from the art historian Alois Riegl, for whom each period has specific will (*Kunstwollen*). Based on this can one read both the developments in art and culture and also that in science, as emerging out of a period and is only possible in that period. Also, for Panofsky the use of perspective in the Renaissance corresponds to a misunderstanding of Euclid’s Eighth axiom which

new conception of space and does not just mimic the understanding of a form of space already given. In this way it is not just representative of the notion of space at the time but it itself *makes* that space. But does this mean what Brunelleschi discovered or invented is just a technique in the service of the painter? In what sense does this *technique* actually help science in the form of geometry as Panofsky suggests? With this regard, how do we understand the relation of these inventions with history, given that history is where these inventions take place — history is the place of origin; and in what capacity does a demonstration attain the status of an origin, which is an epistemological question.

These problems can be approached if we go by Damisch's contention regarding the origin of perspective: it is in theory that Brunelleschi's perspective stands as an origin. It is similar to Thales' inversion from empirical objects to objects of *thought*, which constitutes the originary moment for geometry. Likewise, in perspective there is a shift from the practical field to the field of theory and this way it is the origin. What Brunelleschi shows in his demonstration is not just the coincidence of the point of view and the vanishing point but also that the vanishing point acts as an eye. It looks back. But just like the real eye of the viewer the vanishing point is a fixed point. But both of these points, though fixed, assume that there exists an infinite number of points beyond these points as if infinity behind one's head, and thus any space can be infinitely extended. This is the originality of the demonstration and it claims a certain scientific truth. Thus perspective or its use is not a stylistic manner of the period but it clears the way for an idealization, or to use Husserl's words "horizon of

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states that "two objects of equal magnitude placed at unequal distances are not seen according to the ratio of their distances." But in contrast to this linear perspective takes the ratio of distances as a basis of construction. It served the purpose of representation on a two dimensional plane but in this way that it is dematerialised with the psychophysiological space of the real world. In contrast to this the Medieval *perspectiva naturalis* is more closer to Euclid's theorem as it does not go forward towards a reduction of real world into the plane of the painting. See. Panofsky, 1991: 27-36

ideality”, not just in the way of science. Husserl says that fine literature also has an ideal horizon in the sense that there is an objectivity associated with it, and every development points towards both the origin and this horizon. But what distinguishes literature from something like geometry is not only the structure but the meaning contained in it. For geometry, it is to have its meaning constituted within the structure itself in its objective nature while in literature the meaning is outside, it has to be gathered. Brunelleschi’s demonstration shows that the truth of the experiment can be demonstrated only if one chooses to *perform* it, one must stand at the exact place with the painting and the mirror. And in this sense truth has this objective nature, it belongs to *all*. But this truth is also historical in the way that it has its relation to history at every moment. Cezzane years later would claim for truth by destroying the painter’s use of perspective, and using colours instead of the perspectival construction to do so. This means that any situation participates in a history of truth, thus claiming to be truth for that given time. Moreover, only in theory does perspective propose a new kind of space on which Desargues and Abraham Bosse will work on to develop their projective geometries. Vasari’s text suggests the theoretical inclination of Brunelleschi, who even after perfecting this *method* worked on to demonstrate the truth. At Alberti’s time this was already a well formed discourse in the sense of its use in practical fields. The original meaning of the experiment was lost and it became a mere technique to be used. But the crucial aspect in the experiment is the relation of the object of painting to the question of theory and truth value attached to it. Truth in painting or truth of painting is then thinkable only as a subtraction from the object of painting such that this idealization also relates to the history of truth. We now understand how Inigo Jones’ debate with Ben Jonson has further roots, with regard to the “tradition”. Jones places himself on this tradition and shows how theory and practice are

both essential, and one cannot just claim that the painter is just someone who creates or imitates. There is always the factor of thought associated with it.

### **From Painting to Theatre, and ... architecture**

Although we have placed Inigo Jones in the tradition starting from Brunelleschi they cannot be directly connected by their medium, that is theatre and painting respectively. Then, how do we proceed from painting to theatre or even theatre to painting, perhaps? It is clear that perspectival painting can be seen like a *painting-as-theatre*. The creation of the three dimensional space and placement of human figures may surely seem like a play captured at an instant. Doesn't Alberti recommend the artist to do the same — to make a *historia*, a theatre, in painting itself, with a stage where man is placed, and a composition which actually tells a story? If we agree on this being the case, we can say that painting becomes more theatrical through the use of perspective. The precondition of theatricality is a certain distance that is necessary for the subject to view the work, like the case of theatre. Perspective works out effectively only at a distance, and not just at a given height. In this way perspectival paintings become theatrical, not just in *suspension* of a theatre but by the consideration of distance. But this distance is finally problematized. Though there is the necessity of a physical distance to view the painting *correctly*, the painting demands that the spectator is present for the viewing. In this way the spectator is finally absorbed into the painting, and hence there is the disappearance of the spectator by the capture of the spectator within the painting. The subject, the viewer, is drawn into the space (or may we call it a stage) of the painting and also maintains a distance from it, like a spectator and not an active (or even an inactive) character in the scene. These are the implications of considering painting as a theatre. So there is no strict separation of the subject-object. The subject is implicated in the

object; the object implicated by the subject. But the reverse correlation cannot be made in case of theatre, as in if we consider theatre as a painting. In the case of Inigo Jones' theatre, that is the masques, a relation with painting can be developed if we consider the theatre as a painting-as-theatre. This assumption makes it possible to understand the specificity of Jones' novelty as separate from earlier forms of masques.

