CHAPTER FIVE

COLERIDGE: REMORSE

I.

Coleridge's second dramatic attempt Osorio was written three years after he had written the first act of The Fall of Robespierre. The first draft of the play was revised sixteen years later and entitled Remorse. Osorio "employed and strained" Coleridge's faculties for six or seven months and he was keen on making it a successful play. The suggestion to write a play — a tragedy — first came from Sheridan through Bowles (the poet). Coleridge writes to Sheridan on February 6, 1797: "I received a letter last Saturday . . . importing that you wished me to write a tragedy on some popular subject." To Josiah Wade he writes (March 16, 1797): "Sheridan has sent to me to write a Tragedy, which he promises me to introduce on Drury Lane Theatre with every possible advantage, and wishes me to sketch out one immediately and send him the sketch, when he will give his opinion on it." Coleridge even thought of Mrs Siddons and Kemble for playing the principal roles. "By a curious coincidence", a critic observes, "the two poets were simultaneously sickening for the poetic measles" — that is, engaged in writing a five-act tragedy — The Borderers and Osorio. Coleridge visited Wordsworth at Racedown on June 6, 1797 and, as Dorothy Wordsworth states, "the first thing that was read after he came was William's new poem The Ruined Cottage . . . ; and after tea he repeated to us two and half acts of his Tragedy Osorio. The
next morning William read his tragedy *The Borderers*.

On June 8, 1797 Coleridge confides to Joseph Cottle that "Wordsworth admires my Tragedy — which gives me great hopes." Next day he writes to another correspondent: "I am at present sojourning for a few days with Wordsworth, at Racedown Lodge, near Crewkerne: and finishing my Tragedy. Wordsworth, who is a strict and almost severe critic, thinks very highly of it — which gives me great hopes..." At last he finishes the first draft and reports to John Thelwall enthusiastically: "Oh! my Tragedy — it is finished, transcribed, and to be sent off today —." It seems two copies of the play were prepared, and one was sent to Bowles and another to William Linley, Sheridan's brother-in-law. The first information regarding the play's rejection by Sheridan is contained in Coleridge's letter to Thomas Poole written on December 2: "I received a letter from Linley, the long and the short of which is that Sheridan rejects the Tragedy — his sole objection is — the obscurity of the last three acts." It was indeed very unkind on the part of Sheridan to reject the play so unceremoniously, that too after Coleridge had made repeated anxious enquiries about the fate of the play which he wrote at Sheridan's suggestion and, moreover, when the latter promised his
assistance in adapting it for the stage with every possible advantage.*14 Sheridan even failed to return the manuscript.15 Surely he did not treat a struggling dramatist with justice. Coleridge naturally nursed a grudge against him and often referred to him in such abusive terms as "an unprincipled Rogue",16 "a damned impudent Dog".**17

* J.D.Campbell unconvincingly defends Sheridan in an article in Athenaeum ("Coleridge's Osorio and Remorse," No.3258, April 5, 1890, pp. 445-6). Sheridan even parodied before a large gathering in the house of a Member of Parliament a few lines with which a scene in a dark cave begins:

Drip! drip! drip! — in such a place as this

It has nothing else to do but drip! drip! drip!

This Sheridan twisted, perhaps to entertain his hearers, as

'Drip! drip! drip! there's nothing here but dripping.'


** Surprisingly, three years later Sheridan renewed his offer. Coleridge reports: "Sheridan has sent me a strange sort of message about my Tragedy — wishing me to write for the stage, making his old offers over again, and charging the non-representation of my play on my extreme obstinacy in refusing to have it at all altered! — Did you ever hear of such a damned impudent Dog?" (See Letters, Griggs, I, p. 608)
However, despite the rejection, Coleridge's interest in the drama remained unabated. He writes to Southey on July 22, 1801, "If I am well enough, I mean to alter, with a devilish sweep of revolution, my Tragedy, and publish it in a little volume by itself with a new name, as a Poem." His own estimate of the play was not low: he writes to Joseph Cottle on 28 May, 1798, that the play may be "a poor thing" when set beside Shakespeare and "one other Tragedy" (the reference here is obviously to Wordsworth's The Borderers), but compared with contemporary plays it shows considerable excellence. Consider, again, in this connection, his remark in a letter to Daniel Stuart, dated July 15, 1800: "I am convinced, I have no Talents for so arduous a species of composition as the Drama." He was in a mellowed mood when he wrote this letter and his reference to the Sheridan episode is without bitterness: "After all, I never blamed Mr. Sheridan for not bringing my play on the stage. God knows my inmost heart, and knows that I never for an hour together thought it likely to succeed — I blamed Mr. Sheridan solely for taking no kind of notice even of the receipt of my play . . ."

In the Preface to MS I, Coleridge admits that Osorio is "imperfect" and "obscure". He speaks of its defects as "millstones around the slender neck of its merits"; refers to its confused plot, full of unessential details, and to the central character's lack of motivation. But Osorio was appreciated by Coleridge's immediate circle. Poole, who saw only 1500 lines, was in "extacies
Southey thought it "wonderfully fine", destined to make "tragedy fashionable once again". Wordsworth's admiration has been referred to earlier. However, Coleridge was aware of the strength and limitations of the play and considered revising the play to make it fit for the stage. But "the only copy" was thought to be lost and when it was accidentally discovered among Godwin's books (the copy Coleridge had formerly given to Mrs. Robinson), the thought to recast the play was revived. This time it was for Covent Garden. Coleridge says: "I certainly will correct it; and changing both the title, and the names of the Dramatis Personae, procure it to be presented to Covent Garden." But Osorio took sixteen years to evolve into its new shape, rechristened Remorse. It was accepted by Drury Lane through the good offices of Byron who was on the committee.* His long struggle having ended happily Coleridge hastens to inform Josiah Wedgwood: "I am sure, that I shall have your good wishes on my behalf, when I tell you that I have had a Play accepted at Drury Lane, which is to come out at Christmas, and of the success of which both Manager, Common Men, and actors speak sanguinely." 

* The play ran for twenty nights, a unique privilege for a poetic play in the early nineteenth century. (There was also a special benefit night performance for the actor Alexander Rae in 1817.) Remorse was first produced on January 23, 1813 and first published at the end of January as a pamphlet.
The reception of Remorse was, in the main, favourable, although for many critics the excellence of the work lay in its poetry. Dorothy remarked to a friend, "Coleridge's play has been completely successful." Byron's praise was unstinted: "We have nothing to be mentioned in the same breath with Remorse for very many years. . ." Shelley paid an indirect tribute to it when he asserted that his play The Cenci was "certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of Remorse". Genest regarded it as a "tolerable drama" whose merit was its poetry alone. Henry Crabb Robinson too found its real beauty in the rich poetical passages. Michael Kelly who provided the music for Remorse referred to the "highly animating" poetry of the incantation scene. The contemporary reviews — some of them discussed the play in minute detail — were on the whole approbatory. There were qualified praises but none disputed the genius of the poet. "H" in Theatrical Inquisitor wrote: "We willingly confess indeed that we have read Mr. Coleridge's tragedy with considerable pleasure; as one of the best productions of a vicious and pedantic school, exhibiting frequent examples of original genius surmounting the fetters of prejudice and false taste by which it was encumbered . . . it possesses unusual and unexpected merit. . ." The unsigned reviewer in Christian Observer censured Sheridan for suppressing Coleridge's dramatic efforts which conduct "the public will not easily forgive". In the opinion of the reviewer of Critical Review "the whole
reputation of the piece must hereafter rest upon its merit in respect of poetical sentiment and expression; and (in this point of view only) we think it will always maintain a respectable station on the shelves of a dramatic library, long after it shall have ceased to figure on the boards of a theatre." (However, Francis Hodgson in Monthly Review advises Coleridge to put some rein on his fancy.) An unsigned article in British Review ends with the remark that "the attempt, executed as it is, indicates a powerful and creative mind; and induces us to hope that his muse will vindicate in some future production her tragic ascendancy." The reviewer does not fail to recognize some passages "of great sublimity" and the impact of the first part of the scene between Donna Teresa and her father Don Valdez. The longest review — it is also the most objective in approach — is by J.T. Coleridge in Quarterly Review. He recommends Remorse to readers and he is confident of its success in the closet. Pamphleteer records: "The Tragedy of Remorse is the most popular of all the works of Coleridge... it exhibits a rich vein of thought in a glowing luxuriance of diction, which the most unpoetical are compelled to admire." The Morning Post, representing the London press, paid some unqualified compliments: "... the language is equally poetic and impassioned, the incidents are sufficient to keep the attention alive during the whole of the representation, and some of the situations are strikingly calculated for dramatic effect... the moral is perfect... the style is throughout poetical and
Hazlitt did not fail to pay compliments where they were due. He appreciated Coleridge's devices to keep interest alive by providing "a succession of situations and events, which call forth the finest sensibilities of the human breast . . ." Hazlitt also reckoned it as one of "the more legitimate and higher productions of the drama".

Reviews particularly based on the stage performance of Remorse were, by and large, favourable. Morning Chronicle rated Coleridge, in so many words, as next to Shakespeare as a writer of tragedy. "Coleridge has produced a very beautiful representation of human nature," the critic commented, "which will vie with the best and most popular of our sentimental dramas." The reviewer paid compliments to Elliston and Rae who played the roles of Alvar and Ordonio respectively. "The coupé œil of the invocation scene was one of the most novel and picturesque we remember to have witnessed." His final report was that the "play was received throughout with marks of the deepest attention, and reiterated bursts of applause, and announced for a second representation amidst the acclamations of the audience." The critic of the Morning Post especially praised "the conception of the part of the Moorish woman" as "full of poetic imagination as it is bold and masterly". He also praised the opening scenes in particular as "truly sublime and interesting". The music introduced in the Spell (3d act), he continued, finely composed by Michael Kelley, "was exquisitely sung by Mrs. Bland". "The house was crowded in all parts at a very early hour", he concluded.
Even the unsympathetic critic of The Times appreciated the performance of the principal actors and reported that the "applause was violent at the fall of the curtain". Thomas Barnes remarked in Examiner: "We never saw more interest excited in a theatre than was expressed at the sorcery-scene in the third act. The altar flaming in the distance, the solemn invocation, the pealing music of the mystic song, altogether produced a combination so awful, as nearly to overpower reality, and make one half believe the enchantment which delighted our senses." The characterization of Ordonio and Alhadra received unmixed praise. "Both these characters are developed with a force of thinking, and a power of beauty, which have been long strangers to the stage," he wrote, "and the return of which we hail as the omen of better days." About acting he selected three persons: Mrs. Glover (as Alhadra) "surprised us", Rae, "in the last scene, showed that his face was capable of expressing the most complex working of the soul. Mr. Elliston was animated, and that is all". He, however, like many other critics, could not praise Miss Smith in the role of Teresa. The unsigned reviewer of Satirist overlooked those obvious merits of the drama which were appreciated by many discriminating critics. His comment that "it is all description and no action" is either unabashedly prejudiced or sprang from his ignorance of the art of poetic drama. He, however, made some appreciative remarks about the acting of Rae and Mrs. Glover. The unsigned reviewer of Theatrical Inquisitor thought that the only character that "does credit to the
talents of the author, is the wife of Isidore. He had also a few words of praise for Rae's talents as actor. European Magazine reported: "Many of the passages were received with loud, general, and prolonged applause. The tragedy was, indeed, heard from beginning to end with the most marked distinction and announced for repetition amid shouts from every corner of the theatre." Universal Magazine reported in a similar vein. While raising objections to certain improbabilities in the plot, Literary Panorama thought that "on the whole, the piece, which was extremely well received, is honourable to the genius of its author, and reputable to the discernment of the managers of the new theatre." The review published in La Belle Assemblee indicates the general response: "This tragedy does great credit to the genius of Mr. Coleridge; it is a pledge of greater excellence to be expected hereafter, and holds out a promise that the Muse of Tragedy has not quite deserted the English stage. The merit of Remorse consists in its proper union of the leading requisites of the Tragic Drama, combined by nature and reason, invigorated by passion, and embellished by the graces of poetry... The action is simple, single, varied in its progress and occasionally diverged from the regularity of narrative by an ingenious and natural complication of events. The characters... are upon the whole natural agents, and have that kind of novelty which shows the invention of the author, without subjecting him to much sacrifice of probability to produce them. The dialogue
is in the true dramatic spirit: it never flags, nor declines into supineness and stagnation of narrative. The poetry is rather vigorous than elegant; ... The Tragedy was admirably represented, and received with general approbation. We trust that it will satisfy every expectation of its excellent author." 68

