



**MURDER, LOVE AND BETRAYAL: REVISITING INÉS DE CASTRO  
IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY THEATRE  
(Ignacio García and Ana Zamora)\***

ASESINATO, AMOR Y TRAICIÓN: LA REVISITACIÓN TEATRAL  
DE INÉS DE CASTRO EN EL SIGLO XXI  
(Ignacio García y Ana Zamora)

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Dedicated to the dear memory of Alicia Lázaro  
A la memoria de nuestra querida Alicia Lázaro

**Abstract**

This paper analyzes two performances of the myth of Galician Inés de Castro, a queen murdered and crowned post-mortem by her husband, Pedro de Portugal. After a review of the literary coordinates of this revisitation, a comparison and contrast are made between two approaches made by Ana Zamora and Ignacio García (2019). The former (Nao d'amores's *Nise*) works through Jerónimo Bermudez's *Nise lastimosa* and *Nise laureada*, the latter stages *Reinar después de morir / Reinar depois de morrer* by Luis Vélez de Guevara. The figure of the queen serves to stage obsessions of medieval and contemporary societies. The problematic representation of an act of violence to a woman onstage is presented by two

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contrasting approaches: the one Baroque and bloody; the other one sublime and Romanesque, neutral and yet transcendent.

### **Keywords**

Performance, Medievalism, Inés de Castro, Legend, Jerónimo Bermúdez, Luis Vélez de Guevara.

### **Resumen**

El presente trabajo analiza dos puestas en escena del mito de la orensana Inés de Castro, reina asesinada y coronada *post-mortem* por su marido Pedro de Portugal. Tras una revisión de las coordenadas a partir de las cuales se sitúa la revisitación a la figura de la reina muerta, se hace una comparación y contraste entre dos acercamientos realizados por Ana Zamora e Ignacio García (2019): la *Nise de Nao d'amores* con una dramaturgia que parte de *Nise lastimosa* y *Nise laureada* de Jerónimo Bermúdez y la producción hispanoportuguesa *Reinar después de morir / Reinar depois de morrer* de Luis Vélez de Guevara. En ambas se ven algunas de las obsesiones de las sociedades medieval y contemporánea a través de la figura de la reina. En concreto, se observa claramente la problemática de representación de un acto de violencia al cuerpo de una mujer famosa en la escena y dos acercamientos contrapuestos: uno barroco, sanguinolento y sublime, y otro románico, neutro y, sin embargo, trascendente.

### **Palabras clave**

Puesta en escena, medievalismo, Inés de Castro, leyenda, Jerónimo Bermúdez, Luis Vélez de Guevara.

### INTRODUCTION

The legend of Inés de Castro tells the story of a Galician noblewoman who married king Pedro I of Portugal, only to be soon murdered along with her children. After this cruel murder, she was crowned again by her lover the king, and she ruled as an icon. This brutal case of power, love, and necrophilia, which has captured Iberian imagination for centuries, has been retold a few times, but has recently been adapted twice in the same 2019-2020 season by Ignacio García (Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico and Teatro de Almada) and Ana Zamora (Nao d'amores / Teatro de la Abadía). The former directed the Luso-Hispanic

production *Reinar después de morir / Reinar depois de morrer* based on Luis Vélez de Guevara's Baroque text and the latter combined Renaissance playwright Jerónimo Bermúdez's binomy *Nise lastimosa* and *Nise laureada* into a single play, aptly titled *Nise, la tragedia de Inés de Castro*. The following pages will attempt to dissect the reverberations of a legend specific to Iberian theatre in the 21st century, and the reasons why the two pieces came at the same time. It has to do with social reasons (the Iberian version of the #metoo movement) and the artistic obsessions of García and Zamora, who wished to go deeper into Spain and Portugal's shared legacy.

Inés de Castro (1325-1355) was a Galician noblewoman, the illegitimate daughter of Pedro Fernández de Castro, lord of Lemos and Sarria, and his lover, the Portuguese noblewoman Aldonça Lourenço de Valadares. She arrived in Portugal in 1340 as lady-in-waiting to Constanza of Castile, who had recently married Pedro, the heir apparent to the Portuguese throne. Constanza died in 1345. Afonso IV tried on several occasions to remarry his son, but Pedro refused to take a wife that were not Inés, who was not considered eligible as queen. Pedro's legitimate son, the future king Ferdinand I of Portugal, was a fragile boy, whilst the illegitimate children of Pedro and Inés were prospering.<sup>1</sup>

The legend has a geopolitical influence. Inés's presence created ill-will amongst Portuguese noblemen, who feared a growing Castilian influence on Pedro. Afonso IV exiled Inés from court after Constanza's death, but Pedro remained with her, declaring her his true love. After several attempts to keep the lovers apart, Afonso IV ordered Inés's death.

The killers were Pêro Coelho, Álvaro Gonçalves, and Diogo Lopes Pacheco, who travelled to the monastery of Santa Clara-a-Velha in Coimbra, kidnapped Inés, and decapitated her in front of her young children. When Pedro found out, he looked for the murderers and managed to capture two of them in 1361. He executed them publicly, ripping out their hearts. On ascending to the throne of Portugal in 1357, Pedro I of Portugal declared that he had secretly married Inés, making her queen. His word was, and still is, the only proof of that matrimony. The first literary sources of this were *Nise lastimosa* and *Nise laureada* (1577) by

<sup>1</sup> Inés de Castro and Pedro I had the following children, who were legitimized by Pedro I on 19 March 1361: Afonso, who died shortly after birth; Beatrice, who married Sancho Alfonso, 1<sup>st</sup> Count of Albuquerque and was thereby the great-grandmother of Ferdinand II of Aragon; John, Duke of Valencia de Campos, claimant to the throne during the 1383–85 crisis and Denis, Lord of Cifuentes, claimant to the throne during the 1383–1385 crisis.

