



UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA

TRABAJO FIN DE ESTUDIOS

Título

Estudio comparativo de los conceptos de lo Sublime y lo Pintoresco en la representación de la Naturaleza en "Cartas escritas durante una corta estancia en España y Portugal" (1797) de Robert Southey y "Cartas escritas durante una corta estancia en Suecia, Noruega y Dinamarca" (1796) de Mary Wollstonecraft.

Autor/es

ELENA LAVILLA GARCÍA

Director/es

Cristina Flores Moreno

Facultad

Facultad de Letras y de la Educación

Titulación

Grado en Estudios Ingleses

Departamento

FILOLOGÍAS MODERNAS

Curso académico

2019-20



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Wollstonecraft., de ELENA LAVILLA GARCÍA

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TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

Título

A Comparative Study of the Concepts of the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque* in the Representation of Nature in Robert Southey's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (1797) and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796)

Estudio comparativo de los conceptos de lo *Sublime* y lo *Pintoresco* en la representación de la Naturaleza en *Cartas escritas durante una corta estancia en España y Portugal* (1797) de Robert Southey y *Cartas escritas durante una corta estancia en Suecia, Noruega y Dinamarca* (1796) de Mary Wollstonecraft.

Autor

Elena Lavilla García

Tutor/es

Cristina Flores Moreno

Grado

Grado en Estudios Ingleses [601G]

Facultad de Letras y de la Educación

Año académico

2019/20



UNIVERSIDAD
DE LA RIOJA

Abstract

This Final Degree Project aims to analyze the romantic concepts of the sublime and the picturesque in its reference to Nature, specifically in a comparative study of the works *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (1797) of the laureate poet Robert Southey (1774-1843) and *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796) by writer Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797). Both works are considered key in the development of the Romantic travel writing style that went from being a gathering of documentary facts with informative purposes to a narration with a higher appreciation of the landscape and subjective contents. The concepts of the sublime and the picturesque were largely responsible for this change of perspective in travel narrative; consequently, the following paper focuses on examining its use in the representation of Nature. To that aim, different natural scenes of both novels will be examined, and it will proceed to its analysis and discussion concerning the previously mentioned concepts. Once examined, we will advance to the elaboration of some conclusions about the implications and effects of the use of the concepts of the sublime and the picturesque in the works by Southey and Wollstonecraft above mentioned.

Key words: Travel Writing, sublime, picturesque, Nature, Romanticism, landscape, Wollstonecraft, Southey.

Resumen

El presente Trabajo de Fin de Grado tiene como objetivo analizar los conceptos románticos de lo sublime y lo pintoresco en relación con la Naturaleza, concretamente mediante la realización de un estudio comparativo de las obras *Cartas escritas durante una corta estancia en España y Portugal* (1797) del poeta laureado Robert Southey (1774-1843) y *Cartas escritas durante una corta estancia en Suecia, Noruega y Dinamarca* (1796) escrita por Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797). Ambas obras son consideradas piezas clave en el desarrollo del estilo de la narrativa de viajes en el Romanticismo, que pasó de ser una acumulación de datos con una finalidad informativa a una narración en la que se realizaba una mayor apreciación subjetiva del contenido paisajístico. Los conceptos de lo sublime y lo pintoresco tuvieron mucho que ver en el

desarrollo de esta nueva perspectiva de la narrativa de viajes, y es por eso por lo que este trabajo se va a centrar en analizar su uso en la representación de la Naturaleza. Para completar el objetivo, se examinarán diversas escenas naturales de ambas obras con su posterior análisis y discusión en relación con los conceptos previamente mencionados. Para finalizar se elaborarán unas conclusiones acerca de las implicaciones y los efectos que sugiere el uso de estos conceptos en los obras de Southey y Wollstonecraft.

Palabras Clave: Literatura de viajes, sublime, pintoresco, Naturaleza, Romanticismo, paisaje, Wollstonecraft, Southey.

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1. Objectives and Methodology

The objective of this work is to compare the travel narratives *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (1797) by Robert Southey (1774-1843) and *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796) by Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) to recognize their involvement in the change of style in the writing of Travel Literature that occurred in the Romantic period. For this aim, a specific sub-objective is going to be carried out, which is the identification of the concepts of the sublime and the picturesque in the representation of Nature in both works as markers of the turn from a documentary narration to a narrative with a sentimental charge in Travel Literature. The starting hypothesis is that Nature represented through the concepts of the sublime and picturesque achieves an agent prominence in both works, which provides the narratives with an additional aesthetic function to the existing documentary one.