The managers and performers who were connected in one way or other with the management or performance of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, were full of praise for this "fine tragedy". 69 "Elliston is in raptures, and Tom Dibdin ... is speechless with ecstasy. Arnold, the Monarch and the Magnus Apollo of regenerated Drury; Johnstonian Raymond too; ... all declare, that, since the time of Shakespeare, so wonderful a production has not appeared to improve the taste and awake the feelings of a British public." 70 Coleridge reported to his wife about the "unexampled APPLAUSE" on the opening night and about the clapping that accompanied his personal appearance. 71 He also informed her of the "unsolicited, unknown yet predetermined plauditors", which provoked a malignant paper to assert that he had collected them by dubious means. 72 Coleridge complained angrily against the "infernal lies" of The Times, and the "dirty malice of the Morning Herald, and expressed the intention of answering his reviewers in an "'Essay on Dramatic Poetry', relating to the present State of the Metropolitan Theatres". 73 Mrs. Coleridge was "much excited, as you may guess," Dorothy wrote Coleridge. 74 Leigh Hunt's remark, made about two years later, sums up the contemporary reception: "Mr. Coleridge's Remorse has been
the only tragedy touched with real poetry for the last fifty years, ...
there has been no complete production of the kind since the time
of Otway." The play ran for twenty nights. Coleridge was
naturally happy. But he must have been also aware of the real
significance of the favourable reviews, for what most of them found
laudable were poetical passages that owed their force and beauty
to both Coleridge and his theatre colleagues.

The enthusiasm of Coleridge's friends and acquaintances —
Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, Southey, Poole, Byron and Leigh
Hunt in particular — has not, however, been shared by later
critics, and Coleridge's play has suffered a gradual eclipse.
"There is", says Swinburne, "little worth praise or worth memory ... except such casual fragments of noble verse as may readily be detached from the loose and friable stuff in which they lie embedded ... The characters are flat and shallow; the plot ... once languid, violent, and heavy. To touch the string of the spirit, thread the weft of evil and good, feel out the way of the soul through dark places of thought and rough places of action, was not given to ... the sweetest dreamer of 'Elizabethan' dreams." "Coleridge's drama of Remorse", J. D. Campbell regrets, "finds few readers now-a-days." Archer finds in Coleridge's play only a kind of pseudo-Elizabethanism. S. C. Chew writes in A Literary History of England that "... the play caters to some extent to the 'Gothic' tastes with an incongruous but not uncharacteristic mingling of a
politico-philosophic strain". George Saintsbury in his well-known history of English literature just mentions Osorio. W.L. Wrenwick in Oxford History of English Literature remarks that Remorse, the revised form of Osorio, was "reasonably successful at Drury Lane", and he does not say anything else. George Sampson thinks that Remorse... in the style of Schiller's The Robbers, lacked the full courage of its theme and inclined to current stage sentiment". The bigger volume of Cambridge History (Vol. XI) ignores both Osorio and Remorse in the chapter on "Coleridge" (Chap. VI, by C.E. Vaughan). The more recent Pelican Guide to English literature ("From Blake to Byron") does not take any notice of Coleridge's dramatic efforts. (The article on Coleridge is written by L.G. Salinger.) Basil Willey in his Nineteenth Century Studies ("Coleridge to Matthew Arnold") says nothing about Coleridge's plays. A.C. Ward in his Illustrated History of English Literature is equally silent. The play receives no mention in Eric Bentley's The Life of the Drama, Ronald Peacock's The Art of Drama and Bradbrook's English Dramatic Form: A History of its Development. The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre does not at all mention the plays. The Oxford Companion to English Literature merely takes notice of the fact that there was a play by Coleridge called "Remorse — a blank verse tragedy". The judgment of Allardyce Nicoll, the celebrated critic of the theatre and drama, is harsh and severe: "Joanna Baillie's plays have character and theme dependent on a
preconceived passion. The error, it may be noted, was shared by other more distinguished poets: Coleridge's Remorse is a cardinal instance."\textsuperscript{92} He further comments: "There is little vitality in the work, and rarely if ever do we thoroughly associate ourselves with the characters."\textsuperscript{93} In A Short History of English Drama, Ifor Evans comments (Chapter XI, "The Nineteenth Century") that all the poets of the romantic period failed as dramatists, "nor was Samuel Taylor Coleridge much more successful with Remorse".\textsuperscript{94} Ernest Watson, in his book From Sheridan to Robertson: A Study of the Nineteenth Century London Stage, (Cambridge, 1926), completely ignores the stage performance of Remorse.\textsuperscript{95} (His chapter on "Acting of Poetic Drama" contains no mention of any drama written by any of the Romantic poets.) G. Wilson Knight is one of the few major twentieth-century critics who regard Coleridge's play as a significant literary achievement. He describes the play as "a strangely iridescent creation, with penetrations idealistic and satanic, sinking shafts into subterranean darkness or exploring gleams that slant swiftly upward to heavenly grace".\textsuperscript{96} E.K. Chambers,\textsuperscript{97} Patricia M. Ball\textsuperscript{98} and R.M. Fletcher\textsuperscript{99} are some of the scholars who have dealt with the play seriously, if not exhaustively.

II

The scene of the play is in Spain, and the time, as Coleridge writes in his note,\textsuperscript{100} is the reign of Philip the Second, just at
the close of the civil wars against the Moors. The action centres around Alvar and Ordonio, the two sons of Lord Valdez, a noble Spaniard, and Donna Teresa, an orphan heiress, bequeathed by her parents on their deathbed to the wardship of the Marquis. Alvar, the eldest son of Lord Valdez, to whom Teresa had been betrothed, is supposedly dead — he has been absent for six years — and Teresa is now addressed by Ordonio, the younger son of the Marquis. Teresa, however, remains faithful to Alvar. Her indifference to Ordonio and unwavering fidelity to Alvar's memory provoke maddening despair and murderous jealousy in the younger brother, and Coleridge, borrowing his materials from Otway and Schiller, weaves a complex fabric of perverted human relationships.

As the play opens, we find Don Alvar has returned from his long exile in a distant shore. His treacherous brother Don Ordonio arranged — successfully he thought — to have murdered Alvar long years ago through the Moor Isidore who actually did not carry out the command. Alvar returns in the guise of a Moresco Chief. As he heard a rumour that his beloved Teresa had married his villainous brother, Alvar wanted to arouse remorse in him, Hamlet-like. Their father Valdez is also keen on Teresa's marriage with Ordonio. ("We have mourned for Alvar. / Of his sad fate there now remains no doubt. / Have I no other son?" (IV, ii, 39-41)

But Teresa does not love the 'other son' ("speak not of him! / That low imposture" ("IV,ii, 41-42"). Ordonio commands Isidore to play the role of a fake Sorcerer in order to convince Teresa that Alvar
is really dead. The "Stranger" (Don Alvar) claims that he knows how "to bring the dead to life again" (II, 3, 168) and Isidore asks Ordonio to visit the stranger in the wood near the ruin. Ordonio without recognising his elder brother in him makes him agree to come to his castle to perform certain deeds at his command. But the "Stranger" chooses to show his own 'murder'. The Inquisitors interfere and Ordonio being Claudius - like perturbed gets Alvar imprisoned in a dungeon. Suspecting Isidore's treachery, Ordonio murders him in a cave — his first real murder. His wife Alhadra makes an assault on the castle with the help of the dead Isidore's friends — a scene charged with a sense of noble adventurism. Teresa enters into the dungeon to free the "Stranger" in whose appearance she saw "something". After a few moments of hesitancy Alvar discloses his identity, and Teresa, taking her portrait from his neck ("Ah! who art thou? / Nay, I will call thee, Alvar!" (V, i, 87-88)) "falls on his neck". But this moment of bliss does not last long ("Alvar! my Alvar! am I sure I hold thee? / Is it no dream? thee in my arms, my Alvar!" (V, i, 104-5)). Ordonio enters with a goblet in his hand, and offers the "Sorcerer" poisoned wine; but Alvar says, "There is poison in the wine" (V, i, 138). Ordonio now declares his intention, "for one of us must die" (V, i, 159). Alvar throws away the goblet and calls his brother "Mountebank and villain!" (V, i, 151) and also appeals to him to repent for his act ("One pang! / Could I call up one pang of
true remorse! " (V, i, 167-68) Now Ordonio becomes desperately violent ("Cheat! villain! traitor! Whatsoever thou be / I fear thee, man! " (V, i, 194-95). Teresa uses her last weapon ("Ordonio! / 'Tis thy brother! " (V, i, 195-7). When he rushes at Alvar with his sword, Teresa flings herself on Ordonio and holds his arm ("Stop, madman, stop! " (V, i, 195-7). At this dramatic turn of events, Ordonio becomes almost dumb-founded (there is no stage direction here). When Alvar calls out, "Ordonio — Brother! / Nay, nay, thou shalt embrace me" (V, i, 202-203), Ordonio draws back and gazing at Alvar significantly says, "Touch me not! / Touch not pollution, Alvar! I will die." (V, i, 203-204). But when he attempts to fall on his sword, Alvar and Teresa prevent him. He kneels down and begs Alvar to "Curse me with forgiveness! " (V, i, 214). In the meantime the doors of the dungeon are broken open and Alhadra rushes in with a band of Morescoes. Alhadra orders to "Seize first that man" (V, i, 229), but Alvar tries to defend his brother. "Woman, my life is thine! " (V, i, 231), Ordonio says and warns the Morescoes, "I have strength / With this bare arm to scatter you like ashes." (V, i, 233-34). He admits that he murdered her husband. (Here Alvar and Teresa cry out: "Oh horrible! " (V, i, 236-7). The melodramatic suspense continues for some time. Alhadra suddenly stabs Ordonio and he begs of his
wronged elder brother's forgiveness; Alvar and Teresa bend over
the dead body of Ordonio while Alhadra speaks some of the most
beautiful lines in the drama. (V, i, 265-79): she threatens
destruction of "the kingdoms of the world" (V, i, 271) and
"foundations of iniquity" (V, i, 272), and will rest only when
all with "the spirit of life" (V, i, 277) are united in song.
Alhadra hastily retires with the Moors at the approach of Lord
Valdez. Alvar and Teresa kneel to Valdez who, unaware of the
criminal action and death of Ordonio, blesses the couple with
tears. The play ends on a sublime note with Alvar's speech —
a kind of grim warning — on the tragedy of unheeded conscience.