Jerónimo Bermúdez, stating that after he became king, he had Inés's body exhumed and made the whole court swear fealty to their new queen. According to these sources, Pedro had the body of his beloved Inés dug up, placed her on a throne wearing a diadem and royal clothes, and required all the nobility of the kingdom to come forward and kiss the hem of her dress, giving their respects in death that she had not received during her lifetime.

Some modern sources describe the story of Inés's post-mortem coronation as a *leyenda* ["legend"] (Sousa, 1984). As Miguel Ángel Teijeiro Fuentes says:

qué papel jugó doña Inés en este tablero de intrigas y conspiraciones es difícil de asegurar... Resulta posible imaginar las debilidades de esta joven en un mundo de hombres ávidos de poder. Como doña Leonor de Guzmán, la amante de don Alfonso XI, como doña Juana de Castro, la hermana de don Fernando y esposa por un día de don Pedro el cruel, es muy probable que también doña Inés acabara seducida por los cantos de sirena y ambicionar a la corona de Portugal para alguno de sus hijos. (2019, pp. 368)

[The role Inés played in that series of intrigues and conspiracies is hard to be certain of... We can certainly imagine the weaknesses of this young lady in a world of men eager for power. Just like doña Leonor de Guzmán, don Alfonso XI's lover, like doña Juana de Castro, don Fernando's sister and wife of don Pedro the cruel for a single day, it is quite likely that doña Inés should have been seduced by the siren's call of ambitioning the crown of Portugal for one of her children.]

In fact, the evidence that this ever happened is thin; Pedro had Inés's body removed from its grave in Coimbra and taken to Alcobça, where it was buried at the royal monastery.

Her murder and the legend of the coronation of her exhumed body have made Inés de Castro a recurring subject in art, music, and drama over the centuries. During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, the story of Inés de Castro was immortalised in several plays and poems, including *Os Lusíadas* by Luís de Camões (canto iii, stanzas 118-135), *Agnes de Castro, or, the Force of Generous Love* by Aphra Behn (1688), and *Agnes de Castro* by Catharine Trotter Cockburn (1695). During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, we find a second wave of the myth of Inés in the medievalist style. A series of significant poetic pieces were created during this time. Felicia Hemans' poem *The coronation of Inés de Castro* was first printed in *The New Monthly Magazine* in 1828. Inés is also a recurring figure in Ezra Pound's *Cantos*. Several plays deal with the story, such as *La comtesse de Genlis Inès de Castro* (1826), and *La Reine morte* by Henry de Montherlant, or *Inez de Castro* by

Mary Russell Mitford. Finally, over 20 operas and ballets about Inés de Castro were created throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup>



**Fig. 1.** Eugénie Servières, *Inés de Castro se jetant avec ses enfants aux pieds d'Alphonse IV roi* [*Inés de Castro with her children at the feet of Afonso IV, King of Portugal*], 1822. Paris, Sénat - Palais du Luxembourg. Public Domain.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:In%C3%A8s\\_de\\_Castro\\_se\\_jetant\\_avec\\_ses\\_enfants\\_aux\\_pieds\\_d%27Alphonse\\_IV\\_roi.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:In%C3%A8s_de_Castro_se_jetant_avec_ses_enfants_aux_pieds_d%27Alphonse_IV_roi.jpg)

<sup>2</sup> In ballet we find multiple versions of the story, including eponymous versions by Bernhard Anselm Weber (1790, Hannover), Niccolò Antonio Zingarelli (1798), Walter Savage Landor (1831), Giuseppe Persiani with libretto by Salvatore Cammarano (1835), and Pietro Antonio Coppola (1842, Lisboa). Operas include *Inés de Castro* by Scottish composer James MacMillan (1996), *Wut* in German by the Swiss composer Andrea Lorenzo Scartazzini (2006), *Inés de Castro* by the American composer Thomas Pasatieri. This last work was premiered in 1976 by the Baltimore Opera Company. *Inés* by the Canadian composer James Rolfe (2009). In addition, the Portuguese composer Pedro Camacho created *Requiem Inés de Castro*, premiered on 28 March 2012 at the Catedral Nueva in Coimbra to mark the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transfer of her body from Coimbra to the Alcobaça monastery. Christopher Bochmann produced *Corpo e alma* which focused on Pedro's transition from sensual to spiritual love after her death, using several features of the story. One can also find *Inés de Castro*, a novel by María Pilar Queral del Hierro in Spanish and another novel by Isabel Stilwell as recently as 2022. See also Statello, 2016.