Let us discuss the earlier form of masques and also "theatre" (if we choose to call it so) in general, so that we can revisit this problem with greater clarity<sup>67</sup>. Masques became popular in the Court around the 16th and 17th century, both in Italy and England. The King and other members of the court participated in the masques, unlike the case of public theatres, which was the specific place for *professional* actors and also open to the "common" people. Various elements of the masque can be found in the Medieval period where the form was allegorical and used as a pedagogic tool. To understand this shift from the Medieval to the Renaissance it is essential to ask if there is a change in the notion of the theatre in these two periods. The most common form of theatrical practice in Medieval drama was the Corpus Christi plays — and we will resist ourselves from going into the details of other forms of drama or even the medieval origins of the drama from liturgical practices or otherwise. If we take the example of Corpus Christi, we see how the space of the city was used to perform plays in different parts; it depicted the Christian "history" from the fall of Adam to the second coming of Christ, in different places in the city. Although it showed the temporal movement from each

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<sup>67</sup> Egginton would disagree with such a formulation. For him, theatre as we know it is a modern invention. This means that the medieval world did not know theatre. The assumption on which such an understanding is based is a differentiation in understanding of space and the subject's relation to it, in the case of the middle ages and modern age. This corresponds to the earlier discussion about presence, that is for him the medieval subjectivity was the one based on understanding of the rituals, and other forms as a real presence. This shifts in modernity, and so the modern subjectivity in general is a theatrical one, which makes it possible for the development of the modern stage form. Modern theatre does align itself to this modern notion of a theatrical subject. See. 2002.

scene — and one would continue and another would start such that there is an intersecting time — it was also a spatial movement across the city from one place to the other. The Christian universal history was thus made into spatial form. Moreover the space used was the space of the city and all the components in it, specifically the architecture. It thus created a space incorporating the real architecture and the real people such that there is a *presence*, or alternatively an absorption into the space. The allegorical aspect was the use of a stock character, like the old man or the fool; and the personification of various acts or passions like the sins, for example a person would hold up a banner and on it would be written “Lust” or “gluttony”. Egginton argues that the medieval notion of being was that of presence and hence it would not have been difficult for the spectator to believe whether what happens in the “drama” was real or not — to take the specific case of the Eucharist. And in this regard the Medieval *public* did not have any notion of the character. What we notice is a change of this notion of the drama, and finally a notion of life itself with modernity. The category which defines modernity is then *theatrical*. So, the frequent use of the myth of Saint Genesius, the patron saint of theatre, and his conversion while he is an actor itself, is possible in a world which has itself become theatrical, which recognises the distinction between an actor and a character — to go back that is the condition for something like metatheatre, or even the recognition of world as a stage. Earlier we tried to relate this notion with the idea of infinity. But what is identifiable in the forms of drama in the Medieval time and also medieval masques is this question of presence, where both the spectator and the actor/character are incorporated in one stage and each element has a substantial meaning in contrast to the modern stage which is always *empty*.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> The modern stage is empty in the sense that it does not have to correspond to any real spaces or is not a participatory stage. In becoming a space of pure fiction, this stage can be used to reflect or imitate rather than being something. In this way anything can be represented on stage and any actor

With the Renaissance, this form of masque was changed, and the stage is not that which incorporates the whole space, but is shifted to one side like the Modern stage, similar to the public theatres which develop in England. Masques do remain as a form specific to the Court, but this technical change, related to the public theatre is to be considered. With this shift, the use of perspectival techniques become important and in this we see Inigo Jones' specific intervention. From Egginton, we can rightly claim that these masques become *theatrical*, that is there is a separation between the spectator and the actor, in spatial terms. Moreover, there is an acknowledgement of the element of *fiction*. But how is this fiction established? We'll deal with the specific content of the masques and the relation to power later, but initially let us look at the structural elements of the masques as it is presented on the stage, in other words, the elements of set design. As mentioned earlier the stage needs a certain *depth* for the mechanism to work, that is the perspectival illusion to take place. This involves the use of a painting made using perspectival techniques, which acts as the backdrop but also structural elements like the *periaktoi*, borrowed from the Greeks, which act both as three dimensional objects extending the picture frame, so as to make a box, and not just a window. But these are also used for the change of scenes, which as both Nicoll and Orgel mentions were of major attraction<sup>69</sup>. This is what — taken from the Italian stage and continues the influences into the English courts— is called the *intermezzo*. The use of *intermezzi* was to provide a unity of space and time, so that the change of scenes could occur perfectly without any disruption for

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can become a character. Ibid. 91-113. With reference to this empty stage, we must also mention Jan Kott, who in his reading of *King Lear* but also elsewhere, notes that the Shakespearean stage is empty. See. Kott, 1964.

