

ESTUDOS ESSAYS

Inês de Castro in English Literature

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In the cosmopolitan panorama where all events now take place, the study of any historical, political and even economic phenomenon is becoming less and less meaningful in terms of a simple culture. The same thing must be said about literature. It is not possible to study periods like the Renaissance or Romanticism without establishing sources, circulation of ideas, influences, reception. Mainly reception, which we can consider the fundamental stage of any cultural development. More important than merely identifying the first presentation of an idea or of a theme is what was seen in them, the meaning which was given to them, the connections established, the course they followed. All this depends on a great variety of elements, which are, for instance, the political or social situation of the period when a literary work is published or known.

In terms of literature we must furthermore bear in mind the aesthetic conventions, the dominant taste of the time. The fate of any work is a result of aspects which often have nothing literary, or even artistic about them.

If this is true as far as one literature is concerned, it becomes even more evident when we think in terms of comparative literature. In fact, what can make a writer choose a foreign subject? Here we have a problem mainly of reception, active from the author who picks up a subject which he knew from a foreign text or any cultural contact, passive from

those who read or see the work performed, who comment on it, criticize it, but in principle do not change its substance.

Such themes have mostly a historical origin and they usually lead the author to a complementary research. At this stage it is important to consider other sources: personal contacts, historical works known in the new country, travelling notes, works of art, every kind of news. As far as Anglo-Portuguese relations are concerned we must point out military campaigns, mostly in the first years of the 19th century, at the time of the Napoleonic invasions. In terms of cultural diffusion, such a situation can be compared to medieval pilgrimages, in what they may influence the knowledge of new geographical and cultural worlds, habits, traditions, folklore, etc.

The more we think of all these possible relations, the more fascinating becomes the research concerning the course the theme has followed in and from its native country to the one that receives it. This course is the basis for any study of comparative literature. The episode of Inês de Castro is no doubt the Portuguese subject most widespread in western cultures. Its course in English literature has some peculiar aspects that deserve a special attention.

It is an episode of Portuguese medieval history, the facts of which and the legendary details are well known: Inês came to Portugal with Constança, her cousin and the second wife of Pedro, the heir to the crown. A mutual violent love raised a scandal while the Princess was still alive. The King, Afonso IV, exiled her, but Pedro brought her back after his wife's death. They lived together in several towns of the country before settling at the palace of Santa Clara, in Coimbra. Led by the Royal Council, in a meeting at Montemor, the King accepted a death sentence for Inês. She was beheaded while the Prince was hunting away from Coimbra. The cause for such a punishment seems to have been the increasing influence of Inês' brothers, Galician knights who then opposed Pedro I of Castile, whom they had formerly served. The result of a war that might arise would be very doubtful in terms of Portuguese independence, which was the main political concern of Portugal, in that period when the concept of nation was becoming the root of political organization in Europe.

Out of his mind at Inês' death, the Prince took up arms against his father, and only the action of the Queen and the Archbishop of Braga could put an end to the war. In a solemn ceremony father and son made peace. The Prince swore, in a document signed by himself and some witnesses, not to persecute the councillors whom he accused as mainly responsible for that tragedy. Nevertheless the King advised them, before he died, to leave the country, which they accordingly did.

In the fourth year of his reign, Pedro proclaimed his marriage with Inês, which he said had taken place in Bragança, secretly, for fear of his father. Their three children were declared *infantes*, which meant they might succeed him to the throne, in case his only legitimate son, Fernando, might die. Here our contemporary historians tend to see Pedro's behaviour as mainly political, an aspect that cannot but be considered parallel to his actions seen as deriving from his passionate love.

There followed negotiations with Pedro of Castile for the exchange of some Castilian refugees in Portugal for the exiled councillors. Two of them were arrested and put to death in Santarém, their hearts having been pulled out while they were still alive.

The last act of the drama was the removal of Inês' corpse to a beautiful marble-wrought tomb which he had built at the monastery of Alcobaça beside another intended for himself. The ceremony was performed with a pomp which surpassed by far anything held before in Portugal, according to Fernão Lopes, our first and most reliable chronicler, by night, in a procession which walked the seventeen leagues from Coimbra to Alcobaça between rows of people who held torches to light the way.

These are the facts, which the legend completed so as to fill in suggestive facts:

- The King would have gone to Coimbra with Inês' killers, and she, surrounded by her children, would have implored his pardon;
- Inês would not have been beheaded by an executioner, but stabbed by three councillors;
- Pedro would have had her crowned corpse sitting on a throne, at Alcobaça, and all the Portuguese noblemen would have had to kiss her hand.

The meeting with the King and the stabbing of Inês were told for the first time by a chronicler of the 15th century, and Camões made them known. As far as the coronation is concerned, it was described in the beginning of the 17th century by Faria e Sousa, who supported his tale on a document which no one else seems to have seen. And the Spanish drama of the Golden Age, following a suggestion of Bermudez', made it famous chiefly through *Reynar despues de morir*, by Vélez de Guevara.

Curiously enough, if we remember the kind of relation then existing between Portugal and England, mainly in João I's reign, when all events were still so well remembered and at least one of the main players, Diogo Lopes Pacheco, the third so-called "murderer", was still alive, these does not seem to have any echoing of Inês' tragedy. It is particularly important to stress the fact that the legitimacy of the position of João I, later married to Philippa of Lancaster, John of Gaunt's daughter, was achieved through the long detailed analysis of Pedro's behaviour towards Inês de Castro. This was publicly done by João das Regras on his own reasoning and several testimonials which he managed to obtain.

Neither did the Elizabethan theatre, so fond of tragic and sensational subjects, know or use this version of the struggle between duty and love. The suggestion that John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (1633) may have been the first reflex of the coronation outside the Iberian Peninsula¹ is so dim that it is difficult to acknowledge a real relation. Inês came to England via France, both as a historical and a literary character. This was most probably due to the European interest for Portugal that in the 16th century had attained the peak of glory with the saga of the Discoveries.