III

Coleridge made two significant statements in regard to
the plot construction of Remorse. "I tried to imitate
"Shakespeare's manner in the Remorse", he acknowledges in 1833,
"and, when I had done, I found I had been tracking Beaumont and
Fletcher, and Massinger instead."\textsuperscript{101} In Fletcher, he says, one
finds "a well arranged bed of flowers, each having its separate
root, and its position determined aforehand by the \textit{will} of the
gardener — a fresh plant, a fresh volition."\textsuperscript{102} In Shakespeare,
on the contrary, "all is growth, evolution, each line, each word
almost, begets the following — and the will of the writer is
an interfusion, a continuous agency, no series of separate acts”. In the plays of Fletcher and Massinger, Coleridge notes an absence of organic cohesion, each episode or character having its separate identity, and he notes a similar deficiency in his own play. However, in a letter to Robert Southey, written in February 1813, Coleridge points out the most important quality of the play — "the simplicity and Unity of the Plot, in respect of that which of all the Unities is the only one founded on good sense, the presence of one, all-pervading, all combining, Principle.” He concludes, "As from a circumference to a centre every Ray in the Tragedy converges to Ordonio." Coleridge's letter is written in answer to the critic for the Times who maintained that the plot was "singularly involved and laboured" and that the author had failed to manifest "a vigorous and combining [sic, for combining ?] mind, that muscular grasp of understanding, capable by its force of compressing the weak and the scattered, into a firm and vigorous solidity". (25 January, 1813)

An author is not generally a reliable critic of his own work, but the two statements of Coleridge exhibit a rare perspicacity, drawing attention to both the weakness and the strength of the play's structure. In his critique on Bertram in Biographia Literaria Coleridge censures Charles Maturin for catering to the sensationalism of popular taste and affirms that the so-called German School is nothing other than a corruption of
Shakespearian influence. Coleridge, however, is not discerning enough to perceive that his own play Remorse equally caters to the sensationalism of popular taste, and this sensationalism, resulting in episodic intensification, chiefly explains the play's structural weakness. But despite this diffusion, the plot maintains a kind of unity, and this unity may be traced to the emphasis on a particular "Passion". The passion plays of Joanna Baillie had considerable influence on Romantic dramatists who substituted spiritual action for external action. Baillie believed that the chief object of a playwright is:

... to delineate passion in its progress, to trace it from its early beginning, and to show the fearful gulf toward which it hastens, if not checked in the earlier portions of its career ... ["Miss Baillie"] has thus a high moral purpose in her design; which, if the drama can warn and save, will not altogether have been defeated ... The sole difference between her design and the usual practice of dramatic composers is, that while they have in most instances selected a story for the striking nature of its details, which rendered the prominence of one master passion necessary, she proposed to render her plots subservient to her main end, the development of one predominant and overruling passion. 109

"Remorse" is, at one level, the dominating passion in Coleridge's play, and the stresses experienced by the individual
minds — particularly Ordonio and Alvar — help to unify the different episodes. As Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., pertinently observes, the emotions are not sufficiently objectified and a felt tension emerges between human psychology and dramatic form. Still, the interaction of the responses and reactions of the two brothers achieve dramatic progression and unity. Even Hazlitt admitted that the "succession of situations and events / in Remorse / call forth the finest sensibilities of human breast ...". Don Alvar seeks to confront Ordonio with a moral challenge. This challenge and Ordonio's response — that includes Satanic defiance, spiritual perplexity and torment, and final surrender — constitute the framework of dramatic action and give it a unified structure.

The opening scene of the first act not only reveals the story of Alvar's exile but also shows that the disguised elder brother's intention is not to wreak vengeance but to arouse remorse. When Zulimez asks his master to "reveal yourself, / And let the guilty meet the doom of guilt!" (I, i, 12-13), Alvar says: "Remember, Zulimez! I am his brother, / Injured indeed! O deeply injured! yet / Ordonio's brother" (I, i, 14-16). He says further: "The more behoves it I should rouse within him / Remorse: that I should save him from himself" (I, i, 18-19).
Only after nineteen lines of the opening scene we come across an analysis of "remorse" which sounds like the "Motto" of the play:

Zulimez. Remorse is as the heart in which it grows:
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison-tree, that pierced to the inmost
Weeps only tears of poison! *

The first part of the second scene further enlarges Alvar's image as a noble brother — wronged but still nursing

* This is a later addition. Osorio which was read to Wordsworth when he was finishing The Borderers did not contain these lines. But, strangely, a speech on "remorse" in The Borderers has coincidental similarity with Zulimez's speech:

... Pain is of the heart
And what are a few throes of bodily suffering
If they can waken one pang of remorse? (III, 1399-1401)

Again,

Oswald. ... Remorse —
It cannot live with thought; think on, think on,
And it will die. What in this universe
Where the least things control the greatest, when
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world;
What feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.

(III, 1560-67)
no malice against the wrong-doer. This image is built up particularly through Teresa's endearing words for her lover and her description of Ordonio: "His proud forbidding eye, and his dark brow, / Chill me like dew-damps of the unwholesome night: / My love, a timorous and tender flower, / Closes beneath his touch" (I, ii, 81-84). In the second part of this scene, Alhadra's narration of her sufferings to Teresa, especially of her horrible experience inside a dungeon, "then a young and nursing mother" (I, ii, 206), gives the play a new dimension and raises the expectation of the audience for great events to take place so that poetic justice may at last come to relieve the tension. Alhadra strengthens this expectation when she says: "Great evils ask great passions to redress them" (I, ii, 230). But a little later the "great passions" turn out to be arousing remorse through forgiveness and appeal to better sense. In the same scene Alvar is hurt by Teresa's casual mention of "my Lord Ordonio" (I, ii, 335) and he muses on the implications of this expression. He suspects that "ere she married him, he / Ordonio _/ had stained her honour" (I, ii, 346); but even at this moment, when jealousy may turn any lover's mind to the thought of murder, Alvar's thoughts shrink from blood and revenge, and the acrimony is dissolved in prayer: "Assist _heaven, / That I may pray for my guilty brother! " (I, ii, 363-64).
Act two, scene one shows Ordonio's conspiracy with his accomplice Isidore. It also exposes what happened when the hired assassin Isidore failed to murder Alvar when the latter had revealed that Ordonio was his brother. But this scene also throws light on Ordonio's susceptibility to the pricks of conscience. When Isidore tells him that Alvar "threw / His sword away, and bade us take his life ..." (II, i, 116-17) Ordonio bursts out:

And you kill'd him?
Oh blood hounds! may eternal wrath flame round you!
He was his Maker's Image undefac'd!

(II, i, 119-20)

And again:

Oh cold — cold — cold! shot through with icy cold!

(II, i, 123)

Previously, in the second scene of Act I, Ordonio's guilt-ridden conscience is momentarily revealed, as if in a flash, when Alhadra reminds a startled Ordonio that Isidore is her husband whom "three years ago, three years this very week, / You left him at Almeria" (I, ii, 137-8). Ordonio looks "strange" and is evidently disturbed; but, almost the next moment, Isidore is asked to play a sorcerer and show Teresa's portrait (which Isidore took from Alvar while sparing his life) to convince her about Alvar's death. The audience again prepare for either of the two
eventualities—either Alvar takes revenge or Ordonio becomes remorse-struck. While talking to Isidore Ordonio's guilt-ridden mind suddenly suspects eavesdropping: "Ha! — Who lurks there! / Have we been overheard?" (II, i, 162-83). Ordonio says these words stopping suddenly at the edge of the scene, and the situation is ominous, presaging bloody action. Isidore's reference to a poor idiot boy who "sits in the sun, and twirls a bough about, / His weak eyes seeth'd in most unmeaning tears," (II, i, 186-88) is in the nature of an anticlimax, but the tearful voice of the idiot boy is in consonance with the motif of the play, and what Alvar says in the next scene reinforces this motif:

O faithful Zulimez!
That my return involved Ordonio's death,
I trust, would give me an unmixed pang.
Yet bearable: but when I see my father
Strewing his scant grey hairs, e'en on the ground,
Which soon must be his grave, and my Teresa —
Her husband proved a murderer, and her infants
His infants — poor Teresa! all would perish,
All perish — all! and I (nay bear with me)
Could not survive the complicated ruin! (II, ii, 30-39)

In the next scene of Act II, in the first confrontation between the two brothers after Alvar's arrival at Granada, Alvar's first thought on seeing his brother is "To fall upon his neck and
weep forgiveness !" (II, ii, 60). Something ails him, his hand trembles. When alone, at the end of the Act, Alvar soliloquizes:

Dear Portrait! rescued from a traitor's keeping,
I will not now profane thee, holy image,
To a dark trick. That worst bad man shall find
A picture, which will wake the hell within him,
And rouse a fiery whirlwind in his conscience.

(II, ii, 174-78)

Almost the whole of the first scene of Act III is devoted to Alvar's pathetic efforts to arouse the conscience of his brother. In the "Hall of Armoury, with an Altar at the back of the Stage" with "Soft Music from an instrument of Glass or Steel", Alvar feigns to "call up the Departed! Soul of Alvar!". There is "Music expressive of the movements and images that follow". Ordonio remains proud and relentless and tells Alvar: "The innocent obey nor charm nor spell! / My brother is in heaven" (III, i, 83-84). Alvar's words recall Prospero's admonition:

... What if thou heard' st him now? What if his spirit Re-enter'd its corse, and came upon thee With many a stab from many a murderer's poniard? What (if his stedfast eye still beaming pity And brother's love) he turn'd his head aside, Lest he should look at thee, and with one look Hurl thee beyond all power of penitence?

(III, i, 88-94)
Ordonio is apparently unrepentant, but the next scene shows a perceptible change in his inner world: he feels deceived, but we also note a faint stirring of conscience resulting paradoxically in a creeping paralysis of will:

Valdez. ... But have you yet discovered
... what those speeches meant —
Pride, and hypocrisy, and guilt and cunning?
Then when the wizard fix'd his eye on you,
And you, I know not why, look'd pale and troubled —
Why — why, what ails you now? —

Ordonio. Me? What ails me?
A pricking of the blood — It might have happen'd
At any other time.— Why scan you me?

