CHAPTER - V

THE ATHEIST'S TRAGEDY

The Atheist's Tragedy has a close parallelism with The Revenger's Tragedy as well as with the two tragedies of Webster analysed earlier. This play, too, is concerned with an exploration of evil both in the society as well as in human nature. The milieu is characterized by Machiavellian materialism and violation of values at all levels--social, religious, political, familial and above all human. Like a typical tragical satire the play abounds in intrigues, conspiracies, mutual distrust, and collapse of values which sustain life at human as well as social levels. Tourneur uses both conventional dramatic devices and unexpected reversals which produce the effect of theatricality. Maxims and proverbs are strewn all over the play along with sometimes unnecessarily prolix generalizations which hamper the proper movement of the plot. The action of the play is full of sufferings, tortures, bloodshed, and murders. There is a deliberate attempt by the dramatist towards the end of the play to restore a sense of balance and order in the chaotic world which was the result of the topsy-turvy values guiding the life of the inhabitants of the world of The Atheist's Tragedy. But the increasingly thickening gloom is not fully dissipated towards the end and the seeming perception attained by the evil characters remains
of doubtful validity because these perceptions are more in the nature of compulsive situations and exegencies created by the circumstances than a proper inner growth of the souls of the evil characters. Our analysis of the play in the following paragraphs will demonstrate that the play falls in line with a tragical satire than a tragicomedy, even though virtue is rewarded in the end. It cannot be regarded a tragicomedy because in a tragicomedy catastrophe is threatened but finally averted. Here catastrophe does overtake the evil practitioners whose activities contribute to the overwhelming gloom and sense of rottenness, whereas the couple of characters who are rewarded, contribute only marginally to the thematic and structural designs of the play. Inspite of the reward to virtue, the gloom is so thick that it is hardly dissipated towards the end of the play and the restoration of order over chaos seems to be more in the nature of a conventional structural device than a convincing outcome of the action of the play.

D'Amville, the central character of the drama, plays the title role. He has two sons, Rousard and Sebastian, but none of them is able to manage his future life. Hence D'Amville, to set a rich future for his posterity, plans to usurp the property of his own brother, Montferrers. The latter, after his death, has only one heir in the form of a son, Charlemont. To usurp Montferrers' property D'Amville
conspires to send Charlemont away to war on a false pretext. Charlemont is in love with Castabella, the only heir to Lord Belforest and she is betrothed to him. But D'Amville wants to marry Castabella to one of his sons in order to inherit her property. Charlemont, a virtuous and a firm believer in the code of honour of his family, is easily persuaded by D'Amville to join the war for the sake of the honour of his family. In his absence, D'Amville treacherously murders Montferrers and forcibly marries Castabella to his sickly son Rousard. Ultimately he usurps the property of both Charlemont and Castabella. When Charlemont returns from the war, D'Amville arrests him and throws him into prison. Towards the end of the play D'Amville tries to kill Charlemont. But he strikes his own brains out with an axe. Charlemont is saved and is united with Castabella and regains his usurped property. Parallel to this runs another story which deals with the lustful affairs of Levidulcia, the wife of Lord Belforest and other criminals. Finally all the corrupt persons are duly punished and law and order seems to be restored at the end of the play.

The first Act consists of four movements. At the very outset D'Amville plans how to usurp Montferrers', property and marry Castabella to his son Rousard. He succeeds in his mission partly by getting Charlemont sent to the war. This enables him to get Castabella forcibly
married to Rousard. But within the family of D'Amville, Sebastian opposes this marriage and favours Castabella in her disapproval of the meritless groom that Rousard is.

In the very opening situation of the first Act, D'Amville and Borachio, the two chief evil participants in the main action of the play, offer a choric commentary on human life in general, which is a major characteristic of a tragical satire:

Borachio, thou art read in
Nature and her large philosophy
Observ'st thou not the very selfsame course
Of revolution both in man and beast?¹

The same, for birth, growth, state, decay, and death;
Only a man's beholding to his Nature
For th' better composition o' the two.²

But according to the observation of D'Amville and Borachio this "better composition of the two" is of little profit because "a man becomes/ A fool as little knowing as a beast." Both D'Amville and Borachio are firm believers in the philosophy of Nature. Borachio supports this argument thus:

All subsequent references are to this edition of the text.
2. Ibid., p.5.
... there's nothing in a man above
His Nature, if there were, considering 't is
His being's excellency 't would not yield
To Nature's weakness....

The general commentary on the transitoriness of human
life is dramatically directed to the particular by D'Amville:

Then if death casts up
Our total sum of joy and happiness,
Let me have all my senses feasted in
Th' abundant fulness of delight at once
And with a sweet insensible increase
Of pleasing surfiet melt into my dust.