The first mention made to Inês in England is found in the translation of one of Mayerne Turquet's works, published in France in 1586, made by Edward Grimston in 1612, after a third French edition of 1608. The title points meaningfully to the reasons which made Portugal interesting to Europe, besides the economic and scientific

1. Cf. Davril, 1951.

aspect which at the time were quite apart: *The generall historie of Spaine, containing all the memorable things that have past in the Realms of Castille, Leon, Nauarre, Aragon, Portugall, Granado, &c. and by what means they were visited, and so continue under Philip the third, King of Spain, now reigning.*

Turquet's version of the episode presents Inês married to Pedro, though explaining that there had already been "familiar intercourse during [Constance's] life, for [Inês] was exceedingly fair and amiable." (549) It says that the King went to Coimbra with the killers, but there is no mention of the interview with Inês. There is a very detailed description of Pedro's character and the facts tending to Inês' exaltation, but this reaches its highest point in the lying effigy crowned "as if she were a queen", after Fernão Lopes's words.

She is mentioned again in two English histories of 1661, one anonymous ("by a Person of Quality"), another by John Dauncey. Both use the title to point out the logical connection between the two countries: the present King, Afonso VI, was one of the brothers of Catarina de Bragança, Queen of England. The anonymous work still minded the original cause for interest in Portugal: *The History of the Kingdome of Portugal: With a Description thereof, and it's Original and Growth: As also it's Conquest by Philip the II King of Spain. With it's Restauration under John the IVth, Father of Alphonso the VIth, now King.*

The sources for Portuguese history were the Castilian works by Garibay y Zamalloa (1571) and Juan de Mariana, whose *Historia General de España* (1601), which had first appeared in Latin in 1582, as *Historia de Rebus Hispanicis*, thus being more readable.

As far as Portuguese historians are concerned, the most important work for the diffusion of our history were Duarte Nunes de Leão (*Chronica del-Rey D. Afonso Quarto e Genealogia verdadera de los Reyes de Portugal*, 1600 e 1608) and above all, even in the 19th century, Manuel de Faria e Sousa, with *Epitome de las historias portuguesas* (1628-29). The fact that they were written in Castilian made them easily known abroad. Dauncey's work, more detailed in the narration of the episode we are dealing with, has some mistakes, the most important of which is the fact that it makes João I the son of Pedro and Inês, who

had indeed one with the same name. But others, more concerned with Inês, helped to form an Inês de Castro who has little in common with the historical truth and even with the character created by the Portuguese legend.

The series of historical texts that tell the episode ends in 1662, with the translation by Francis Sandford, called *A Genealogical History of the Kings of Portugal* (1662), from the French *Histoire générale de la Maison de France* (1619), by Scevole and Louis De Sainte-Marthe. The facts are told in a short summary, but with some relevant details:

- the secret marriage is considered real,
- thus enlarging the conclusion drawn by Fernão Lopes, by saying Inês' effigy was "adorned with a Royal Diadem, to signifie, that he owned her for his Queen and Wife";
- and, as in Dauncey, the expression used for Inês' death is "put to death".

Only after all these pseudo-historical accounts does the first literary work appear in English. It is also a translation from the French. Though very free in the use of the text, the plot is unchanged.

This work has a peculiar history. In 1688, M.lle Barbier de Brilhac² published in Amsterdam a novel with the title *Agnes de Castro*. Two English translations were immediately made, one by Peter Bellon (*The Fatal Beauty of Agnes de Castro*), another by Aphra Behn (*Agnes de Castro; or, The Force of Generous Love*). Both were licensed in May, respectively on the 19th and 24th, and published in London. There are no other editions known of Bellon's version, but that of Mrs Behn was quite a hit, which had its eleventh edition in 1777, having appeared with different titles, such as *The History of Agnes de Castro* and *The Fair Maid of Portugal*. This was such a success that its French origin was forgotten (though some editions, the first one included, pointed out that it was a translation), and in 1761 and 1775 two French versions of the English text appeared, again in Amsterdam, with the title "*Histoire d'Agnes de Castro, traduite de l'anglais*". The former was due to Baron

2. Manuela Delille refers the authorship to Jean-Baptiste de Brilhac. Cf. Delille, 2003.

Lyttelton and mentions Mrs Behn as its author, the latter was the work of Mme Thiroux d'Arconville.

This novel gives an account of the facts which has its origin in the Spanish theatre of the Golden Age: Inês falls a victim to the jealousy of a rejected lover – in this case with the aggravating detail that his sister loved Pedro – and not to political forces. And for reasons that we can understand if we think of the time and of the fact that it was written by a woman, the episode is told essentially with a moral purpose: above all to warn the readers against the dangers of “an unlawful passion [even when] restrained within the strictest bounds of conduct.” (III)

This novel had an immediate literary offspring, the tragedy *Agnes de Castro* (1696), by Miss Catherine Cockburne, who seems to have been the first woman to write for the theatre in Britain. And what a theatre! Violence, ghosts and a heap of corpses, in the good Elizabethan tradition. It is not good literature, but it keeps the audience interested, it has a vigorous style and sometimes reaches a fine poetic level. Though its effect may be lost by the King's matter-of-fact final considerations, the expression of Pedro's love has something new imparts strong emotion:

But I can die without the help of weapons,
I wrong'd my love by making that attempt,
As if I thought it wanted strength to kill me;
I'll wait the ling'ring leisure of my Griet,
Thus kneeling at thy Feet, sigh out my soul,
And grow a statue to adorn thy tomb. (47)

Still before the end of the century two important Peninsular histories, already mentioned, appeared in English, *The History of Portugal* by Faria e Sousa and *The General History of Spain* by Juan Mariana, both translated (1698 and 1699) by Captain John Stevens, an Irish Catholic who accompanied Catarina de Bragança back to Portugal after Charles II's death. Faria e Sousa is responsible for the diffusion of the most sensational scene of this tragedy, the legendary posthumous coronation, which however had to wait for the 19th century Romanticism to be accepted.