Valdez. His speech about the corse, and stabs and murderers,
bore reference to the assassins —

Ordonio. Dup'd! dup'd! dup'd!
The traitor, Isidore!

(III, ii, 62-72)

A little later Ordonio confesses to his father how he reacted to Alvar's sorcery:
I was benumb'd, and staggered up and down
Through darkness without light — dark—dark—dark!
My flesh crept chill, my limbs felt manacled
As had a snake coil'd round them! ...

(III, ii, 79-82)

Ordonio's resistance gradually breaks down. He is a warped, morbid character lacking in balance, and throughout the play we see how his reactions oscillate between hatred and revenge and a paroxysm of fever and repentance: as the play progresses, there is a gradual erosion of his mental powers, and this is particularly marked after the "incantation" scene. His mimicry of Isidore's manner and voice ("A common trick of gratitude, my lord!" III, ii, 85) and his specious reasoning suggest the inner erosion: "Love! love! and then we hate! and what? and wherefore?/Hatred and love! fancies opposed by fancies! / What? if one reptile sting another reptile? / Where is the crime?" (III, ii, 94-97). He ends this speech wondering: "That this must needs bring on the idiotcy / Of moist-eyed penitence — 'tis like a dream!" (III, ii, 103-4). He knows that he is a prisoner of passion and the thought of Teresa only deepens his perplexity:

This, then, is my reward! and I must love her?
Scorn'd! shudder'd at! yet love her still? yes! yes! 
By the deep feelings of revenge and hate
I will still love her — woo her — win her too!

(III, ii, 168-71)
His outburst after a brief pause shows a mental delirium:

... My soul shouts triumph!
The mine is undermined! blood! blood! blood!
They thirst for thy blood! thy blood, Ordonio!

(III, ii, 174-76)

This delirium is followed by cool calculation: he decides to lure Isidore to "midnight wood" that very day and "he shall never, never more return!" (III, ii, 184).

The fourth act opens on "A cavern, dark, except where a gleam of moonlight is seen on one side at the further end of it". Isidore is seen alone, with an extinguished torch in his hand, and a few moments later comes Ordonio, lighting a torch. In this gothically romantic atmosphere, many intimate sentiments are exchanged between them. Ordonio significantly says that it is "abhorrent from our nature / To kill a man —" (IV, i, 83-84). And yet when Isidore suggests that one may kill in self-defence Ordonio jumps upon the excuse: "Why that's my case; and yet the soul recoils from it — / 'Tis so with me at least" (IV, i, 85-86). His explanation of his own mental framework shows the source of his moral depravity and also offers a sudden glimpse into the multiple layers of his consciousness:
All men seemed mad to him!
Nature had made him for some other planet,
And pressed his soul into a human shape
By accident or malice. In this world
He found no fit companion.

(IV, i, 105-109)

Ordonio analyses his own self and ruminates philosophically on his past. He still remains proud and unrepentant; but his attempt to shake off the pang of conscience reveals an inner despair.

The final act renders dramatically Ordonio's confession and repentance, although his dying statements are more in the nature of an anguished surrender to destiny: he carries with him the galling bitterness that poisons his own life and also the lives of others. To Alhadra he admits that he murdered Isidore: "most fouly" (V, i, 235). When Alvar says, "... My anguish for thy guilt! Ordonio — Brother! / Nay, nay, thou shalt embrace me" (V,i,202-203), Ordonio draws back: "Touch not pollution, Alvar! I will die" (V,i, 204). It is indeed a heavy burden of guilt and pain that he bears all his life, and his prayer for forgiveness is almost a despairing cry: "My brother! I will kneel to you, my brother! / Kneeling. / Forgive me, Alvar! — Curse me with forgiveness! " (V,i, 213-14). For Ordonio, however, this is not a journey from darkness to light, and the play reaches a
fitting finale when Alhadra stabs him. The drama ends with a
warning, a note of moral admonition to mankind:

That Conscience rules us e'en against our choice,
Our inward Monitress to guide or warn,
If listened to; but if repelled with scorn,
At length as dire REMORSE, she reappears,
Works in our guilty hopes, and selfish fears!

(V. 288-92)

The interest of the audience is kept alive through a series
of events which end in both death and spiritual salvation of the
play's central figure. Coleridge's main business here is to
render a perplexing moral dilemma reflected in human behaviour —
and this is evident in all the episodes in the play, from Alver's
playing sorcery to Ordonio's surrender. The complex motivations,
not only of Ordonio, but also of Alvar, Teresa, Valdez and Alhadra
are studied with a psychologist's curiosity and the results are
deduced and recorded in brilliant poetic passages, "finer poetry",
as Bertrand Evans calls it. This "finer poetry" may sometimes
have been served at the cost of exterior action. But, as Joseph W.
Donohue, Jr., so rightly says, "... this 'finer poetry',
undramatic or merely atmospheric as it sometimes is, reveals
Coleridge's attempt to reconcile the inevitable (and, perhaps to
him, lamentable) necessity for dramatic economy with a full
Coleridge's chief aim as a dramatist is to present a situation that will involve moral choice — he does not seek to portray life as it is, — and while this moral intention gives the play a rich significance, it also weakens the dramatic effect. Remorse is dramatically more effective than the earlier version, but the weakness persists. The first victim in a play with a moral design is particularity or concreteness, for the characters cease to become individuals and are turned into mere mouthpieces or at best symbols for representing certain pet speculations. Some of Shakespeare's characters also tend to personify abstract issues or "passions" such as ambition, jealousy etc., but they never fail to create impressions of complex individual personalities. This sharpness of individuation is generally absent in Romantic drama. As illustrations of a moral design, Coleridge's characters too tend to lapse into abstractions, but it must be said that his psychological curiosity gives them a certain complexity: they are never two-dimensional. To render the theme of moral dubiety, Coleridge also chooses a plot that sometimes strains the credulity of the audience, and there are situations where we have to suspend our disbelief unwillingly. An instance is the visit of Teresa, a modest, high-born maiden, to Alvar's lonely dungeon, while she strongly suspects that he might be her lover's murderer. Almost immediately after her arrival, still unaware of the fact that the
"Sorcerer" is her lover, she forgives him (V, l,6?). A little later, taking her portrait from his neck, she falls on his neck (V,1, 88). A recurrent device is deception, and there are too many deceptions in the body of the plot: The hero and the heroine are mistaken in various ways, the villain and his associate are deceived about their respective crimes. Here we may recall a comment by the reviewer of Theatrical Inquisitor:

To render the absurdity more obtrusive, the author has put into the mouth of Teresa, a series of fantastic expressions, on the resemblance between the expression of the stranger's countenance and that of her adored and lamented Alver. Had the influence of climate and fatigue been such as to change so effectually the features of his countenance, the 'beloved' and well-known voice that she hears in the winds, and on the aerial sound of which she dwells with raptures, would have awoke her senses to all the extacies of reality... the air, the gait, and the manners of a personage, are supposed to lead to a suspicion of his identity. 114

Such incredulous situations are indeed part of melodrama, and the melodramatic elements persist even in the revised version of Coleridge's play. Melodrama is also characterised by an excess of sentiment and we note in Coleridge a tendency to lyric effusions that often retard dramatic progression. In Act IV, Ordonio, instead of moving towards his victim, proceeds to tell his life story in the third person, perhaps as he wishes it to appear to himself, ostensibly to Isidore, but obviously to readers
of a poetic drama. Coleridge's direction that the recital should be given as "in the feeling of self-justification" shows his innate preference for thought to action: the speech is more suitable for dramatic monologue. The same is true of the scene when Alvar, a long-lost lover meeting his beloved, almost alone, indulges in description of a stormy night, the pastoral beauty of the place where he once stayed, the qualities of the maid he once loved, and in his own dreams (I, ii). While Teresa is desperately searching "the grave of my beloved" she twice appears on the scene (III, ii) to listen to some philosophical peroration on life, or to some ethical truism. Coleridge's play is marked off from conventional melodrama by its moral tone, but the poetry often derails the dramatist from the task at hand. The lines (94-111) spoken by Teresa in Act IV, scene ii, for instance, produce a lyrical atmosphere, but they weaken the pace of action. The emotional pitch here is dissolved into mere recital. For a Romantic dramatist, emotion is action. As a result tragic moments degenerate into emotional effusions.

Coleridge lamented the turning down of Whitbread's proposal to the assembled subscribers of the Drury Lane Theatre, the object of which "was avowedly to be no less than redemption of the British stage not only from horses, dogs, elephants and the like Zoological rarities, but also from the more pernicious barbarism and Kotzebuisn in morals and tastes." However, sharp Coleridge's distaste for the spectacular and sensational melodramas of the day
may have been, he was constrained to come to terms with the contemporary theatre and the contemporary taste, and, as Hazlitt says, the defects Coleridge so scathingly pointed out in his criticism of Maturin's *Bertram* could be discerned in his own drama. The medieval Spanish back-drop, the conscience-ridden villainous brother, the disguised Sorcerer, the concealed relationships, "the sea-shore", the "wild mountainous country", the "Hall of Armoury with an Altar at the back of the stage", "the interior of a Chapel, with painted windows", "cavern", "castle", "the interior court of a Saracenic or Gothic Castle, with the iron gate of a dungeon visible", "ruin in wood", — all these are in keeping with the Gothic tradition. When Valdez persuades Teresa to marry the villain by describing the brave feats of Ordonio, she replies: "... I have no power to love him / His proud forbidding eye, and his dark brow,/ Chill me like dew-damps of the unwholesome night : / My love, a timorous and tender flower, / Closes beneath his touch" (I,ii, 80-84). The guilty marks of the villain are also shown in a brief scene before his villainy is exposed to us (I, ii). When the villain rushes to kill the hero, the latter delivers a speech wherein he holds up a picture of the general features of Gothic villainy (V, i). The villain's cries of agony ("O horror! not a thousand years in heaven / Could recompose this miserable heart,/ Or make it capable of one brief joy!" (V,i, 208-10) and the adventure of Teresa,
mysteriously attracted to the "Sorcerer", exploring avenues to release him in dim light from dungeon (V, i), have obvious Gothic ancestry.

Coleridge, says Bertrand Evans, "raised the Gothic above itself through finer poetry. And, like Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley, he left certain very obvious marks of his own personality on the formerly impersonal dramatic kind." Coleridge introduced three elements that redeemed his play from rabid sensationalism — psychological motivation, moral dubieties, and poetry — and yet he was also a prisoner of the contemporary milieu.* We may note here that the plays which were being presented on the London stages at the time of the composition of Osorio were adaptations of Schiller's Die Rauber, Kotzebue's Pizarro, Lewis's Castle Spectre, and Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho. Coleridge sought to avoid Gothic trappings and to use the atmosphere of gloom and terror, mystery and suspense as a vehicle for "spiritual transmission", but he could not avoid introducing

* On 16 March, 1797 he hinted to William Lisle Bowles that the tragedy Osorio that he had planned would be "romantic and wild and somewhat terrible", though, he hastened to add, he was "almost weary of the Terrible ..." (See Letters, Griggs, I, p. 318)
some of the stage firework. Coleridge's literary ancestor in this domain was Schiller.