Not only this, D'Amville believes that "pleasure only flows/
upon the stream of riches." Borachio, too, supports it,
"wealth is lord/ of all felicity." D'Amville's greed for
hoarding wealth for himself and his progeny is revealed in
his long soliloquy on the importance of conserving and
increasing "substance" to support one's position:

And for my children, they are as near to me
As branches to the tree whereon they grow,
And may as numerously be multipli'd.
As they increase, so should my providence,
For from my substance they receive the sap
Whereby they live and flourish.

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p.6.
The commentaries of the above mentioned characters on materialism, self-aggrandisement as well as philosophic perception of all the frailties that human flesh is heir to form the crux of the main thematic burden of the play. They show the elements of both satire and tragic action which, intermingled together, develop the drama of the play.

D'Amville-Borachio conversation is temporarily interrupted by Charlemont's hesitation to join the war. The reason why Charlemont does not want to go to the war is two fold: first he is the only son and heir to his father, and secondly Charlemont is denied maintenance by his father. D'Amville at once catches the second point and encourages Charlemont by offering him a 'thousand crowns'. D'Amville's hypocritically simulating nature is easily seen when he says:

... I'd disinherit my posterity
To purchase honour. 'Tis an interest
I prize above the principal of wealth. 6

Charlemont is easily persuaded by D'Amville by offering him a 'thousand crowns'. Before Charlemont leaves D'Amville he enters into a bond for "the repayment of this gold." After Charlemont takes leave the earlier interrupted conversation between D'Amville and Borachio is resumed. Earlier the

6. Ibid., p.7.
argument was only about wealth but this time it shifts to the means "how to compass it." The way is hinted at by Borachio:

Young Charlemont is going to the war....
The happy absence of this Charlemont
A subject for commodious providence.
He has a wealthy father, ready even
To drop into his grave and no man's power
When Charlemont is gone, can interpose
'T wixt you and him.'

Borachio himself accepts the offer to complete this treacherous task. For this he is promised "thy reward shall parallel thy worth." The first movement of the first Act comes to an end with D'Amville's yet another exposition of his lust for wealth when he sees his two sons Rousard and Sebastian:

Here are my sons....
There's my eternity. My life in them
And their succession shall for ever live,
And in my reason dwells the providence
To add to life as much of happiness.
Let all men lose, so I increase my gain
I have no feeling of another's pain.

D'Amville's self-portrayal significantly contrasts with his

7. Ibid., p.8.
8. Ibid., p.9.
earlier musings over the transitoriness and essential
bestiality of human life and nature. It also brings into
bold relief his cunning hypocritical nature which he tries
to hide by his proclivities to philosophise.

So far in the action of the play we have seen that
honesty in the world of The Atheist's Tragedy is nothing but
"miserable and contemptible quality" and "it is wealth which
is the lord." Here we notice an echoe from the earlier play
of Tourneur where almost all the villainous deeds have been
done for the sake of wealth alone. Preferment and self-
advancement, even by wading through blood of kinsmen, is
one of the main themes of the play. This is explicitly
confessed by D'Amville, "Let all men lose so I increase my
gain/ I have no feeling of another's pain."

D'Amville's evil machinations are contrasted with
Montferrers' pitious and heart-rending urge to stop
Charlemont from going to the war. But D'Amville privately
convinces Montferrers and cunningly diverts his attention
from Charlemont. He succeeds in his mission to persuade
Montferrersin his own favour. 9

D'Amville's argument is well supported by Lord
Belforest and his lady Levidulcia. Contrasted to this is

9. Ibid., p.10.
Castabella's pathetic love-lorn condition. Guided by her honest amorous emotions she naturally does not want Charlemont to go to the war. But all her repeated urges are of no avail. Before Charlemont bids farewell to Castabella, he appoints Languebeau Snuff, a puritan, as his faithful friend and guard to Castabella. Snuff, as a true friend of Charlemont, witnesses the contract of Castabella's love to Charlemont and assures them:

I salute you both with the spirit of copulation. I am already informed of your matrimonial purposes and will be a testimony to the integrity of your promises. ¹⁰

The above speech is ironically hypocritical, because later on Snuff, too, proves false to his promises. Immediately after Charlemont's departure, things begin to turn against Castabella. Her foreseeing of "some sad event will follow my sad fears," 'fearful soul', 'heavy clouds', 'mourning heads', 'ill success', etc., mentioned in her departing speech, begin to concretise in action. D'Amville succeeds in his strategy to win over Snuff in his favour with the help of gold. Snuff willingly accepts the job of enticing Castabella to amorously respond in favour of D'Amville's sickly son Rousard. The 'faithful' friend of Charlemont turns false to his promises which he had made earlier. Instead of guarding

¹⁰. Ibid., p.13.
Castabella Languebeau begins to entice her to lust as planned by D'Amville. His true hypocritical nature is revealed when he openly plays a pander and says:

Charlemont, thy gratuity and my promises were both,  
But words, and both like words shall vanish into air  
For thy poor empty hand I must be mute,  
This gives me feeling of a better suit.¹¹

This behaviour and attitude of Languebeau show how virtue yields to the pressure of materialism and low desires and thus thicken the ever-increasing gloom of the dramatic world of the play where values sustaining normal life have turned topsy-turvical.