Contemporary visions of the myth can be exemplified with two paintings. The first, by Eugénie Servièrès entitled *Inès de Castro se jetant avec ses enfants aux pieds d'Alphonse IV roi* [*Inès de Castro with her children at the feet of Afonso IV, King of Portugal*] (1822), contains most of the story: the figures of Inés, Afonso, and her children with her husband Pedro in the hands of a loyal counsellor. In the background, two groups of figures hide in the shadows (emphasising their culpability): the dark figure of the royal counsellor who is to become her murderer, and the multitude who are about to break into the room. The representations of Afonso, Inés and Pedro are idealised, and the details give a sense of grace. In contrast, *Assassinato de Inés de Castro* [*Tragedy of Inés de Castro*] (1901/04) by Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro shows the lady on her knees, desperately trying to save her life. The viewer cannot see the king's face, whilst the counsellors look sombrely down upon her.



**Fig. 2.** Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro, *Assassinato de Dona Inês de Castro* [*Murder of Inês de Castro*], 1901/04, Museu Militar de Lisboa. Public Domain.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ines\\_de\\_castro.jpg?uselang=pt#Licenciamento](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ines_de_castro.jpg?uselang=pt#Licenciamento)

Both paintings romanticize the myth of Inés de Castro. Eugénie Servières and Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro present her bending her knees and begging for her and her children's life to king Afonso IV while the assassins look distantly. At the same time, Bordalo Pinheiro clearly racializes her figure in naturalistic fashion being gloomier and more intimist than Servières's more epic account. In a sense, the productions we will go on to describe are parallel to these two paintings. *Nao d'amores* maintains the stylised vision of the figures in Servières' painting, whilst Ignacio García offers a more pathetic and emotional vision like Bordalo Pinheiro's (without the emphasis on race in the figure of Inés).

How do two theatrical pieces on the same myth take place at the same time? In Spain, the marches for International Women's Day, held in recent years on 8 March, are among the largest in the world. This is owing to various factors, such as the case of *La Manada*,<sup>3</sup> the global #metoo movement and other parallel Spanish movements. The numbers are impressive. In March 2018 (in the times before Covid-19), over 5 million people took part in 120 marches, 182 meetings and 139 events that took place in over 200 towns around Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, etc. Violence against women ("machista" violence) is on the rise. According to notes from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística [National Institute of Statistics], the number of women who have suffered sexist violence has remained high for the last five years: 2016 (28.281), 2017 (29.008), 2018 (31.286), 2019 (31.911), 2020 (29.215). In 2020 the rate of victims of sexist violence was of 1.4 in every 1000 women amongst women of 14 years of age or older and the number of victims of domestic violence grew by 8.2 % (INE, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> This was a case of sexual violence that took place in Pamplona on 7 July 2016 during the San Fermín celebrations. A group of five men sexually assaulted an 18 year-old from Madrid in the hallway of a building in the centre of the city of Pamplona. The victim accused them of rape. The case was highly present in the media. The events were recorded on video and were commented on in social media. The accused, from Seville, included a member of the Civil Guard and a member of the Spanish army, who were arrested and put on trial. The sentence was announced on 26 April 2018, with the judges absolving the accused of rape and charging them with sexual assault. One of the three magistrates did not agree with his two colleagues and voted for their full absolution. The three magistrates were Francisco Cobo, who presided it, Raquel Fernandino and Ricardo González. The sentence was announced on 26 April 2018 and included a charge for continued sexual abuse aggravated by undue influence. The sentence emerged from the agreement of two of the judges, José Francisco Cobo and Raquel Fernandino, whilst the third judge, Ricardo González ruled in favour of the absolution of the accused. Ultimately the Magistrates Court in Navarre condemned the five accused. The case has been used as a demonstration of the patriarchal nature of the judiciary (Campos 2017, Altell 2018). For digital discussion, see Orbeagozo Terradillos, Morales i Grass and Larrondo Ureta (2019, pp. 211-247) and Molpeceres Arnáiz and Filardo-Llamas (2020, pp. 55-78).

Several plays reflect this situation. A selection of productions can be pointed out: *El castigo sin venganza* by Helena Pimenta (2018), a Joven Compañía de Teatro Clásico production entitled *En otro reino extraño* (2020), multiple versions of *Fuenteovejuna* which present the play in the light of Feminist social criticism, such as Ignacio García and José Gabriel López Antuñano's version in Ivory Coast (2019) and Pepa Gamboa's production with gypsy women (2017). These are the backdrop for both plays.

### *Nise, la tragedia de Inés de Castro*

As already stated, in *Nise, la tragedia de Inés de Castro* (2019) Ana Zamora departs from a version of *Nise lastimosa* and *Nise laureada* by Jerónimo Bermúdez (Lugo de Santiso c. 1530-1605/06),<sup>4</sup> Senecan tragedies in five acts with two choruses (Antonio de Silva, 1577). *Nise lastimosa* deals with Inés's awful death, and *Nise laureada* with the unstoppable revenge of prince don Pedro against the participants of the plot. More than likely, *Nise lastimosa* is an adaptation of a prior Portuguese play by Antonio Ferreira (1558), whilst *Nise laureada*, which presents the consequences of this story of love and betrayal, is an original play. Nao d'amores take quite a daring stance on the material. The tragedies of the late 16<sup>th</sup> centuries have traditionally been seen as simply academic exercises to be analysed in a classroom. However, their inherent theatricality is very obvious, an aspect that Ana Zamora and her team take full advantage of. Zamora's adaptation respects about a third of both plays, using the edition by Alfredo Hermenegildo (2002), such as, for instance, the prince's initial speech which is cut from 136 to 35 verses. At the same time, the dramaturgy emphasises the more hidden elements, those that border on necrophilia.