<sup>69</sup> Orgell notes that the *intermezzi* become more attractive than the actuarial play, this is because in these change of scenes the illusions using machineries or perspectival scenes were best established. It was such that the audience would wait more for these changes, and as if they themselves became like independent plays. The shift in desire towards the spectacle, as mentioned earlier, can also be noticed here. See. 1975, 34-36

the spectator. It allowed a coordination between the practices of changing scenes and also theories of unity of time as given in Aristotelian poetics<sup>70</sup>.

So we find a translation of the imaginary perspectival space into the real space of the theatre. This relation between painting and theatre is possible because of the element of architecture. As noted earlier, Brunelleschi's demonstration was possible because of the primacy of architecture, and he as an architect attempted to translate the real architectural building into the canvas, as it was, and not just by the method of planning. This reduction of the dimensions also allowed the architect to learn from the painting. Alberti noted that the architect learns ornamentation from the painter but he makes a distinction between architecture and painting, the former uses *mathematical* techniques rationally in the sense that they are put to use for something existent or useful in concrete terms, whereas the latter uses the techniques, like that of perspective only for purposes of illusion. Illusion or truth? Perspective has always been tied in this double bind, just like the Renaissance itself! But it is necessary to discuss the difference in the use of perspective in theatre and in that of other forms like the *trompe l'oeil* or that of anamorphosis. The specificity of anamorphosis has been discussed earlier, but let us take up the point about *trompe l'oeil*. *Trompe l'oeil* uses the real elements in a given space, such that to make it appear like an illusion, from a certain point, similar to anamorphosis. Phenomenologically, it must be placed in a given space, and in this sense though it uses certain mathematical techniques, it has a relation to the medieval form being situated *at a place*. Whereas perspective claims its relation to truth, as being close to nature, only in being separated from nature. The placement of the eye in a specific position

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid. The purists attacked the use of intermezzi as it was more of a spectacle than being related to the play. However, the supporters argued that such a shift was necessary for the creation of wonder, also for a unity of time and further to mitigate the effects of tragedy produced in the play.



is a condition for perspective but this is secondary in the way that firstly, what is essential for perspective is to create the picture frame itself, a window, and this way it is bounded. In other words, it imposes on itself certain limits and in establishing these limits, it constitutes a *world* in itself. Thus it is possible to make a world by imposing the limits which are considered within the use of the perspective *function* itself. And this is how it works in the case of theatre.

So, the primary condition is the imposition of limits on itself for a successful illusion. If this is established, the further task that remains in the construction of the *historia* is the position of the actors on stage, like the specific position of the characters in the paintings. They must then be placed on the checkered surface, that is the floor of the stage itself, so as to follow the rules of construction, though we acknowledge the use of other spatial elements who are floating. But this would finally implicate something like the *sky*. We have noted from Brunelleschi's experiment, the sky was never constructed. The real sky was reflected on the mirror so as to demonstrate the nature of the construction. If we go by this, it also indicates that the *real* sky was brought to the ground so as to be but on the surface, what can be called a certain immanent gesture. It seems that a similar move is made in the theatre itself. In Inigo Jones' theatre the use of heavenly motifs is predominant, as we can see in the use of clouds, and there are intricate mechanisms and technological uses to bring the action forward. But these illusions are finally brought forward only in reference to the checkered floor and the characters present on stage. George Kernodle argues that the development of perspectival scenes in illusionist theatre in the Renaissance owes its debt to the form of *tableau vivants* which was prominent in the middle ages (1964: 52-110). This indicates a transformation "from art to theatre", where the form of *tableau vivants*, which is a kind theatre in the streets, is brought to the painting and then from painting goes back to the theatre, but now only

restricted to the Courts. This is also a movement from the streets to the closed buildings. But this direct relation does not seem quite possible. There were obviously possibilities in the construction of painting itself, which allowed them to be used in the perspectival theatres but certain distinctions must be made. What is essential for the theatre is the establishing of the horizon and it is behind the wall that is the place where the perspectival painting — which has the horizon in its surface — is placed. Moreover, there is the conception of a homogeneous space in the painting, but in theatre the space is not homogeneous, like any existent space. The fixating of the horizon behind the wall is thus an attempt to put all the elements of the stage, including the painting and the “checkered floor” within a closed configuration, but the factor of heterogeneity remains. This heterogeneity is more clear in the intermezzi, in which the change of scenes would reveal the nature of heterogeneity, or in another way it was an attempt for the closure of this heterogeneity. Given this heterogeneity and distinctions from painting, is it still possible to have a privileged point in the theatre? This is a central issue as the courtly dramas were meant for the glorification of the King. In dealing with this problem, we will also try to think about the privileged position of perspective as such.

