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## ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation by compendium of publications critically reassesses *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* by looking at the inception of Robert Southey's deeply ambiguous cultural cosmopolitanism—and how his first extended, published prose enterprise inaugurated a series of interests that were to permeate his later writings. Structured as a series of letters written as he travelled across the Iberian Peninsula between December 1795 and May 1796, Southey published the richly detailed account of his journey early in 1797. *Letters* engaged with the tradition of English travelogues, while borrowing traits from other genres such as the journal, translation, literary criticism, history, and the picturesque guidebook. On his way, Southey commented on every aspect of Spanish and Portuguese society, from local food and wine, bizarre customs, literature and theatregoing, to Iberian politics and religion.

The four publications this dissertation is comprised of yield new insights into two crucial aspects of Southey's writing career traditionally understudied by Romantic scholarship. Firstly, they explore how Southey championed the interconnectedness between tourism, walking, and landscape in his role as a successful travel writer. Secondly, they explore the inception and development of a line of work that would translate in Southey becoming one of the leading (Luso-)Hispanists in Georgian England.

The methodology of research is governed, in the first place, by the resurgence in recent decades of scholarly interest in the genre of Romantic travel writing. In this respect, special emphasis has been given to how the late eighteenth century saw the transformation of walking from an unwelcome fact of life to an enriching mode of travel, and how this impacted travel writing. The theoretical model of the study further draws on the burgeoning research field of the connections between English and Iberian letters in Romantic England.

On the whole, the analysis reveals a deeply nuanced composition and production process behind *Letters* which was to shape Southey's attitude towards the business of literature in his later writings—offering a case study of the interplay between Southey's Iberian travelogue and his semi-parodic *Letters from England*. This dissertation also attests to the development of Southey's conflicted attitudes to Spanish literature in general, and Lope de Vega in particular, from the writing of *Letters* till his mid- to late-career—showing how and why he moderated his earlier positions as he read further and built up a more complex network of understanding and affinity.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CLRS* *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey*, gen. eds. Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford and Ian Packer, 6 vols (Romantic Circles Electronic Edition, 2009–ongoing), [https://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey\\_letters](https://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey_letters)
- Flores and Gonzalez 2019 Cristina Flores and Jonathan Gonzalez, ‘Los clásicos españoles en el Romanticismo inglés: el caso de Lope de Vega y *La hermosa de Angélica* en *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* de Robert Southey’, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 96.8 (2019), 1221–1249.
- Gonzalez 2017 Jonathan Gonzalez, ‘Poetic Industry and Abominable Superstition: Southey on Lope de Vega’, *Romanticism on the Net* 68-69 (2017), 1–27.
- Gonzalez 2021a Jonathan Gonzalez, ‘Introduction’, in Jonathan Gonzalez and Cristina Flores (eds.), *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal by Robert Southey* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021a), 1–45.
- Gonzalez 2021b Jonathan Gonzalez, “‘Peripateticating among the mountains’: Robert Southey and the Aesthetics of Pedestrian Motion’, *Romanticism* 27.1 (2021b), 75–87.
- Letters* (1797) *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, by Robert Southey, 1<sup>st</sup> edn (Bristol, 1797)
- Letters* (1799) *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, by Robert Southey, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Bristol, 1799)
- Letters* (1808) *Letters Written During a Journey in Spain, and a Short Residence in Portugal*, by Robert Southey, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 2 vols (London, 1808)
- LFE* *Letters from England by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella*, by Robert Southey, ed. Carol Bolton (London and New York: Routledge, 2016)
- LSP* *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, by Robert Southey, eds. Jonathan Gonzalez and Cristina Flores (London and New York: Routledge, 2021)



## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is hard to think of a literary author so deeply embedded in the major political, cultural, economic, and religious debates of Romantic-era Britain and which has been so readily forgotten by later generations of scholars as Robert Southey. In spite of the fact that he became appointed Poet Laureate in 1813 under George III—and remained incumbent until his death in 1843, during the rule of Queen Victoria—his elision from canonical accounts of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century writing has entailed that, until very recently, his reputation was in ruins. *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, his first extended, published prose enterprise, has particularly suffered from this textual neglect—a text consigned to oblivion up until relatively recently, even by modern Southey scholarship. This doctoral dissertation by compendium of publications, and the works included herein, seek to end this situation, presenting a new critical appraisal based on recent Southey research, as well as on current methodologies that re-historicise literary studies within their social and political context.

This dissertation seeks to add to the ongoing restoration of Southey as a central part of Romantic-era literary culture, and shed light on the marginal position that he was made to inhabit in the Romantic canon as a result of the editorial neglect he suffered from his death in 1843 to the end of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> This restoration is much indebted to the publication in Pickering and Chatto first, and in Routledge's *The Pickering Masters* series second, of the nine-volume *Poetical Works of Robert Southey* under the general editorship of Lynda Pratt and Tim Fulford, completed in 2012,<sup>2</sup> together with the ongoing Romantic Circles Online Edition of the *Collected Letters of Robert Southey*, under the general editorship of Pratt, Fulford and Ian Packer, which to this date covers the period

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<sup>1</sup> Lynda Pratt and Tim Fulford, 'Editing Robert Southey for the twenty-first century', *European Romantic Review* 19.2 (2008), 187–197.

<sup>2</sup> *Robert Southey: Poetical Works 1793–1810*, ed. Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford, and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts, 5 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004), and *Robert Southey: Later Poetical Works 1811–1838*, ed. Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford, Carol Bolton, Ian Packer, Diego Saglia, Daniel E. White and Rachel Crawford, 4 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

1791–1821.<sup>3</sup> With Southey’s early and mid- to late career poetry already available, and the scholarly edition of his complete correspondence currently under way, a definite canon of Southey’s prose works begun to be established in recent years—a path opened by the edition of *Letters from England by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella*,<sup>4</sup> and continued by those of *Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*,<sup>5</sup> as well as *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*.<sup>6</sup> These efforts are to be followed shortly by Fulford’s forthcoming editions of *The Life of Nelson* and *The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism*, as well as Tom Duggett’s edition of *The Book of the Church and Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae*.