As for signs outside the actor (to employ Kowzan's terminology), the first thing that surprises the audience is the rear of the seating. Nao d'amores use their system for indicating the boundaries of the stage: a wooden structure which is kept in their laboratory in Revenga. Seating is essential to the play as it gives it an element of ritual that is present in the whole text. They are U shaped stands that surround the acting space and are inevitably reminiscent of

<sup>4</sup> Bermúdez was an erudite humanist, theologian, playwright, soldier, traveller and, in his final years, Dominican friar at the convent of Peña de Francia (in Salamanca), A Coruña and Tui (Pontevedra). He probably taught at Salamanca and Coimbra. He died towards the end of 1605 or beginning of 1606. See Teijeiro Fuentes for his biography (2019, pp. 365-399).



the first Renaissance theatres in Italy such as the Gonzaga theatre in Sabbioneta or the Farnese theatre in Parma. Zamora is very interested in how to use seating stands. In an interview I conducted with her for a piece of her work on Lucas Fernández and Gil Vicente, she mentioned the Forman brothers, whose *Obludarium* was based on a wooden platform, remaining motionless for up to three or four hours, and on very uncomfortable stools.<sup>5</sup> Zamora was interested in the ritual nature of the theatrical. We should remember that the play opened at the Teatro de la Abadía, a theatre in an old church in Madrid, where the solemn and magical space acquires great ritual force. Miguel Ángel Camacho's lighting was essential, as it highlighted the wonderful stained glass the building possesses. Likewise, both Ricardo Vergne's set design and Deborah Macías's costume design highlighted the ritual elements. Macías created a woollen cloak divided in two colours: dun for the men and white for the women, with a mixture of both tones for the tenor.

The heart of the conflict of the play revolves around the triumphal return of Nise after her death. Zamora created a number of interactions with the late Alicia Lázaro's music, by singing *romances* about the unfortunate events. Likewise, Javier García Ávila's choreography gives a certain lightness to the actor's movement on stage. The cast was formed of actors used to Nao d'amores' work: José Luis Alcobendas, Javier Carramiñana, Alba Fresno, José Hernández Pastor, Natalia Huarte, Eduardo Mayo, Alejandro Saá and Isabel Zamora. These are total actors, who perform, sing, and dance and are able to work towards the general joyful effect of the play, a striking example on the present-day Spanish stage (not only with reference to early modern theatre, of course). Notions of power are prominent throughout the play. As Alfredo Hermenegildo points out:

En la *Lastimosa*, junto al icono [rey], se muestran otros dos iconos, el cetro y la corona que vienen a completar visualmente dicho icono, agregándole ciertas connotaciones del poder. En la *Laureada*, el icono [rey], dotado también del icono [cetro], está también acompañado por unos complementos sémicos muy significativos de la crueldad y la violencia: el cuchillo con el que se ejecutan los dos traidores el corazón de las víctimas, etc. Todo lo demás es discurso, es decir, más que hacer, hablar, más que presentar. (2002, pp. 25-26)

<sup>5</sup> *Obludarium* was a show directed by Petr Forman, written along with his brother Matěj. Both performed it on tour, using an iron structure that they assembled and disassembled for each performance. The structure has a capacity of 140 spectators. It has been performed at, amongst others, the Titirimundi festival in Segovia in 2010.

[In *Lastimosa*, along with the icon [king], two other icons appear, the sceptre and the crown that visually complete said icon, adding certain connotations of power. In *Laureada*, the icon [king], also equipped with the icon [sceptre], is accompanied by semiotic elements signifying cruelty and violence: the knife with which the two traitors are executed, the hearts of the victims, etc. Everything else is discourse, in other words, speaking rather than doing, more than presenting.]

Symbols of power are inserted by using several crowns and helmets depending on the actors. These icons serve to help differentiate between the performers. These icons are related to various monologues on the function of the king and the queen, underscoring, above all, the treatment of Inés, who is presented as a scapegoat. Zamora follows the main argument used by the counsellors to persuade the king to kill Inés (min. 15):

Por dar salud al cuerpo, cualquier miembro,  
 si se pudre, se corta porque el sano  
 no venga a corromperse. A que este cuerpo,  
 Del cual tú eres cabeza, está en peligro  
 De corromperse todo y destruirse  
 Por esta hembra sola. Si la vida  
 Le atajas, la ponzoña es atajada.  
 Tendrás el reino sano y sin zozobra.

(Hermenegildo, 2002, pp. 132-133; vv. 637-649;  
 minute 15 in the recording of the production)

[To give health to the body, any extremity,  
 If it rots, is cut off so that what is healthy  
 Is not corrupted. Of this body  
 You are the head, and it is in danger  
 Of being corrupted wholly and destroyed  
 By just this one woman. If her life  
 You cut short, the poison will be stopped.  
 The kingdom will be healthy and you will be untroubled.]