IV

Coleridge had written Osorio before he read Schiller's dramas in original. But undoubtedly he was acquainted with the English translations of Schiller's Die Räuber and Der Geisterseher. Coleridge's enthusiastic admiration of Schiller is recorded in an apostrophe entitled "To the Author of 'The Robbers'" (1794):

** The spectacular element is, however, put into effective dramatic use in Act IV. In darkness (only a streak of moonlight is seen on one side at the further end of a cavern), Isidore crouches fearfully waiting for Ordonio. The atmospheric effect provides an analogue of the conflicting moods of the murderer and the victim. Isidore (Ferdinand), Coleridge added in a manuscript note, must play in a "hurried undervoice" so that the effect of nightmare is achieved at once. (See PW, II, E. H. Coleridge, p. 860n, second paragraph.)

* See Stokoe, p. 99. Die Räuber was translated from the German entitled The Robbers by A. F. Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, London, 1792;
Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood
Wandering at eve with finely-frenzied eye
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood
While with mute awe gazing I would brood:
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy!

Coleridge referred to Schiller's spell also in a letter to Southey: "... My God! Southey! Who is this Schiller? This Convulser of the Heart? Did he write his Tragedy amid the yelling of Fiend?" (This enthusiasm perceptibly diminished by the year 1800. He wrote to Daniel Stuart, October 7, 1800: "To be known to Schiller was a thought, that passed across my brain and vanished -- I would not stir 20 yards out of my way to know him.

As J. L. Lowes points out, the plot of Osorio is drawn freely from the Sicilian's tale in Schiller's prose work Der Geisterseher. A Sicilian sorcerer, one of the characters the second edition was published in 1795. Der Geisterseher was translated by D. Boileau, London, 1795. It was apparently this version which Thomas Rescoe printed, under the title "The Apparitionist", in his German Novelists. (London, 1826, III, 120-301). Coleridge had knowledge of these translations. (See Letters, Griggs, I, pp.122-304, and also Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Kathleen Coburn, London, 1957, No. 210.)

Moreover, The Robbers and a dramatic version of the tale were being played in London about the time Osorio was being written. (See Fletcher, p. 73.)
in Schiller's tale, narrates a strange story concerning two brothers and a mysterious apparitionist. In the Sicilian's tale, Jeronymo, the elder brother, is betrothed to Antonia, but just on the eve of his marriage to the girl he suddenly disappears and is believed to be the victim of Algerian pirates. Five years roll by. Antonia is now addressed by the younger brother Lorenzo, but her hope that Jeronymo may still be alive makes her reluctant to marry him. Now the Sicilian sorcerer, at Lorenzo's request, invokes through mechanical contrivance the spirit of the brother supposedly dead, and the spectre removes from its finger a ring that Jeronymo wore. Lorenzo's father is now convinced that Jeronymo was killed by pirates and he arranges for Lorenzo's marriage to Antonia. At the wedding ceremony he is disturbed by the sudden appearance of a mysterious lean figure dressed as a Franciscan monk; after the guests leave, he demands that the family drink to the memory of Jeronymo — Lorenzo trembles in fear and as he repeats the toast a

* The apparitionist is another incarnation of the 'Wandering Jew', in Lowes's view. (The Road to Xanadu, second revised English edition, London, 1951, p. 252 ff.) Lowes also traces the influence of Schiller's Armenian on the characterization of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. (Ibid.) : "The unfathomable stranger of Der Geisterseher and The Monk," Lowes says, "was hovering in the background of Osorio." (Ibid., p. 257 and notes.)
ghastly figure in blood-stained garments appears and cries out, "I hear the voice of the murderer." Lorenzo dies terror-struck, and both the Franciscan monk (presumably the mysterious apparitionist) and the ghostly figure disappear. Coleridge alters the story in three important respects: in his drama, the Sorcerer is not an accessory to the crime, and the elder brother returns alive to bring the younger brother to repentance. Coleridge also shifts the dramatic focus from the wedding festival (which he omits for obvious reasons) to the incantation scene in order to emphasise the theme of guilt and remorse. That this shift of focus made an impact on the audience is evident in a comment made by an anonymous reviewer (Dora Ashe guesses that Charles Lamb was the reviewer*) in the Examiner on January 31, 1913:

We never saw more interest excited in a theatre than was expressed at the sorcery-scene in the third act. The altar flaming in the distance, the solemn invocation, the pealing

* See Dora Jean Ashe, "Coleridge, Byron, and Schiller's 'Der Geisterseher'", N & Q, col (1956), pp. 436-38. But this unsigned review has been attributed also to Thomas Barnes, editor of The Times from 1817 and a member of Leigh Hunt's circle. (See CCH, p. 122.)
music of the mystic song, altogether produced a combination so awful, as to nearly overpower reality, and make one half believe the enchantment which delighted our senses. 124

John Livingston Lowes draws attention to a curious detail which shows Coleridge's debt to Schiller's play. 125 Just before the Sicilian Sorcerer invokes the spirit of Jeronymo, he has recourse to the sound produced by a musical instrument — probably the glass harmonica invented by Franklin in 1763 in which Schiller had been greatly interested. At the corresponding situation in his play (Osorio, III * ) Coleridge has the following stage direction:

"Here a strain of music is heard from behind the scenes, from an instrument of glass or steel — the harmonica or Celestina stop, or Clegget's metallic organ."

Several episodes in Coleridge's play show the distinct influence of the Sicilian's tale; but Lowes also pertinently recognises Coleridge's debt to The Robbers, 126 and this debt is of a more fundamental nature. Of Schiller's early dramas Die Räuber is by far the most revolutionary, it is also dramatically intense. It was a stirring Rousseauque protest against stifling convention and corruption in high places. Schiller grew up in the

* In Remorse there is only "Soft music from an instrument of Glass or Steel".
throttling atmosphere of Duke Karl Eugen's despotic Wurttemberg and naturally hated the strict discipline at his regimental school. Written in "romantic" spirit, The Robbers (Die Räuber), challenging the existing order in the name of freedom, shows the hero Charles Von Moor, cheated out of his inheritance by his brother Francis, shunning the evils of his father's court for the free forests of Bohemia, where he lives like a Robin Hood.

Among his followers are some genuine victims of social injustice and some others are opportunists. Charles's brother Francis is a scheming villain, holding in his possession Charles's beloved Amelia. When Francis's place is stormed by the band of Charles Moor he strangles himself in a melodramatic fashion (in the original edition of Die Räuber).* At the end of the play Charles surrenders

* In the acting edition of the play, "Francis attempts to throw himself into the flames, but is prevented by the robbers, and taken alive. He is then brought before his brother, in chains, for sentence. Schweitzer (one of the Banditti) says, 'We tore him out of the flames, and the castle is in ashes.' Charles delegates the judgment on Francis to Schweitzer and Kosinsky, but for himself forgives him in these words: 'Thou hast robbed me of heaven's bliss! Be that sin blotted out! Thy doom is sealed — perdition is thy lot! But I forgive thee, brother.' Upon this Karl embraces and leaves him; the Robbers, however, thrust Franz into the dungeon where he had immured his father, laughing in a savage manner. (See Schiller's Works, "The Robbers", etc., II edn., London, 1782, John C. Nimmo, Ltd., p. 150, n.)
to the authorities for "making my death a free-will atonement". But he does so by offering himself to a day-labourer "with eleven living children", for a reward has been offered to any one "who shall deliver up the great robber alive". "That man shall be served", says Charles.

The play contains two distinct strands — Charles Moor's revolt against authority and his final realization that the means he adopted was wrong, and the malignity of a scheming villain, seeking to dislodge his elder brother from his father's affections, to grab the property and possess the girl loved by his brother. It is this latter aspect of the story that bears a resemblance to the theme of Coleridge's play. Osorio's passion, however, is chiefly directed towards the possession of the girl to whom his elder brother was betrothed, and it must be admitted that despite his villainy and his murderous envy Osorio belongs to a much higher plane than Schiller's Francis who is really a monster in the garb of a human being, and whose malevolence is unredeemed in spite of his final confession and prayer. In the acting version of The Robbers Charles forgives Francis, and in Coleridge's play Albert's attitude to his villainous brother shows an identity of motive. Critics have noted several other points of resemblance between the two plays. F.W.Stokoe says: "That the secret assembly of the Moors in which the death of Ordonio is decreed is a reminiscence of the Ferngericht is perhaps rather probable than
Thomas Roe, a Schiller enthusiast, points out two other points of resemblance: "In Act II, scene I, where Osorio urges Ferdinand to deceive Maria with the portrait, we are reminded of the scene in The Robbers, where Franz incites Hermann to do a similar thing (Act II, Sc. i and ii). The words of Velez to Maria in act IV, 'Repent and marry him — or to the convent', seem to be suggested by the scene where Franz threatens Amelia with a similar fate." Amelia, in her attachment to Charles Moor, also reminds us of Coleridge's Maria (Teresa).

The impact of Schiller on Coleridge — as well as Wordsworth — was two-fold: moral and political. Schiller's play poses a challenging question of the relations between means and ends, and in Coleridge's play Albert's (Alvar in Remorse) attempt to bring his younger brother to repentance for the enormity of his crime shows an indirect influence of Schiller. But if Schiller was a champion of a new morality, he was also the champion of freedom, and his fight against tyranny found a sympathetic echo in the heart of the young Coleridge. Coleridge in his youth was a rebel. He voiced his protest against corruption in the "high places" and against the persecutions perpetrated on children, labourers, and common man, and on those who protested against tyrannical laws and vicious social and religious institutions. Through Osorio he registered a protest against
the inhumanity of man against man, and especially against the despotic Pitt ministry which not only suspended the Habeas Corpus Act in 1794 but also passed the Seditious Meetings Act and the Treasonable Practices Act in 1795. Coleridge attacked these Acts in his lecture "On the Present War" in Bristol in February, 1795 and appealed for open and free discussion of all public issues. Naturally Coleridge was attracted towards Schiller's The Robbers, for it was not merely a "Storm and Stress" drama, but also a "political tragedy". Significantly The Robbers bears the following passage from Hippocrates as Motto: "What herbs cannot cure, iron cures; what iron cannot cure, fire cures." Coleridge found English parallels not only in Schiller's work, but also in Robert Watson's The History of the Reign of Philip the Second, King of Spain (3 volumes). The historical facts of the Inquisition, cruel edicts, the persecution of the Moors and the forcible conversions of the Moors to Orthodox Christianity, as described by Watson, provided an appropriate setting for the play of the young dramatist, and it is relevant to note that most of the proper names were first drawn from the book. The scene of the drama is Granada, Spain, and the time as indicated by Coleridge is "The reign of Philip II., just at the close of the

* Coleridge changed the names in Remorse.
civil wars against the Moors, and during the heat of the persecution which raged against them, shortly after the edict which forbade the wearing of Moresco apparel under pain of death. Philip's first step, writes Robert Watson:

was to strip the Morescoes of their arms ... Having therefore resolved, if possible, to extirpate from his dominions the private as well as the public exercise of Mohometanism, and to wash it out with the blood of its votaries, rather than suffer it to remain, he appointed a select number of Ecclesiastics to consider of the proper means by which his design might be accomplished; and agreeably to the advice of these men, he soon afterwards published an edict which contained the following prohibitions, and denounced death in case of disobedience: "That henceforth the Morescoes shall lay aside their native language, dress, and peculiar customs, and in future adopt those of the inhabitants of Castile. That they shall no longer take Moorish names or surnames, but such as are generally used in Spain. That they shall bear none of those symbols about them by which the disciples of Mohomet are distinguished. That they shall discontinue the use of their baths, which shall be immediately destroyed. That their women shall not, as hitherto, appear in veils; that no person shall marry without a dispensation from the ordinary; that none shall remove from one place to another without permission; and that they shall on no occasion wear arms, or keep them in possession."
Soon insurrection broke out. Turks and Africans helped them with troops. A royal mandate was dispatched, commanding all the prisoners above eleven years of age, without distinction of sex or condition, to be sold for slaves.