D'Amville as a participant in the action is happy at the desired role played by Languebeau. But as a satiric commentator he does not spare Languebeau from being whipped satirically.

And seems to know if any benefit  
Arrives of religion after death,  
Yet but compare 's profession with his life;  
They so directly contradict themselves  
As if the end of his instructions were  
But to divert the world from sin that he  
More easily might engross it to himself.  
By that I am confirm'd an atheist.¹²

¹¹. Ibid., p.17.  
¹². Ibid.
Though here D'Amville is a commentator as well as a participant in the drama, his role is functionally different from the similar role played by Antonio in the opening situation of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. While D'Amville justifies his atheism concluded from his observation of the distortion and degeneration of virtue, Antonio leaves out the personal involvement altogether.

After describing Languebeau's true profession D'Amville reveals his own motive behind sending Charlemont away to the war and arranging Castabella's marriage with Rousard:

Well, Charlemont is gone and here thou see'st
His absence the foundation of my plot.
He is the man whom Castabella loves
That was the reason I propounded him
Employment fix'd upon a foreign place,
To draw his inclination out o' th' way.\(^{13}\)

This Castabella is a wealthy heir;
And by her marriage with my elder son;
My house is honour'd and my state increas'd.
This work alone deserves my industry.\(^{14}\)

Borachio becomes a willing instrument to help in the execution of the plot of D'Amville. The second movement of

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the first Act comes to an end with D'Amville-Borachio's treacherous intrigue to turn Castabella against Charlemont.

In this situation Languebeau's role of a treacherous villain, hints at the widespread corruption prevailing among the religious persons who are supposed to set right examples before the society. D'Amville's denial of anything above human nature and his blind pursuit after sensual pleasures to the complete flouting of all established values show that he is following his avowed path of atheism. The theme of preferment and advancement is presented through Languebeau who, for the sake of money, turns into a pander from a religious person. The images, particularly drawn from animals, reinforce the rottenness and low-level existence which characterise the world of the play. From the structural point of view the play exploits the conventional device of disguise to manipulate evil deeds as well as to effect the movement of the action and is in keeping with the convention of a tragical satire.

The rottenness of the world of the play, because of the topsyturvical state of all values, is further thickened when we find that the case of the impotent Rousard is favoured even by the parents of Castabella, who are instigated and assisted by Languebeau Snuff. The mother, after her acquiescence to Languebeau's strategies, argues thus:
Verily, that disobedience doth not become a child.  
It proceedeth from an unsanctified liberty.  
You will be accessory to your own dishonour if you  
suffer it.  

Unaware of any other evil plan, Belforest is easily persuaded by Languebeau and resolves:

Your honest wisdom has advis'd me well.  
Once more I'll move her by persuasive means.  
If she resist, all mildness set apart,  
I will make use of my authority.  
... This instant night she shall be married.  

The next havoc which Castabella faces, appears in the form of Languebeau Snuff. Castabella's protestations of faithfulness, true love, and comitment to the contract of her marriage with Charlemont, do not have any effect on Languebeau. Instead he tries to divert her attention from Charlemont and says:

Since Charlemont's absence I have weighed his love with the spirit of consideration, and in sincerity I find it to be frivolous and vain. Withdraw your respect; his affection deserveth it not.  

Can he deserve your love who, in neglect  
Of your delightful conversation and  
In obstinate contempt of all your prayers  

15. Ibid., pp.21-22.  
16. Ibid., p.22.  
17. Ibid.
And tears, absents himself so far from you.\textsuperscript{18}

Castabella's virtuousness and firm resolve to love Charlemont is contrasted with her mother's animalistically passionate nature. Levidulcia, a perfect woman of the court, knows well how to remain in the limelight of the society. Like D'Amville she knows that in a woman "the passage lies not through her reason but her blood." She is well versed in enjoying luxurious life through the various means which nature has provided to men. She tries to convince Castabella in her characteristic manner:

How wouldst thou call the child
That being rais'd with cost and tenderness
To full ability of body and means
Denies relief unto the parents who
Bestow'd that bringing up?\textsuperscript{18}

Nature, the loving mother of us all,
Brought forth a woman for her own relief,
By generation to revive her age,
Which, now thou hast ability and means
Presented, most unkindly dost deny.\textsuperscript{20}

Levidulcia's typical character of a lustful woman and a follower of nature is best represented in the following

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{18} Ibid., p.23.
\bibitem{19} Ibid., p.24.
\bibitem{20} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
speech when she strongly disapproves of all the pathetic protestations of Castabella:

Prefer'st th' affection of an absent love
Before the sweet possession of man,
The barren mind before the fruitful body
Where our creation has no reference.
To man but in his body - - - - -
Wise Nature; therefore, hath
Our greatest pleasure in that greatest work,
Which being offer'd thee, thy ignorance
Refuses for th' imaginary joy
Of an unsatisfi'd affection
To an absent man. 21

Castabella's helpless condition is worth noticing when she kneels down to one person after the other. All her pleas go awry and she is forcibly prepared to marry Rousard. However, among all the evil persons, D'Amville's younger son Sebastian emerges as the defender of Castabella. He boldly opposes the forced marriage calling it "A rape, a rape, a rape;... To marry one ... with him she would not." But Sebastian, too, like Castabella remains helpless and he could not save the situation.

