Towards the end of the sixteenth century when Shakespeare was writing his last plays, a new perception of life had already started troubling the minds of the creative writers. For this the milieu in which the artist lived contributed significantly. Creative writers, especially dramatists, showed an increasing interest in the exploration of the nature of evil, not only innate in man, but as a consequence of the social, cultural, and moral devaluations of the society in which they lived. The exploration in man's innate depravity was based on the assumption of the Manichean philosophy that man was as angelic as he was Satanic. This found support in the concept of macrocosm which was a result of the combination of light and darkness. This is further supported by the belief that the Fall of Man was a result of the joint activities of God and Satan. Since in the Elizabethan dramatic world man is envisioned as microcosmic, he is logically constituted of divine and evil attributes. Certain writers, like Shakespeare in his romantic comedies, might emphasize the positive aspects of man's being while other writers, like Webster have focused on the darker aspect. Generally an ironist with satiric intentions takes up the baser aspects of man's personality for treatment. The example of such writers whose plays have
been analysed in the present study are mainly Webster and Tourneur. In fact, much before these dramatists, ironic detachment, in a subtly ambivalent manner, is noticeable in Marlowe's tragedies and explicitly treated in Ben Jonson's satiric comedies.

After perusing Shakespeare's tragedies where there is a synthetic vision of the positive and the negative or the divine and evil, one wonders why Webster and Tourneur, writing in the same social and cultural milieu, though with a changed political perspective, wrote the type of plays which are full of sufferings, intrigues, bloodshed and death, but where the tragic characters do not evoke the right tragic emotions of pity, fear and admiration. These emotions remain ambivalent and the audience's response remains uncertain and ambiguous, which recalls the technique of 'alienation' explicitly stated and used by Bertolt Brecht after about three and a half centuries. This is not to say that the Brechtian 'alienation' is used by either the Elizabethans or the Jacobean as a conscious dramatic technique but the effect on the audience of a Brechtian play and that of a Jacobean is quite similar as far as the dramatist's careful manipulation of the audience's ambivalent empathy is concerned. This point needs some elaboration
in order to make our stand clear as well as to justify the investigation undertaken in the present study.

We can begin with Marlowe's treatment of evil. He presents evil in such an exhilarating manner that we feel drawn towards his protagonists who always try to overreach themselves. Dr. Faustus's extravaganza of the heroic powers of evil, for example, are so exhilarating that we feel almost swept away by the sheer force of the current of the rhetoric of the protagonists. His Tamburlaine swells into such a Titanic figure that we feel inclined to admire him for his superhuman prowess and potential. The same thing we find, though in a lower key, in the Young Mortimer in Edward II, Barabas in The Jew of Malta, and the Guise in the Massacre at Paris. Both the mental and intellectual accomplishments of Marlovian heroes are presented in terms of superhuman proportions which threaten to compare with divine omnipotence. Tamburlaine's ordering his army to attack the firmament and pull down Jupiter is a classic example of the Marlovian conception of the superhuman potential of his protagonists. But Marlowe's ironic vision runs through his entire dramatic career. He has manipulated this by the use of the central metaphors of such mythical figures as Icarus, Phaeton, and the medieval concept of the Fall of Pride and the turning of the wheel of Fate. We find that Marlowe's heroes, in spite of their struggle, suffering, intermittent
victories, and eventual defeats, do not elicit tragic emotions from the audience. But the heroes are denied perception of any higher reality or truth where they could show an awareness that they have realized their mistakes. We find that this realization is too feeble to arouse our sympathy for them. Even Shakespeare's Satanic protagonist, Macbeth, realizes his mistake and perceives a higher truth which enables him to welcome death half-way. But whereas in Shakespeare's tragic protagonists the perception does not have any ambivalence or false note, in Marlovian tragic protagonists realization of higher truth is rather ambivalent and does not contribute to the raising of their stature. In other words, they fail to transcend their personal selves to become larger than life.