Zamora maintains Bermúdez's reference to the notion of the body politic, known by most medievalists as the famous *The King's Two Bodies*, a term coined by Ernst Kantorowitz. The metaphor functions by means of a synecdoche by which the extremities of the social body are identified by the extremity that best characterises them: the leader is generally the head of state, as he rules the body and remains on an upper level; the mouth corresponds to the public speakers; the clergymen are the ears, as they listen to one another; language is the doctors, as

they write the prescriptions; workers who maintain the body would be the feet, or the hands depending on their profession:

In this Mystical Body there are many members, because the heads are the kings, princes, and prelates; the eyes are wise judges and true councilors, the ears are religious, the tongue good doctors; the right hand is the soldiers ready to defend; the left hand is the merchants and faithful mechanics; the heart is the citizens and burghers placed in the centre; the feet are the farmers and labourers supporting the whole body firmly. (Hale, 1971, p. 44)

In the European tradition, the body politic is used in discussions about the possibility of revolution. According to this physical conceptualisation of the nation, governors should act as doctors who cure bodies by purging them of poison and sickness, as suggested by Plato in the *Republic* (I.161). In fact, as the case of Socrates reminds us, the Greek legal tradition included the possibility of being accused of corrupting public morals (*Apology* 24B-25E; 431) which could lead to the expulsion of the corruptor, seen as a poisonous antigen within the body politic of the state. As René Girard has studied in *The Scapegoat* and *Violence and the Sacred*, the mechanisms of expulsion were articulated in pre-modern societies based on the selection of a scapegoat, or significantly a “cabeza de turco” [“Turk’s head”] which is expelled from the social body or killed in a sacrificial and ritual act with no risk of revenge (1993, p. 9). Given this image, it is not surprising that minorities or the sick (lepers for instance) should be seen as poisonous antibodies in the state’s body politic. In the anonymous *Libro del regimiento de los señores* [*Book of the Faculties of Lords*] dedicated to don Álvaro de Luna (c. 1390-1453), he is advised, as first minister for Juan II (1406-1454), father of Isabel la Católica, to rule the kingdom according to a divine conception of monarchy. One of the seven maxims he is taught is to expel those who harm the kingdom. The metaphor used is, of course, that of the body politic:

Quando ya non pueden ser dexados sin damno de los otros [miembros], facer deven así como face el sabio físico o çurjano que tanto quanto en el es e puede guarecer el miembro malo o llagado e quando mas non puede, por que no peresçan los otros miembros del cuerpo, cortalo, queriendo cuerda mente mas que un solo miembro peresca que non todo el cuerpo o todos los miembros. (p. 693)

[When they can no longer be left without harming the other [members], you must do as the wise physicians or surgeons do which is to save the bad or damaged member when possible, but when it is not possible, to prevent the other members from perish-

ing, to cut it off, being more sensible to allow a single member to perish than for the whole body or all its members.]

The lexical field of the body, the metaphor of the body politic, and the semantics of religious contamination were used extensively in several political and social upheavals. For instance, particularly significant was the edict of expulsion of the Jews and Moriscos.<sup>6</sup> So, in *La expulsión de los moros de España* [*The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain*] Gaspar Aguilar praised Felipe III for his decision by constructing an allegory for the expulsion of the Muslims by feminising Spain's body politic:

ya con esta expulsión queda purgada  
de los malos humores que ha tenido.  
Y pues ve que la purga fue acertada,  
no la espante el dolor que ha padecido,  
que el mal humor que el médico corrige  
salido sana, y cuando sale affige.  
(p. 354; vv. 4283-4288)

[now this expulsion purges  
All the ills that man has had.  
And as we see the purge was correct,  
We should not be horrified by the pain suffered,  
For the bad humour the doctor corrects  
Is now healthy, and when it comes out it hurts.]

Spain is a lady that has suffered from an excessive viral load of Arabs, reflected by the propaganda of the era, as it is a recurring character in the iconographic

<sup>6</sup> In the edict of expulsion of 31 March 1492, the Catholic Monarchs declared: “Echar los dichos judíos de nuestros reinos, porque cuando algún grave y detestable crimen es cometido por algunos de algún colegio y universidad, es razón que el tal colegio y universidad sean disueltos y aniquilados y los menores por los mayores [...] y que aquellos que pervierten el buen y honesto vivir de las ciudades y villas y *por contagio* pueden dañar a los otros sean expelidos de los pueblos, y aun por otras más leves causas que sean en daño de la república, cuanto más por el mayor de los crímenes y más peligroso y *contagioso*, como lo es éste” [“Expel the aforementioned Jews from our lands, because when a grave and detestable crime has been committed by some at a school or university, it is right for the school or university to dissolve and annihilate the few in favour of the many [...] and that those who pervert the good and honest living of the cities and town *by infection* can damage others, should be expelled from the places, and even with less serious causes that may harm the republic, as much as the most serious and dangerous and *contagious* of crimes, as this is.”] (p. 149; my italics).

representation of the treatment of Empire; for instance, see Titian's painting *Religion Saved by Spain* and Cervantes's thoughts on "Madre querida, España" ["O Spain, my mother dear" (1885a, p. 21)] in *El cerco de Numancia* (v. 441). As we can see, it is a very carefully considered dramaturgical adaptation with detailed work on the recreation of the symbolic world of the era.

*Reinar después de morir / Reinar depois de morrer*

The second play, the Spanish-Portuguese *Reinar después de morir / Reinar depois de morrer*, by Luis Vélez de Guevara (2019), comes with the quality control of having been produced by a team who have been performing early modern theatre for many years.<sup>7</sup> The director, Ignacio García, has directed over 50 Baroque comedias, zarzuelas and contemporary works. The adaptor, José Gabriel López Antuñano, has often worked on Baroque texts. We could highlight his version of Calderón's *La cisma de Inglaterra* [*The Schism in England*] as a magnificent *Enrique VIII* [*Henry VIII*] that was performed by the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (2015).<sup>8</sup> We are dealing with a coproduction between the Festival de Teatro de Almada and the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico. It opened in 2019 in its Portuguese version, where it was unexpectedly successful in a context where it is not unusual to find a lot of early modern drama, and then later performed in Spanish in Spain. The actress Pepa Pedroche worked as director on this second production, although the stage concept and original direction of the Portuguese version was defined by Ignacio García.