The first Act comes to an end with Sebastian's satiric commentary which is aimed at the religious profession of Languebeau Snuff: "And verify the proverb the nearer the Church, the farther from god." 22

21. Ibid., pp.24-25.
22. Ibid., p.27.
By the end of Act I almost all the major characters with their characteristic manners are introduced. The chief motives, moods, and situations which set the foundation of the action of the play are clarified in this Act. Contrast between virtue and vice, passion and reason, has been presented by the two central characters--D'Amville and Charlemont. At the very opening of the play it is made clear that in the dramatic world of Tourneur there is no place for the virtuous. Lust for preferment, and fleshly pleasures has transformed Tourneur's dramatic world into one of utter chaos.

By the end of Act I we saw that all the issues concerning the thematic and structural designs of a tragical satire have been introduced and substantially developed. The second Act chiefly deals with D'Amville's apparently successful manoeuvres. First of all D'Amville and Borachio brutally murder Montferrers. Secondly the chief participants of the sub-plot are introduced in the action with their characteristic manners. The Act opens with a banquet which is specially arranged in honour of the marriage ceremony of Rousard with Castabella. In the midst of the banquet the preplanned entry of the disguised Borachio changes the direction of the current of the action. His appearance as a soldier, "newly returned from Ostend," in disguise makes Montferrers suspicious. Through the long
narrative Borachio tells that during the fight with the enemy Charlemont is slain. He supports this concocted news of Charlemont's death with the duplicate scarf which Charlemont used to put on during the fight. At this D'Amville outwardly shows grief but inwardly feels happy when he calls Borachio "a most delicate sweet villain." Now he feels hopeful of his future success when he asserts:

So the foundation's laid. Now by degrees
The work will rise and soon be perfected.23

D'Amville's corrupt and hypocritical nature is highlighted by the puritan Languebeau Snuff. After Borachio's revelation of the false concocted story Snuff suggests Montferrers to make a will because his only heir, Charlemont, is killed in the war. Helpless Montferrers is easily convinced by the hypocritical puritan and the former agrees to make a will.

D'Amville's evil machinations follow the rehearsal of the murder of Montferrers. During the course of the rehearsal D'Amville proudly cheers: "Fortune, I honour thee. My plot still rises/ According to the model of mine own desires." Every thing seems to be now in favour of D'Amville who accompanies Montferrers for a walk to suit his purpose.

In the following situation a contrast between virtue and vice is presented through Levidulcia and Castabella.

23. Ibid., p.33.
In the opening soliloquy, Castabella stoically endures the judgement of heaven. This is contrasted with Levidulcia's fickleness and lecherous character. The béstiality of her nature is evinced in her unquenchable sexual appetite which she satisfies by proving false to the sanctity of her nuptial bed. Her courting Sebastian and then Fresco hints at her lustful nature. This becomes more abhorable when contrasted with Castabella's constant nature and her firm belief in the divine power. The figures-in-speech are followed by figures-in-action as Borachio appears with a stone, in each hand, showing the progress of D'Amville's plot. This is hinted at by Borachio:

Such stones men use to raise a house upon,
But with these stones I go to ruin one.24

According to a preplanned intrigue D'Amville walks with Montferrers in the dead dark of the night. Montferrers' feeling uneasiness is a sort of a premonition of a disaster. He rightly perceives:

My soul's oppres'd with grief. 'T lies heavey at
My heart O my departed son, ere long
I shall be with thee.25

24. Ibid., p.40.
25. Ibid., p.43.
This premonition is followed by action when D'Ammville thrusts Montferrers down into the gravel pit where he dies. To gull suspicion and convince others, D'Ammville simulates grief and shock.

But very soon this simulation is exposed when D'Ammville and Borachio themselves reveal their real nature. D'Ammville's foundation of his plot is already laid; the death of Montferrers further facilitates it.

During D'Ammville-Borachio's gloating over their successfully manipulating the murder of Montferrers, the intervention of the supernatural power is seen in the form of "thunder and lightning." At first D'Ammville's response to it is as of a "mere effect of nature" but later on he feels it as a "brave noise." Borachio, too, perceives it as a fearful noise. Though the 'thunder and lightning' has a dramatic significance other than the ones realized by Borachio and D'Ammville, its full significance becomes clear only later in the play:

I'll wear thy colours at his funeral.