### **A Point or a Thread: Seeing and the Question of Power**

The major concern regarding perspective is its anti-humanist nature of reduction of man to an eye, fixated on a specific position which allows the *best view* possible. For painting itself, one can adjust one's view accordingly to see from the assigned point. But in theatre this is more challenging as the spectator cannot move accordingly but must sit in the assigned position. So, in this way the seating arrangement itself provides the conditions for the different views accordingly. If this is the case there must be a single best view, a single position or seat which

is privileged above the others. In the Stuart Masques we find that this supposedly privileged position is assigned to the King or the Queen. So, this position is also a position of power. The already existing power seems to be reasserted through the occupancy of this position. This line of argument can be assigned to the absolutist discourse with regard to theatre which argues that courtly theatres, which were already the theatre for the people in the court, were used as a form of depiction of the power of the Absolute, here the King. The other arrangements are made not by the reference to the stage but by the reference to the position of the King. In the courtroom, the King is the *one* reference point. And others are grounded on the basis of this point. The most sought for places being ones nearer to the King. It seems that the play does not hold much significance in this context. These forms were developed during the Renaissance mainly in the Italian courts and worked for the depiction of the King's power, as Kernodle argues. There is obviously a correlation between the form of power of the State and the form of theatre. It seems that the architect was assigned to create perspective scenes and theatre buildings only for this purpose. It is as if the only function of perspectival theatres was for the establishment of Sovereign power. But it is interesting to note that this form of theatre continues even after the disappearance of the monarch. The birth of the bourgeoisie does not lead to the birth of a new theatre or art form. Only in the twentieth century, we find new forms of theatre in matters of design, that is a shift from the perspectival theatre, to avoid the question of the privileged position. Historically, the direct relation established by Kernodle does not seem to effectively work. Further, to take up the given situation itself, where these courtly dramas were performed, can we rightly assert that these forms of theatre were *only* for the King and the privileged view? Or in the theatre, are there moments away from the absolutist discourse?

In *The Illusion of Power*, Stephen Orgell discusses similar issues regarding the relationship of the masques with the power of the sovereign. Taking up the specific case of Stuart and Caroline Masques, he contends that the masques were artistic mechanisms used by the King to maintain “the illusion of power”. He discusses several of such techniques used in the courtroom masques. Firstly, the position of the King remains a central issue, and the position closer to the King was a symbol of power for other members. But he brings another aspect into this matter. It is not just that the King is watching the play from the best position but the King is also part of the play. There were various methods adopted to do this, like glorifying the King through the content of the play. We have the famous case of King James depicted as Oberon in Jones’ *Oberon the Faery Prince*. Moreover the King also *acted* in the plays, along with professional actors. The play was divided into two parts: the masque and the antimasque. As acting was not a noble profession, the professional actors played the roles of vices in the *antimasques* and the noble man would portray virtuous roles in the *masques* as if to overcome the evil of the vices. By use of these mechanisms the “illusion” is established and in this way, it’s also a kind of Machiavellian gesture, as noted by Orgell, as it relies on a deceptive technique to retain its power. The king becomes the one who proceeds towards good by overcoming evil and also leads people towards this good. However two aspects of this matter are intriguing, the question of illusion and the question of the process. Illusion relates to something that is not in reality. And finally here we find a question of realism versus naturalism. Jones’ techniques attempt a kind of naturalism in regard that the perspectival mechanism imitates nature in a sense, by creation of a new space. But this naturalism only seems superficial. Almost two centuries later we find Courbet, the French painter during the Paris Commune, claiming realism over naturalism as being the truth of art

<sup>71</sup>. The matters in the Renaissance are however not very distinct. If Jones uses the techniques in favour of the King, it is also because such a dominance of power does not exist in reality. That is perhaps the use of illusion. On a different note, the illusion also pertains to the act of viewing rather than understanding. We are again reminded of the Johnson-Jones debate. The other aspect of the masques is the reliance on the process, that is the stage design is not itself given, but movements happen on stage especially during the *intermezzi*. The *intermezzi* which is the intermediary between two scenes is used to establish a continuity between the scenes by movements of the different elements of the stage and hence, were important to maintain the unity of the drama. These were the most spectacular moments in play and drew the most attention. It was the attempt of the masques to indicate that these movements are because of the will of the King. This is as if the King now controls nature and can make matter move or change accordingly. Like Prospero? But the attention is not focussed on the King but the actions themselves. In that sense, the actions become more important than the monarch. Finally the illusion seems to become more real for the King rather than the spectators. Masques for him are reflections not of nature but of himself and this is why he is like Narcissus in seeing himself in the play. Narcissus remains only as a myth of mere reflection for the King but not a pure creation, which was the case of Alberti. The place is given to the artist and not the King. This is because reflection remains as a condition of pure creation, and this is not just for a specific man like the King (with divine connotations) but a possibility for *any* man, which is also an understanding of the philosophical anthropology of