At this point Watson remarks in a footnote:

The effect of this barbarous treatment, says a Spanish historian (Perreras), was, that great numbers of the Moreseos women languished in slavery for a little time, and then sunk under their calamities. 139

In a persuasive article in *JEGF* (April, 1962) Arnold B. Fox analyses the political and biographical background of Osorio and shows how Coleridge reacted to his reading of Watson's History and what meaning the Inquisition and the persecutions of the Moreseos had for him in the play. Fox thinks that Coleridge must certainly have thought of Pitt in creating the Inquisitor, Francesco, and that the Inquisition was related in his mind to the despotic Government in England. 140 "That busy man, gross, ignorant, and cruel!" (Osorio, I, 103) — this is Maria's immediate reaction as Francesco enters, and his claim that he is "tender-hearted" (I, 119) shows the contrast between appearance and reality: he seeks to convince himself and others that he is
prompted by the disinterested motive of weeding out "detestable weeds" from the "garden of faith" (I, 127-28), but at the mere prospect of the bishopric he withdraws his charges against Ferdinand. Iago starts with the premise that each man is motivated by self-interest, and Francesco starts with the premise that love and submission are prompted by fear:

If a man fears me, he is forced to love me.

(III, 264)

Francesco represents a fanatical power that crushes the will of others and imposes its own will: Ferdinand is taken prisoner by the Holy Brethren on the suspicion that he is a Mohammedan, and Alhadra along with her infant is cast into a dungeon only because she has dark complexion. The horror of the Inquisitorial power is reinforced by "The Foster-Mother's Tale" in Act IV (later omitted in Remorse). The sub-plot concerning Ferdinand and Alhadra, carefully woven into the main plot, serves as a vehicle for Coleridge's radical political views, and it is significant that Albert (Alvar in Remorse) is disguised as a Moor. The persecutions of the Morescoes and the revolt heralded by Alhadra also reflect Coleridge's concern with a perplexing moral issue: what is the right way to combat evil? Alhadra and Albert present two alternative approaches, and the alternative ideals are held in tension in the structure of the play.
Schiller's tale Der Geisterseher and The Robbers and Robert Watson's History provided the moral, political and physical setting of Coleridge's play, but other influences and parallelisms are also noticeable. Consider, for instance, Thomas Otway's The Orphan. An orphan girl is the object of passion of the two sons of a nobleman, and the elder brother is favoured by the girl. The similarity, however, ends there. Otway's dejected lover is not as heinous as Ordonio, and the elder brother has little in common with Alvar. The relationship of the two brothers that Coleridge explores in this play may also have had an autobiographical background, and critics have relentlessly pursued Coleridge's psychological ambivalence. The direct personal sentiment is revealed in the choice of a story of two brothers — one wronged. Alvar (Albert in Osorio) looks like an alter ego of Coleridge. Ordonio in some characteristics resembles Reverend George Coleridge, Samuel's elder brother — a parent-figure. Coleridge's analysis of Ordonio's character (Osorio) has perhaps something to do with his attitude to George who would never sympathize with the eccentricities and the idealistic ventures of his poet brother and who mistook "constitutional abstinence from vices, for strength of character". Coleridge revered his elder brother, but we also note an inner revulsion.

* Kathleen Coburn suggests that in the earlier version (Osorio), Osorio (Ordonio in Remorse) is associated with Southey
Arnold B. Fox points out, at times Coleridge must have seen himself as Osorio and George as Albert.\textsuperscript{143}:

Personal experiences invariably steal into an author's work, and the fable derived from Schiller's tale finally emerges into a complex design. Coleridge, however, is the most literary of authors and the most vivid sensations in his works are derived from literature, history and philosophy. And it is interesting to note that while he borrowed the story from Schiller, his style is irresistibly Shakespearian. Critics from William Archer\textsuperscript{144} to T.S. Eliot\textsuperscript{145} contend that a poor imitation of Elizabethan models — particularly of Shakespeare — explains in the main the failure of the Romantic dramatists. Shakespeare is indeed a hazardous model, but Shakespeare is also irresistible, and Coleridge's own statement (eighteen months before his death) is an apt commentary on the difficulty of choice:

\begin{quotation}
and Coleridge may have imagined himself in Albert (Alvar in Remorse). (See The Notebooks of S.T. Coleridge, ed. K. Coburn, 2 vols., ed.n E (1957), vol.II, entry no. 2928). She thinks that "Coleridge's choice of tragic themes, involving as they seem to do, unprovoked injury, a child - parent relation or its substitute, sympathy, conflict, remorse and premature death, shows a recurrent pattern." (Ibid., entry no. 210). Max F. Schulz suggests that the play symbolically dramatizes Coleridge's obsession with the theme of parricide and fratricide during approximately the same months of 1797 when he wrote Osorio. (See JEGP, "Coleridge's Agonistes", April, 1962, p.272. See also pp.273-4 for other interesting autobiographical interests. We may also refer here to Coleridge's letter to Thomas Poole, Oct.16, 1797). (See Letters, Griggs, pp.352-54)
\end{quotation}
There is such a divinity doth hedge our Shakespeare round, that we cannot even imitate his style. I tried to imitate his manner in the Remorse, and when I was done, I found I had been tracking Beaumont and Fletcher and Massinger instead ... 146

T.S. Eliot says that while a bad poet "defaces" what he takes, a good poet makes it into something better or different 147 and although one may not agree with Wilson Knight that the dramatic intention of Alvar's wizardry is achieved with a finer subtlety and irony than Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet 148 and that the trick that Hamlet plays on Claudius is a "flea-bite" in comparison, 149 it is unmistakable that the Shakespearian reminiscences heighten the moral perplexity of Coleridge's characters: We understand Alvar better when we recall Hamlet, and Ordonio's mental workings become a little clearer when we think of Othello, Iago, Macbeth and Hamlet. For a poet steeped in Shakespeare as Coleridge was, it was difficult to drown the echoes of the immortal Bard, and verbal reminiscences and situational parallelisms are indeed many and varied. Teresa's comparison of the two brothers recalls Hamlet's picture of his father and uncle; Ordonio's thoughts of death

There, where Ordonio likewise would fain lie!
In the sleep-compelling earth, in unpierced darkness!
For while we live —
An inward day that never, never sets,
Glares round the soul, and mocks the closing eyelids!
Over his rocky grave the fir-grove sighs
A lulling ceaseless dirge! 'Tis well with him.

(III, ii, 122-28)

remind us of Macbeth's thoughts: "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well". Ordonio's remorse-stricken sentiments after the murder of Isidore ("Not all the blessings of a host of angels / Can blow away a desolate widow's curse!" V, i, 173-74) are a clear reminiscence of Macbeth's sentiments after the murder of Duncan. Instances can be multiplied, and we refer here to two passages that have also an unmistakable Shakespearean ring:

Ordonio (aside). O what a thing is man! (II, ii, 80)

... this same world of ours,
'Tis but a pool amid a storm of rain,
And we the air-bladders that course up and down,
And joust and tilt in merry tournament;
And when one bubble runs foul of another,
The weaker needs must break.

(V, i, 111-16)
Coleridge, unlike Shakespeare, is a poet whose chief concern is to present ideas in sensible forms, and it is necessary to bear this distinction in mind to appreciate the Romantic poet's achievement in the dramatic genre. It is true that in his presentation of the story he was to a great extent cramped by the theatrical conventions of the day, but we should not miss the genuineness of his search for a fable that could serve as an appropriate vehicle for the ideas he sought to convey. In his characterization, too, we note a similar duality: the villain with a guilty conscience and a noble sorcerer are part of the contemporary stock-in-trade, but we also note an attempt on the dramatist's part to deepen their significance and give them a complexity of motivation that is absent in contemporary drama.

This attempt has often queer results. Consider, for instance, Coleridge's presentation of Osorio or Ordonio. What Coleridge sought to project in the character is not very clear, but it is clear that the motivation is not dramatically realized. "In the character of Osorio", Coleridge writes in his note, "I wished to represent a man, who from his childhood had mistaken constitutional abstinence from vices, for strength of character —
thro' his pride duped into guilt, and then endeavouring to shield himself from the reproaches of his own mind by misanthropy."

The intention, however, remains unrealized and Coleridge himself admits in his preface: "the growth of Osorio's character is nowhere explained — and yet I had most clear and psychologically accurate ideas of the whole of it..." The creation has gone out of the control of the creator, and Osorio (or, Ordonio) emerges as something more than — or should we say something different from — what his creator intended him to be. It is indeed difficult to describe him, for the outlines are blurred; but however imprecise the portrait may be, his lonely suffering as well as his malignity presses powerfully on our consciousness. He is a villain with a conscience, but this label is not adequate enough to explain the many layers of his personality. He reminds us of Macbeth, Iago, and sometimes even of Hamlet; he is disturbed by "phantom thoughts unsought-for" (IV, i, 112), and his Byronic self-analysis is worth quoting:

\[
\text{Nature had made him for some other planet,}
\]
\[
\text{And pressed his soul into a human shape}
\]
\[
\text{By accident or malice. In this world}
\]
\[
\text{He found no fit companion.}
\]

(IV, i, 106-9)

Alvar calls him "mountebank and villain" (V, i, 151); Teresa calls him "the low imposture" (IV, ii, 42). This is, however, a
hasty and biased estimate and does not do justice to his sensitiveness. He loses his balance and almost confesses his guilt to his father when he is confronted with a picture of his own murder presented by the wizard. And yet his logical defence, like Oswald's, sounds Machiavellian (in the popular sense). He says: "Love! love! and then we hate! and what? and wherefore? / Hatred and love! fancies opposed by fancies!" (III, ii, 94-5).