In the meantime, three variations on the subject appeared in England during the 18th century:

- in a new history of Portugal, 1726, by Charles Brockwell, Pedro marries Branca of Castile and Constança, but also Inês de Castro and even Teresa Gallega (who was Teresa Lourenço, João I's mother);
- three years later, in the first opera dealing with this subject, there is a happy ending, which this kind of literature kept long, until the Romantic taste for all excess re-established the historical truth;
- and in 1763 La Motte's famous tragedy (1723), which was the real promoter of the European fame of Inês, was adapted to the English stage by David Mallet. A success like the original work, it was performed in London, Edinburgh and Dublin, thus widening the range of falseness about the heroine, who is poisoned. This version was not adopted in England, but it reappeared in *Inez: or the Bride of Portugal* (1871) by Isabella Harwood, who followed another famous work of the French tradition, Lucien Arnault's *Pierre de Portugal* (1823). And she went a step further: she makes Pedro die at Inês's feet, crying his despair and wish for revenge. Inês's death had other variations in English: in Skelton's tragedy (1841) she fell from a wall when trying to escape from prison. But Mallet's most striking liberty was to change Inês's name into Elvira, something unheard of in any other literature.

Other tragedies may have appeared in the course of the 18th century, as it seems to be suggested by Southey's words about Charles Symmons' *Inez, a Tragedy* (1796) in the *Critical Review or Annals of Literature*:

Perhaps no subject has more frequently been made the theme of tragedy, than the death of Inez de Castro. It is not, however, our intention to compare the present production with former tragedies founded upon the same incident. No good drama upon the subject has previously appeared. (1798, vol. I, 326)

We know only two English tragedies before this, and one (Mallet's) is the adaptation of the only French version of the episode (La Motte's)

up to this year. Southey could not read Spanish or Portuguese yet, and would not know about the *Castro* of the three previous Spanish works on the subject. He went to the theatre very often, and we may think he had seen some obscure tragedies probably lost.

Symmons' work, which was written in 1792, was published four years later, after being refused by the manager of Drury Lane, for the situation it depicted was very similar to the burning scandal involving the Prince of Wales and Maria Fitzherbert.

And here we have one of the possible reasons for interest in a foreign subject: the fact that it resembles some story in the real present – and can be used as a veiled criticism – or in the national past, thus offering the possibility of a variation on some successful theme. Symmons denied any critical intentions and explained his choice as a result of reading Camões³ (of course in Mickle's translation) and Mallet.

Symmons' *Inez*, which was published anonymously, does not reveal, also according to Southey, "the marks of superior genius", but it makes pleasant reading and of a better taste than was common at the time. It introduces the motif of a premonitory dream, which Romantic literature would make a frequent element. Inês' father, a new character, represents the persistence of middle-class morality that marked the English treatment of the Portuguese heroine.

Even while the happy versions of this famous love story were presented on the London stage by the musical drama, with Bianchi's *Ines de Castro* performed several times and edited in 1797 and 1799, Southey came to Portugal and was so much attracted by the subject that he thought of writing one tragedy about Inês and another about Pedro. For the latter he even drafted a long plan in his *Commonplace Book*. In it, and for the first time in English literature, the Prince is seen as the really active and interesting character which Romanticism was going to make him:

3. The mention of Camões leads us to the fact that it is often said that *Os Lusíadas* were the main source of the interest for Inês de Castro, which is not true. The heroine that Europe knew was the one presented by La Motte, dying from the poison given by a stepmother who never existed. Camões' elements are mostly poetical, and their influence was felt much later.

Pedro was a man whose character was worthy of being dramatized by Shakespeare, so strongly had the circumstances of his life and station acted upon his strong feelings and ungoverned mind. (348-349)

Inês, about whom we know nothing but that she was extremely beautiful, is the passive victim of raging passions: love, hatred, vengeance. Her deep meaning reaches us only through Pedro's mad actions: civil war, cruel revenge, unreal glorification. This shifting of interest from Inês to Pedro, which asserted itself gradually in the course of the 19th century, was hardly felt in England, where but for Southey and two other poets, Alaric Watts and Felicia Hemans, the sentimental side of Inês' sufferings was persistently emphasized.

Southey's tragedy, the title of which would be *The Revenge of Pedro* or *Pedro, the Just*, would have begun with the torture of Inês' murderers. Though the plot included a complicated intrigue around Pacheco's daughter, Southey himself recognized that "the story admit[ted] of good scenes, but nothing very striking in effect; it would make an excellent drama, but hardly for the mob." (*Idem*)

The end of the 18th century saw the assertion of the interest in Camões which was going to be felt during the 19th. Special mention must be made here of the fact that Mickle's version, which had a fourth edition in 1807, and a fifth one in 1809, had been advertised in 1772 in a pamphlet which presented the episode of Inês. This interest coincided with the travelling notes of such as Beckford, Murphy, Southey and Kinsey, who, as happened with other travellers, always told that story when they mentioned Alcobça or Coimbra, and with the translation of the three then most famous Portuguese tragedies on Inês: Reis Quita's *Castro* in 1800 by Benjamin Thompson, Nicolau Luís' *Tragédia de Dona Inês de Castro* by Adamson in 1808 and Ferreira's *Castro* by Musgrave in 1825. Adamson's and Musgrave's works were the first translations of both works. Thompson's source was the German Friedrich Wilhelm von Zanthier's reduced version, one of two or three Portuguese theatrical works he "translated", one of which a comedy by António Ferreira, *Bristo*.