In addition to the editions of his poetical and prose works, a considerable number of monographs, collections of essays, special issues of journals, and chapters that deal with the significance of the Poet Laureate in one way or another evidence the burgeoning field of Southey scholarship: Lynda Pratt’s *Robert Southey and the Contexts of English Romanticism*, W. A. Speck’s *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters*, Carol Bolton’s *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism*, Stuart Andrews’s *Robert Southey: History, Politics, Religion*, Alex Watson’s *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page*, Tim Fulford’s *Romantic Poetry and Literary Coteries: The Dialect of the Tribe*, and the special issues of *Romanticism* and *Romanticism on the Net* guest-edited by Pratt, Fulford and Matthew Sangster, among others.<sup>7</sup> The publications that comprise this doctoral dissertation seek to extend this push

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<sup>3</sup> *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey*, gen. eds. Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford and Ian Packer, 6 vols (Romantic Circles Electronic Edition, 2009–ongoing), <[https://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey\\_letters](https://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey_letters)>

<sup>4</sup> Robert Southey, *Letters from England by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella*, ed. Carol Bolton (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Southey, *Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*, ed. Tom Duggett, 2 vols (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Southey, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, eds. Jonathan Gonzalez and Cristina Flores (London and New York: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> See Lynda Pratt (ed.), *Robert Southey and the Contexts of English Romanticism* (London: Ashgate, 2006); W. A. Speck, *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Carol Bolton, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007); Stuart Andrews, *Robert Southey: History, Politics, Religion* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2011); Alex Watson, *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), pp. 1–12, 73–100, 139–144; and Tim Fulford, *Romantic Poetry and Literary Coteries: The Dialect of the Tribe* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 1–78, 99–130; Pratt (ed.), *Romanticism* 17.1 (2011); Pratt (ed.), *Romanticism on the Net* 32–33 (2003–2004); Fulford and Matthew Sangster (eds.), *Romanticism on the Net* 68–69 (2017).



into the study of Southey as a central figure to Romantic studies, with *Letters* at its core. Against this backdrop, the four publications herein included delve into two often neglected sides of Southey's writing career: his role as a successful travel writer and as one of the foremost Hispanists of the period.

The methodology of research is governed, in the first place, by the resurgence in recent decades of scholarly interest in the genre of Romantic travel writing, with special emphasis on how the late eighteenth century saw the transformation walking from an unwelcome fact of life to an enriching mode of travel, and how pedestrianism was accordingly championed in travel writing.<sup>8</sup> *Letters* relates Southey's travels in the Iberian Peninsula between December 1795 and May 1796, from his arrival in Coruña in the northwest of the Spanish coast to the heart of Castile and into Madrid, before making his way to Lisbon. Structured as a series of letters written as he travelled across the Iberian Peninsula, *Letters* engaged with the tradition of English travelogues, while borrowing traits from other genres such as the journal, translation, literary criticism, history, and the picturesque guidebook. It partakes in the tradition of other late eighteenth-century commercially successful travel narratives of Englishmen in the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>9</sup> What is more, Southey's volume also prefigured the enormous quantity of books on this note that would be produced by some of the most important publishers of the time, most notably John Murray, following the renewed interest in Iberian nations after the outbreak of the Peninsular War.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (London and New York: Palgrave, 1997), Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), or Simon Bainbridge, *Mountaineering and British Romanticism. The Literary Cultures of Climbing, 1770-1836* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Southey followed in the footsteps of publications such as William Dalrymple, *Travels Through Spain and Portugal in 1774* (London, 1777), Francis Carter, *Journey from Gibraltar to Malaga* (London, 1777), Richard Twiss, *Travels Through Portugal and Spain* (London, 1775), Henry Swinburne, *Travels Through Spain in the Years 1775 and 1776* (London, 1779), or Sir John Talbot Dillon, *Letters from an English Traveller in Spain* (London, 1778).

<sup>10</sup> These included Thomas Roscoe, *The Tourist in Spain* (London, 1836) as well as George Borrow, *The Bible in Spain* (London, 1843), which paved the ground for arguably the most successful Iberian travelogue of the century: Richard Ford, *A Handbook for Travellers in Spain*, 2 vols (London, 1845). See Cristina Flores, "'Spain! Most Pleasant were my wanderings': Robert Southey's Pedestrian and Mountaineering Writing in the Iberian Peninsula", *Romanticism*, 27.1 (2021), 63–74.

Southey offered English readers a close-up view of the Spanish and Portuguese character and insights into the everyday life in the Iberian Peninsula. This detailed view of a foreign society provided his readers with an example against which to rethink the national character, as well as contemporary issues that affected life in the British Isles. In his letters Southey, who would grow to become one of the leading (Luso-)Hispanists in late Georgian England, contrasted the political, religious, cultural and social systems of Britain and two of the oldest nations in the European continent in a way that raised important questions about cultural contact and transmission during the Romantic period. Despite Southey eventually growing to become recognized worldwide as ‘the friend of Spain and Spanish literature’,<sup>11</sup> the description of his first acquaintance with all things Iberian as described in the first edition of the *Letters* was not always positive. An outright opponent of Catholic Emancipation, Southey found in the idiosyncrasies of the Spanish and the Portuguese a blueprint to expose the fallaciousness of Iberian ‘Popery’. Southey’s readings of the most religiously-infused poetry of the sixteenth century Spanish writer Lope de Vega prompted not particularly flattering commentaries on the influence that the superstition and absolutism of Spanish religion and politics had had upon the literature of the nation. And yet, these initial views seem to have been motivated not only by his anti-Catholic beliefs, but also enhanced by the nagging thoughts that haunted his mind ever since he left British soil in December 1795. Southey’s abrupt separation from Edith Fricker, whom he had married only a month before setting sail from Falmouth, seems to have been what coloured his initial view of Spain, which struck him as being characterised by filth and fleas, vermin and bigotry.<sup>12</sup> With hindsight, however, Southey realised that his time spent among Spaniards had not been at all times as horrible as described at some points in the first edition of *Letters*. In the roughly eleven years that elapsed between the first and third editions of this text, Southey’s investment in all things Iberian grew considerably. The 1808 *Letters* softened the first negative impressions of the Southey that travelled through the Iberian Peninsula in 1795–6, reflecting the carefully considered views of the Southey who, having read extensively about these countries—on top of having been there twice—, saw the two Iberian nations in a new

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<sup>11</sup> Edward Churton, *Gongora: An Historical and Critical Essay on the Times of Philip III & V of Spain. With Translations* (London, 1862), p. vii.

<sup>12</sup> Speck, *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters*, p. 153.