The methodology the development of the work will follow is of a hypothetical-deductive type in which, based on the premise of the use of the sublime and the picturesque as distinctive features, I will proceed to analyze each of the works separately, and then complete their comparison and to eventually present my conclusions. The nature of the data is descriptive since the units of analysis are fragments of the works considered of interest for the subject to be treated. The sources are mainly bibliographic with the review of writings, articles, research and publications related to the topic as well as the two works to compare.

2. Theoretical Discussion

2.1 Travel Writing: Origins and Evolution, the Romantic Turn of Travel Writing

To track the origins of travel writing we would have to go back to the most ancient account of someone's journey only to find out that the relation between travel and writing is as old as people's ability to journey and recall their experience. In non-literary societies, the transmission of journeys stories was done orally through tales, myths or legends. Australian Aborigines tribes transmitted their knowledge about their origins through 'songlines' or 'Dreamtime stories' by which their historical account was territorial rather than chronological. Those stories accounted how their ancestries travelled the land and created the different landscape forms, moulding at the same time the relationship between humans (Das and Young n.p). Other ancient stories emphasize the old practice of travel writing as the Arcadian *Poem of Gilgamesh* (1000 B.C) whose homonym protagonist set off in a journey to find the source of the immortality or Homer's *Odyssey* (600 B.C) whose influence is still acknowledged on the current use of the word odyssey to refer to an epic journey. Biblical sources are also a great example of travel writings not only for their explicit stories about journeys as The Exodus or Cain exile but also because the Christian tradition inspired the peregrination routes and the subsequent written accounts as *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) by John Bunyan or *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (Hulme and Young 2).

Despite the obvious relation between travel and accounting the experience of that travel, there are many ways of travelling and many other ways to write about travelling concerns and to reach a consensus about what type of writing should be considered travel writing in a literary sense has been the intention of the critic during this last fifty years. The approaches range from very loose definitions as that of Holland and Huggan who consider it as "the most hybrid and unassimilable of all literary genres" (see Young 6), to more concrete approaches like that of Fussell (1924-2012) on his *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* (1980) in which he starts by identifying travel writings with 'travel books' and thus excluding other writings dealing with travel, especially the 'guide book'. Fussell differentiates the guide book and the travel book on the basis of the effect the reader expects from each of them. While guide books are addressed to those who "plan to follow the traveller doing what he has done" a travel book is for those who "do not plan to follow the traveller at all, but who require the exotic or comic anomalies,

wonders, and scandals of the literary form romance which their own place or time cannot entirely supply” (Fussell 203). Hence, in travel books there is an encounter with the traveller’s reaction to his experience and, therefore, the reader gets access to his impressions, feelings, emotions and opinions, which transform the text from a practical account of facts to a subjective narration of experiences. Fussell, thus, considered the travel book:

a sub-species of memoir in which the autobiographical narrative arise from the speakers encounter with distant or unfamiliar data and in which the narrative- unlike that in a novel or a romance- claims literal validity by constant reference to actuality. (203)

The emphasis in the personal aspect and the author’s sensibility and style displayed in the narratives suggest that their function is not limited to practical or documentary aims, but as Thomson (15) claims, for Fussell it is “usually a first-person account of travel that may be read for pleasure, and for its aesthetics merits, as much as for the useful information it provides.” By mentioning actuality as a feature of the travel book, Fussell was referring to the actual journey the traveller author had to take, what at the same time signals for the non-fictionality of the travel book. As Hulme explains, for the text to be regarded as a travel narrative the journey the author is describing must have really taken place, since if later it is discovered that the claim is false the work would be “discredit from travel writing to imaginary travel” (Quoted in Young 4). To trace a line between the fictionality and non-fictionality is one of the most problematic concerns in defining travel writing. Carl Thomson (16) refers to the different ‘contract’ that exists between a reader and author depending on fiction or non-fiction works. A novel reader is aware of the possibility of encountering invented passages in a reality-based text since the author is not obliged to be totally accurate to the real facts, on the contrary, a travel writer does not have such license and reader expects an entirely faithful description of the events. The author, therefore, as he goes on explaining, “finds himself negotiating two subtly different and potentially conflictive, roles: that of a reporter, as they seek to relay accurately the information acquired through travel, and that of story-teller, to present it in an enjoyable, or at least easily digestible way ” (27). To that aim travel writing authors borrow literary techniques from other genres and vice versa leading to an overlapping of genres features that difficult their classification. Young (3) shows that intersection with the example of the novel *Typee* (1846) by Herman Melville who firstly was considered a reliable account