Adamson was a lusophile particularly interested in Camões, whose *Os Lusíadas* Musgrave published in English in 1826. Musgrave was the English Mail Agent and also a kind of political informer for the British Cabinet in Lisbon, 1819-20. As happened with the epic, his *Ignez de Castro* was a faithful translation – using usually even the same number of lines as the original – but of a poor poetic quality. It is interesting to notice that he never used the Castro of the original, but always *Ignez* or *Ignez de Castro*. In the Portuguese text, only Pedro, in his emotive speeches after his lover's death, calls her *Ignez* or *my Ignez*.

In 1828 again a woman, Mary Russel Mitford, established an important link between Inês and an English medieval heroine of a very similar tragedy: Fair Rosamond, Henry II's concubine, who fell a victim of Eleanor of Aquitaine's jealousy, and about whom Mary Mitford had also written a tragedy the year before.

Both Rosamond and Inês made their first appearance in literature of the 16th century, where their ghosts told their sad stories. Both blamed the fate which through their beauty raised them only to let them fall from higher, remembered the happy days they had spent in their family homes, the deep love of the princes who had conquered their hearts, the respect showed to them, the furious rage of their murderers. But here too there is an essential element that stresses a difference between the cultures to which they belonged: Rosamond repents her sinful life and advises girls to keep virtuous, while Inês laments only the fact that death had so soon put a stop to the great love she had lived. Behind these attitudes is the explanation of the moralizing effort that created a different Inês in English literature.

The first tragedy on Rosamond appeared in 1692, three years before that by Miss Cockburne on Inês. There is a striking coincidence in the passionate words with which Henry and Pedro express their love and grief at the death of their beloved. Henry exclaims: "That I may grow a statue by her side,/ And be each other's monument for ever." (Act V, Scene II, 489). While Pedro ends his violent farewell speech to Inês by saying he will kneel at her feet "and grow a statue to adorn [her] tomb." (47)

Likewise, the forged letter that Inês' enemy drops to make her read it, in Mrs Behn's novel, reappears in an anonymous novel on Rosamond in 1717, after the sixth edition of the former. More important than such a motif, which was not exclusive to this story, there are clear mutual influences in the literary development of both subjects. Particularly in the Romantic period, when the number of works on both heroines increased substantially, this inter-action becomes evident, mainly after Mary Mitford exchanged some elements.

From Inês, Rosamond received the secret marriage – quite impossible because Henry had long been married –, the existence of two children (a number which was an invention of La Motte's, maybe because it allowed a better scenic balance) and, after Mrs Behn's and La Motte's versions, the despised lover. The children, who did not exist, were used, as with Inês, to reinforce the scene where Rosamond asks for mercy. As to the lover, by Inês he was one of the three murderers; for Mrs Behn and Jonathan Skelton he was Álvaro Gonçalves, for Symmons Coelho, for Mrs Anna Eliza Bray's novel *The Talba* Diogo Lopes Pacheco. For Rosamond he was a knight, her former neighbour or her keeper in the palace.

The solemn entombment and coronation, the most conspicuous elements of Inês' story, had some influence on her English counterpart. From the early hints of a beauty and glory that she still kept in death, there gradually developed the description of a rich well-wrought tomb, which the king opened to see his beloved once again and several ceremonies held in her honour.

From Rosamond, Inês got a secluded life in a lonely palace, the initial ignorance of her lover's identity and chiefly the changes in the circumstances of her death. This was often caused by poison, like Rosamond's, though there may be here a coincidence of La Motte's version.

In the versions where Eleanor was the murderer, Rosamond could choose between a dagger and poison. Inês had the choice between death and a compulsory marriage (Landor) or flight into oblivion (in Miss Harwood). She decided for poison in Miss Harwood's tragedy and for a dagger in Mitford's.

Other details, logically or illogically exchanged will become evident in a closer study of both traditions, but what matters now is to establish the idea that Inês, though not brought into English literature because it reminded authors and audience of Rosamond, at least was received and adopted with the consciousness that she was the heroine of a similar story to one they knew, and this contact could be mutually enriching.

A renewed interest in Portuguese affairs was aroused by the descriptions of the travellers (mainly British) who came to Portugal in the last decades of the 18th century, chiefly attracted by the effects of the catastrophic earthquake of 1755, and the first of the 19th century for reasons that were particularly political and military, owing to the situation created by the Napoleonic invasions. Most of them knew something about Inês already, which shows widespread information on the subject. Southey, for instance, often refers to her even in his letters just as "Inês". To his mother and to Charles Danvers he made some remarks on the subject when he first visited the places made famous through the tragical episode. A "heart-interesting" subject, "dear by historical and poetical associations", "historically interesting": all the characteristics attractive to Romantic writers, who definitely got hold of the story. Able to get recent information about details in several histories of Portugal, successive translations of *Os Lusíadas*, letters from relatives and descriptions or actual sight of works of art were some possible sources, besides the English original works.

A series of tragedies followed the one by Mrs Mitford: in the same year, one by Walter Savage Landor, in 1840 the publication of an anonymous one and the most violent and famous musical treatment of the subject, the opera by Persiani on a poem by Salvador Cammarano, the next year a tragedy by John Skelton, in 1846 another anonymous one, and in 1871 yet another by Isabella Harwood.

Landor was also the author of one text of his *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen* (1828), in which the characters are Inês de Castro, Don Pedro and Doña Blanca (who is sometimes mentioned as Queen). The plot of this "conversation" is an attempt of

Pedro to obey his father's orders to marry the Spanish Princess. He makes declarations to Inês, saying he does not love her any longer, but he cannot resist her charm and her grief. It ends with her death and his cry that he will not resist her (his?) loss.