The Marlovian pattern is broadly discernible in the plays of Webster and Tourneur. It will create a confusion if we use the term 'tragedy' for the plays of Marlowe, Webster, and Tourneur, as we use it for those of Shakespeare. Hence the use of the term tragical satire has been preferred. In the following paragraphs we propose to define the term with reference to its broad characteristics which are deductively drawn from our study of the 'tragedies' of the Jacobean.

For a tragical satire the most important aspect is
the milieu on which the dramatist directly draws for his source material. The second important aspect is the dramatist's attitude to this milieu. The third factor which must draw our attention is the dramatist's manipulation of the various dramaturgical elements in order to convey his attitude. And finally the emergent vision is a deliberate fusion of the affirmative and negative views of life where the gloom is not completely diffused. Let us elaborate these points to have a theoretical construct for our study.

Both Webster and Tourneur drew upon the ethos, conventions, and ideas characterising the world of their time. It is well known to the students of history that after a prolonged spate of civil strife it was Queen Elizabeth who provided a sense of security and stability to the English people. Prosperity returned to England gradually but steadily in all walks of life. England was making strides in the independent fields of trade and commerce with the discoveries and adventurous voyages of the newly awakened explorers. The glorious victory over the hitherto invincible Spanish Armada brought added confidence to the minds of the English people and bred in them a growing sense of national pride. In the literary and academic fields enthusiastic and creative authors produced works which celebrated the glorious processes of life, and
eulogised the vital and vigorous incidents of the past. At the same time the revival of classical learning and the Renaissance humanistic thinking also contributed substantially to man's newly acquired faith in his individualism and being created in the image of God. Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus, Young Mortimer and the Guise are some of the well-known figures of high-soaring aspirations. These superhuman aspirants in the pride of their semi-divine potentialities, wilfully tried to deny the limitations which man is subject to. They try to overreach their congenital circumscription. The result is a steep fall following their vertical ascent. It appears that writers like Marlowe were sending out signals and warning to the Elizabethans who were gloating over the humanistic individualism because of which man was envisioned as having infinite potential. Marlowe's message is not a denial of man's inherent potential to reach extraordinary heights but a sagacious advice that man is great, no doubt, but at the same time he is little, too. This naturally produced a sense of despair in sensitive minds.

With the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the new era, this mood of despair was reinforced by the revival of the sense of uncertainty and instability brought by James I. In fact this sense of uncertainty was subterraneously present during the latter half of Elizabeth's reign when people's minds must have been
agitated at the prospect of the revival of the older days of strife for the occupation of the throne, because the Queen did not marry to leave a legitimate inheritor of her throne. Political intrigues, conspiracies, and other fissipperous tendencies which were covered by the facade of external prosperity, calm, and nationalism, threatened all along to come on the surface. The accession of James I only hastened this process. Though his accession was without any bloodshed, it was not maintained for a long time. The luxurious activities at the court, lowering of standards, slackness in discipline, loss of dignity, and extravagant expenditure of the Royal family soon brought the earlier (pre-Elizabethan) uncertainty in the minds of the Jacobean people. The various intrigues, like the open rebellion of the Earl of Essex, and the Gun Powder Plot (1605) aimed at blowing up the parliament and James himself, were a pointer to the direction in which the English society and polity were going to shape.

Before the turn of the century the English poets had maintained a balance between court and country, civilization and nature, and art and feeling. But with the turn of the century this balanced interaction was broken. It was being excluded from the dramatic works; the dramatic scene was confined to the corrupt Danish Court of Hamlet,
the French Court of Bussy, the Italian Court of Sejanus, and
the Roman Court as presented in the plays of both Webster
and Tourneur. The life at Court was full of self-seeking and
vying for power, and preferment.\(^1\) The court was the place,
the corridors of which led man to the extremes of his own
being, to murder, madness, dream, violent sexuality, terror,
death, torture, and to the mirror of his own self. "In the Italian
Palace the most humane impulses took their perverse forms.
The Faustian dream of learning became the pedantry of the
scholar who studied himself nearly blind to determine how
many knots there were on Hercules's club, the shape of the
Caesar's nose and whether Hector had a toothache."\(^2\)
Medicine was used as a mad doctor beats his mad patient with
urinals filled with rosewater. Religion became a melancholy
Cardinal denouncing his sister, whom he is trying to murder
for never having had her children christened. Morality was
reduced to sententiae, the mere form of moral discourse
memorized by children and pronounced without conviction on
any approximate occasion. Service became pandering, law the
tool of power, beauty the cosmetics covering ugliness,
government the cynical exercise of the will of the ruler,
and politics the employment of policy and Machiavellian