of a shipwreck, but later after Melville's novelist reputation, "the work complex interplay of biography, fiction and literary influences" (3) was better understood. Fussell himself notes that the travel book has some parallelisms with the novel or romance in that it usually begins with the narrator/ protagonist leaving in search of adventures that will mark him deeply, and returns from his quest with greater cultural learning that gives meaning to his adventure (see Thomson 17). However, Thomson (18) claims that in his approach Fussell excluded many other sources of variation if his definition of travel writing as the degree of literality, since some author's intentions may be more aesthetical than others who prefer to emphasize the practical aspects and add to the narrative elements like maps, journal sketches or photographs to accent the veracity of the facts. The structural organization would be another feature to analyse, as some authors do not follow the journey form, but account their experience while living in a foreign country or use the journey theme as a pretext to provide essays on little related subjects. Jam Borm in "Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology" aware of the complexity of the term and in an attempt to grasp the whole spectrum of the concept, provided two definitions for travel book and travel writing. He considered travel writing not as an isolated genre but as a "variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel" (quoted in Moroz 26) which would match Raban's famous metaphor of travel writing as a "raffish open house where different genres were likely to end up in the same bed" (quoted in Young 2), and he concreted that travel books as travel writing whose dominant aspect was literacy and produced a similar definition to that of Fussell:

Any narrative characterized by a non-fiction dominance that relates (almost always) in the first person a journey or journeys that the reader supposes to have taken place in reality while assuming or presupposing that the author, narrator, and principal character are but one identical. (Borm quoted in Moroz 26)

Regarding what has been discussed, it is not possible to give a concrete and closed definition of travel writing because of the broad variety of texts that could fit within its margins. In fact it can be considered as an amalgam of texts that share some common features that enable to contemplate them as travel writing. Yet the form of the travel book defined by Born and Fussell can be considered as the main literary form characterized by the autobiographical aspect, and the non-fictionality of the narration.

As we have previously mentioned, the trajectory of writing related to travel themes dates back to the dawn of civilization and has continued to be cultivated to this day, evolving with and developing according to the cultural, ideological or economic trends of the societies where the works were produced. However, the literary idea of travel writing is considered to have begun to develop in the XV and XVI centuries in the context of colonisation and mercantilism (Das and Young n.p). The discovery of America by Christopher Columbus is considered one of the references to establish the passage from the Medieval Age to Modernity. As Thompson (40) explains, his writings also meant a before and after in the writing of journeys that supposed “a new emphasis on the act of eye-witnessing and of seeing for oneself and establishing facts through empirical inquiry” rather than relying unquestioningly on previous knowledge. This new way of gathering information turned into the development of the empirical methods enunciated by Francis Bacon that will be the basis of modern science and philosophy and that will influence the evolution of travel writing.

The rise of mercantilism meant also an increase in the production of reports, surveys or maps that would ensure the register of the commercial and economical interest of the European powers at the same time as the traveller’s testimonial reports about exotic and new places attracted the attention of the public and thus investment and settlers. As Fuller (2) claims “voyages come into being no only after-the-fact accounts for ideological purposes, but as an integral part of the activities they documented”. Narratives as the English editor Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616) collection of English travel reports *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffics and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589) helped establish the travel writing as “one of the early modern period’s most popular forms which educated and entertained, inspired national pride and commercial investment” (Sherman 20) and granted the documentation of trade enclaves and new cultural knowledge. The New World was not the only source of interest and experiences likely to appear in travel literature, but Europe, Africa or Asia continued to be an economic, commercial and cultural attraction, and consequently Travel writing was also produced, as Thomas Coryat's *Coryats Crudities, hastily Global up in Five Monethes Travels* (1611) which can be argued to be one of the first examples of a travel journey that had no further aim than to transmit the traveller's experience and to be aesthetically enjoyed as much as for the content of it (Thomson 43).