The play works through a spectacular set formed by a semi-circular ramp with two hatches to either side which are used consistently for entrances and exits. The wooded ramp is multi-coloured, with images reminiscent of Portuguese tiles. To the left and right we find symbols of a half-moon and full-moon respectively. The actors perform from the ramp, and the proxemics are defined by a choreography

<sup>7</sup> The text by Luis Vélez de Guevara was written around 1627 and 1628 and published posthumously in 1652.

<sup>8</sup> López Antuñano is also the author of a contemporary drama handbook called *La escena del siglo XXI* [*The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Stage*], an essential text on the present European theatrical scene. Pepa Pedroche is an experienced actress within the company who has worked on a number of previous productions. We could note, amongst others, her *¿De cuando acá nos vino?* by Lope de Vega (2009), see Vélez-Sainz (2019a and b).

where characters ascend and descend the ramp, slide down it, traverse it and disappear down the hatches. Of all the cast, we could highlight the work of David Boceta who was the one to use the ramp the most for the dramatic movements of his character across the stage. Also worth mentioning is Lara Grube, who stood in for Carmen del Valle under difficult circumstances, as del Valle injured her leg during the last days of rehearsal, and Grube replaced her after only three days of preparation. Ignacio García trained as a musician (clarinet) and music always plays an important role in his plays. It is used, on the one hand, to underscore the melodramatic moments of the piece and also to accompany the psychological development of the characters whilst, at the same time, helping to connect the audience to the complex Baroque world of Vélez de Guevara. A few stage signs also stood out: doña Blanca de Navarra, wonderfully performed by Manuela Velasco (a TV actress with a solid theatrical track record), always appeared with a bouquet of flowers which are at the same time darts with which she tries to capture a symbolic heron during the second act. Meanwhile, the chrysanthemums fall, marking the moments until king Afonso decides to kill Doña Inés. This is, however, a story of after death triumph.

The dramaturgy preserves 60 % of the original verses, based on the canonical version by George Peale, and reduces the play to about one hour and twenty minutes. López Antuñano focuses on the most poetic scenes and includes references to the world of the *romancero*, which delves many times into the myth. One of the most famous, the “Romance del palmero”, develops some of the play’s motifs: the knight desperately seeking his lover, her transcendent death, and her pallor. The nucleus of the *romance* reads:

¿Dónde vas el caballero?  
 ¿Dónde vas, triste de ti?  
 Que la tu querida esposa  
 Muerta es, que yo la vi.<sup>9</sup>

[Where are you going, knight?  
 Where are you going, so sadly?  
 Your dear wife  
 Is dead, I saw her.]

<sup>9</sup> Menéndez Pidal dedicates a chapter to it in “Canción amplia y canción breve” [“Extensive song and brief song”] in volume XI of his *Estudios sobre el romancero* [*Studies on the Romancero*] (1973).

This *romance* appears in works such as “La infanta coronada” [“The Crowned Princess”] by Suárez de Alarcón or in sonnet 181 of Lope de Vega’s *Rimas* entitled “De doña Inés de Castro” [“On doña Inés de Castro”]:

Con pálido color, ardiendo en ira,  
 en los brazos de Avero y de Alencastro,  
 de la difunta doña Inés de Castro  
 el bravo portugués el rostro mira.

Tierno se allega, airado se retira  
 (trágico fin de amor, infeliz astro)  
 y abrazado a su imagen de alabastro,  
 con este llanto y voz habla y suspira:

“Si ves el alma, Nise, de mis ojos,  
 desde el cielo en que pisas palma y cedro,  
 más que en este laurel y fe constante,

“verás que soy, honrando tus despojos,  
 portugués en amor, en rigor Pedro,  
 rey en poder y en la venganza amante”.

[With pale tone, burning with rage,  
 In the arms of Avero and Alencastro,  
 Of the deceased doña Inés de Castro,  
 The brave Portuguese man gazes at her face.

Tenderly he draws near, angrily he withdraws  
 (the tragic end of love, unlucky star)  
 And embracing her alabaster image,  
 With this cry and voice he speaks and sighs:

“If you see the soul, Nise, of my eyes,  
 From the heavens where you walk beneath palms and cedars,  
 More than this laurel and constant faith,

You will see that I am, honouring your remains,  
 Portuguese in love, suffering Pedro,  
 King with power and a lover in revenge”.]

Lope focuses on don Pedro’s injured love. In Vélez’s time, it was common for the theatrical tradition to include the *romance*. So it is in *La tragedia de doña Inés*

*de Castro* [*The tragedy of doña Inés de Castro*] (1612) by Mejía de la Cerda, *La tragedia por los celos* [*Tragedy over Jealousy*] (c. 1622) by Guillén de Castro.<sup>10</sup> Fragments of the mentioned “Romance del palmero” appear inserted in them. In the case of *Reinar después de morir*, the motif is that of the absent voice that says:

¿Dónde vas el caballero?  
 ¿Dónde vas, triste de ti?  
 Que la tu querida esposa  
 Muerta es, que yo la vi.  
 Las señas que ella tenía  
 Bien te las sabré decir:  
 Su garganta es de alabastro  
 Y sus manos de marfil.  
 (vv. 532-559).