And again:

What? if one reptile sting another reptile?
Where is the crime? (III, ii, 96-97)

But this is only one aspect of his personality, and Valdez's diagnosis is revealing: "... thy excess of feeling — / Almost I fear it hath unhinged his brain" (III, ii, 105-6). Sometimes he is able to look at life objectively and takes it as a "pool amid a storm of rain" (V, i, 112), but often his assessment of his own conduct is subjective. He asserts that he has never hurt anybody by consciously inflicting "faintness, cold, and hunger" (V, i, 124-25). The best construction that can be put on this self-justification is that it is a kind of self-deception. That his argument is prompted by a sinister motive is apparent from the fact that he offers Alvar poisoned wine: his argument is indeed queer, for while he seems anxious to remove faintness, cold and hunger, he is indifferent to the death of man (III, ii, 136). He passes from one mood and attitude to another, and it is
difficult to weave his multiple responses into a unity. Before murdering Isidore in a dark cave for his alleged treachery, he argues brilliantly and the gradual disclosure of his murderous intention is couched in a sensitive language (II, i, 118-23). But after this murder his argument has a sinister ring. He thinks that this murder should not disturb his conscience and his argument is specious: a corpse, he thinks, generates ten thousand worms who are sentient beings and who have no less capacity for happiness than the assassinated person. Like a philosophic misanthrope he argues:

Say, I had laid a body in the sun!
Well! in a month there swarm forth from the corse
A thousand, may, ten thousand sentient beings
In place of that one man.— say, I had kill'd him!

Teresa stops listening.
Yet who shall tell me, that each one and all
Of these ten thousand lives is not as happy,
As that one life, which being push'd aside,
Made room for these unnumbered —

(III, ii, 107-14)

This is giving, in his own words, "substance and reality" (IV, i, 125) to crime — a strange unbalanced perception of the true nature of things. When he offers poisoned drink to Alvar in the dungeon and his attention is drawn to an insect by Alvar, he
of course admits "there's poison in the wine" (V, i, 137). In an earlier context (III, ii, 94 ff) he dismisses the supposed antithesis of love and hate and speaks of "the idiotcy of moist-eyed penitence". In Act V his response is much more complex. Alvar (V, i, 157 ff) calls him a "blind self-worshipper" and points to his pride, his cunning, his faith in universal villainy, his shallow sophisms, his dark misanthropy; there is, however, no touch of bitterness in Alvar's accusations, and he sincerely believes that "one pang of true remorse" (V, i, 167) can yet save Ordonio. Ordonio's reaction is revealing: it is obvious that he feels the sting of repentance, and yet he knows that remorse or "all the blessings of a host of angels" can never redeem the enormity of his crime.

Curse on remorse!
Can it give up the dead, or recompact
A mangled body? mangled — dashed to atoms!
Not all the blessings of a host of angels
Can blow away a desolate widow's curse!
And though thou spill thy heart's blood for atonement,
It will not weigh against an orphan's tear!
(V, i, 170-76)

The recognition of one's sin is the first stage in the process of spiritual recovery. The development of Ordonio's character does not, however, show any steady linear progress and he remains
a prisoner of his own ego. Towards the end, however, we are offered an unexpected glimpse of his many-sided personality, and despite a melodramatic ring his utterances are convincing. When he recognizes his brother, he asks him not to touch him: "Touch not pollution, Alvar! I will die" (V, i, 204-5). He kneels and asks forgiveness and his speech carries all the horrors of a nightmarish agony:

O horror! not a thousand years in heaven
Could recompose this miserable heart,
Or make it capable of one brief joy!
Live! Live! Why yes! 'Twere well to live with you:
For is it fit a villain should be proud?
My brother! I will kneel to you, my brother! [Kneeling.]
Forgive me, Alvar! — Curse me with forgiveness!

(\textit{V, i, 208-14})

If Ordonio is a villain with a conscience, he is also a philosopher, and although many of his ingenious arguments betray a warped and perverted intelligence, we often hear the voice of Coleridge, the metaphysician, in his elaborate speculation on human destiny, and at such moments he has kinship with Hamlet and Macbeth. He is keenly aware of his own evil propensities and he wonders whether human nature was not destined to be evil:
What have I done but that which nature destined,
Or the blind elements stirred up within me?
If good were meant, why were we made these beings?

(II, i, 130-32)

This may seem to be a rationalization of his own misdeeds, but his puzzlement before the mystery of evil is genuine. Ordonio is, observes G. Wilson Knight, "no simple Machiavellian (in the popular sense), no Iago. Bosola is, perhaps, his nearest relative; yet he also touches a moonstruck insanity and trance-like paralysis resembling that of Webster's Ferdinand and Cardinal in their final appearances." Ordonio is indeed many characters put into one: his life-weariness, philosophical profundity, ruthless self-analysis and susceptibility to emotion are as pronounced as his cynicism, cool calculation, ingenious sophistry, cruel indifference to life and freedom from emotion.

O this unutterable dying away here——
This sickness of the heart! (II, i, 126-27)

This is not the language of a sinister villain pursuing relentlessly a Machiavellian design. Alvar's description of him as an "inly-tortured man" (V, i, 118) is an apt commentary on his split personality. His ironic contemplation of the human situation ("And we the air-bladders that course up and down, / And joust and tilt in merry tournament", V, i, 111-12) shows a capacity
for philosophical detachment, and his intense death-wish expressed in answer to Teresa’s question as to where the dead body of her “betrothed husband” (III, ii, 121) lies shows, to use G. Wilson Knight’s words, a “trance-like paralysis”¹⁵³ that we do not associate with a scheming villain:

There, where Ordonio likewise would fain lie!
In the sleep-compelling earth, in unpierc’d darkness!
For while we live.—
An inward day that never, never sets,
Glares round the soul, and mocks the closing eyelids!
Over his rocky grave the fir-grove sighs
A lulling ceaseless dirge! ’Tis well with him.

(III, ii, 122-28)

Wordsworth's Oswald is more consistent than Ordonio, but Ordonio is undoubtedly more human. When Teresa goes away (despite Valdez's warning), saying,

I haste but to the grave of my belov’d!

(III, ii, 167)

Ordonio remarks:

This, then, is my reward! and I must love her?
Scorn’d! shudder’d at! yet love her still? yes! yes!
By the deep feelings of revenge and hate
I will still love her — woo her — win her too!

(III, ii, 168-71)
In whatever way we interpret Ordonio, we have to recognize that his chief motivation is desire; and although the different strands in his personality do not properly cohere, he impresses us as a living human being. Alvar, on the other hand, is an idea—Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., describes him as a "purposive brother who will act as an agent of destiny" and Coleridge's excellence as a dramatic artist lies in the way he makes this idea credible and actual. Goodness or perfection is intractable to dramatic presentation, and Alvar is a character who is nearly perfect and guided by the noblest altruistic motive. His chief intention throughout the play is to achieve a moral transformation in his younger brother, and he indeed appears god-like in his moral grandeur. Teresa's description cannot be dismissed as an infatuation of a love-lorn maiden, the image is dramatically realized.

His own fair countenance, his kingly forehead,
His tender smiles, love's day-dawn on his lips!
That spiritual and almost heavenly light
In his commanding eye — his mien heroic,
Virtue's own native heraldry! to man
Genial, and pleasant to his guardian angel.
Whene'er he gladden'd, how the gladness spread
Wide round him! and when oft with swelling tears,
Flash'd through by indignation, he bewail'd
The wrongs of Belgium's martyr'd patriots,
Oh, what a grief was there — for joy to envy,
Or gaze upon enamour'd! (IV, ii, 52-63)

He has fought, as he says to Alhadra (II, ii, 6-8), against oppression, has "bled and suffered bonds" "for the native liberty of faith"; and yet before the spear flew from his hand, there rose an angel from betwixt him and his aim (II, ii, 16-18). When he rises alone slowly from a bed of reeds in the dungeon and speaks of love, wisdom, God, nature, and when he concludes, while retiring out of sight, that "life's best warmth still radiates from the heart / Where love sits brooding, and an honest purpose" (V, i, 34-5), he seems more than human and his character attains an almost divine transcendence.

The anonymous critic in British Review (May, 1813) thinks that the "gentle, forgiving, well-meaning, moral Spaniard" is "degraded by being made to play off the tricks of a conjurer".155 However, Alvar's invocation of natural and supernatural objects, ("ice-mount", "tempest", "new-thaw'd sea", ...)
"Lampland Wizard's skiff") and his reference to the departed soul toiling out "from the blue swoln corse" and joining the "mighty army" (III, i, 61-62) of innumerable spirits not merely build up the necessary atmosphere but also reinforce the transcendental grandeur that we associate with him. Critics have commented on the idealization of Alvar's character and the consequent lack of credibility. Alvar, we have said, is god-like, but unlike a remote deity he bears the full load of pain. He is much too human to be a mere abstraction; his heart quivers with emotion, and it is his passion for Teresa that gives his character the necessary veracity. Night after night, as he says (I, i, 83), Teresa visited his sleep, "Now as a saintly sufferer, wan and tearful, / Now as a saint in glory beckoning to me": (I,i,83-85). He is inwardly assured that she is innocent, and yet the thought of treachery disturbs him:

She deems me dead, yet wears
no mourning garment!

Why should my brother's --- wife --- wear
mourning garments?
(I, ii, 269-70)

Alvar returns after a long journey, and his purpose is not only to reclaim Teresa but to bring his younger brother to true repentance. What is, we may ask, his primary purpose? "The more behoves it", Alvar says to Zulimez in the opening scene, "I should
rouse within him / Remorse! that I should save him from himself" (I, i, 18-19). The awakening of remorse seems to have prompted his return, and yet we note a certain duality in his intentions. On the intellectual and moral plane, he indeed acts as the agent of a moral order and his disinterested mission is clearly defined in several places. Alvar, however, is not merely a moral man, he is also a sensitive emotional being; we even discern a certain tension between the two selves. As the type of a moral idea he would be static, almost wooden character, but he is not. He grows, and it is interesting to note the gradual expansion of his personality. In the beginning what disturbs — and almost cripples him — is the thought that Teresa, possibly an accomplice in Ordonio's perfidy, is married to Ordonio and is the mother of his children, and there are moments when the thought of Teresa is uppermost in his mind outweighing his moral mission:

O faithful Zulimez!
That my return involved Ordonio's death,
I trust, would give me an unmingled pang,
Yet bearable: — but when I see my father
Strewing his scant grey hairs, e'en on the ground,
Which soon must be his grave, and my Teresa —
Her husband proved a murderer, and her infants
His infants — poor Teresa! all would perish,
All perish — all! and I (nay bear with me)
Could not survive the complicated ruin:

(II, ii, 30-39)
Two thoughts particularly assail his mind. Is Teresa innocent? Is she wedded to Ordonio?

Thus disguised
I will first seek to meet Ordonio's—wife!
If possible, alone too. This was her wonted walk,
And this the hour; her words, her very looks
Will acquit her or convict.

(I, i, 94-98)
'Tis strange! It cannot be! my Lord Ordonio!
Her Lord Ordonio! Nay, I will not do it!
I cursed him once—and one curse is enough!

(I, ii, 338-40)

What deters him from the exposure of his brother's malignity and from revenge is not merely the moral idea but also the thought of Teresa, and we note a sudden release of his creative energy when he learns from Ordonio that Teresa is not married and that she is innocent.

Are you not wedded, then? Merciful Heaven!
Not wedded to Teresa?