\(^1\) J. Leeds Barroll, & A. Leggatt, The Revels History of Drama
in English, Vol.III. 1576-1613 (Methuen & Co., London,

\(^2\) Ibid.
intrigue. John Marston saw this world and man as corrupt and beastly. For Chapman "Nature no longer moved towards any sensible end, but worked blindly and randomly, an enormous process of wastages." Naturally the dramatic works of this period quite often reflect all these things in abundance. The comic plays concentrate upon the manners, habits and morals of man as social and non-spiritual animal, while the serious plays become satiric, revealing a world order of evil power - bewildered and confused.

A certain kind of development is noticed in the second phase of the Elizabethan drama. It was not the development of the playwright's personal vision, but his grappling with social, economic, and moral issues. "Shakespeare's progress from Romeo and Juliet to King Lear was not a personal development but a development of the system." The literary man reacted to this routine of the system and shaped it in his work. Moreover, the target of the playwrights of the day was not entirely against the system but against the individuals also who were helping to shape it.

3. Ibid.
4. For a fuller description see Bussy D'Ambois, V.II.
Theatrical activities were much affected by the religious controversy between the Puritans and the Roman Catholics. The theatres were the haunts of the courtier because the majority of the society which was in favour of the Puritans and against the King, stopped visiting playhouses saying that "the cause of plagues was sin, if you look to it well; and the cause of sin are plays: therefore the cause of plagues are the plays." These courtiers were more interested in exciting entertainments at the court than anything else. They desired the same in the theatres. As the dramatist had to please the audience, he kept them "stimulated by a continual series of thrilling events, particularly at stress-positions within the play." 

In addition to the above abnormalities the period is distinctly marked with a certain kind of discontent which gave rise to a melancholy behaviour. Almost all the classes and systems operating in the society were affected by it. It spread over the literary scene and was visible in the sermons, letters, and pamphlets of the day. The court, the university, the administration and the private sectors, too, were under its grip. In fact this melancholic tone was partly exaggerated by the contemporary critics, but chiefly

the pervading atmosphere of misery and discontent because of the prevailing attitude towards death and the social and economic life of the period, is the main factor which gave rise to its wide spread popularity. Secondly, psychology was very popular among certain groups of people according to which to study a man properly was neither scientific nor systematic. A deep and true study of psychology was based on the theory of humours according to which the different characteristics of men were attributed to the different combinations of blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy. Obsession with death was another factor that contributed to the wide-spread sense of melancholy. John Donne and Ben Jonson themselves were among the plague-affected people who had suffered a great loss of family lives. Certainly the element of melancholy was a product of the society and as the dramatists drew on their society for material for their plays, they presented in their works a number of melancholy characters.

Despair, excitement, or exultation, resulting from the portrayal of a milieu, depends upon the writer's attitude to the material he is working upon. This attitude determines the writer's vision of life in a particular work of art. For example, a writer's attitude may be one of indulgence, tolerance, and forgiving acceptance. Such an
attitude will either ignore human foibles and the degradation of social values or will attenuate them to such an extent that the sharpness of their edges will be blunted. In Shakespeare's romantic comedies, for example, we do have glimpses of evil in human nature as well as society but they are treated with such indulgence and are so overshadowed by the brighter side of life that we tend to accept them. Contrasted with Shakespeare's treatment of evil in his comedies is Ben Jonson's treatment of the various forms of evil in his comedies. While in Shakespeare's case we are indulgent, in Ben Jonson's case we respond to the world of evil with comic distance and ironic detachment. The distinctive measure of difference between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson in this regard is that while Ben Jonson is explicitly satirical, Shakespeare is subtly indulgent with a pinch of irony. The writer's attitude in a tragedy stands on a different footing altogether. He may present an exploration of evil and suffering with an impersonal and dispassionate attitude without being partial to either good or evil, something in the nature of Keats's negative capability. Shakespeare is an example of this especially when, in his tragedies, the plot elements do not directly relate to the immediate society. Hence satire is, if any, indirect, subtle, and fused with the longer human issues. But a dramatist may approach his material in a tragedy where
the topical immediacy of material is paramount and explicit. His purpose may be clinically diagnostic where he wants to expose the social evils in unreserved terms. He may do this by a complete withdrawal of authorial sympathy and with ironic detachment. In such a situation darkness overshadows brightness and the element of gloom and despair becomes a strongly felt dramatic experience. Webster and Tourneur belong to this category of writers.