(and more positive) light. His initial criticism, however, was still present to a certain degree, chiefly regarding the Catholic Church and the despotism of Spanish monarchs.

The methodology of research of this doctoral dissertation, moreover, is also influenced by Anglo-Hispanic studies. Connections between English and Spanish letters in the Romantic period have attracted and continue to attract the attention of scholars, having been explored in seminal publications.<sup>13</sup> *Letters* went beyond the conventions of the travelogue precisely by embedding within the narrative over thirty Spanish (and to a lesser extent Portuguese) poems of considerable length that introduced English readers to two previously neglected literary cultures, and foreshadowing the popularity that the old chivalric literature of Spain was to achieve in late Georgian England. Above all, the ‘Essay on Spanish and Portuguese Poetry’ as well as the translation and critical commentary of Lope de Vega’s *La hermosa de Angélica* which Southey included in *Letters* were instrumental in the promotion of the fascination with Spanish literature in general, and Lope in particular, prompting a huge expansion in the interest in the Spanish playwright.

What is more, *Letters* deserves to be recognised as having laid the foundations of Southey’s lifelong interest in Spanish literature. In the early nineteenth century, the writings of Spaniards of the likes of Miguel de Cervantes, Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Lope in particular gained prominence among Romantic audiences, with the idea of Spain as an exotic imaginary geography featuring in key Romantic texts. Leaving aside the unprecedented impact that staple Spanish texts like Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* had upon English letters in the Romantic period, the presence of Lope, first brought to light by Southey in the *Letters*, deserves special attention given his popularity among other outstanding Romantic-era figures, including the statesman and Hispanist Henry Richard, the third Lord Holland, the manager of Covent Garden theatre John Philip Kemble, the American Hispanist George Ticknor, the Whig MP Roger Wilbraham, and George Villiers, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Britain to Spain, to name

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<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, Anthony Close, *The Romantic Approach to Don Quixote* (Cambridge University Press, 1978), Diego Saglia, *Poetic Castles in Spain* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000); Jocelyn Almeida (ed.), *Romanticism and the Anglo-Hispanic Imaginary* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), Harley Erdman and Susan Paun de García (eds.), *Remaking the Comedia: Spanish Classical Theater in Adaptation* (London: Tamesis, 2015), Susan Valladares, *Staging the Peninsular War. English Theatres 1807-1815* (London: Ashgate, 2015), or Ian Haywood and Diego Saglia (eds.), *Spain in British Romanticism - 1800-1840* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2017).

but a few. What is more, the Napoleonic Wars eventually brought about the rise of a Francophobia among the British that turned their authors' views away from French cultural hegemony and in favour of other literary traditions, most notably that of Spain. Southey and Lord Holland, two of the leading Hispanists of the period, were indeed among the first to advertise in their writings the possibilities that Spanish literature offered, a burgeoning trend from 1808 onwards when, after centuries of confrontation, an Anglo-Spanish alliance against France situated the Iberian nation at the forefront of the political and cultural arena in Britain.<sup>14</sup>

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This doctoral dissertation comprises four publications, shedding light on the origins and composition of *Letters* together with its publication history, and its interplay with Southey's later writings (Gonzalez 2021a), dealing with the use of *Letters* as a model for Southey's critical and commercial success *Letters from England* (Gonzalez 2021b), the way in which *Letters* inaugurated his obsession with Spanish literature in general and Lope de Vega in particular (Flores and Gonzalez 2019), as well as how Southey's contribution to the criticism of the sixteenth-century Spanish writer was shaped in a period of over twenty years since the publication of his travelogue (Gonzalez 2017).

Gonzalez 2021a makes sense of the major issues posed by the text of *Letters* and evinces how a close examination of this travelogue contributes to studies of both Southey and Romanticism. This publication sets out the origins and composition of the text together with its publication history, as well as offers a carefully considered view of the connections between *Letters* and the traditional form of the English travelogues of which it partakes—bringing into view the wide array of sources and influences Southey drew from. It contextualises the text within both its literary context and British and Iberian socio-political affairs, outlining the place of *Letters* within contemporary religious and cultural debates, and offering more insights about the inception of Southey's life-long

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<sup>14</sup> Southey benefitted from the support of Lord Holland and the cultural hub of writers, politicians, publishers the latter established in Holland House as promoters of Spanish literature. See Lynda Kelly, *Holland House: A History of London's Most Celebrated Salon* (London: Tauris, 2015) and Will Bowers and Hannah Leah Crummé (eds.), *Re-evaluating the Literary Coterie, 1580-1830: From Sidney to Blackwood's* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2016).

interest in Lope de Vega. It further considers the main themes present in the travel narrative, the responses that *Letters* elicited from the reading public, as well as the individual significance of each of the three editions of this work, and its place within the rest of its authors oeuvre.

Gonzalez 2021b, by contrast, is a study of the nuanced relationship between Southey's actual travelogue, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*, and his 1807 faux travel narrative, *Letters from England*. The latter was Southey's first published text about the Lake District, inaugurating what became a recurrent concern with this landscape—one with pedestrianism at its very core. Ostensibly the work of the Spanish tourist Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella, Southey's Lakeland tour narrative, this article argues, depended on his own *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*: his Iberian countryside ramblings serving as a paradigm to frame his alter ego's engagement with the Lakes on foot. The motif of the outlandish Spaniard in the English fells as a turnaround of the foreign Englishman walking in Iberia, it is argued, was exploited by Southey to outgrow the limitations of the picturesque as a mode of understanding and appreciating landscape. These two texts offer an insight into the direction of thought at work in peripatetic practice, evincing a markedly pedestrian Southeyan gaze that highlights each place's potential to hold multiple meanings.

Flores and Gonzalez 2019 identifies how *Letters* went beyond the conventions of the travelogue by embedding within the narrative over thirty Spanish (and to a lesser extent Portuguese) poems of considerable length that introduced English readers to two previously neglected literary cultures, and foreshadowing the popularity that the old chivalric literature of Spain was to achieve in late Georgian England. In order to contribute to a clear-cut distinction between the role Lope de Vega and other Iberian writers play on Southey, this article singles out the 'Essay on the Poetry of Spain and Portugal' included in Letter IX, as well as the translation and critical commentary of Lope's *La hermosura de Angélica* included immediately after the 'Essay'. In so doing, it argues these two sections of *Letters* were instrumental in the promotion of the fascination with Spanish literature in general, and Lope in particular, prompting a huge expansion in the interest in the Spanish playwright.