In all cases Inês and Pedro are married. Skelton goes so far as to stage the preparations for the wedding, closing the scene as the princely couple enters the chapel. Again we find this moralizing background as the most constant feature of all the literary works written about Inês during the 19th century,

The coronation is usually accepted, but rather as a hint of what is going to happen. The anonymous author of 1846, for instance, makes Inês herself describe her burial and glorification. She knew everything from a dream, which provides the most original and suggestive speeches in the play:

a mist or veil
 Hung o'er her features; her tiare's gems,
 Her royal robes, the sceptre in her hand,
 Grown visible and glorious to the gaze.
 But now the horror comes! (Act IV, Scene III)

In thunderlike shouts, she is acclaimed "Queen of Lusitania's realm", and sees herself enthroned as a Queen:

Insensible, as alabaster cold,
 As rigid, meaningless, and ghostly pale.
 There, on that chair of state, superbly plac'd,
 Sole orb and centre of the gorgeous scene,
 [She] was saluted, hymn'd, anointed, crown'd,
 Proclaim'd of all, and ne'ertheless – a corpse. (Act IV, Scene III)

The anonymous tragedy of 1840 is the only one where the coronation is visible staged, with the crowned skeleton seated on the throne. Pedro's words, passionate and solemn, provide a fit ending:

Be this your first act of allegiance! Though
 Remorseless Death has wasted every charm,
 And made her what we shudder to behold –
 Oh! Bear in mind, she would have been your queen,
 If not unjustly robb'd of life and crown!
 Therefore, to injured Virtue bend the knee –
 The sceptred corpse be honour'd as though living! (Act III, Scene IV)

Though in one or other detail some echoes of the French tradition may be heard, we can safely say that the English dramatic treatment of Inês is the most creative and varied in Europe. Such liberties as the different ways of her death, the presentation of a very active Queen either as a friend or a mortal enemy, Inês' lineage, the treatment of her children, are justified by the way how writers understood the use they could make of historical subjects. It can be traced back to Dryden, who expressed his opinion, which was to become law for his successors, in the preface of his tragedy on another Portuguese theme, which comes next to Inês in European fame, *Don Sebastian* (1710):

Where the event of a great action in left doubtful, there the Poet is left master. He may raise what he pleases on that foundation, provided he makes it of a piece, and according to the rule of probability. (7)

The author of the tragedy on Inês published in 1840 also felt the need of a similar explanation, which he did to finish an introduction where he told the facts as he knew them from the tradition history and legend had formed, but he acknowledged that he had used them freely and "taking advantage of the writings of others on the same subject, where they better suited his purpose."

Even more than sensationalism, it was indeed sentiment, feeling, that the English Romanticism sought in this episode. We could say that all the literary attempts of this period – and not only dramatic – are simple variations on a universal problem which everybody can understand or at least feel and which Symmons summarized in the question Inês asks the King: "Is love a crime?" To these Romantic

writers the Portuguese heroine had a greater appeal as a victim of love and jealousy than as someone sacrificed to political reasons. These, however, were not completely lost. The anonymous author of 1846 made Gonçalves say:

Why are we here? The King is in our hands;
His honour – safety – we must save the realm;
Our task is terrible, but Fate ordains. (Act V, Scene III)

His predecessor of 1840 stressed the conflict between love and duty created by politics and deeply felt by Pedro in despair:

Had I been born a peasant, I had still
Possess'd thee, undisturb'd by mortal envy!
Ah! Happy privilege in humbler life!
But born a prince, such blessing is denied me! (Act III, Scene II)

The fact that he understands the situation does not kill in him the human being who feels, suffers and reacts to the pain inflicted on him by making his subjects feel the weight of the power in the name of which they made his life a real hell:

O men or demons! – for ye are the last –
As still more ready to do ill than good –
Beware, since you have roused me! From this hour
I fling away all gentleness of nature –
You shall be ruled but with an iron sceptre!
For that which you shall find me, thank yourselves! (*Idem, Ibidem*)

And the action closes with a threat that must hover terribly on the mind of the audience: "One duty still/ Is unperform'd – for me the sweetest – Vengeance!"

The emphasis given to feelings accounts for the lyrical tone which is predominant in all these texts. The very nature of the episode explains that they were "hardly fit for the mob", (*Common Place Book IV, 190*)

as Southey put it. It also explains that they were rather published than performed. But in literary terms, some of them – and we should draw a particular attention to both that are anonymous – do not deserve to be forgotten.

The pathetic and visible impact of the scenes of this story that tradition has made so to say compulsory in its treatment explains the fact that the 20th century approaches to the theme are still dramatic: in English we have an *Inez de Castro* by Annette Meakin in 1930, another by Ernest Randolph Reynolds in 1943, John Clifford's "*Ines de Castro, A Portuguese Tragedy*", for the Edinburgh festival of 1989, and, to close the century, James Macmillan's opera *Inês de Castro*, based on Clifford's tragedy, for another Edinburgh Festival, the one of 1996.

Meakin's tragedy in verse, strictly following Guevara's text but, according to the author, also drawing its inspiration in Camoens, introduces as novelty the presence of medieval lyrics and troubadours, chiefly Macias, "the poet of true love". Generally speaking, it is a good text, but the few additions or novelties are not enough to give it a mark of real originality.

The text by Reynolds, for some years English lecturer in Lisbon, is a short treatment of farewell, death and coronation, and was published in Lisbon, as well as other attempts by him on Portuguese subjects.

As far as Clifford's tragedy is concerned, its promotion by British and Portuguese institutions, such as the Scottish Arts Council and Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, it has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese (for the University Theatre of Porto, 1991) and Croatian, and has gone a long run in Britain, Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States.

Against George Steiner's statement that it is impossible to write tragedy in our present world, Clifford has declared that, after visiting Alcobça, Coimbra and Nazaré, where the long contemplation of the sea and what it implies for people living there has stressed the ideas of sadness, darkness and death implied in the episode, he reinforced the belief that it has to be dealt with as a tragedy. He adds, as a conclusion:

So I wanted to write something classical, that obeyed the classic rules: where everything happened in a very short space of time, where there was a chorus, and tragic irony, and where everything happened offstage.