Along the XVIII century, the exploratory travel continued to provide travel writings but with a scientific value added to the information gathered. At the same time and also influenced but this desire of acquiring knowledge another way of travelling developed: tourism. In *Enquiry of the Human Understanding* (1748), John Locke (1632-1704) claims that experience was knowledge and as such the travel experience was conceived as a primary knowledge acquisition process. Among the young aristocrats expanded the trend of the Grand Tour which consisted in spending few years after the university education travelling around Europe, especially France and Italy to learn from “the treasured artefacts and ennobling society of the continent” (Buzard 38) and cultivate their artistic taste on the Classical art. Several travel narratives were composed in the context of the Grand Tour such as Joseph Addison’s *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705) which was conceived as an essential manual for these youngsters travelling to Italy. Those travel writings which were motivated by the personal desire to cultivate the mind gave rise to a coalition of the inner world of the traveller and the outer world he perceived, and thus, emotions and opinions started to be more present in the narratives showing a certain degree of sensitivity with the external world. Laurence Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* (1768) expose this foregrounding of the travellers' personality over the mere analysis of the places visited as he claimed that the value of travelling was not in the transcription of the experience but on the “traveller’s receptivity to feelings” (quoted in Blanton 13).

By the late eighteenth century, the variety of travel writings widens vastly, the Grand Tour is no longer affordable exclusively for the elite but the middle-class start participating of it too, the classical world and Europe are no longer the only attractive destinations and the Enlightenment balance between scientific knowledge and sentiment, decants towards the subjectivity of the self typical of the Romantic movement that is emerging (Thompson 48-50, Blanton 12-14). The Seven Years War (1756-1763), the French Revolution (1789) and later Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) make travelling through Europe difficult so the national tours became a solicited touristic lure. Macpherson’s publication of the *Ossian* poems (1760-1765) appealed to the tourist to visit the mysterious, dark landscapes of the Scottish Highlands which will inspire the Gothic and Celtic Romantic taste, which together with the increasing interest on the Alps journey, will make a shift in the aesthetical interest in the serene, gentle and peaceful landscapes to hazy valleys, imposing mountains and waterfalls (Buzard 43).

The increasing interest on the aesthetical category of Nature is linked to the fact that for Romantic writers “landscape transcended the banal and stereotype description of the environment to become an instrument also reflective of moods, sentiments, moral and mystical inclinations” (Scaramellini 53). According to Northrop Frye (163), “the Romantic Movement begun with the sense of the individual subject was no longer a self-explanatory unit of experience”. For William Wordsworth for example, as Frye exemplifies, the individual identity was a product of the interaction of the human imagination with the natural world outside the boundaries of human society. As Thomson (111) explains, Romantic writers were much concerned with the operations of the mind and consciousness as well as the “role played by feelings and emotions in shaping the individual's engagement with the world” hence the impetus in the subjectivity and emotional manifestation in literary works. For the Romantic writer travelling offered the means to establish that relationship between the inner self and the outer Nature where the journey functions as a metaphor for “aesthetic and psychic exploration” (Smethurst 12). Romantic travellers are not mere observers of the landscape, but “I- witnesses”, as Smethurst puts it since they reflect upon the reaction to the scenery they are experiencing. Robert Southey’s *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (1797), being himself “delighted with the wild and novel prospect” (Southey 29)¹ is “imbued with subjectivity, with the pleasure of the immediate aesthetic response” (Flores 26). Romanticism implied, therefore a turn in Travel writing as the Romantic traveller not only offers an account of the scenes and experiences he encounters, but also an inward journey of self-discovery (Thomson 116). Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Norway, Sweden and Denmark* (1796) together with Southey's *Letters Written a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (1797) represent the perfect model for the late eighteenth-century Travel Writing with a combination of exhaustive and sincere information, as Southey remarks in this preface to the *Letters*:

In the following letters I have related what I have seen. Of the anecdotes with which they abound, there are none of which I myself doubt the authenticity. There

¹ In absence of any modern critical edition, in this essay I will be quoting from the first edition: Southey, Robert. *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal, With some Account of Spanish and Portuguese Poetry*. Bristol: Bulgin and Rosser, 1797. Number of pages will appear parenthetically in the body of the text.

are no disquisitions on commerce and politics; I have given facts, and the Reader may comment for himself. (Southey 5)

And also the reflective self upon the experiences encountered as Wollstonecraft comments on her advertisement:

In Writing these desultory letters, I found I could not avoid being continually the first person- “the little hero of each tale” [...] I, therefore, determine to let my remarks and reflections to flow unrestrained [...]. (Wollstonecraft 3)²

In order to transcribe into words the sensations and emotions the scene produced in travellers, a new terminology that could grasp the whole of the response was needed. In this context the *Sublime* and the *Picturesque* are given an aesthetical category useful for the representation of the traveller’s approach to the landscape that we will later discuss.