Because of the above mentioned artistic attitude of the dramatist, dramaturgical elements, like plot, characterization, and dramatic devices, are moulded differently from those of proper tragedy. By the term 'proper tragedy' we mean two things: one is a systematically developed plot-line with either a main story only or along with a sub-plot as well. Such plot-lines follow the Aristotelian cause and effect pattern of development when the motivations of characters are not ambiguous. The pattern is normally one of exposition, complication, catastrophe, and denouement. The tragic characters follow the pattern of choice, action (leading to suffering) and perception. The play eventually ends at a note of resolution, reconciliation, and acceptance, and the dramatic experience which we get is what Milton calls in his Samson Agonistes "calm of mind all passion spent." The
element of universality and the experience of Longinean transport result from the tragic protagonists' struggle which starts at the personal level but eventually grows into a larger concern which transcends into the domain of an exploration into the meaning of life in the perception of a higher truth. Ancient Greek and Shakespearean tragedies follow this pattern. But there are dramatists, like Webster, Tourneur, Middleton, and Ford who may not be interested in the deeper issues of human existence as such but in the various manifestations of evil and its modus-operandi. When focus on the various lights and shades of evil becomes the primary dramatic concern, the clearly developed plot-line suffers a setback sometimes. This is because it becomes necessary for a dramatist to induct into the broader-framework of a play certain events, situations, and interactional encounters. This naturally brings in a looseness in the structural fabric of the play. The plays of Webster and Tourneur are full of such elements. Another dramaturgical element which is remoulded in a tragical-satire is characterization. Rounded characters, developed convincingly, are very often reshaped into static ones. Because of the primacy of portraying the various facets of evil and the modes of its operation, the elements of causal motivation in characterization become ambiguous. The dramatist's reduced reliance upon tightly constructed plot
structure and convincingly developed characters through the
pattern of choice, action, and perception and the final
vision which a suffering character is allowed, remains
devoid of the element of higher truth. The dramatist
increasingly relies upon a variety of dramatic conventions,
such as chorus, commentator, pantomime, pageants and the use
of anecdotes etc. The dramatic experience that we derive is
thus short of an affirmative view of life. The pervasive
gloom is not completely diffused towards the end of the
play.

Webster and Tourneur have written plays which belong
to the category whose main dramaturgical characteristics
have been mentioned above. They were not accorded the
recognition they deserved for over hundred years until
Lamb and Swinburne showed some a perfunctory interest in
them. Certain writers, like Dryden and Dr. Johnson in their
preoccupation with Shakespeare, paid at most a lukewarm
interest in Webster and Tourneur. The neo-classical critics,
obessed as they were with the observance of the strict
rules of drama, with emphasis on the purity of the dramatic
form, naturally did not find the plays of Webster and
Tourneur as viable examples to illustrate their critical
tenets. As pointed out earlier Webster and Tourneur wrote a
hybrid form of tragedy which made use of diverse dramatic
forms, conventions, and devices. Hence they resisted
conformity with every hitherto established dramatic convention. As referred to earlier critics found it difficult to explain the structural strategies adopted by these dramatists, because their plays were full of sufferings, bloodshed, and murder, along with theatrical sensationalism and horror, but the audience's response was not quite the same as a typical Shakespearean tragedy produces. Hence their plays were perhaps ignored because they were considered dramaturgically deficient.