(II, ii, 120-21)

And I did curse thee!
At midnight! on my knees! and I believed
Thee perjur'd, thee a traitress! the dishonour'd!
O blind and credulous fool! O guilt of folly!
Should not thy inarticulate fondnesses,
Thy infant loves — should not thy maiden vows
Have come upon my heart? And this sweet Image
Tied round my neck with many a chaste endearment

(II, ii, 157-64)

Here we have a new, almost unexpected picture of Alvar, a human being in the full sense of the term and not a mere personification of moral crusade, and the picture receives a gracious tenderness when we recall that he "lov'd sad music from a child" (III, i, 2):

Once he was lost, and after weary search he was found in an open place in the wood "To which spot he had followed a blind boy, /
Who breath'd into a pipe of sycamore / Some strangely moving notes" (III, i, 5-7).

Both Alvar and Ordonio show an acute emotional tension, a soul-searing agony. This tension also sharpens the character of Isidore, a Moresco Chieftain converted to Christianity, who serves as an accomplice in Ordonio's murderous design. Ordonio's description of him as a "tender-hearted, scrupulous, grateful villain" (III, ii, 134) is unjust and shows little of the complexity of Isidore's response to the situation in which he finds himself, but the irony is that each word in the description applies to him. He is indeed grateful, scrupulous and tender-hearted,
but he also assists, although unknowingly, in a monstrous conspiracy. Alhadra says (I, ii, 241) that her husband has a "lion's courage" but his gentle heart is "unfit for boisterous times" (I, ii, 243). This gentleness also causes a certain blindness in him and makes him an easy dupe; he fails to discern the true motive of Ordonio who thrice saved his life and speaks of Ordonio in grateful exclamation as his "Patron! Friend! Preserver!" (II, i, 5). "I would", he assures his saviour, "climb up an ice-glazed precipice / To pluck a weed you fancied!" (II, i, 18-19). He desists from killing Alvar when he learns that Alvar is Ordonio's brother, but his trust in Ordonio still persists, and he is puzzled to note that Teresa loves Alvar, not Ordonio. He has enough conscience to decline to play the sorcerer to deceive Teresa, but he indirectly participates in the deception in introducing Ordonio to the mysterious wizard. His agonized statement "I am no villain — never kill'd for hire (II, i, 76) — shows the force of his conscience, but destiny places him in the role of a hired accomplice, and the wheel comes full circle when he is killed by his supposedly noble saviour.

I have hurl'd him down the chasm! treason for treason.  
He dreamt of it: henceforward let him sleep,  
A dreamless sleep, from which no wife can wake him.  

(IV, i, 168-70)
Gratefulness is a moral virtue, but gratefulness can also lead to slavery and a morally indefensible position, and Isidore's predicament illustrates the dilemma. No such dilemma disturbs Lord Valdez, Teresa's guardian and the father of the two brothers. He is deeply attached to the memory of his elder son who is supposedly dead, but he pleads for acceptance of an irretrievable loss. Teresa, in his eyes, is the "victim of a useless constancy" (I, ii, 17), and his counsel to Teresa has the assurance of pragmatic reason:

Love him for himself,
Nor make the living wretched for the dead.
(I, ii, 2-3)

And again:

O power of youth to feed on pleasant thoughts,
Spite of conviction! I am old and heartless!
Yes, I am old — I have no pleasant fancies —
Hectic and unrefreshed with rest —
(I, ii, 59-62)

He is convinced that Alvar is dead and asks Teresa to marry Ordonio with a repeated insistence that is almost sickening:

O beloved Teresa,
Would'st thou best prove thy faith to generous Alvar
And most delight his spirit, go, make thou
His brother happy, make his aged father
Sink to the grave in joy.

(I, ii, 75-79)

Valdez fails to see the malignity in Ordonio and the complex working of his inner mind, and his dotage is both pathetic and irritating. He claims to be a realist — he has no pleasant fancies, he says (I, ii, 61) — and yet he shows no understanding of reality.

Like Valdez, Teresa too shows little trace of emotional tension, but she is very much unlike Valdez. The absence of any inner conflict in her mind is not to be traced to any weakness: she is intellectually and morally alert, and her keen emotional sensitivity gives her a distinct identity. She is not unaware of her obligations to her guardians, but her allegiance to Alvar outweighs all other considerations. Her journey to the dark dungeon, "an inhuman den", to free the wizard shows her fearlessness; she is equally fearless in rejecting Ordonio, and her protestations against the arguments of Lord Valdez shine out in moral clarity. There are woes, she says, that are "ill-buttered for the garishness of joy" (I, ii, 18-19), and she confronts the father with an unanswerable question:

... if this be wretchedness
That eats away the life, what were it, think you,
If in a most assured reality
He should return, and see a brother’s infant
Smile at him from my arms?
Oh what a thought!

(I, ii, 46-51)

Her estimate of Ordonio is equally sharp and piercing:

That low imposture! That mysterious picture!
If this be madness, must I wed a madman?
And if not madness, there is mystery,
And guilt doth lurk behind it.

(IV, ii, 42-45)

And again:

... saw you his countenance?
How rage, remorse, and scorn, and stupid, fear
Displaced each other with swift interchanges?

(IV, ii, 46-48)

This moral and intellectual vigour is equally perceptible in her attitude to Monviedro:

The Inquisitor! on what new scent of blood?

(I, ii, 104)

And yet Teresa is not Shakespeare’s Portia: her intellectual and moral vigour is part of her identity, but the impression that persists is of an almost ineffable being. Alvar describes her as
"the angel of the vision" (I, i, 55) and Teresa's own description of her own love as "a timorous and tender flower" (I, ii, 83) is an apt commentary on her character. Her dream of a bowery paradise (I, ii, 42-44) — a symbol of life's triumph over death — does not really seem an unsubstantial fancy, and what sustains Coleridge's portrait is that with her astral purity and beauty she remains human enough.

The sound of thy voice shall be my music!
Alvar! my Alvar! am I sure I hold thee?
Is it no dream? thee in my arms, my Alvar!

(V, i, 103-105)

Teresa suffers long the pang of separation, but she remains unswerving in her attachment, and for her separation is also a channel of grace. We note a similar absence of tension in Alhadra, Isidore's Moorish wife, who is, in Wilson Knight's words, "the only active force in the play". Her passionate devotion to her husband and her children and to the Moorish cause, and her equally passionate antipathy against the "fell inquisitors" — the "sons of blood" (I, ii, 186) — give her character a ferocity and power that is both moving and disturbing. That she has a tender sensitive nature is evident in her poignant narration of her suffering in the prison with her baby (I, ii, 206-25), but this tenderness, under great physical pressure, gives birth to "flaming life" (Wilson Knight's words) and leaves us wondering whether
her militant energy is really heroic or a form of perverted passion. What her life and her action illustrates is the extent to which human relationships are twisted and desecrated by perverted religion and perverted civilization, and her remark that "Great evils ask great passions to redress them" (I, ii, 230) is an ironical commentary not only on Alvar's avowed moral purpose but also on a political and religious order that could perpetrate monstrosities in the name of God.

Alhadra's remarks "Great evils ask great passions to redress them" pinpoint not merely her rebellion against the existing order but also Coleridge's own perplexity in confronting the question: What is the right way to achieve the end? Remorse is avowedly a problem play, a play with a definite moral mission, and although Coleridge shows considerable skill in the construction of the plot and in the delineation of characters, the chief significance of the play lies in this moral note. The moral design is complex, and to emphasize "remorse" as the play's main motif would be to over-simplify this design. What happens is that two motifs—political and moral—are counterpointed. The earlier version (Osorio) is evidently more radical in tone; the moral tone is more predominant in Remorse, but the political ardour of the young Coleridge persists, complicating the question of means and ends. Is radical action on the social and political plane the only adequate means to
eliminate evil? Or, should the process be inward, a spiritual transformation of the guilt-ridden mind? Alhadra and Alvar represent two different approaches, involving two different commitments. Coleridge, at least in the structure of the play, does not offer any definitive answer, and the uncertainty — or duality — enriches the play's structural and moral design.
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4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 316.
6. Ibid., p. 318.
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10. Ibid., p. 326.
11. Ibid., p. 352.
12. Ibid., p. 355.
13. Ibid., p. 358.
15. Ibid., pp. 384-85.
16. Ibid., p. 606.
17. Ibid., p. 608.
18. Ibid., II, p. 745.
19. Ibid., I, p. 412
20. Ibid., p. 604.
21. Ibid.


23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., p. 324.


28. Ibid.


31. LWL, The Middle Years (1811-1820), II (1937) p. 552 (letter to Mary Hutchinson, 1 February 1813).


34. New Letters, II, p. 43 (see letter to Thomas Southey, January 20, 1813).

35. CHH, p. 138.

36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., p. 140.
38. Ibid., p. 152.
39. Ibid., p. 155.
40. Ibid., p. 165.
41. Ibid., p. 174.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., p. 188.
44. Ibid., pp. 195-96.
45. Ibid., pp. 117-18.
46. Quoted by Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., p. 299.
47. William Hazlitt, *Collected Works*, (Dent, 1903), vol. 8, p. 416. He, of course, qualified his praise later by calling the play "a spurious tragedy" *(Ibid., p. 421).*
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., p. 117.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 118.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., p. 121.
57. Ibid., p. 123.
58. Ibid., p. 124.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., p. 126.
62. Ibid., p. 130.
63. Ibid., p. 132.
64. Ibid., p. 134.
65. Ibid., p. 135.
66. Ibid., p. 136.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., p. 137.
69. Ibid., p. 140.
70. Ibid., pp. 140-41.
72. Chambers, p. 255.
73. Ibid. See also Letters, Griggs, III, p. 430 (letter to Sara Coleridge, 27 January, 1813).
74. Chambers, p. 255.
75. Leigh Hunt, p. 103.


77. The Athenaeum, No. 3258, April, 1850, p. 445.


79. Chew, p. 1153.


93. Ibid., p. 212.


95. See Ernest Watson, pp. 281-313.


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105. Ibid.

106. CCH, p. 119.

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112. Evans, p. 224.

113. Joseph W. Donohue, Jr., p. 300.

114. CCH. pp. 131-32.


118. Evans, p. 224.

119. Fletcher, p. 73.

120. FW, Campbell, p. 34.

121. Letters, Griggs, I, p. 122. The letter is dated 3 November 1794.

122. Ibid., p. 628.


124. CCH, p. 123.


126. Ibid. See also Arnold B. Fox, "Political and Biographical Background of Coleridge's Osorio", JEGP, vol. LXI, No. 2, April, 1962, p. 258.

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid.

130. Stokoe, p. 127.

131. Quoted by Stokoe, ibid.


136. See Friedrich Schiller's Works, op. cit., p. 1. (The English translation of the motto is quoted.)


146. *Specimens of the Table Talk of the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 2 vols. (1835), entry for 17 February 1833, II, pp. 121-22.


151. Ibid. See Preface to the MS. of Osorio, Appendix IV, F, p. 1114.


153. Ibid., p. 146.


155. CCH, p. 172.

156. See Ibid., for instance.

157. See Knight, op. cit., p. 156. See also CCH, p. 149.

158. Ibid., p. 156.

159. Ibid., p. 160.