2.2 The Concepts of the Sublime and the Picturesque

The sublime as an aesthetic category appears in the antiquity as a result of a treatise *On the Sublime* attributed to the Greek oratory instructor Longinus dated in the first century of our era. This treatise was not appreciated until Nicolás Boileau's translation in 1674 which caused the reappearance of the theoretical discussion of the concept. Longinus' approach to the sublime was in relation with the rhetoric phenomena, and he pointed at it as “loftiness and excellence of language” which takes the reader “out of himself” at the same time that “exhibits the power of the orator in a moment of time” (Longinus 16). The sublime, therefore, is presented as a mode of speech capable of inducing a feeling of amazement in the public not allowing attention to be distracted from what is being told and remaining in the listener's memory (Longinus 22). As Philip Shaw (14) notes: “unlike conventional public speech, the sublime is a discourse of domination; it seems to ravish and intoxicate the audience so that a grand conception may in instilled in the mind without any bothersome appeal to reason or justice.” This sense of superior effect on the mind of the addressee suggests that there is a differentiation between the sublime and conventional oratory techniques. It has to do with the question of the existence of a way of mastering the sublime, while techniques such as “skill of invention” (*inventio*) or “lucid arrangement and disposition of facts” (*dispositio*) can be achieved by the study of art

² Throughout this paper I will be quoting from the 2009 Oxford edition: Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

(*ars*), the sublime has an origin in Nature that doesn't allow it to be taught but yes, grasped, as Longinus explains:

Nature in her loftier and more passionate moods, while detesting all appearance of restraint, is not wont to show herself utterly wayward and reckless; and though in all cases the vital informing principle is derived from her, yet to determine the right degree and the right moment, and to contribute the precision of practice and experience, is the peculiar province of scientific method. (16)

Accordingly, the language of the sublime comes from both Nature and Art in that the elevation and superior feelings it produces are of natural origin, while the techniques for its expression and communication resulting from the study of Art are necessary to grant it structure and coherence (Cruz 1).

In 1861 the theologian and writer Thomas Burnet (1635-1715) published *Telluris Theoria Sacra* translated as *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681). At a time when Nature's impression was equated to the harmonic, delicate and heavenly God's Paradise, Burnet described the natural landscape as "so deep, and hollow, and vast; so broken and confus'd, so every way deform'd and monstrous" (Burnet 181) and where yet paradoxically, "there is something august and stately in the Air of these things, that inspires the mind with great thoughts and passions; [...] They fill and over-bear the mind with their Excess, and cast it into a pleasing kind of stupor and admiration" (191). Although he denies deformity and irregularity as a creation of God, there is an acknowledgement of a feeling caused by Nature that exceeds the commensurable, but that feeling is based only on its magnificence and not on its beauty since "as we justly admire its greatness, so we cannot at all admire its Beauty or Elegancy, for 'tis as deform'd and irregular as it is great" (176). As Beatriz Moreno (65) explains, this transformation of the contemplation of the abrupt and asymmetric landscape is exclusively physical and it is not until the Romantic authors who, with their creative self, used it as a projection of their soul and emotions than it was given the dimension of the sublime.

The distinction between a sublime cause and a beautiful one continues to be the subject of discussion in authors such as the literary critic John Denis (1658-1734) who "struggle to reconcile his aesthetic preference for the order and regularity of beauty with his newfound enthusiasm with the sublime" (Shaw 30). Denis identified the sublime with a passionate feeling of enthusiasm, different from the most ordinary passion of beauty. In

order to access that enthusiasm, he maintained the need for reflection upon the source of it since he considered the sublime “nothing more but a great thought; or Great thoughts moving the soul from its ordinary situation by the Enthusiasm which naturally attends them” (Denis 78). As Cora (2014) suggests the sublime does not exist in itself but in the recognition of an intense emotion of enthusiasm that moves the soul and requires a mental process upon the source to identify it as sublime.