D'Ammville-Borachio's evil machinations are suspended for some time and the action of the sub-plot is taken up for further development. We encounter here a number of courtship

26. Ibid., p.44.
27. Ibid., p.48.
scenes involving Levidulcia, Fresco, and Sebastian. Fresco's tactlessness in love is contrasted with Sebastian's bold moves which he makes towards Levidulcia. But before he could satisfy Levidulcia's hot lust, Belforest's entry frightens them away. Levidulcia is caught almost red-handed in a lustful course of action, but as a typical court lady she tries to save her face by narrating a concocted story to Fresco which the latter is advised to communicate to Belforest.

The last movement of the second Act deals with the revelation by the ghost about Montferrers' death. Charlemont naturally gets frightened but manages to retain his sanity and restraint. For a moment he is caught by a dilemma which is Hegelian in import. The ghost advises him to resign to his lot when he has been disinherited because he has been assumed to be dead. This would require his home return. But then he feels duty-bound to proceed to the war which he has been enjoined upon as a part of the bigger strategies of the agents of evil.

It is needful here to comment on the appearance of the supernatural power in the form of the ghost which has appeared twice in the second Act. At first the thunder appears before D'Amville who takes it as a favourable noise for his evil machinations. But it foretells his destructive future course which is rightly perceived by Borachio.
Secondly the inciting of revenge by the ghost of Montferrers is different from that of the conventional revenge plays. Conventionally the ghost of the murdered person incites revenge to be taken by a near kin. Thirdly through the introduction of the members of the sub-plot, we come to know that the central character—Levidulcia—is a firm believer in the philosophy of Nature. For her reason exists nowhere and passion controls the inner self of a woman. Hence the evil nature of the central characters of the two plots hints at the close parallelism between the sub-plot and the main plot.

So far we have seen the development of the plot of D'Amville's 'Industry.' The third Act further shows a development in D'Amville's evil machinations. At the same time he is threatened by the appearance of the supernatural power. The third Act is full of paradoxical movements and unexpected reversals. Ironical and humorous situations add to the strength of the action of the play. The Act opens with the ironical situation when D'Amville appears with the funerals of both Montferrers and Charlemont. D'Amville's fearful reaction to what is written on the two epitaphs and particularly staring at Charlemont's grave shows his guilty self:

O might that fire revive the ashes of
This phoenix! Yet the wonder would not be
So great as he was good and wond'red at
For that. 28

The above speech contains dramatic irony because the 'phoenix' mentioned by D'Amville does revive in the following action of the play. Further Charlemont is alive and D'Amville knows well this only too. Yet to convince the public he has 'bary'd under the marble stone' Charlemont's live hopes. D'Amville's false tears are contrasted with the really pathetic mourning of Castabella. This shows a deliberately introduced incongruency between pretence and truth to highlight the rottenness of the whole situation.

Reversal of situation starts taking place when Charlemont meets Castabella in the churchyard where she is mourning over his grave. Charlemont's meeting with Castabella should bring joy; instead he faces 'grief above griefes' when she reveals her suffering. The discovery of Montferrers' death and Castabella's forced marriage do not have any significant effect on Charlemont.

At the end of the first Act we noticed that Sebastian had changed his attitude towards Charlemont. For this, now D'Amville effects his ouster from the family. This is

28. Ibid., p.59.
followed by Charlemont's meeting with D'Amville. The latter counterfeits to take the former as a ghost. D'Amville, frightened by Charlemont's unexpected presence, cries, "O stay. Compose me. I dissolve." D'Amville tries to drag Charlemont away and fights with the latter. Sebastian again changes and defends his father but during this Sebastian receives fatal wounds. Before Charlemont could kill him the manipulated appearance of Montferrers' ghost again warns his son:

Let him revenge my murder and thy wrongs
To whom the justice of revenge belongs.  

When D'Amville finds no other circumstance to charge Charlemont, he arrests him on the charge for not paying back the sum of a "thousand crowns." At the same moment Sebastian receives a sum of a "thousand crowns" as compensation for the wounds he has received in the fight with Charlemont. After this Sebastian again changes and starts thinking of doing a favour to the virtuous, "I have a thousand crowns. Honesty tells me 't were well done to release Charlemont."