With the revival of interest in seventeenth century poetry in our own age the Jacobean dramatists have also received considerable critical attention. But majority of the studies on the two dramatists under consideration, concentrate on the stylistic elements, imagery, and the complex dramatic experience. The eighteenth century almost ignored Webster simply because, "in an age whose art was characterized by a civilized restraint in the handling of emotion and a preoccupation with decorum - the subordination of every detail to the whole - in matters of style, a dramatist who favoured an apparently piecemeal method of writing and excelled in scenes of stark mental and physical anguish was not likely to please." During the nineteenth century Webster's plays drew critical attention from a number of critics, particularly through Charles Lamb's

Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets (1808). In this book Lamb studied the Elizabethans with Webster as poets and not as playwrights. Other critics like Stendhal, and H.M. (John Wilson) have criticized Webster in respect of the structure of his plays. The latter in his 'Analytical Essays on the Early English Dramatists' called Webster as an expert of scenes rather than of structure. His judgement on The White Devil is characteristic of his critical attitude to Webster as a dramatist:

This play is so disjointed in its action: the incidents are so capricious and so involved and there is throughout such a mixture of the horrible and the absurd - the comic and the tragic, the pathetic and the ludicrous that we find it impossible within our narrow limits to give anything like a complete and consistent analysis of it.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century Webster criticism can be summarized with reference to two groups of writers. The critics of the first group, like Lamb and Swinburne, concentrated on the 'poetic power of Webster's tragic vision', while the members of the other group, like Archer and Poel, concentrated on the structure, absurd improbabilities, and gross excesses in his writings. Most of these critics

11. Quoted by R.V. Holdsworth in Webster, p.34.
celebrated Webster as a great explorer of the human soul and the mystery of the world's inequity. To Lamb and Swinburne, Webster "seemed, at his best, almost Shakespeare's equal; and yet by other minds, themselves not contemptible, he has been judged, degraded as a man and futile as an artist." Rupert Brooke assesses Webster thus: "Though the popular conception of Webster is rather one of immense gloom and perpetual preoccupation with death, his power lies almost more in the intense, sometimes horrible, vigour of some of his scenes and his uncanny probing into the depths of the heart." On the other hand some of the theatrical critics had been satisfied only with finding faults in the structure of Webster's plays. Among these William Archer is the most significant. He would accept a play as good drama only when it, "obeyed .... rational canons of dramatic construction" and which had "believable characters acting in coherently motivated ways .... step by step towards rationally developed conclusion." Here is Archer's bitter observation on a twentieth century performance of The Duchess of Malfi: "The privilege of listening to its occasional beauties of diction was felt to be dearly bought

at the price of enduring three hours of coarse and sanguinary melo-drama."15

Another dimension of Webster scholarship has been the moral criticism of his plays. The last quarter of the nineteenth century shows a revival of interest in the earlier dramatists, because they appealed to their new perspective of life in the wake of anti-Victorianism. Many twentieth century critics were primarily concerned with the moral criticism of Webster. Charles Kingsley, Ian Jack, W.D. Boklund, and Robert Ornstein are some of the critics in this regard. Kingsley dismissed Webster's plays and similar plays by other Elizabethans as "licentious drama."16 In fact, the same was originally expressed by the puritans. Ian Jack (1949) observes, "the extraneous background of moral doctrine" in The White Devil has no relation with the rest of the play. According to W.D. Boklund the world of The White Devil is "totally immoral." In his The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (1960), Robert Ornstein examines and asserts that the moral lessons of the two plays of Webster are inadequate. In the same way it is pertinent to recall Irving Ribner who observes that "Webster's plays are an

agonized search for moral order in the uncertain and chaotic world of Jacobean scepticism by a dramatist who can no longer accept without question the postulates of order and degree so dear to the Elizabethans."  

Another set of writers have concerned themselves with analysing Webster's plays to assign them to generic categories. Here the names of E.E. Stoll and T.S. Eliot can be mentioned. Eliot has observed that the main cause of the failure of the Elizabethans in general and Webster's The Duchess of Malfi in particular, during the early seventeenth century was "their inherent weakness than to the fitness of modern actors to represent their virtues."  Yet there are critics like Clifford Leech who are concerned with structural devices of Webster's plays which result from the "sententiae." The charge against sententiae is that they bear no relation to the rest of the play. Leech asserts that the sententiae "are not separated from the action or used for the purpose of relief; they come in death scenes in the final utterance of major characters. The result is an effect of distancing when immediacy would be better."  