Until this moment, the sublime had been approached collaterally without a clear thesis about the concept. The discussion had been addressed from a rhetoric perspective or as a part of the reflection upon the concept of beautiful, rather as an extension of it or as a way to indefinitely refer to what does not assemble the standards of the beautiful. With the publication of Edmund Burke's (1729-1797) treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* in 1757, the theoretical debate on the concept of the sublime added an innovative psychological approach to the aesthetic category, at the same time as it made a distinction between beauty and the sublime as two individual concepts, which until now had not been clearly established. He considered that beauty participated in light, lightness, and small dimensions, while the sublime partakes of darkness, vastness, and pain. Burke confers a precise classification of the causes of the sublime and the emotions that emanate from them from a materialistic point of view since as Janowitz (56) indicates he was influenced by the theories of John Locke and David Hartley who claimed that the mind produces ideas and emotions thanks to the combination of senses produced by impressions. To such degree, the sublime becomes a quality present in some objects with physical signs that are recognized by the subject through the senses. Additionally, Burke declared the pleasures imagination as another way for the individual to notice those qualities, since by cause of the representing capacity of language the ideas of the things they are associated with can be excited, even when they are not occurring. Another innovation that changed the scope of the sublime regarding previous judgement on the matter was its association with terror. Burke considered that: “Everything that is adequate to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is, everything that is in some way terrible, or relates to terrible objects, or acts analogously to terror, is a source of the sublime; produces the strongest emotion that the mind is capable of feeling ” (29).

Fear, darkness, death and everything equivalent to terror is consequently the primary source of sublimity. He does not believe that there is another emotion more powerful than

terror able to cause in the individual the passion of the sublime in Nature which he distinguishes as amazement and he defines it as the "state of the soul in which all its movements are suspended to a certain degree horror" (42). Therefore, Burke's contribution meant a change in the way of studying the sublime towards a metaphysical analysis of the phenomena and turning from its hitherto positive connotation to its negative side, emphasizing the emotions produced by terror.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in *Critique of Judgment* (1790) shares Burke's belief that the beautiful and the sublime are two different concepts, however while Burke focused on the sensory faculty of the individual to give rise to a psychology of the sublime, Kant maintained that the sublime was produced entirely by mental processes. The senses in Burke were what allowed the mind to understand that something was sublime, since thanks to them the individual accessed the physical qualities of the objects that made it sublime (Janowitz 63). Kant differs from Burke's thesis and states that what makes something sublime is the recognition of it as such, what he refers to as a judgment.

Kant differentiates between two sublimes, the mathematical one, related to space-time magnitudes, in that they are so great that the mind looks for comprehensible units of reference, but still cannot be apprehended by the Imagination, and the dynamic one, when the imagination fails to find something with which to compare the greatness and the mind freezes, for example the infinity. Faced with these situations that the Imagination cannot capture through sensible intuition, it is Reason, who, conscious of the situation, generates the idea of infinity as a whole that indeed can be considered, and "thus it is that the aesthetic judgment itself is subjectively purposive for the Reason as the source of Ideas, i.e. as the source of an intellectual understanding for which all aesthetic comprehension is small; and there accompanies the reception of an object as sublime" (Kant 109). As Shaw summaries, for Kant the sublime is a feeling that occurs when the subject who undergoes it is aware of the transcendence of the experience, in that "the ideas exceed the application of a concept and the mind comes alive to the existence of a faculty of reason transcending the limits of our sensual existence" (88, 89) Applied to Nature, what Kant is saying is that, while on the one hand the incapacity of the Imagination to apprehend the greatness of Nature is one of the limitations of the individual, on the other hand, the faculty of the Reason by which the infinite becomes a unit, makes the individual superior to Nature, since everything compared to infinity, is small, and so would be Nature.

According to Kant, the fact that the human being is superior to nature due to his reasoning represents the division that exists between the romantic man and the power of nature that he never seems to understand. However, the fact of being able to recognize this limitation is what allows him to enjoy the pleasure of the sensations and emotions that it transmits, and for that reason, in the eighteenth-century Romanticism poets, writers, and artists resorted to Nature and its power as a source of inspiration and knowledge of their own human nature.