Gonzalez 2017, moreover, argues that, rather than offhand allusions, Southey's references to Lope de Vega in his own poetical oeuvre—including the second edition of his *Joan of Arc* or his *Roderick, The Last of the Goths*—lie at the core of a deeper literary, religious, and political interest in the figure and writings of the sixteenth-century Spanish writer. Southey's contribution to the criticism of the so-called 'Phoenix of Wits' might be difficult to assess, not least because in a period of over twenty years he went from asserting that 'Lope de Vega is never sublime, seldom pathetic, and seldom natural' in a series of public letters he contributed to the *Monthly Magazine* in 1796,<sup>15</sup> to becoming a true aficionado of this 'prodigy of nature,' celebrating in 1818 his *Rimas sacras* as being characterised by 'strains of sober piety and elevated devotion, in which a true Christian might devoutly join, and bless the man who has expressed for him so well the aspirations of hope and faith'.<sup>16</sup> Southey's ambivalent cultural cosmopolitanism, nevertheless, meant that even when he celebrated Lope de Vega's poetic industry, he was balanced in his praise, leaving room for harsh attacks on the latter. Southey's ambivalence towards Lope de Vega is read in this publication in the light of his investments in all things Spanish, considering the public and private, domestic and international dimensions of his writings.

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<sup>15</sup> Southey to the Editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, [c. December 1796], *CLRS* 188.

<sup>16</sup> [Robert Southey], 'Some Account of the Lives and Writings of Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, and Guillen de Castro by Henry Richard Lord Holland.' *Quarterly Review* XVIII (1818), 1–46, on p. 45.

## 2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The aspects of *Letters* and its impact in Southey's later writings selected for examination in this doctoral dissertation by compendium of publications revolve around the composition, production and reception of *Letters* and the role it played in shaping Southey's attitude towards the business of literature in connection with his later writings (Gonzalez 2021a), the travelogue's connections with Southey's own faux travel narrative *Letters from England* (Gonzalez 2021b), as well as the presence of Lope de Vega in *Letters* (Flores and Gonzalez 2019) and in Southey's contributions to the periodical press (Gonzalez 2017). The findings obtained in these respects are presented in turn.

Beginning with a thorough examination of how the travelogue came about, Gonzalez 2021a aims at establishing the basis for a broader understanding of *Letters* by focusing on the major issues posed by this text—tracing them down from the composition and publication stage of the book, all the way to the responses it elicited from the reading public. More importantly, this work opens up a new strain in examining the role *Letters* played in shaping Southey's attitude towards the business of literature. The book was conceived, at the outset, as a means of money-making. Having only just resolved to abandon the prospect of a career in the clergy for a Pantisocratic dream that had then collapsed, providing for his own ways and means became a growing concern for Southey as he decided on a new course of life. Six months in the Iberian Peninsula were not to be an utter waste of time, as they would yield him the opportunity of turning his knowledge into profit by publishing a travel narrative and translating Spanish and Portuguese literature. With the market for travel writing expanding, the commercial potential of Southey's expedition was soon recognised by the Bristolian bookseller and publisher Joseph Cottle. 'Delighted with the idea of a volume of travels', the latter engaged Southey in advance of his departure to produce an account of his trip upon his return.<sup>17</sup>

It was decided jointly by Cottle and Southey that at the heart of the volume was to be a poetical history of the two nations visited, after the fashion of the overviews of foreign literature typically featured in published accounts of the Grand Tour since Joseph

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<sup>17</sup> Southey to Grosvenor Charles Bedford, [started before and continued on] 23 October [1795]; *CLRS* 137.

Addison had depicted Italy through the lens of its classical poetry.<sup>18</sup> Southey, encouraged by Cottle, thought that this literary historical focus would give his book an opening in the already crowded market of Iberian travel narratives. The conclusion is drawn, however that, *Letters* was not conceived solely as a poetical history of the Iberian Peninsula. Southey's book sought to combine historical and literary matter with acute descriptions and life-painting. Taking advantage of the hybridity of epistolary journalism and engaging with the standing traditions of English travelogues and picturesque guidebooks, Southey's aim was to blend his own personal reflections on places visited with the descriptions of those places in the vernacular literatures.

With this background, Gonzalez 2021a considers the nature of the efforts Southey devoted to the other two lifetime editions of *Letters* (1799 and 1808), and examines the main conclusions that can be drawn between the relationship his first prose text developed with his later writings. If works as central to his literary and historical oeuvre as *Madoc* (1805) and *The Life of Nelson* (1813) were 'shaped by Southey's own experiences in Portugal',<sup>19</sup> the craze for Iberian subjects in Georgian Britain led Southey to produce an extensive series of Spanish-infused texts, including *The Pilgrim to Compostella* (1829). In a similar manner, a substantial portion of Southey's writing life, from its outset, was spent in the realm of translating. Even if his three most important translations saw the light in the course of the 1800s—*Amadis of Gaul* (1803), *Palmerin of England* (1807) and *Chronicle of the Cid* (1808)—Southey began to develop his skill in *Letters*, and continued honing it in more ephemeral publications during his years as a contributor to the *Morning Post* and the *Monthly Magazine*, as well as through his reviewing labour chiefly for the *Annual Review*. It was this long investment in translation which prompted Southey in 1807 to begin work on an updated edition of Thomas Shelton's translation of *Don Quixote* and write a 'Life of Cervantes', abandoned shortly afterwards.<sup>20</sup> It was also what motivated his unfulfilled plans to produce a volume of renderings of Luís Vaz de

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<sup>18</sup> See Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, &c. In the Years 1701, 1702, 1703* (London, 1705).

<sup>19</sup> Tim Fulford has illustrated how it was from Southey's first-hand encounters with Iberian Catholicism in 1795–96 and 1800–01 that he developed his influential portraits of British imperialist heroes. See Fulford, 'Heroic Voyages and Superstitious Natives: Southey's Imperialist Ideology', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 2 (1998), 46–64.

<sup>20</sup> See Southey to Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, [end of August 1807]; *CLRS* 1356, and Southey to Sir George Beaumont, 11 December 1807; *CLRS* 1397.