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<sup>71</sup> Theophile Gautier would call Courbet the one who brings realism to art. And in this regard he distinguishes Courbet from a naturalist painter like Francois Millet. Both of them rely on the same subject matter, that is majorly the working class, but it is the use of the form that distinguishes both of them. Millet establishes the figure in harmony with the existing world, but for Courbet there is already a moment away from this harmony. The world for the working class is not a harmonious one. See. Fried, 1990: 28-52

the Renaissance and we had discovered this also in Brunelleschi. If this is the case it is dubious how the perspectival construction of masques could actually sustain the notion of power.

There is another aspect of the King being implicated in the play. He is not just present in the formal structure of the play but his presence *creates* a new play and becomes a spectacle. The other people in the courtroom observe him and his relation to the play, how he reacts to specific instances. The King *claims* to be in the centre of the play and also the courtroom. This capture of attention is also a mechanism for the maintenance or display of power. In this sense two different plays go on within the courtroom. In other words there are forms of metatheatre in the given space, and the attention of the formal audience is already divided between these forms. One can wonder whether there is a notion of theatricality prevalent in this. To categorise these aspects as theatres would also be to claim a theatrical world, as we did before. However, the aspect of the spectacle is not dependent on the King or even the artist. They are not the only essential condition for the spectacle to work. If we consider *theatricality* to be something that makes it work, it also considers the spectator. Thus it becomes a process and in this process the notion of theatricality is produced. To this extent, theatricality is not a pre-given aesthetic content of the specific form of the masques or even perspectival theatre, it is what happens during the play that creates a split where the other enters<sup>72</sup>. Though in masques an important feature is to make it *seem* real, the divided attention further calls to question this reality. Though there are attempts to make the play look real, it seems that the fictionality is recognised.

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<sup>72</sup> For such a reading of theatricality see. Josette Feral, 'Performance and Theatricality: The subject demystified' in Murray, 2000: 289-300

Finally we recognise that it is not the position which is essential but the process. And this is valid for any perspectival painting. In other words, it is not the question of the *givenness* of a thing be it the object of painting/theatre or the subject (the perceiver) but the relation that is established between them. This also means that the relation itself is not a given relation but in a certain sense, arbitrary. The formal aspect of perspectival construction with respect to the viewer, is not that of a point where the subject is placed, but rather a thread. This thread can be infinitely extended and more tightly pulled. In this sense, the subject gets her bearings only by this thread. And so the subject is destabilised. This is perhaps an exemplar of modernity itself, where it is as if one is caught in the labyrinth and would require a thread like that of Ariadne, but the essential part being that the thread is indistinguishable from the labyrinth itself.

## Conclusion

### The Question of Renaissance, yet again

We understand that the Renaissance project of a return to the Greeks was not just an attempt for mere repetition or imitation, but a question of legitimacy. In aligning itself to the Greeks the people of the time could have a support of the tradition. In this way, they could have claimed an exit from the medieval world, and affirm something new. The crisis which made such a claim possible, being the thought of the infinite. But it is difficult to finally show that there was a single dominant strain in the Renaissance, as in a single response. The various strains were also probably because of the transitory nature of such a period like the Renaissance. It is obvious that these different strains are also read in various ways and probably this sedimentation is what results in vast the field of what we call the Renaissance Studies. It is probably with Burckhardt that all of this begins and because of his seminal study of the period, it receives attention<sup>73</sup>. Burckhardt in his reading of the Renaissance argues for the novelty of the period in different forms like that of culture, art, religion, the new understanding of the State Form and importantly the development of the individual. Further, all of these stand for a certain consciousness that the people of the period shared. For him the *return* was just an aspect of the Renaissance and not the essential underlying core of it. It is interesting to note that he takes up this from Jules Michelet, the famous historian of France who specifically coined the term “renaissance”, taking it from Vasari. Though Michelet

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<sup>73</sup> Burckhardt, 2003.



acknowledges the developments in the period, for him the Golden Age of man is that of the period of Louis XIV. Burckhardt however argues that the Renaissance is *the* golden period. It has its origins in the city of Florence, because of its availability of the sea and the Medicis being both merchants and rulers. In addition to this several other reasons led to its spread all across Europe. In the field of arts, it begins with the paintings and sculptures by the Florentine artists but soon goes on to northern Europe, to the Netherlands and finally in parts of England, Spain and France where we specifically find the development of literature and theatres. Shakespeare, Cervantes, Rabelais being the most exemplary of this late literary renaissance. But, we further find the deployment of the term even in modern times to different golden periods, “the Harlem Renaissance,” “the Bengal Renaissance”, “the Islamic Renaissance” and so on. This usage of the term really does take it away from its specific temporal and spatial meaning that Burckhardt had assigned to it, and mobilizes the term as a metaphor. It further assumes that the period of renaissance of the culture is the essential point rather than an evocation of a glorious past as being originary in nature. In that sense it is an *awakening* rather than a *reawakening*.