Other critics also concentrate on the same aspects as outlined above. T.B. Tomlinson, D.L. Frost, G.O. Mac Donald assert that no new insight is possible in Webster study. Wilson Knight's "spatial criticism" has been very popular with Shakespeare's plays; it has also been applied to Webster's plays. In this connection it was Ellis Fermor who unsuccessfully attempted to explain Webster's imagery. In fact the function of imagery in Webster has variously been traced by critics like, Moody E. Prior, and C.W. Davis, but Hereward T. Price has adopted it on a fuller scale. The overall view of these critics may be summarized like this: "Webster's structures are too deliberate, too intellectual, too much a mosaic made out of his own reading, to be properly susceptible of 'Spatial analysis'". In fact, as it has been rightly observed, no single approach can be applied to fully analyze Webster's plays. T.S. Eliot remarks: "in his greatest tragedies Webster has a kind of pity for all his characters, an attitude to good and bad alike which helps to unify his pattern."

Bogard compares Webster with Shakespeare in terms of a satiric counterpoint to the tragic action: "If Shakespeare's

22. Ibid., p. 108.
tragedy be conceived as a vortex - centering the moral universe in the suffering soul of an individual; Webster's may be likened to a framed general action like a stage panorama which makes its most significant revelations through the presentation of man's relation to man."23

Like Webster, Tourneur's fame in the literary history rests mainly on his two great plays - The Revenger's Tragedy, and The Atheist's Tragedy. He, like the other Jacobean playwrights, was relegated into oblivion for a long time and his fame is a sort of a gift of nineteenth century romantic critics. As a satirist, Tourneur is not superior to Marston but had a "real gift for invective, and while exhibiting beastly figures in the perpetration of ill-motived atrocities, he was able to shroud his stage in the miasma of the bitter world-weariness which was one of the symptoms of the Jacobean reactions."24 Though The Atheist's Tragedy has its own merits, and occupies a distinct position in the history of drama, Tourneur's fame, because of his greater artistic achievement rests upon his earlier play The Revenger's Tragedy. In these two plays Tourneur's merits "lay in his ability to evoke a poetic vision of a world so corrupt and vitiated by evil as to leave no hope for humanity."25 Swinburne identifies Tourneur as the poet of

23. Ibid., p.39.
25. Irving Ribner, 'Introduction' to The Atheist's Tragedy, p. XXXIII.
such moral fervor that he could regard the world of his plays only with a savage indignation expressing itself in sublime poetry. Tourneur's amorality so much haunted T.S. Eliot that he could not but comment: "The Revenger's Tragedy achieves its amazing unity by its ability to express an intense and unique horrible vision of life; but it is such a vision as might come as the result of a few or slender - experiences to a highly sensitive adolescent with a gift for words."  

Many a critic who have regarded Tourneur's plays as most deficient in moral vision are those who do not see them in terms of the long tradition of medieval homilitic hortatory literature. William Archer considers Tourneur's plays as "the work of a sanguinary maniac who cannot even write tolerable verse." Tourneur's moral inadequacy has been confirmed by J.A. Bastiaenan as follows:

Tourneur also does not think much of religion. A more materialistic way of rejecting all expectation of a life to come in favour of a restful epicurean career than occurs at the beginning of The Atheist's Tragedy, it would be difficult to conceive. The free and easy manner

26. Ibid., p.146.
in which man is lowered to the level of the beast is repulsive. However, it should not be forgotten that the persons concerned are utter scoundrels."

The same critic further observes that "an estimate of Tourneur's moral purpose which is that whatever moral purpose the author may have had in view, when depicting characters of this description, perversity like this ought not to have been brought on the stage." In continuation with the moral criticism of Tourneur, Irving Ribner observes, "Tourneur's is the pessimistic christianity inherent in a large segment of medieval thought, implicit in Augustine and Aquinas, which had its most characteristic expression in the De Contemptu Mundi; Tourneur's emphasis is upon the baseness and corruption of man as the inheritor of original sin. He stresses man's smallness in the universe, his slavery to the ravages of time, and hence his need to look to the other world as his only hope of felicity."