The following movement of the action opens with Charlemont's recounting the predicament of honest men

29. Ibid., p.65.
surrounded by evil and not helped by God. But even in this extremely miserable state he does not lose faith in divine justice and blames human agents of evil nature for perpetrating tortures on the innocent. Charlemont now resolves to put up a resistance against the odds. However, he draws consolation from the realisation that there are people who are worse than him. Charlemont's long speech in this regard is in the nature of a choric commentary, not on any topical issue but on human predicament in general. While he is defending himself from falling into the trap of despair, Tourneur manipulates the entry of Sebastian which is both theatrically and dramatically significant. He comes as Charlemont's saviour from the present enemies. Sebastian offers Charlemont money that he has received from D'Amville in the form of compensation for his injuries. This offer is motivated by Sebastian's sense of gratitude at Charlemont's sparing him his life. But lest Charlemont should feel insulted at being offered help in his miserable condition Sebastian tells him a lie that the money he is offering has come from his father's benign inclination towards him. Sebastian's offer of a 'thousand crowns' for releasing Charlemont leads the latter to comment philosophically on the fruitful results of patience in contrast with selfish deeds:

I was a baron; that thy father has

compromise with Charlemont; a

assigns this task to Borachio. Once again the place for his
Depriv'd me of
Instead of that I am
Created king. I've lost a signory
That was confin'd within a piece of earth,
A wart upon the body of the world,
But now I am an emp'ror of a world,
This little world of man. My passions are
My subjects and I can command them laugh,
Whilst thou dost tickle 'em to death with misery. 30

Impressed by this attitude of Charlemont, Sebastian releases him.

Contrast in attitudes of the virtuous with the vice becomes the main concern of the following movement. Castabella humbly requests D'Amville to release Charlemont but D'Amville is determined to torture her with her lover and neglects all her pitifully made supplications. This is ironical, too, because Charlemont is already released by Sebastian. When Charlemont appears with Sebastian before D'Amville he feels surprised and calls Sebastian a villain. Sebastian satirically replies, "you are my father." This further sets an opposition and a hurdle to D'Amville's smooth flow of his plot.

Now seeing the situation going out of his hands, D'Amville simulates sympathy for Charlemont:

I will excuse you
To lose a father and, as you may think,
Be disinherited, it must be granted....
I will supply your father's vacant place. 31

The third Act comes to an end with a seeming compromise between Charlemont and D'Amville, particularly initiated by D'Amville who pretends to Charlemont "the eternal bond of our (his) concluded love." Virtuous Charlemont again fails to understand the 'atheist,' D'Amville and embraces him. This shows that even the virtuous has to dissemble and take shelter under the powerful shade of evil.

In the forth Act the characteristic evil designs of both D'Amville and Levidulcia are further developed. Here the action of the sub-plot runs parallel to the action of the main-plot. However, at the very opening of the Act the sub-plot overtakes the main plot, and Soquette is seen with her professional needle-work which consists of various trees, their branches, leaves and flowers. Along with this needle-work presentation, lustful courting runs on among Sebastian, Soquette, Cataplasma, Languebeau, and Levidulcia. Though Languebeau is himself involved in the lustful deeds he comments on this course: "Purity be in this house." Levidulcia's sexual relations with Sebastian, Fresco, and Snuff hint at her most rotten personality.

31. Ibid., p.72.
The needle-work of Cataplasma, symbolizes sexual love. 'The medlar', 'plum tree', 'savin tree', 'the gum issuing out of the perished joints', 'honey suckle', 'popering pear tree', 'wanton stream', which comprise the needle-work, are all symbols of sexuality. It is a commentary on Sebastian's and Levidulcia's wantonness. It also symbolizes D'Amville's barren posterity. Like a 'fruitful tree' D'Amville has two sons as its branches. But like the dead and rotten branches, D'Amville's sons are unable to continue their generation.

The action of the sub-plot is temporarily suspended to allow the main plot to progress. Contrary to the earlier compromise with Charlemont, D'Amville now seeks his life and assigns this task to Borachio. Once again the place for his murder is chosen, which is 'the sacred Churchyard'. D'Amville does not want to miss this golden opportunity for Charlemont's murder. His elder son is impotent, and the younger son is a man of humour. So D'Amville gathers courage to do the task himself:

...I hope I have a body
That will not suffer me to lose my labour.
For want of issue yet. But then 't must be
A bastard. Tush, they only father bastards
That father other men's begettings. Daughter!
Be it mine own, let it come whence it will.
I am resolv'd.32

32. Ibid., p.80.
From the above speech it is clear that D'Amville is completely under the control of the beast in him. He does not fear or hesitate to violate the familial values and shamelessly wants to seduce Castabella.

D'Amville's corrupt nature is again contrasted with that of Charlemont which is amply evinced in the latter's meditation in the sacred Churchyard. During his meditation Borachio discharges fire on him, but luckily the pistol misfires and Charlemont is saved. In a defensive move Charlemont wounds Borachio and the latter dies. Besides murder, the sacred Churchyard is also chosen for the fulfillment of lust by the lustful partners. Languebeau and Soquette have fixed their meeting in the Churchyard nearly at the same place where, after killing Borachio, Charlemont hides himself. Before they could fulfil their desire, Charlemont frightens them away and again hides in the charnel house thinking, "It may be Heaven reserves me to some better end." Indeed he is reserved for some better end which will be seen a little later.