But one can surely disagree with the Renaissance being a specific period in the history of Europe. There were many other Renaissances, like the Carolingian Renaissance, Ottonian Renaissance and the 12th century Renaissance in the Medieval Age. This debate is related to the question of continuity in history. On one side if Renaissance is considered as a break with earlier world of thought, it confirms the theory of discontinuity<sup>74</sup>. Such a debate also brings

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<sup>74</sup> For an insightful debate regarding the originality of the Renaissance one can refer to the debates between Cassirer, F. R. Johnson, Thorndike, and others. While Cassirer is on the side of discontinuity to support his thesis of originality, not by the reference to just science but new ideas also in art, his specific reference to Montaigne, Thorndike would take Duhem’s position and claim science as a basis to understand continuity. So for Thorndike, it is quite redundant to claim that the spirit of rationality

into consideration whether a new radical knowledge is produced in a period, and so it is finally a question which goes back to the history of sciences. Galilean science is considered to be the birth of modern science because of the novelty of a mathematization of physics, and in this way it claims for a new knowledge. However, Pierre Duhem would show that much of Galilean science owes its debt to his predecessors. For Duhem, Galileo's theory of inertia is greatly built by medieval theories of physics, that is primarily the *impetus theory*. In this respect Duhem stands for the significance of medieval knowledge for modern thought, and hence on the side of a continuity in history, giving no special significance to modern thought. In a different reading by Walter Pater we find that he affirms a Renaissance Spirit which is not specific to any time but as if eternal and can be traced both before the Florentine Renaissance and even centuries after it. This spirit is specifically the spirit which has its roots in the pleasure of art to the extent that it goes towards a pleasure in life itself. It is possible for this spirit to exist only in the imagination of a pantheistic culture. So for him, the Greeks remain an important aspect to the Renaissance because of the pantheistic imagination of the Greeks. But the Greek world is already lost, and within the Christian world one can find these moments of the Renaissance spirit, like in that of Chrétien de Troyes in Medieval times to Winckleman around the early eighteenth century. All of them share the Hellenistic spirit and a pantheistic worldview though they are placed in the Christian world. It can be read that Pater's consideration acknowledges only two essential moments in history, that of the Greeks and the Christians, and so one must trace the lost Hellenist spirit. In this respect, he forgets the newness assured in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Huizinga, however, recognises this time as different from the Middle Ages. He argues that though there are many strains of the

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was lost after the emergence of Christianity and was resurrected in the Renaissance. See. Cassirer et al. 1943

Renaissance with the Middle Age and each takes a different trajectory, the Renaissance is not a radical change in the sense of a progression but a “fall.” The word “dark” associated with the Middle Ages, in the sense that there was lack of rationality at times because people were blinded by faith, arises out of a wrong conception. He sees in the Middle Ages important systems of thought and high moral standards that were lost in the Renaissance.

All of these readings bring us again to the question of the consideration of continuity and discontinuity in history, regarding the Renaissance. Burckhardt surely sees the Renaissance as a break with the earlier medieval world both in sense of the social structure and also in art, culture and religion, and all of these aspects are inseparable from each other. In this sense he aligns himself to the revolutionary position of understanding history as Michelet, who also argued that the French Revolution is a radical break. Because of the seminal nature of his study, it seems that the debate regarding the Renaissance revolves around Burckhardt’s text. Either one favours such an argument or goes against it. If the earlier mentioned debates work on the question of time as in history, the other aspect of the debate revolves around the question of space. This is a kind of questioning of the western rationality by the other side of the world. It is true as a precursor to the modern, this period saw the exploration of new worlds, which finally led to colonialism. Shakespeare’s *Tempest* being probably the best suited example in this respect: the white man Prospero who colonises the island where the native “beastly” Caliban resided. In a different note it is also accused that the reading of the Renaissance ignores the influence of the East, and makes it an absolutely closed thinking of the West. Our task however was not to deal with these aspects specifically nor to defend the white man’s Renaissance. But we aligned with the side of discontinuity in history, and assumed that there is a specificity of the Renaissance which distinguishes it from earlier periods, it is neither the revival of Antiquity or the continuation of the Medieval world. In

proceeding in this direction, we considered how the people during the Renaissance tried to respond to the new idea of the infinite, and in this attempt tried to read the thinkers during the Renaissance. To this extent, we discovered that the Renaissance can be read as a point of crisis, and how new ideas emerge in thinking of this crisis.