Camões,<sup>21</sup> and when this failed, an equally doomed anthology of translated Spanish and Portuguese literature.<sup>22</sup>

Focusing on the relationship between *Letters* and *Letters from England*, Gonzalez 2021b examines the manifold ways in which, writing as Espriella, Southey was able to frame the all-too-familiar Lake District landscape through the eyes of his outlandish alter ego by positioning himself as an outsider in the role of a visitor, much as he had done in 1797 in his actual travel narrative. In point of fact, while Southey acknowledged that *Letters from England* was undertaken to stimulate his sense of belonging in Keswick—‘to make another attempt at settling by writing an anonymous book purporting to be the letters of a Spaniard from England’—,<sup>23</sup> in 1829, once again writing in foreign disguise for of *Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*, he conceded that his gradual attachment to the Lake District as his home stemmed from his nostalgia for the Iberian landscape.<sup>24</sup>

*Letters* was the product of Southey’s peripatetic peninsular tour in a very literal way, for he had ‘walked the greater part of the way’ from Coruña to Lisbon via Madrid,<sup>25</sup> more often than not taking to the hills and peaks along his route, leaving his companions behind in their carriage. Scholarship has demonstrated over the past decades how the late eighteenth-century saw the transformation of walking from an unwelcome fact of life to an enriching activity for both mind and body for certain kinds of people; the rise of hillwalking and the pedestrian traveller having, as a result, a substantial impact upon landscape aesthetics.<sup>26</sup> Against this backdrop, the new visual experience that peripatetic practice brought about in contrast to the picturesque tour demanded a new descriptive discourse—one that Southey embraced in *Letters* first, and then in *Letters from England*.

For Southey, what is at stake in pedestrian writing is not a conventional framing of the landscape in picturesque terms, but a moving panorama that is the synthesis of different spatial and temporal perceptions, and which can only be apprehended by means of a physical exploration of the space. One that, although primarily motivated in visual

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<sup>21</sup> See Southey to Longmans, 13 November 1807; *CLRS* 1377.

<sup>22</sup> See Southey to Walter Scott, 6 November 1808; *CLRS* 1528.

<sup>23</sup> Southey to John Rickman, 18 December 1804, *CLRS* 1004.

<sup>24</sup> See Southey, *Sir Thomas More*, vol. ii, pp. 575–576, 592.

<sup>25</sup> Southey to Grosvenor Charles Bedford, [December 1795–] 20 February [1796], *CLRS* 145.

<sup>26</sup> See Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

terms, appeals to all the senses: sight, hearing, smell, and taste. His incorporation of the bodily experience of the walker in these texts entails that his and Espriella's feet traversing through 'stoney plain' (*LSP*, 99) or 'broken ground' (*LFE*, 241), his 'languid limbs' laying on a 'smooth rock' while he rests along the way, or the feel on his skin when his 'old tormentors the flies swarmed from the hedges and coppices by which we passed' (*LFE*, 240) are also in play as he constructs scenes on the move. In Southey's work, then, walking is worth writing about in and of itself: an aesthetic act that is continuous with the physical act that allows for the walker to be in motion.

The third part of this study addresses the presence of Lope de Vega in *Letters* (Flores and Gonzalez 2019), and examines how he surpassed himself by pushing the boundaries of the travelogue with his emphasis on Spanish—and, to a lesser extent, Portuguese—literature. Southey believed that 'books are the portrait of the public mind, and the characteristic traits of every age and of every people may be read in their poetry' (*LSP*, 132), and accordingly sought to go beyond the kind of overview of literature readers would expect to find in a travel narrative by featuring, in detail, Iberian verse and his own translations. Although Southey aimed to present a representative selection of Iberian verse, the arrangement of authors included in *Letters*, seriously thought through, reveals an overwhelming preference for Spanish over Portuguese poetry. He included seventeen poetical compositions in Spanish but only four in Portuguese—and while the selection of the former features some of the most prominent names in the literature of Spain, it is only minor figures from the literary history of Portugal that Southey deemed worthy for *Letters*.

More importantly, while Southey kept the focus on Spanish poetry at the expense of the Portuguese epic, both were consistently belittled in favour of the British tradition. In contrast to his ethnographic discourse on Iberian literature—or perhaps because of it—in Letter XXVI Southey ventures 'to assert that there is more genius in one of our old metrical Romances than can be found in all the Epic Poems of Portugal, not excepting Camoens' (*LSP*, 300). Katherine Turner suggests in this respect that *Letters* is 'a radical text... in its implicit privileging of poetry over prose as the genre of national consciousness'. In so doing, she further argues, Southey's poetic and critical material on Spanish and Portuguese literature is 'designed to demonstrate the ideal superiority of British epic... peculiarly associated with liberty and therefore, in the 1790s, presented as

peculiarly under threat'.<sup>27</sup> If so, then, more overtly politicised than his main thesis itself is Southey's direct confrontation with Lope de Vega in the 'Essay on the Poetry of Spain and Portugal' and his thirty-six-page section (in 1797) on Lope's *La hermosura de Angélica*. The 'Essay', albeit claiming to be 'on the Poetry of Spain and Portugal', deals mostly with Spanish writing and, above all, focuses on Lope de Vega.

Following a similar line of argument to the 'Essay', Southey's 'Analysis of La Hermosura de Angelica', an epic conceived as a sequel to Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, substantiates his earlier claims in seeking to 'make the reader acquainted with the manner, the merits, and the faults of' the Spaniard who, 'confident of his own powers has attempted to rival Tasso in his Jerusalem Conquistada, and Ariosto [here]' (*LSP*, 133). In his 'Analysis' of *Angélica*, a sense arises of the complexities and incongruities that abound in the poem, which challenges the precepts, both formal and thematic, of Southey's previous encounters with the original *Orlando*—an engagement that can be traced back all the way to his juvenilia.

Although Southey's interest in Lope de Vega was a direct result of his work on *Letters*, the fourth article selected for this doctoral dissertation by compendium of publications explores how Southey remained conflicted about Lope beyond the publication of his travelogue. Gonzalez 2017 further explores a shifting series of critical accounts other than the three editions of *Letters*, including his contributions to the *Annual Review* and the *Quarterly Review* in 1807 and 1818 respectively. In so doing, it shows that Southey significantly moderated his earlier positions as he read further and built up a more complex network of understanding and affinity. As the years went on, Southey was an experienced student of Spanish literature, having produced an extensive body on Spanish matter, including translations of *Amadis of Gaul* and the *Chronicle of the Cid* in 1803 and 1808, as well as his Spanish-themed narrative poem *Roderick, The Last of the Goths* in 1814—publications that led to his appointment as a Fellow of both the Royal Spanish Academy and the Royal Spanish Academy of History.