[Where are you going, knight?  
 Where are you going so sadly?  
 Your dear wife  
 Is dead, I saw her.  
 Her appearance  
 I can describe to you:  
 Her throat is alabaster  
 And her hands ivory.]

To which the prince responds

Aguarda, voz funesta  
 da a mis recelos y temor respuesta,  
 aguarda, espera, tente.  
 (vv. 560-562)

[Wait, deathly voice,  
 Answer my worries and fears,  
 Wait, linger, tarry.]

<sup>10</sup> *La tragedia de doña Inés de Castro* by Mejía de la Cerda was included in the *Tercera Parte de las comedias de Lope de Vega y otros autores* [*Third Part of the Plays of Lope de Vega and Other Authors*] (1612). In *El peregrino en su patria* [*The Pilgrim in his Country*] by Lope de Vega (1618) an “Inés de Castro” is mentioned. Two versions of *La tragedia por los celos* (c. 1622) by Guillén de Castro are preserved: one at the Biblioteca Nacional and another at the Biblioteca Provincial de Toledo.



In this funereal scene, the ballad (set by an off-voice) by a gardener warns the prince of the tragic news he will receive. It is an omen that preludes the climax of the play in which the prince sees his beloved fiercely and unjustly assassinated. The text appears in García's version set to music and sung in both versions, and repeated twice in the Spanish version. The song echoes a very famous children song "¿Dónde vas Alfonso XII?" / "Where are you going Alphonse XII?" whose main phrase is easily recognizable by the public.<sup>11</sup>

Both productions share significant parallels. Both use a small pool to highlight Inés de Castro's bath. This bath (almost like legendary Diana's) captures the audience's attention, just as Inés de Castro captured don Pedro's. In both cases, the basin is a mosaic made of Portuguese tiles. In Ana Zamora's production, the bath signifies the birth of the children in a beautifully choreographed and dream-like scene which includes an augury that predicts her death (min 19.10-22.52). In it, she sees three lions enter her room and kill her and her children. The scene is accompanied by the villancico "Malferida iba la garza" ["The heron was badly wounded"] created by the late Alicia Lázaro:

### Malferida

Ay, cadenas de amar.

Malferida iba la garza  
Enamorada:  
Sola va y gritos daba.  
Ay ay ay

Donde la garza hace su nido,  
ribericas de aquel río,  
gritos daba y sola va.  
Ay ay ay

Malferida iba la garza  
enamorada  
Balletero la ha herido  
En el alma  
Ay ay ay

<sup>11</sup> Famous contemporary musician Joaquín Díaz offers a version in his "100 temas infantiles", 2006, vol. 1, URL: <https://open.spotify.com/track/4M7HgsSMLGLxFvirmHEbL1>.

Donde la garza hace su nido,  
 ribericas de aquel río,  
 balletero la ha herido  
 Ay ay ay

Turbias van las aguas, madre,  
 Turbias van.  
 Más ellas se aclararán.  
 (*Corpus*, 1987, p. 512a)

[Badly wounded

Ah, chains of love.

Badly wounded flies the heron,  
 Struck with love;  
 Alone it goes, uttering its cries.  
 Ah, ah, ah.

Where the heron makes its nest  
 On the shores of that river,  
 Alone it goes, uttering its cries.  
 Ah, ah, ah.

Badly wounded flies the heron,  
 Struck with love;  
 The crossbowman injured her  
 Right in her soul.  
 Ah, ah, ah.

Where the heron makes its nest  
 On the shores of that river,  
 The crossbowman injured her  
 Ah, ah, ah.

Muddy flows the water, mother  
 Muddy it flows.  
 But they will run clear.]

The white neck of the heron, according to Cirlot's dictionary, is a "símbolo de la mañana y de la generación vital" ["symbol of the morning and vital generation"] (1994, p. 214). The dawn music is the painful moment for the lovers who, after their nocturnal encounter, must separate with first light. The crossbowmen represent the lackeys of the king. In the production by Ignacio García, Inés was represented on a number of occasions with the nickname "Neck of the White Heron". The character of Inés de Castro appears semi-otically emphasised by a dress, the only white one in the production, which highlighted her long neck (Death Scene 43.00-45.00). This falls in line with the original text in both cases. Both García and Zamora have read the works of philologists like Mitchell Triwedi, who had already noted this aspect in a seminal work (1962, pp. 1-7).<sup>12</sup>

The *Nao d'amores* production highlights the crowning of Inés de Castro and her subsequent coronation in a religious and ritual manner inspired by her tomb at the Alcobaça monastery, through images that the collective imaginary would associate with the *pieta*. The climax of the play sees an interesting interaction between the earthly and the divine. After Inés's death, don Pedro, desperate with pain, blames the earth for harbouring her body. The dramaturgy highlights the connection between the earth and don Pedro's pain, as he wears a brown cloak inspired by the famous *capa de honras* typical of the areas around Aliste in Zamora and Miranda do Douro in Portugal where similar capes are worn. In both cases, they are formal, liturgical dress designed for civic and religious celebrations. The bells that toll in the background throughout the scene underscore the liturgical nature of the event.