### **Of Nature and Infinite**

Our attempt was to show the various responses and ambiguity associated with it. The concept of *making* made it possible for us to bind all these responses together, but obviously there were various modes of making, in different fields from philosophy to the arts. This power of making was not just restricted to any specific class or for the privileged philosopher, as is relevant from the work of the craftsmen who made the theatre design or the public in Shakespearean theatres. All of these show that a specific idea of man is being considered, the man who makes. This is not just restricted to the humanist tradition of the Renaissance but as we have seen, it is present even in someone anti-humanist like Machiavelli. In this manner, it can be said that there is a philosophical anthropology in Renaissance thought. This kind of anthropology argues on the equality of all men, in being those who have capacity for knowledge and creation. Because of this capacity the *place* of man is not an assigned one, but rather we have positions (in society) and these are not fixed. A position demands that it is not a given one, but can be mobilised accordingly. The new science also corresponds to such an understanding. Against the Aristotelian concept of natural places, in Physics we now find the concept of position. The new science corresponds to the social imagination. Based on this position man makes accordingly, not just in art but also politics and forms of life. But for such a making, the necessary condition is knowledge and the renaissance man strives for such knowledge to understand the workings of nature, as nature is like a machine. It is then crucial

to understand nature not just because it is God's creation but because it is where man exists. In this sense, the new man is more worldly. Thinking itself becomes immanent to the world through this move. It is not God who is the focal point of thinking, but the new focal point is nature. The transference of the infinity of God to nature makes this possible. This step shows that the Christian idea of an infinite God is not that radical compared to the Greek Idea. It is true that if Greek thought was the one that was limited to finitude, and with Christian God we have an infinite Being. But in both these cases, it is the finitude of the world which is the important component; nature for both of them is finite. In the Christian idea, the Infinite God is the foundation for the world and the immanent world is always finite, just like the Greeks. In our period of consideration, we notice that this idea changes, by two crucial moves, that is a thought of the infinite and the importance of nature.

But looking back we understand that Koyre's thesis of an infinite universe as opposed to the closed world is a false dichotomy. This is because the opposition between an infinite and closed is not possible. The closed may be opposed to the open. The idea of an infinite universe that Koyre proposes is limited because the infinite is finally subsumed by the One. That is the universe is finally a whole even if it is infinite. In this respect it is also closed. Koyre argues for a phenomenological reading of the infinite in the form of an universe, which for him guides modern thought. This in turn also asks for cosmological support. The imagination of an infinite cosmos becomes the ground for the immanent world. It is true that thinking is immanent for Koyre, which is possible through a thinking of infinite universe but such immanence also falls prey to the One and finally demands a support of a cosmological thinking of the infinite. The implications of these aspects are clearly visible in the Renaissance, as we do not have a proper idea of the infinite at that time. Infinite remains as something tied to nature, and so it remains as a phenomenon. Man's demand for infinite

knowledge is limited by the extent of nature being infinite. So, we also find continuous evocation of nature. The philosophical anthropology of the Renaissance demands this support from nature. The conception of man which allows all of these possibilities, is a natural idea of man, that is man is thought to be *naturally equal*. It is on this conception of nature, that the idea of making is predicated. We further realise that the ambiguity of understanding history also sides on assigning a particular character to history. History is that which judges all and even the great rulers are subservient to history. It seems quite radical but history is assigned a particular character, that of the judge, as if history is *naturally something*. This ambiguous dependence on nature also limits the possibility of art. As we have discussed earlier, imitation has been a basis for thinking about art. In the Renaissance we see a shift from this tendency, but the period still relies on aspects of nature as a basis, though not totally concrete but fictional, of construction. Further, because of this art cannot actually be an act of *pure creation*. Hence, the autonomy of arts that we discover is also an autonomy with respect to the other forms. We have seen the autonomy of scenography or the visual with respect to the text. An autonomy of the arts would require a separation from nature, which we probably find in the modern age, specifically with the various art movements. Finally a separation from nature, would also call into question the category of a natural man that is whether the characterization of man can be made based on some inherent qualities. Through this detachment we can properly think of not what one is, but what one becomes or makes. This in a sense brings the question of the subject, if the subject is not that which is naturally given, but made through a process.