The term picturesque has a pictorial origin referring to the plays of light and colours that Italian artists of the Renaissance used to represent environments in the backgrounds of their works. However, when it was introduced in England as part of the aesthetic vocabulary, its use spread to fields of various kinds to formulate representations of nature that could be framed in a picture, happening that the relation of all arts to one another, through the pictorial appreciation of Nature, was so close that poetry, painting, gardening, architecture, and the art of travel may be said to have been fused into the single “art of landscape” (Hussey quoted in Ross 271). The interest in the contemplation of the landscape and its qualities began in England through the travelers of the grand tour who, belonging to the upper classes and without any economic concern, traveled for enjoyment through European landscapes appreciating the light and color of the changing environments, which on their return home they looked for in paintings such as those by the artists Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Salvatore Rosa (1615-1673), Claude Lorraine (1600-1682) or Gaspar Duhget (1615-1675), in whose works the landscape acquired a nuclear dimension (Maderuelo 81).

The term picturesque was introduced by Reverend William Gilpin (1724-1804) as a result of his comments on the landscape during his English tours which he narrated in works such as *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales, etc. Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the Year 1770* (1782) or *Observations, Relatively chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England; particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (1786). He defined the picturesque in *Essay on Prints: containing Remarks upon the Principles of Picturesque Beauty; the Different Kinds of Prints; and the Characters of the most Noted Masters* (1768) as “a term expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty, which is pleasant in a picture” (12). Thus, he points out that the picturesque is beauty, but not because the object has peculiarities that make it beautiful, but because it

is capable of being painted. This establishes a relationship between art and Nature, in that the landscape begins to be analyzed based on the pictorial laws, but clarifies that those laws, “are drawn from Nature: so that to examine the face of nature by these rules, is no more than to examine nature by her own most beautiful exertions” (*Lakes* 1, 22 quoted in Miall), recognizing Nature as the model of art. The main distinction of the picturesque is roughness, but when it comes to scraps it is ruggedness. According to David Miall (88), this indicates that Gilpin is based on both aesthetic physical characteristics and subjective perception of Nature, suggesting that the workings of the imagination participate on the picturesque judgment.

Two other characteristics that Gilpin considered essential in the picturesque were variety and contrast since in graphic terms a landscape that only presents smooth elements and uniform lines do not provide a composition, and therefore, neither do it for the picturesque:

Variety too is equally necessary in his composition; so is contrast. Both these he finds in rough objects; and neither of them in smooth. Variety indeed, in some degree, he may find in the outline of a smooth object: but by no means enough to satisfy the eye, without including the surface also. From rough objects also he feels the effect of light and Shade, which they are as well disposed to produce, as they are the beauty of composition. One uniform light, or one uniform Shade produces no effect. It is the various surfaces of objects, sometimes turning to the light in one way, and sometimes in another, that give the painter his choice of opportunities in massing, and graduating both his lights, and Shades. (*Three Essays* 20)

A more theoretical approach was given by two of the principal exponents of the Picturesque discussion, Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824) and Uvedale Price (1747-1829). Price, exposed in *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794) the Picturesque as an objective criterion. Admirer of Burke’s systematization of the qualities that formed the Sublime and the Beautiful, he claimed the Picturesque as an independent category between the previous two, where the anomalies that could not be placed in neither of them belong. After Gilpin, roughness, variety and irregularity would be the distinctive features of the elements. Every object that displayed those characteristics can be considered picturesque

and not only sight was the sensible canal to what appreciate it, but all sensations were also conducts of the Picturesque (Batey 122-123, Ross 273-274, Maderuelo 84)

Knight, on the contrary, defended that the sensible appreciation of the picturesque scenery was a demonstration of real taste. In the development of his argument he was strongly influenced by the philosopher Allison who elaborated a theory of the relation of taste and sensibility and argued for the need for a “general principle” that would make a scene picturesque as a whole and not just the mixture of picturesque-like elements (Batey 121). Knight composed a theory of taste in his *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805) where he meditated on the Picturesque getting to the conclusion that it was a mode of association between the external features and the previous experience of the perceiver, which required his reflection. It is therefore a subjective appreciation depending on the concerns of the observer. The pleasure derived from the contemplation of scenery went beyond the mere sensory experience, and in order to appreciate it as picturesque, a certain degree of pictoric knowledge was necessary (Ross 275-277).