Resolved to continue his future generation D'Amville walks with Castabella in the Churchyard. He frankly discloses his business to Castabella:

'Tis true. By my
Persuasion thou wert forc'd to marry one
Unable to perform the office of
A husband. I was author of the wrong.
My conscience suffers under 't and I would
Disburden it by satisfaction....
I will supply that pleasure to thee which he cannot. 33

Castabella's helplessness before the powerful evil is worth noticing here. She repeatedly urges heaven to save her honour, but it is of no avail. D'Amville denies the existence of any supernatural power and even challenges Castabella, "Nay then invoke/ Your great suppos'd protector./ I'll do it."

At this juncture Tourneur manipulates the plot and deliberately brings in the divine intervention in the form of Charlemont who appears in disguise in the dress which Languebeau had left in confusion. He not only protects Castabella but also frightens D'Amville away.

Languebeau again enters the Churchyard pursuing his lustful partner Soquette. He catches sight of Borachio's dead body and mistakes it for Soquette's. But realizing the fact, he cries "Murder: Murder." D'Amville responds to the call. He looks upon a death's head and stares at it:

Why dost thou stare upon me? Thou art not

33. Ibid., p. 85.
The skull of him I murder'd. What hast thou
To do to vex my conscience.  

D'Amville's guilty nature is easily seen from the above speech. This is further perceived in the following speech:

... but now that I begin to feel
The loathsome horror of my sin and, like
A lecher empty'd of his lust, desire
To bury my face under my eyebrows and
Would steel from my shame unseen, she meets me
I' the face with all her light corrupted eyes
To challenge payment o' me.

This pricking of the conscience is very soon quietened and D'Amville gathers courage to face whatever calamity comes in his way. But guilty conscience seems to continue to trouble him:

... O behold!
Younder's the ghost of old Montferrers in
A long white sheet, climbing yond' lofty mountain
To complain to Heav'n of me. Montferrers!
'Pox o' fearfulness. 'Tis nothing but
A fair white cloud. Why, was I born a coward?
He lies that says so.

34. Ibid., p.89.
35. Ibid., p.90.
36. Ibid.
This sense of guilty feeling is heavily burdened by Languebeau when he discovers Borachio's murdered body and cries for help. Languebeau's cries for D'Amville are like 'Mountains' and he again fears as if the "ghost of old Montferrers haunts me (him)." The effect of distraction continues to weigh on D'Amville's mind. Seeing Languebeau coming towards him D'Amville takes him to be: "Black Beelzebub/ And all his hellhounds come to apprehend me (him)." The conflict of passion and reason troubles D'Amville all the way since his opposition by Sebastian. Seeking after the possible murderer of Borachio, D'Amville approaches the sleeping Castabella and Charlemont. He charges them with Borachio's murder, and announces the doom of execution on both of them. Here unlike D'Amville, Charlemont confesses that he has killed Borachio, but not intentionally.

Towards the end of the fourth Act the sub-plot is once again taken up. Till now Levidulcia's sexual relations were not known to her husband, Belforest. But her long absence, at times, makes Belforest suspicious of Levidulcia's character. This is confirmed by Fresco, who himself is one of the lovers of Levidulcia. He reveals that Sebastian often serves Levidulcia's pleasure. Before Belforest could reach Levidulcia, she fearfully suspects the former's
presence. Here Sebastian, who himself is involved in the lustful activities, does not spare the corrupt women and satirizes their fickleness in an answer to Levidulcia's "how many mistresses ha' you 'i' faith?" Sebastian replies:

In faith, none, for I think none of 'em are faithful, but otherwise as many as clean shirts. The love of a woman is like a mushroom; it grows in one night and will serve somewhat pleasingly next morning to breakfast, but afterwards waxes fulsome and unwholesome. 37

Though the commentary is made on corrupt women, the irony is that it is one evil character commenting on the other evil one. Meanwhile Belforest approaches and catches Levidulcia with Sebastian in the lustful course. In the violent rage and unbearable passion Belforest kills Sebastian but in exchange himself receives the death wound. When the two wounded lovers are staggering for death, Levidulcia appears. She confesses her shameful deed, and feeling guilty at heart stabs herself. Before death she realizes:

...The sea wants water enough to wash away The foulness of my name. O, in their wounds I feel my honour wounded to the death. 38

Levidulcia's confessional speech before death gives

37. Ibid., p.97.
38. Ibid., p.99.
an impression that she has perhaps attained to some higher truth. Her death does not lead her to any higher perception, and remains the outcome of her shameful deed. The fourth Act ends with a choric commentary:

O with what virtue lust should be withstood,
Since 'tis a fire quench'd seldom without blood.\textsuperscript{39}

The above comment reminds us of Cornelia's comments on lust and its consequences which she beheld in the lustful affairs between her daughter Vittoria and Brachiano:

Earthquakes, leave behind lead, stone
When they have tyrannized. But woe to ruin
Violent lust leaves none.\textsuperscript{40}

It is pertinent to recall here two things; first it is in the fitness of things that the pursuit of lust and murderous intentions are set in the dark, in a Churchyard; and secondly D'Amville's sexual advances towards Castabella make a climax of evil activities that violate all universal human values.