Lope de Vega now seemed to him far from a mediocre writer, one who no longer epitomised the evils of Spanish Popery and politics—at least not entirely. Southey's mature view is set out in his letter to John May of September 4, 1817, wherein he 'heartily

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<sup>27</sup> Katherine Turner, *British Travel Writers in Europe 1750-1800: Authorship, Gender, and National Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 239–40.

wish[ed] that I had the collected edition of Lope de Vega,—I have a good many of his works separately, in the original editions,—but it would be much more satisfactory to possess the whole’.<sup>28</sup> That same month, Southey told his uncle Herbert Hill of the delight he took from finally bringing himself to read Lope’s *Arcadia*, ‘which I had not patience to do twenty years ago’.<sup>29</sup> Southey’s interest reached its peak in 1818, when his forty-six-page-long article for the *Quarterly Review* on the second edition of Lord Holland’s *Some Account of the Life and Writings of Lope Felix de Vega Carpio*, published in 1817, saw the light. Southey had written a shorter notice of the first edition for the *Annual Review* in 1807, where he put forward some of his own translations of Lope against Lord Holland’s, arguing that some of the pieces he rendered into English were ‘so much prettier in the original, that if Spanish were as commonly read as French’ he would have made ‘no attempt ... at versifying [them]’.<sup>30</sup>

Gonzalez 2017 reveals how, if Southey’s anti-Catholicism underpinned his readings of Lope in the late 1790s, that reading context is far less ferociously evident in 1807 and (above all) 1818, being substituted by a Christian one that allows Southey to accept and even welcome both conscious and unconscious religious motifs in Lope’s poetry. In his eyes, the writings of the Spaniard are no longer entirely permeated by Popery, but sometimes by a true Christian spirit of which English readers can also partake. This is clearly an attempt on the part of Southey to justify his engaging with these poems, given his previous dismissal of other writings by Lope. In effect, it was only after a twenty-year-long attachment to Lope’s poetry that Southey could bring himself to accept some of his religious pieces by focusing on what unites Catholicism and Anglicanism, rather than what separates them.

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<sup>28</sup> Southey to John May, 4 September 1817, *CLRS* 3021.

<sup>29</sup> Southey to Herbert Hill, 6 October 1817, *CLRS* 3027.

<sup>30</sup> [Robert Southey], ‘*Some Account of the Life and Writings of Lope Felix de Vega Carpio* by Henry Richard Lord Holland.’ *The Annual Review and History of Literature; for 1806*, ed. Arthur Aikin (London, 1807), 397–411, on p. 399.

### **3. PUBLICATIONS**

3.1. Jonathan Gonzalez, 'Introduction', in Jonathan Gonzalez and Cristina Flores (eds.), *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal by Robert Southey* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021a), 1–45.



3.2. Jonathan Gonzalez, “Peripateticating among the mountains”: Robert Southey and the Aesthetics of Pedestrian Motion’, *Romanticism* 27.1 (2021b), 75–87.





3.3. Cristina Flores and Jonathan Gonzalez, 'Los clásicos españoles en el Romanticismo inglés: el caso de Lope de Vega y *La hermosa de Angélica* en *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* de Robert Southey', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 96.8 (2019), 1221–1249.



3.4. Jonathan Gonzalez, 'Poetic Industry and Abominable Superstition: Southey on Lope de Vega', *Romanticism on the Net* 68-69 (2017), 1–27.



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND LINES OF FUTURE RESEARCH

This doctoral dissertation by compendium of publications has focused on the inception of Southey's deeply ambiguous cultural cosmopolitanism—and the manifold ways in which the life-long investment in all things Spanish and Portuguese that *Letters* inaugurated permeated his later writings. The four publications herein included have aimed at the exploration of the use of *Letters* as a blueprint for Southey's critical and commercial success *Letters from England*, his engagement with Lope de Vega in a period of over twenty years since the publication of his travelogue, as well as the interplay of all aspects of *Letters* with Southey's later writings—areas of research that had drawn little attention in Romantic studies as of yet. Thus conducted, this research has contributed to a new critical appraisal of *Letters* and its author, based on recent Southey research, as well as on current methodologies that re-historicise literary studies within their social and political context. In so doing, this doctoral dissertation has contributed one more piece to the ongoing restoration of Southey as a central part of Romantic-era literary culture, and highlighting the marginal position in the Romantic canon that Southey—and, above all, *Letters*—had been made to inhabit until recently.

*Letters* is structured as a collection of thirty letters written as Southey journeyed, each addressed to an unnamed 'you'—a composite of many identities, general and specific—in the course of which he deploys a series of strategic guiding topoi. This text is at once a compelling epistolary travel narrative, a work of scenic tourism that outgrows the limitations of picturesque aesthetics as a mode of understanding and appreciating landscape, and a politically and religiously motivated ethnographic discourse on Iberian poetry and culture that implicitly demonstrates the superiority of British epic and national consciousness alike. The power of *Letters* arises, in effect, from the commentary that unfolds on the state of society and culture in Spain and Portugal and, ultimately, in Britain.

Writing at a point in time when private reflections adapted for public consumption had become increasingly popular (and, above all, saleable), Southey situates his work within the dominant discourse of late eighteenth-century travel writing, which sought the re-formulation of the travelogue in terms of local colour rather than that of fact-gathering

which privileged scientific knowledge. Southey was innovative in his treatment of local colour as much as in his approach to topographical descriptions—an outlook which he realised carried with it a danger of haste that threatened the very fabric of travel. Temporality becomes one of the defining factors that mediates Southey’s experience of Iberia in *Letters*. Southey, as a visitor, exists in Spain and Portugal on borrowed time: the acceptance of how unlikely he is to revisit the same spots again shapes his effort to render in writing, and thus preserve, the changing essence of his presence in the Iberian landscape. A defining feature of Southey’s approach to travel narrative as form is, accordingly, the departure from the quasi-picturesque approach characteristic of other accounts by British travellers in Iberia, and his advocacy of pedestrianism.