This statement was made for the initial presentation in the Traverse Theatre of Edinburgh. At the same circumstances, the critic Jon Kaplan, in *Magazine Online Edition*, once again established a connection with English literature: "There's a strong Romeo and Juliet undercurrent, as well as a dollop of Jacobean Tragedy. A pair of lovers seeks a paradisiac world to escape their rigid, disapproving social structure". The way how Clifford deals with the Chorus is very interesting. It is not exactly one, but five, each of them expressed in a character, except Inês de Castro. After all, they represent the several forces which act around the victim. He draws the attention to the fact that tragedy has begun as a ritual that occurred in a sacred place, the reason why he would like to have on stage the four elements: earth, water, fire and air.

This tragedy is a very good work, with a novelty that tries to present a stronger reason than going hunting for the parting of the two lovers, once it was plausible that Inês' life was in danger: the King his father sent Pedro to fight the Spaniards, who had invaded Portugal, which leads to a difficult situation between Pedro and Inês, for once with mixed feelings as far as their national origins are concerned. Pedro sees the political situation as more important than anything else, and from it comes a cold accusation to Inês: "You cannot understand. You are one of them." The apex of this confrontation of the two lovers is cold and cruel: "Ines. Must we part as strangers?/ Pedro. It seems we must." (Scene XX) Clifford's tragedy is most of all a beautiful text. And we are led to agree with the author, when he said that "he has re-invented history". An offspring of Clifford's text closed the British presence of Inês de Castro on the English stage, in James Macmillan's opera for another Edinburgh Festival, that of 1996. It began as a joint work by Clifford and Macmillan, but the latter finished it by himself. The opera had not a good reception on the part of the British press, but its presentation in Porto, in 2001, due to the collaboration of the British Council, the European Union and Porto Capital da Cultura,

was a success. The critic Jorge Calado establishes once again a reason for the British interest in this subject:

It was to be expected that our Pedro the Cruel's excesses would arouse the Gothic imagination of the British. What for me was a revelation was the metamorphosis of the episode in one of those tragedies of "blood and revenge" which swarmed in the time of James I. (2001)

With their faults – nothing is perfect – the fact is that Clifford's and Macmillan's works took the story of Pedro and Inês all over the world, from Europe to America and Australia.

For the Galleon Theatre Company, Alice de Souza, a Portuguese who for some years has been presenting dramatic versions of Portuguese dramas and novels, was the author of another *Inês de Castro*, in 2003. Under the title "The Princess Diana saga is in danger of being upstaged by what happened in Portugal 650 years ago", *The South London Press* conveys the author's opinion:

It's the most famous Portuguese love story but I suppose because history has been chronicled by men I wanted to give it a feminine perspective and make it intimate and private.

The critic, Paul Nelson, was enthusiastic about the staging and the players. Besides suggesting a comparison of the historical role of Inês and Mary Queen of Scots, he cannot resist the idea that Pedro and Inês' love story calls for a universal understanding, by saying:

Not only is the play reminiscent of anti-euro feelings which are disturbing but there is also raised the parallel with the projected alliance between Camilla Parker Bowles and Prince Charles.

The 19th century has also produced the only long historical novel – that should rather be called Gothic – on this subject: *The Talba, or the Moor of Portugal* (1830), which Mrs Anna Eliza Bray wrote after she saw one of the great Romantic paintings on Inês, the one by

Gillot Saint-Èvre entitled *Le Couronnement d'Inez de Castro*, exhibited in London in 1829. A friend of Southey's, with whom she learned an interest in the Peninsula, Mrs Bray mixed several exotic elements of the Portuguese tradition in England: the Moors, Sintra, natural catastrophes, and Inês de Castro. The darkest characters and intrigues fight against the innocent Inês, who runs the strangest adventures. The plot ends in an apocalyptic scene of an earthquake, where Pedro's passions rage in full fury. But the author cannot resist something like a moral conclusion, for justice' sake:

Reader, our task is done; and here, perhaps, we should close this melancholy tale, as what follows is too well known in history to find a place in these pages, could we deny ourselves the satisfaction of adding, that, though late, the vengeance of heaven overtook the guilty triumvirate who had laboured to induce the king to command that Ines de Castro should die. It is also some consolation to state that, though in her lifetime the unfortunate princess did not obtain the justice she deserved, it was afterwards paid to her memory with the highest honours. (270-271)

Then she proceeds to tell how "Don Pedro, whose passionate grief for the death of his beloved wife amounted almost to insanity", "caused to be, performed a ceremony till then unheard of in history or in fable". This was "the solemn coronation of her corpse", the "august ceremony" which she found Saint-Èvre had so masterly depicted. This painting has the additional interest of being now the only one extant suggested by this episode that can still be seen, now in Paris, after long years in Victor Hugo's house in exile, in the isle of Guernesey. Others, which were formerly in Madrid, Salzburg and somewhere in Italy, have simply vanished.

We find another novel in the middle of the 20th century, a version of Antero de Figueiredo's *D. Pedro e D. Inês* (1913), through Claire de Landeville's translation into French. After visiting Portugal, Elizabeth Younger wrote *Heron's Neck* (1954), even before the travel-book she published with her husband (*Blue Moon in Portugal*, 1956). In this

very year Marie Noële Kelly also mixed the episode with travel-writing ("Queen in Death", in *This delicious land Portugal*, chapter two).

The emotional quality of this episode spread a kind of contagion over those who came near the visible remains of Inês' sad story. They suggested to travellers descriptions that sound rather like lyrical compositions. A certain Miss Julia Pardoe, who went to Portugal in 1827, included romantic descriptions of Alcobça and Coimbra, similarly to the feelings expressed by Elizabeth Younger ("It seemed indeed as if Santa Clara had been created for the delight of Pedro and his golden love", *Heron's Neck*, 95).

If travelling notes sound like this, something should be expected from poets. In fact, some poems represent the best English contribution to the literature on this subject. Free from problems of lively action or a structure developing logically, they can concentrate on feeling and atmosphere, which Inês and her sad fate provided easily.