Ana Zamora uses a medieval conception of the death of Inés, her figure is majestic and indifferent. Her white mantle makes her resemble a Romanesque virgin and connects her to her tomb in Alcobaça. The connection to the tomb is present in the whole production. For instance, the posters for the premiere and preview (in Segovia) depicted the catafalque instead of an actor:

<sup>12</sup> There are also notable differences. Dramatically, the character who signals the greatest difference between the plays is that of Blanca de Navarra, who does not appear in Bermúdez's play and who plays an important role in Vélez de Guevara's. Meanwhile, in the Baroque version, Blanca de Navarra is absolved of any responsibility for the fall of Inés de Castro. In the Renaissance version, the nemesis are the counsellors who are very cruelly executed, with their hearts ripped out of their chests.



**Fig. 3.** Poster for *Nise: La tragedia de Inés de Castro*, Nao d'amores, 2019, Teatro de la Abadía. © Nao d'amores.

After the premiere, once the company had a good number of photos to work with, they picked the scene where Inés is carried to her tomb for their touring poster:



**Fig. 4.** Poster for *Nise: La tragedia de Inés de Castro*, Nao d'amores, 2019, touring version. © Nao d'amores.

The scene refers to the catafalque in Alcobça of don Pedro and doña Inés, where we find their tombs along with the inscription “Até o fim do mundo” [“Until the end of the world”] indicating the wait until Judgement Day. Inés’s side is decorated with scenes from the New Testament. Her head is embellished with the crucifixion. At her feet, we find a representation of judgement day in three tones, around a sinuous line that begins from the mouth of the leviathan, whilst a majestic Christ presides over the divine court. We can also see the Virgin Mary kneeling and surrounded by angels and apostles before the miracle of resurrection. The reclining body of Inés de Castro bears a crown. Four angels hold up her head and her mantle, flanked by two more with incense burners. Surrounding Pedro’s head we find the most eye-catching element of the tomb: the wheel of life. The rosette is formed of two concentric circles with eighteen relief sculptures. The inner circle represents the wheel of fortune, while the outer circle is the wheel of life. At the base of the feet, representations of the final rites of a dignified death are illustrated: the viaticum and the last rites.



Fig. 5. Catafalque of Inés de Castro, Alcobça Monastery.

The majesty of Inés is openly contrasted with the execution of her assassins, who are put to death with their backs to the audience so that Zamora can draw out the Senecan effect of the scene. Ignacio García's Inés is, on the other hand, also transcendent, but suffering, bloodied, Baroque.

#### CONCLUSION

To sum up, throughout this paper we have looked at a selection of productions: *Reinar después de morir* by Luis Vélez de Guevara adapted by Ignacio García (2019), and *Nise: la tragedia de Inés* de Castro by Nao d'amores (2019), which demonstrate the permeability of the play with regards to contemporary issues.

During a recent telephone conversation with Ana Zamora, she made the point that there was a very fertile period during which to deal with this urgent social issue, which festivals interpreted in terms of civic responsibility: "No es casual el interés en la mujer en los festivales públicos en cuanto al teatro" ["The interest in women in the public festival circuit is no accident, when it comes to theatre at least"]. It is not so much about directed culture, but an interest in dealing with present-day issues.

It could easily be argued that the rise in violence against and the intimidation of women is owing to the change in the power-dynamics, a change that is very clearly reflected in contemporary theatre. A large number of specialists in gender-based violence agree that violence is not exclusively physical but is also psychological and symbolic. At the same time, these symbolic components can easily prelude, and, in many cases, portend cases of physical violence. Miguel Lorente Acosta summarizes: "Si hay algo que caracteriza a la violencia contra las mujeres, en cualquiera de sus manifestaciones y formas, es la agresión psicológica" [If there is anything that characterizes violence against women, in any of its manifestations and forms, it is psychological aggression] (2004, p. 78). As with all types of violence (wars, fights, competition games, demonstrations), the physical and material is only one part of a whole in which the social and symbolic must also be analyzed. Lorente Acosta says:

No estamos hablando de conductas de violencia propiciadas por determinados momentos de la historia o por ciertas circunstancias sociales, nos estamos refiriendo a una conducta utilizada por los hombres desde el origen de la sociedad con el objetivo de mantener la posición de desigualdad previamente instaurada alrededor de los valores masculinos. (2004, p. 76)

[We are not talking about acts of violence fostered by certain moments in history or by certain social circumstances, we are referring to a behavior used by men from the origin of society with the aim of maintaining the position of inequality previously established around male values]

Both plays can be seen under the lens of Lorente Acosta's analysis of patriarchy. García and Zamora inject their works with historical and philosophical content in order to present cogently the historical conditions that serve as cultural, social and philosophical context for psychological and physical aggressions. The directors exploit these symbolic and literary contexts in order to denounce not just the case of Inés, but a deep patriarchal structure that accommodates aggressions. In this way, the works recall that the participants and discussion agents do not act in a historical-cultural vacuum but are recipients of attitudes and models of conduct present in history. At the same time, the legend of Inés de Castro endures because it appeals to sentimentalism in society, eroticism (*Eros*) and death (*Thanatos*), mixed with the triumph of the coronation: a play of Baroque depth on the limits of power and love. This tradition is actively devoted to the search of examples that can shed light in the historical structure that underlies patriarchy. And Inés de Castro's shines above many.

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