## **Copernicus Our Contemporary**

The Copernican theory led to a decentering of the earth, shifting it from its fixed position and making it move. We saw the implications of his theory for Western thought. This shift in position of the earth also led to the decentering of the position of man. But we also see an anthropocentric vision in the Renaissance, in the philosophical anthropology it stood for. How can these two aspects be correlated? We may start by asking whether Copernicus' actually decentres man or re-establishes his position in the world order. To put it in a different way, is there anthropocentrism in Copernicus' theory? As mentioned earlier, the preface to Copernicus written by Osiander was attacked by both Bruno and Kepler. Osiander's preface was meant to establish Copernicus' idea to the common public, and also make it acceptable to the Church. For him, Copernicus' theory of the Heavens was *just* meant for easier calculations of various astronomical factors, and it did not want to contradict the scriptures. In other words, Copernicus' project was not to claim a truth but it was a hypothesis that made calculations easier without contradicting the phenomenon or scripture. Osiander denies Copernicus' demand for truth because truth is not the capacity of man but the property of God. In this way, man cannot ask the reasons behind a phenomenon because it is the will of God that guides it. Man's task is not to demand truth but to have faith in the Divine will and the scriptures. Moreover, in propagating Copernicus' theory Osiander agrees with a different aspect of Copernicus. Copernicus' thesis argues that one's cognitive senses cannot fully be trusted in the way that they can deceive and hide the truth by the use of the phenomenon. He believed that the given discourse of the time may also be like the opinion and not the real truth of the world. So, his moving away from the centres of learning and knowledge to a remote village also exemplifies this. The eccentricity of his theory also corresponds to an eccentricity of his own position, in the sense of removing himself from centres of opinions

and established knowledge and trying to discover the truth for himself. There are two essential aspects concerning methods that were necessary for him: firstly, one must not contradict the phenomenon, and secondly the theory must be based on the *first principles*, which are guaranteed and in a way axiomatic. For him one such principle is the sphericity of the heavenly bodies. One must then proceed from the first principles to arrive at a theory of the world. We understand that because of this surety of the first principles, Copernicus moves the focus from cognition to thought, because proceeding from cognition may be unproductive and end in falsity. Osiander mobilises this aspect as this worked in his favour, because for him the world is a place of deception and one must deny deceptions of the world to receive Divine Grace. But in using the category of hypothesis for Copernicus, he rejects that man can have the capacity for truth. In this way he rejects Copernicus' anthropocentrism and finally goes for a theocentric world.

Copernicus' moving away from the centres of learning surely reverberates Petrarch's famous climbing of the mountain<sup>75</sup>. After taking a perilous task of climbing Mont Ventoux to see the view, Petrarch soon realised that the vision from the mountains is worldly and he quickly went back to reading his copy of Augustine's *Confessions*. While reading this he reflected on his earlier years that he had wasted and realised that the worldly desires and deceptions were similar to the ones Augustine had faced and so one must take a position outside this realm of senses to understand the futility of the world and reflect on God. Finally, this point outside or above the plane of worldly life in a sense leads him back to contemplation of his self and of God. Only this contemplation can save him from the world. But we moderns have lost God, He has escaped from us. Without God and this possibility of contemplation we are left on our

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<sup>75</sup> Petrarca 'The Ascent of Mont Ventoux' in Cassirer et al. 1948: 36-46



own, caught in our labyrinth. What is then our hope of escape? Maybe Copernicus' proposition still seems unheard of. It is the understanding of the world itself that provides an escape from it. This escape however is not just an escape from the world or the earth. To think in passing about the recent craze about space exploration to find habitable lands elsewhere, something like a “colonization of planets”, is itself an attempt to escape from this labyrinth of the world as seen as earth<sup>76</sup>. It is as if all of this is done to save humanity from any upcoming crisis, the ecological crisis being an ongoing one. In our times, is this where the Copernican Revolution and the conception of making that we tried to understand, lead to? That we use technology to make objects for our escape to other possible worlds? It seems that the Copernican task of our times may be two fold: the desire for truth that Copernicus demands and also a certain decentering from the established forms of knowledge that tend to cover this up. It is interesting to note a phrase that is not used by Copernicus but is associated with the revolution. Galileo mentions this and these are words on the pedestal of his famous statue in Torun: “mover of the earth, stopper of the sun and heavens.” A certain theatricality is added to Copernicus theory, it is as if through his theoretical act he literally *moves* the earth. It is as if through this gesture he *acts* like God.

We seem to be caught in between these two, a nihilism arising from loss of God and also claim to be the second God. Our reading of the Renaissance shows us the implications of

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<sup>76</sup> The recent development of ways to go to other planets, mars for the time being seems like an interesting case. The logic given behind such a quest is the curiosity of man or even to the extent of settling elsewhere to save the planet earth. The richest men on Earth, Bezos and Musk seem to be the faces of such a proposition. While their specific ideas may vary, one cannot but look at such a venture skeptically. However, the point of critique cannot just be a misappropriation of capital for something seemingly absurd, but one needs to think through this recent rise. See. Kelsey Piper, ‘The case against colonizing space to save humanity’ in Vox Online. Oct 28, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/22/17991736/jeff-bezos-elon-musk-colonizing-mars-moon-space-blue-origin-spacex>

such a thinking in the period, through the creation of both imaginary and real “worlds.” Associated with all of this is the quest for truth. But how do we think of this today without falling back on conceptions of nature or natural? Should we then think of historical truths as opposed to natural? Finally, does this understanding provide us with a new conception of the world and man, beyond the philosophical anthropology of man? This is probably the task at hand.

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