Landor was also the author of one text of his *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen* (1828) in which the characters are Ines de Castro, Don Pedro and Doña Blanca (who is sometimes mentioned as Queen). The plot of this "conversation" is an attempt of Pedro to obey his father's orders to marry the Spanish Princess. In his declarations to Ines, he says he does not love her any longer, but he cannot resist her charm and her grief. It ends with her death and his cry that he will not resist her loss.

Alaric Watts, poet and journalist, published in the *New Monthly Magazine* (1818-19) "The Coronation of Inez de Castro", to which he added "King Pedro's Revenge" in *The Literary Souvenir* of 1829. This poem was particularly significant, for he pointed to what was the Romantic approach to the episode, the stress on the Prince's character and action.

The same title, "The Coronation of Inez de Castro", was used by Robert Folkestone Williams, in 1833, included in *Rhymes and Rhapsodies*, by Bernard Barton, in the volume *The Reliquary*, published with his daughter Lucy, in London, 1836, and by Felicia Hemans in 1839. The latter is the best known, which can be justified by its quality. It is a meditation on death and love around the description of a

ghostly ceremony, performed at midnight. There is again a stress on Pedro, who had organized the ceremony. We can explain her interest in the subject because her brother spent some years in Portugal and sent her letters and books which aroused in her a special interest for that country.

Next we have Thomas Hughes' long poem *The Ocean Flower*, published in 1845. Hughes chose some particularly suggestive episodes of "the chivalrous history of Portugal", a country where he had lived for some years, and among them that of Inês, which he told in the 6th canto. In a long preface, he says that the murder of Inês de Castro is "a fact so well known in Europe in all its leading circumstances, that it is needless here to recapitulate the details, the more especially as the history is very closely followed in [his] text". (20) But he accepts as true details such as the secret marriage and the coronation, and makes some mistakes like that of presenting King Fernando as Inês' son. He boasts of giving for the first time to the English public the information that Inês was "nobly born" and "one of the Ladies of the Court", (21) which is quite false, especially if we remember the historical works which circulated in Britain. He does not accept the legal execution mentioned in the first Portuguese chronicle, seeing the suppression of "the violent circumstances of the sanguinary deed" as "a curious moment of subserviency to Royal wishes". (23)

But it is not historical truth what we seek in Hughes. He himself explains the meaning of his work:

The novelty of my treatment of the subject consists in its tripartite division into "The Murder", "The Revenge", and "The Atonement". The murder alone has been hitherto handled in detail; and to improve in any way upon the epic splendour of Camoens' narrative and the dramatic force of Nicolao Luiz's fine Tragedy⁴ was so ridiculously hopeless that I have merely availed myself of whatever little advantage was afforded by throwing the story into the ballad form. (20-21)

4. We must remember that it had been translated into English by John Adamson in 1808.

Like all those who visited Alcobaça, Hughes was fascinated by Inês' effigy: "The face is of angelic beauty, and the form of corresponding grace. Gazing on it, I could almost excuse Dom Pedro's fierce revenge". (23)

Hughes' poetical speech, which for the first time in English literature draws much from Camões, has a direct and naive tone, which makes it particularly pleasant reading. This is mostly felt in the first part, "The Murder", where the famous scene between Inês, surrounded by her children, and the King loses the solemn pathetic atmosphere that characterizes it in *Os Lusíadas* and La Motte's tragedy to become a moving situation with a human message that touches every simple soul:

'I swear by Heaven thou shalt not live
Another sun to see!
Two steps advanced Afonso
With high uplifted sword;
When Inez' boys on bended knee
Their grandsire's grace implored.
His mantle little Afonso caught,
And clinging by the ends,
'Unless you have pity on Mai,⁵ he said,
We can't indeed be friends!'

This menacing Afonso with his sword ready to strike the woman at his feet looks more like the fierce Herod of the popular theatre of the Middle Ages than the brave King who was feared by the Moorish armies. This naiveté, which is the most distinctive characteristic of the poem, gradually changes into a greater solemnity as it advances towards the strange events told in "The Atonement". Here we find another original detail: Pedro does not disclose a former marriage, he celebrates his wedding to the corpse, whose "lily flesh" was not stained by "the cold earth". Then comes the final glorification, minutely

5. Mãe.

described. In Mrs. Hemans' poem we had seen a deeply heart-struck Pedro who could not bear the sight of his beloved, though she still kept something of her beauty. But in Hughes emotions are more direct and warm-hearted:

With tender eyes on Inez fixed,
Where tears incessant spring;
(...)
Devouring in Don Pedro's glance,
Whose soul from out his eyes
Doth leap to her he summoned from
The sepulchre to rise.

After these short poems, a long one (67 pages) seems to have come to light recently, having deserved a reedition. (HardPress Publishing, 2012) *Inez de Castro: A Poem in Three Cantos* (1847) is the work of John Stores Smith about whom I only know that he was a young author from Manchester, who was a visitor to the Brontë sisters. He confesses that he recreated the episode, to the point of suggesting to those who want to know the real one that they must look for other sources. But the most important point about it are its quality and the way how it is representative of the aesthetic ideals of its age. The most interesting line of the all plot is the way how he presents Pedro, following a trend that was started in the 19th century and still lasts today: Pedro is the real hero, very human and just – he deserves his revenge – the sentimental hero who reacts “mute and as immovable (...) – no sound escapes his lips – no groan – was there to wake his doleful ton” (39):

But O, his former self had fled
The fire of his proud temper dead.
For years on his ancestor throne,
His body sate – for heart had gone,
And peace and rest for aye were flown.
Sadly he plodded o'er life's plain,
And ne'er awoke to joy again! (End of Canto III)

The next important poem, which is by far the best one, won the Oxford Newdigate Prize in 1883. It would be an interesting research work to find out the reasons that led the University committee to set Inês as the theme for this contest. From it only this one has survived. The reason why Inês de Castro was chosen may have been the revival of interest in Camões due to the centenary commemorations of three years before. The critic of *The Oxford Magazine*, May 30th, who announced the decision of the jury, mentioned previous works on the subject and established a comparison between fanciful treatments of Inês and the picture that could be drawn from *The Lusíads* through the first bilingual English edition of Aubertin's, 1878. This was the fourteenth time that the Portuguese poem was published in English, and two new translations appeared precisely in 1880, but somehow it was Aubertin's which the Oxford critic had in mind or the only one he knew. The strange thing is that he considers this as a subject which was practically unknown. Something might come out of the knowledge of what were the programmes of poetry or general literature followed at the University at that time, but that is most probably impossible to find out.