The studies on Tourneur can generally be categorized under such sections as lack of moral vision; lack of hope, fascination with evil; style and Imagery; and the structure of his plays.

30. Ibid., p.82.
The above sketchy survey of the critical response to Webster's and Tourneur's plays shows that their plays have been approached from the points of view of moral criticism, structural weakness, and confused blending of the genres of tragedy and satire. In recent times adequate attention has been paid to the study and analysis of the various stylistic devices such as imagery, symbols, and syntactic manipulations. By and large, critics have regretted that both Webster and Tourneur represent a rather gloomy picture of life with inadequate psychological probing in regard to characterization.

Tragical satire as an established genre or sub-genre which can be adopted as a standard model for the examination of a particular play, has not yet been adequately defined. It can better be understood with reference to its contrast with proper tragedies like those of the ancient Greek masters or Shakespeare. The fundamental difference immediately noticeable between proper tragedy and tragical satire is that the former delves much deeper into the problems of human suffering than the latter. The sources of human suffering in a proper tragedy are not so much the evils in the society as the deeper realities of human psyche or in a higher, cosmic, divine or moral dimension of reality. In a tragical satire the immediate sources of
depravities in the individuals are primarily social. Social norms and practices control and guide human behaviour whereas in tragedies the sources are more intangible, such as the forces of the psyche or of higher reality represented by Ate; Fate, or the moral order of the universe. However, the individual's responsibility remains an important ingredient in both the forms. But the humans as agents of suffering and disintegration are more prominent in tragical satire in which the role of the higher reality—Fate or moral order of the universe—is reduced to a marginal or peripheral level. The chaos and destruction created in the world of a tragical satire is mostly man-made. But the tragic situation in a proper tragedy is of a more universal nature where man-made predicament is corroborated by some superior force working invisibly, such as Ate in Greek tragedies, Fate and moral order of the universe in Elizabethan tragedies, and chance in Hardy's novels. These are forces which man fails to comprehend and overcome. Hence the profoundity and mystery of human life become affirmed in a tragedy where the existence of a higher controlling and insurmountable force is asserted. But in a tragical satire God or any equivalent force is almost withdrawn which makes the vision of life relatively narrowed. In other words proper tragedy concentrates on the mystery of human existence. Tragical satire remains concerned mostly
with the observed reality of life. The sense of mystery, wonder, and inexplicableness of human predicament remains the hall-mark of tragedy while a tragical satire quite often deals with explainable factors responsible for producing the state of evil in the individual or the society. Finally, inspite of suffering, destruction, and death, tragical satire lacks the intensity of exploration into the nature of evil because of its elements of ironic detachment and satirical lashing.

Tragical satire is a tragedy of suffering, evil, and horror, wherein the sense of perception, an important aspect of a proper tragedy, is either missing or considerably reduced. Depravity, greed, ambition, malice, and stupidity are the guiding dieties in a tragical satire. Nevertheless, certain amount of grandeur is added to these. Here the emphasis is on the destructive ugliness and power of vice, and good is presented but in a precarious form.

In the world of a tragical satire stress is on the lowly and the mundane wherein the spiritual or the beautiful is in danger of being destroyed under the sheer weight of vice. The opposition of the good and the vice may be in the society or within the individual himself. The world of a tragical satire is more perilous and uncertain than that of a pure or formal satire. It presents greed, lust, vice, hate etc., cast in a heroic mould
to which the stakes are life, throne, power, etc. The tragic persona persists in his depravity and outrage and though he has tragic perceptions and is offered chances of redemption but he rejects them. For example, Tamburlaine's perception at the end of his career is that he failed to conquer the territories he had wanted to. The Young Mortimer only perceives that his machiavellian machinations would take him no further and hence he is forced to accept his doom. Similar is the perception of Barabas, the Jew, who only realizes that his tricks have, contrary to his plan, trapped him fatally. Dr. Faustus, instead of accepting the inevitable, covers and shrieks. All the heroism and stature of the Marlovian protagonists crumble down and the heroes are defeated in literal terms whereas Shakespeare's tragic protagonists achieve a glorious victory through their perception of truth and a higher vision of life. Even the most Satanic of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists, Macbeth, attains to this spiritual elevation. But as we will see the characters of Webster and Tourneur are more in line with the Marlovian protagonists than the Shakespearean.