In the final Act all the loose ends of the different movements of the action are taken for conclusion. As we have already noticed, D'Amville's dream of his building up of

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p.100.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
a great plot, begins to crumble down. He is presented as a mad pursuer after wealth. In the very opening of the Act, D'Amville's idea of wealth as a supreme ruler of human life is presented through his handling of money which is collected as revenue after Montferrers' death. This is subtly commented upon by the watch who looks after it:

D'Amville. Leave me my gold,
Servant. And me my rest,
Two things where with one man is seldom blest. 41

The comment is made on the restless condition of greedy men such as D'Amville. D'Amville's blind faith in the power of wealth is stated in his following speech:

These are the stars whose operations make
The fortunes and the destinies of men ....
... These are the stars, the ministers of fate,
And man's high wisdom, the superior power
To which their forces are subordinate. 42

Tourneur keeps the moral perspective of the audience by opposing to D'Amville's eulogy of the power of wealth, the pragmatism and harsh truth contained in the ghost's warning:

D'Amville, with all thy wisdom th' art a fool,
Not like those fools that we term innocents,
But a most wretched miserable fool,

41. Ibid., p.101.
42. Ibid., pp.101-102.
Which instantly, to the confusion of
Thy projects, with despair thou shalt behold. 43

D'Amville does not feel thwarted by this precautionary
warning, rather he gathers courage to defy it. But once
again a reversal of situation takes place and D'Amville's
over-confidence is brought down to dust when the dead body
of his younger son is shown to him. Sebastian, as we know,
was slain by Belforest in the previous Act. D'Amville faces
shipwreck after shipwreck and now he hears the pathetic
groaning of Rousard who is struggling for life. But he
boldly faces this calamity and seeks the help of the
doctors:

Doctor, behold two patients in whose cure
Thy skill may purchase an eternal fame.
   . . . Now let thy practice and their sovereign use
Raise thee to wealth and honour. 44

From now onwards D'Amville starts suspecting the
favour of nature when he is repeatedly tortured by the
groaning of Rousard. He foresees his ruin thus:

   His gasping sighs are like the falling noise
      Of some great building when the groundwork, breaks
    On these two pillars stood the stately frame
    And architecture of my lofty house.

43. Ibid., p.102.
44. Ibid., p.104.
An earthquake shakes' em;  
The foundation shrinks.\textsuperscript{45}

D'Amville's hope of saving the life of Rousard fails him. The following extracts from D'Amville's last speeches throw ample light on the nature of the tragic perception that he attains to:

O there expires the date  
Of my posterity. Can Nature be  
So simple or malicious to destroy  
The reputation of her proper memory?

Now to myself I am ridiculous.  
Nature, thou art a traitor to my soul.  
Thou hast abus'd my trust. I will complain  
To a superior court to right my wrong....  
... I the sense of death  
Begins to trouble my distracted soul.\textsuperscript{46}

D'Amville's seeming perception of some higher truth is worth noticing here. It is more an expression of his despair than of realising any higher truth which governs and controls human destiny in general. Like Marlowe's Tamburlaine he ends his long materialistic, self-aggrandising evil career with a sense of defeat and frustration.

Towards the end of the Act the conventional device of

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.105.  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p.106.
purgation of the evil atmosphere is brought in. Cataplasma who has been working as poison to womanhood, is punished and deprived of her valuables, which she got through immoral means. Secondly Languebeau is sent back to his original profession of tallow-makers. Here Languebeau's revelation of how he became a hypocrite throws light on the corrupt Belforest, too. The chief villainous piece of the drama, D'Amville, inspite of showing intermittent and sporadic qualm of conscience, continues to wade through evil. He tries to remove mercilessly all hurdles from the way of his avowed ambition to perpetuate his posterity through Machiavellian ways to fructify one's aspirations. The play ends with considerably truncated perceptions of any higher values by all characters. Charlemont, however, is singled out as a devotee of patience, as a virtue and a strong believer in the divine dispensation of justice. It is through his character that the dramatist introduces a moral conclusion in the play towards the end. Charlemont's self consoling in the following lines is a deliberate attempt at didacticism, a characteristic of tragical satire, and not a direct and convincing conclusion of the play worked out dramatically. The predominance of intrigues, coincidences theatrical horror and naked sexuality are too strong to make

47. Ibid., p.109.
the didacticism artistically effective:

Only to Heaven I attribute the work,
Whose gracious motives made me still forbear
To be mine own revenger.
Now I see
That patience is the honest man's revenge.48