This doctoral dissertation has also revealed how Southey’s career as a historian had its genesis in *Letters*, a work that, as Manuela Mourão puts it, ‘sets the tone for his life-long concept of the historian’.<sup>31</sup> His six-month residence in the Iberian Peninsula in 1795–96 opened up a possibility of writing about historical events, literature and religion at greater length—which Southey readily seized in anticipation of his second sojourn: ‘My intention is, when at Lisbon, to undertake the History of Portugal, a long & arduous & interesting & important undertaking, which I think I can do as it ought to be done... no country in her rise ever displayed more splendid actions, or exhibited a more important lesson in her fall’.<sup>32</sup> Southey worked intensely on his mammoth ‘History of Portugal’ up until 1806, when his uncle suggested he ought to reframe his approach and ‘lose no time in setting about and getting ready that part of my Magnum Opus which relates to Brazil... in consequence of the present bias of the public mind’.<sup>33</sup> Although only three volumes of the *History of Brazil* (1810–19) were completed, Southey never gave up hope of completing the original proposal of a ‘History of Portugal’—and continued amassing books galore on the subject.

This doctoral dissertation has also opened new perspectives and lines of research, namely the identification of Southey’s engagement with the business of literature as early as 1797. While he trusted his poetical endeavours were to ensure his textual life-after-

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<sup>31</sup> Manuela Mourão, ‘Robert Southey on Portugal: Travel Narrative and the Writing of History’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 37 (2015), 43–60, on p. 49.

<sup>32</sup> Southey to Thomas Southey, 23 March 1800; *CLRS* 500.

<sup>33</sup> Southey to John May, 29 December 1806; *CLRS* 1252.

death, throughout his lifetime Southey found in prose (and particularly travel) writing a profitable way to financially provide for his family. In spite of his strong opinions on the genre and the values which travel writing, in his view, needed to uphold, Southey was labouring under an explicitly and primarily financial imperative. From its outset, the value of *Letters* was regarded in economic terms—as were *Letters from England* and the over 150 pieces he published in the *Annual Review* during the seven-year life of this periodical (1803-1809), a substantial number of which were reviews of travel books. This practice testifies to Southey's shrewd business acumen and the way in which he embraced the world of commodified letters: diversifying his own corpus of saleable commodities.

The commercial success of *Letters* was, indeed, the main driving force behind Southey producing two revised, amended editions in 1799 and 1808 respectively—exploiting in the process the interplay between the economic and the aesthetic that the genre of travel writing yielded itself to. As Gonzalez 2021b examines, Southey's actual travelogue became, to such a degree, the model for *Letters from England*. A case in point in how the collision between the economic and the aesthetic that arises in the two later lifetime editions of *Letters*, mediated by the writing of *Letters from England* in between, ties in with the practice of 're-collection' which Michael Gamer has described as central to the Romantic ethos—a conflict between the commercial and the cultural that is particularly prominent in the case of Southey. The 1799 and 1808 *Letters* epitomise, in effect, an instance of what Gamer labelled 'transformational reprinting', that is a move that goes beyond merely publishing a new edition of an older text. Rather, Southey gathers the original components of his travel narrative, patched with new materials, presenting the former in a new light that transforms the assembled materials. These 'acts of salvaging, selection, arrangement, and repackaging', Gamer has observed, effectively produce a new work.<sup>34</sup>

The path that *Letters* opened saw Southey engage with prose as an extended medium, in so doing becoming an accomplished travel writer and social commentator. More importantly, it saw the birth of Southey the professional author, at once concerned with bookmaking from a formal as well as from a practical outlook. While recent scholarship has examined Southey's business practices and deconstructed the myth of his

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Gamer, *Romanticism, Self-Canonization, and the Business of Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 232.

approach to the fame/income dichotomy, his engagement with travel writing via his first extended prose work has not yet been the subject of discussion.<sup>35</sup> Although this doctoral thesis by compendium of publication leaves some pending tasks for future research, it has already shed light on this particular lacunae, revealing how the inception of this for-profit mentality can be traced back to Southey's initial book-length prose venture—and how in his early engagement with travel writing he learnt fast to play the possibilities of the new periodical culture for promoting and publishing his work.

Southey's conception of the professional author had certainly evolved by the late 1800s, but it was in the context of the publication of his 1797 *Letters* that it had begun to take shape. Incidentally, it was Wordsworth who made the case of Southey being fully acquainted with the ins and outs of the 'bookselling animal' already in the late 1790s. The infamous notice of *Lyrical Ballads* Southey published in the October 1798 *Critical Review*, a book that in Southey's view had failed to deliver what it promised, was a blow for Wordsworth—not so much because of Southey's critical evaluation, but insofar as it hindered the commercial success of *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth thus complained in a letter towards the end of the Summer of 1799 how Southey was fully aware 'that I published those poems for money and money alone', making a case that 'if he could not conscientiously have spoken differently of the volume, he ought to have declined the task of reviewing it'—a tenet emphasised in his blunt concluding remarks: 'I care little for the praise of any other professional critic, but as it may help me to pudding'.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> On Southey's involvement with the practical aspects of literary production, profit and loss, see Gamer, *Romanticism, Self-canonization, and the Business of Poetry*, pp. 16–53, 156–196.

<sup>36</sup> *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1787–1805*, eds. Ernest de Selincourt and Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 267–268.



## RESUMEN Y CONCLUSIONES EN ESPAÑOL

### RESUMEN

Esta tesis doctoral por compendio de publicaciones consiste en una reevaluación crítica de *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal*. Más concretamente, la tesis se centra en un análisis del ambiguo cosmopolitismo cultural que este texto inaugura en la obra de Robert Southey, y cómo afecta a sus trabajos posteriores. En 1797 Southey, quien llegaría a convertirse en uno de los (luso-)hispanistas británicos más importantes del siglo XIX, publicó esta obra, su primera publicación extensa en prosa, basada en su viaje alrededor de la península ibérica entre diciembre de 1795 y mayo de 1796. Estructurada como una serie de cartas públicas escritas a lo largo de su ruta por España y Portugal, esta obra participa de las emergentes narraciones de viajes dieciochescas, al mismo tiempo que incorpora rasgos predominantes de otros géneros como el diario, la guía turística, la crítica literaria o la historiografía. Southey da cuenta de su periplo por la península a la vez que aborda cuestiones relacionadas con todos los aspectos de las sociedades española y portuguesa, incluyendo la comida y el vino, la literatura y el teatro, o el modo en que la política y la religión definen las vidas de la población local.