The plot of a tragical satire is usually open-ended. Paradoxically it ends nearly where it begins. It is because the suffering individuals remain tied down to the "blood and mire" and complexities of lowly life. If the dramatists, like the
tragic dramatist, were interested in the resolution of the conflicts of evil, the structure of a tragical satire would have followed the pattern of resolution of a proper tragedy. In a tragedy, normally the division between evil and good is more explicit and though there is no poetic justice, evil is vanquished and good is rewarded in the sense that the protagonist attains a perception of higher reality. From the aesthetic point of view, poetic justice is there. But poetic justice in the worldly sense—material reward for virtue and punishment for evil—is not there. In a tragical satire the conflict is more diversified. It may be between evil and evil and between evil and good. Evil is always presented as destroying and self-destructive. It has a strange magnetic attraction to draw both its own kin and the opposites, i.e. virtue towards itself. Hence the picture of life that emerges is one of total anarchy and chaos. Since the presence of a morally ordered universe is deliberately played down and the role of the supernatural or higher reality is either absent or only nominal, the suffering becomes more horrifying than aesthetically and emotionally appealing.

In a tragical satire there is a satiric persona who directs his attack with vigour and acts as a poetic device to express the authorial satiric vision. This satiric
persona is not a complex character and is incapable of any intrinsic change through suffering. "No ambiguity, no doubt about himself, no sense of mystery troubles him and he retains his monolithic certainty." The plot of a tragedy as defined by Francis Fergusson, has the rhythm of "purpose, passion, and perception." The tragic hero does something (purpose), and he suffers the consequences of his deeds (Passion), and this suffering eventually leads him to a new vision or understanding of himself as well as of human existence (perception). In a tragical satire the first two elements are present but the most important act of perception is lacking and hence the movement of the action is only forward. Very often there is some glittering of perception but it is no more than a much diminished recognition as compared with the tragic perception.

The tragic satirist uses a host of conventional devices of exaggeration, understatement, undercutting, grotesquity, caricature, and contrast and reversals, which help bring out the sham hidden under what appears to be real. Sometimes the comic devices - incongruity, parody, distortion, etc., are also used.

Tragical satire relies on norms which are universal, transcending time and topicality. Here the function of satire is to "reveal man's common mortality and his involvement in evil, the tragic story is the story of a few who find courage to defy such revelations." Dissimulation either deliberate or resulting from misdirection is one of the principal sources of a tragical satire. Pretence, hypocrisy, deceit, or self-deceit, and pride become the chief attributes of the tragic protagonist. In a tragical satire the tragic satirist is not much concerned with the actions as in the hypocritical justifications offered for them.

The characters in a tragical satire, who involve themselves in evil, appear more ridiculous than wicked. Of course the tragic satirist is not interested in the novelty of ideas; rather he pays a greater attention to the manners of presenting them.

The purpose of the tragic satirist is to expose some aspect of human behaviour which seems to him foolish or vicious to demonstrate clinically that the behaviour in question is ridiculous or wicked or repulsive and to try to

36. Travis Bogard, p.147.
37. See "Introduction" to Satire (The Univ. Press, Iowa, 1967), p. VIII.
stimulate in his reader the appropriate negative response which prepares the way to positive action.\textsuperscript{38} In a tragical satire clear-cut detachment is not always possible because quite often the audience tends to get involved in the "heroic depravity" of the protagonist. The audience remains in a state of uncertainty or ambiguity during the course of the action and swings between "involvement and disgust, endorsement and indignation."\textsuperscript{39} These aspects of Tragical


\textsuperscript{39} Travis Bogard, \textit{The Tragic Satire of John Webster}, pp.5-6.