The most important circumstance of the 1883 prize is that it led to the writing of twenty-three poems on Inês, which practically doubles the number of original English texts written about her.

The prize poem itself was presented with two stanzas, one signed J.W.M. and the other H.C.B. on the same subject. A.S., the reviewer of Nichols' poem for *The Oxford Magazine*, June 6th, writes about them:

Mr Nichols is also fortunate in the two little red songs between which his black poem is set. The two friends, who sign well-known initials, melodiously and characteristically congratulate the poet on the "sadness" of the story.

For me it is still strange to think of these stanzas in this way, I would rather have them as parts of longer poems, may be also presented as competitors. But the fact is that they are not to be found in the books published by Nichols' two friends. They were his fellow undergraduates in Balliol and published with him a first joint volume of poetry,

Love in Idleness (1885), which was reedited in 1891 with some new poems as *Love's Looking Glass*. They were Henry Charles Beeching and John William Mackail. The latter was responsible for the posthumous edition of Nichols' *Poems* in 1943 and its *Introduction*. There he gives an account of Nichols' family and life and writes about his poetical activity and the Newdigate poem. He explains the whole by saying that "poetry was then in the fashion in the undergraduate world". About *Inez de Castro*, which was included in this collection, he says:

Prize poems are usually short-lived, and its inclusion in this volume may seem to ask for explanation. But, unlike most of that long series, it retains after fifty years a surprising vitality, alike in the quality of its rhyme and in the continuity of its structure, which justifies its rescue from oblivion, and moves regret that he never afterwards executed any poem of similarly large scale. (Mackail, 1943)

This opinion agrees with that of *The Oxford Magazine*, who finishes his review by saying:

And if there is in the poet's world-weariness and melancholy, in his sense of the vanity of all things save beauty alone, something that we cannot take quite seriously, yet there is also in his writing an ease and a grace, a melody and a taste, a real command of the style he has adopted, which make the story very pleasant to read, and sufficiently distinguish it from the ordinary run of prize-poems. (1883)

The critic of *The Oxford Magazine* identified Bowyer Nichols as "a poet of the new school, who sit at the feet of Swinburne (...) who sing of love, and death, and sorrow: who know the hollowness of things, the transitoriness of summer and beauty, (...) who in their own poetry are always subdued, and musical, and sad". These characteristics led to "a great success" because they were most appropriate to the subject:

And certainly the medieval romantic tale of Inez de Castro is an ideal subject for a poet of the Swinburnian school. No element is wanting. There is beauty, youth, yellow hair, love, treachery, early death of the deceived one, brief rapture of the traitor, plots, a summer morning, murder; and the needful touch of horror is given in the crowning of the corpse in the cathedral, amid streaming sunlight and dying echoes of the organ.

In a way, this is a kind of criticism which is as Romantic as the poem itself, but we could say that the particular atmosphere the poet has created leads us to feel and talk of it in a similar way. The poet may have searched for the main lines of the story in such unpoetical works as encyclopaedias, he may have read some literary versions, such as the one by Mrs. Hemans, but he saw in it something really different. More than the tragical aspects of the murder or even the wondrous scene of the coronation, Nichols saw in this episode the tragedy of a beautiful woman, lonely and destitute, for whom the world had only had the gift of a great love which, nevertheless, was strongly mixed with feelings of sorrow and remorse. From the reverie in which Inês revisits the scenes of her happy youth and her meeting with the Prince, which was her meeting with Fate, a deep and strange sadness arises, which pervades everything that she says and makes us feel, a sadness which has in itself "a dim foreboding, which is the shadow of her coming death."

The source of Bowyer Nichols' knowledge of it seems to have been simply the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, according to his notes. One legendary detail struck Nichols and his friends in a particularly way: "the exceeding pity of her golden hair", which for the two he quoted were her "murdered golden head", that made gold look pale, and "the golden glory", "the marvel of her hair".

Lyrical and beautiful did Inês come to Oxford in what may be said to be the most beautiful text on Inês in English. How long she stayed, the periodical publications of the time may help us know. She may have revived in 1907, when the Newdigate Prize proposed another Portuguese subject – this time Camoens. It is so common that it has almost become a rule that literary texts on the poet use material drawn

from his work, and Inês is mostly certain to be mentioned at least. So, if we could get to the poems written for this contest, we should most probably find some more lines on “the fair maid of Portugal”, as she was introduced to the English public by Aphra Behn.

The treatment given to Inês by British writers emphasized their lyrical tendency, for, while in Portugal, Spain and France, at least, the 19th century gradually discovered how richer and more suggestive Pedro was, as a character, in England she was always the centre of interest. Being in fact so much unknown, except for her beauty, her golden hair and her love, this explains the several episodes included in novel and drama. Nevertheless, it is significant enough that the Romantic tragedies on Inês were written rather as a literary exercise than for the stage. Southey’s opinion that it was “hardly for the mob” is the feeling of an emotional quality, of a kind of lyricism that made it a fit subject for poetry, which found its best expression in the lines of the Oxford poet.

Thus innocent and fair, unfortunate but glorious, Inês crossed English culture and literature as a tragic heroine who allowed several views of a conflict which is human and perennial, always actual and heartfelt and in this sense always interesting to writers and their audience.