Las cuatro publicaciones de las que se compone esta tesis doctoral ofrecen nuevas perspectivas sobre dos aspectos cruciales de la carrera literaria de Southey que, sin embargo, no han sido estudiados en detalle por la academia. En primer lugar, exploran cómo Southey defendió la conexión existente entre el turismo, el pedestrianismo, y el paisaje a través de su papel como exitoso escritor de narrativas de viajes. En segundo lugar, analizan en detalle el origen y desarrollo de una línea de trabajo que Southey inauguró en *Letters* y que le llevaría a convertirse en una de las figuras esenciales del diálogo hispano-británico del periodo romántico.

La metodología de la investigación se rige, en primer lugar, por el renovado interés académico en el género de la narrativa de viajes durante el Romanticismo, prestando especial énfasis a cómo a finales de siglo dieciocho el turismo pedestre, una actividad asociada hasta entonces con los pobres y los criminales, comenzó a ser aceptado y plasmado en este tipo de escritos. El marco teórico del estudio se basa, asimismo, en los trabajos existentes sobre las conexiones entre las letras inglesas e ibéricas durante el periodo romántico. En conjunto, el análisis revela el complejo proceso de composición y producción que Southey llevó a cabo de cara a la publicación de *Letters*, y cómo este proceso llegaría a definir la actitud que Southey adoptaría hacia la literatura como un negocio lucrativo en sus obras posteriores. En este sentido, se ofrece como caso de estudio la relación entre *Letters* y la obra cuasi-paródica que Southey publicó en 1807, *Letters from England*. Esta tesis doctoral también llega a conclusiones relativas al desarrollo de las actitudes en conflicto que Southey desarrolló hacia la literatura española en general,

y Lope de Vega en particular. Un estudio diacrónico, desde la publicación de *Letters* hasta el final de su carrera, muestra cómo y por qué Southey reconfiguró su posición general hacia las letras españolas a medida que adquiría un conocimiento más profundo de las mismas.

## CONCLUSIONES

Esta tesis doctoral por compendio de publicaciones centra su atención en los inicios del ambiguo cosmopolitismo cultural que caracteriza la vida y obra del escritor británico Robert Southey. En concreto, presta atención a las múltiples formas en las que el interés por temas españoles y portugueses que Southey inaugura en *Letters* se encuentra presente en sus obras posteriores. Las cuatro publicaciones que componen esta tesis doctoral tienen como objetivo explorar cómo *Letters* supone el punto de partida para el éxito crítico y comercial de *Letters from England*; su interés en Lope de Vega en un período de más de veinte años, así como la interacción que existe entre los escritos posteriores de Southey, tanto en prosa como en verso. Se trata, en todos los casos, de áreas de investigación que hasta el momento habían atraído poca atención en los estudios del Romanticismo. De este modo, esta tesis doctoral y los trabajos que la componen contribuyen a una nueva valoración crítica de *Letters* y su autor, basada en los últimos estudios sobre Southey, así como en metodologías actuales que rehistorizan los textos literarios dentro de su contexto social y político. En este sentido, esta tesis doctoral supone un paso más hacia la restauración de Southey como parte central de la cultura literaria de la era romántica en Inglaterra, sacándolo de la posición marginal en el canon romántico que Southey (y, sobre todo, *Letters*) habían ocupado hasta ahora.

*Letters* está estructurada como una colección de treinta cartas escritas durante el viaje de Southey por la península ibérica, cada una de ellas dirigida a un ‘tú’ anónimo que busca representar una combinación de muchas identidades, generales y específicas. Este texto es a la vez una convincente narrativa epistolar de viajes que supera las limitaciones de la estética ‘pintoresca’ como modo de comprender y apreciar el paisaje. Es, al mismo tiempo, un discurso etnográfico sobre la poesía y la cultura ibéricas tras el que se perciben motivaciones políticas y religiosas que implícitamente muestran la creencia en la superioridad de la épica y la conciencia británicas. Así, la relevancia de *Letters* radica en las opiniones que en esa obra Southey vierte sobre el estado de la sociedad y cultura española y portuguesa y, en última instancia, en Gran Bretaña.

Escribiendo en un momento histórico en el que las reflexiones privadas adaptadas al consumo público se habían vuelto cada vez más populares (y, sobre todo, atractivas comercialmente), Southey sitúa su obra en el discurso dominante de la escritura de viajes de finales del siglo XVIII, que buscaba la reformulación del diario de viaje. Southey fue innovador al utilizar un enfoque naturalista que acompañaba con descripciones topográficas. La temporalidad se convierte en uno de los factores definitorios que median

la experiencia de Southey en España y Portugal en *Letters*. La experiencia de Southey en España y Portugal, como turista, tiene una limitación espacio-temporal. Esto le lleva a la aceptación de lo inevitable: lo improbable que es volver a visitar los mismos lugares en el futuro, lo cual da forma nuevamente a su esfuerzo por plasmar por escrito, y así preservar, la esencia cambiante de su presencia en el paisaje ibérico. Como resultado, una de las características que define las narrativas de viaje de Southey es, desde el punto de vista formal, la desviación del enfoque cuasi-pintoresco que prevalecía en los relatos de los viajeros británicos, así como su defensa del viaje a pie.

Esta tesis doctoral ha revelado asimismo cómo la popular carrera de Southey como historiador tiene su génesis en *Letters*, una obra que, como afirma Manuela Mourão, «marca la pauta de su concepto de historiador a lo largo de toda su vida».<sup>37</sup> La estancia de seis meses en la península ibérica entre 1795 y 1796 le abrió la posibilidad a Southey de escribir sobre acontecimientos históricos, literatura y religión con mayor detenimiento, lo que Southey aprovechó de inmediato en previsión de su segunda estancia en 1801.<sup>38</sup> Siempre motivado por el éxito de *Letters*, Southey trabajó intensamente en su gigantesca (e inacabada) ‘History of Portugal’ hasta 1806, cuando su tío sugirió que debería replantear su enfoque y centrar sus esfuerzos no en el pasado de Portugal, sino en el de Brasil. El resultado directo de estos esfuerzos, los tres volúmenes de su *History of Brasil* (1810–19), le ganaron a Southey una reputación internacional como historiador.

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<sup>37</sup> Manuela Mourão, ‘Robert Southey on Portugal: Travel Narrative and the Writing of History’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 37 (2015), 43–60, on p. 49.

<sup>38</sup> Southey to Thomas Southey, 23 March 1800; *CLRS* 500.



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