The sublime and the picturesque, therefore, are two categories that arise from the need to explore the relationship between the natural environment and the nature of the human being. Although the limits of each term vary depending on the scholar that is examined, they have in common their aesthetic dimension and their orientation towards the representation of nature. In Romanticism and specifically in romantic travel literature, these terms are going to be used as a link between material Nature and spiritual nature. This projection towards Nature is going to exert a turn in travel literature, which is going to acquire a more subjective dimension than the informative recapitulation of previous travel literature.

3. The Sublime and the Picturesque in *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (1797) by Robert Southey and *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796) by Mary Wollstonecraft.

3.1 Material Circumstances of the Publication of the Works: Travelling and Writing.

Robert Southey's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* (1797) is a heterogeneous work presented in the form of an epistolary narration which allows the author to create a travel work at the same time that he makes a social criticism and even intersperses native and own poetic works. The narration is the result of a six-months trip across the Iberian Peninsula through Spain and Portugal he undertook between 1795 and 1796. He began to be interested in the Iberian Peninsula after his trip there with his uncle Herbert Hill, a chaplain in Lisbon. His uncle and his family underlying intentions with this trip was to persuade him not to marry Edith Fricker but their efforts were infructuous as they became a marriage before Southey had set sail. Southey and his uncle arrived at La Coruña on the 13th December 1795. He continued East and crossed the community today known as Castilla y Leon, until his arrival to Madrid. He later departed to Extremadura and crossed to Portugal finally arriving to Lisbon.

During his journey he got acquainted with the Spanish and Portuguese poetry and started gathering poem samples and learning those languages. The reflection of his interest in the Peninsular poetry can be appreciated along *Letters*, as not only many pieces of poetry appear, but he also wrote an essay titled "Essay on the Poetry of Spain and Portugal" which he included in Letter IX in which he reflected upon the essence and the characteristics of Spanish and Portuguese poems and poets. His fascination for the peninsular culture will continue throughout his literary career as he will later publish several translations of Spanish classics as *Amadis de Gaula* (1803) or *The Chronicle of the Cid* (1808).

During his journey not only did he give an account of the Iberian scenery, architecture of way of living of the different population he encountered, but he also spoke about the religious, historical and political situation of Portugal and Spain and try to blend together those socio-political situations and the impressions he was receiving. He travelled by foot whenever he could, as a way of connecting better with the environment surrounding him so he could better understand the sensations he was receiving from the places he was

visiting. This closer connection to his surroundings allowed him to expand a reflective dimension which linked his encounters with his own experience and feelings what gave rise to a sentimentalist and emotive tone. He combines the Illustration desire for the acquisition of contrasted knowledge with the exploration of the human sentiments and emotion through experience.

This narration was clearly one of the most influential in Southey's own career as the trip in which it was based will be the inspiration for many of his later works on Spanish and Portuguese literature and history. He will even become honorary member of the Spanish Academy of Letters. His success will increase notably through the years to the point of reaching the status of Laureate poet. This concrete book has been renewed in two times in 1799 and 1808 (Parker and Pratt 37), however there is not an actualised and modern English edition yet³.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) was published several months before Southey's travel work and was the best well-known and received work by the author. She was already an established writer recognized for his reflections about the French Revolution and her revolutionary feminist thinking which she showed in *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). Her radical ideas were developed more intensely after her contact with the group of dissenters, among whom were figures such as Dr. Richard Price (1723-1791) or who will be their editor and friend Joseph Johnson (1738-1809). Encouraged by the idea of experiencing the French Revolution first-hand, she travelled to Paris in 1792 where after a few months she met and fell in love with an American merchant named Gilbert Imlay (Poza 19). Their relationship, however, is not a path of roses from which the author will make two suicide attempts when Imlay began to disregard her and the daughter, Fanny, that the couple had in common in 1794. In an attempt to recover Imlay's love and attention she accepts his assignment to travel to the Nordic countries to solve an unfinished business that Imlay had with a Norwegian family. He sets out on the journey with his 13-month-old daughter and a French nanny and leaves Hull in 1795. She travels through the countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, from where she departs again to Dover.

Although motivated by commercial reasons, Mary Wollstonecraft's journey has another side, as apart from collecting the experiences that are presented to her, she also reflects

³ A modern scholarly edition by C. Flores and J. González will be published in 2020 by Routledge

on her reaction to them. As Brekke and Mee put it, Wollstonecraft's *A Short Residence* constantly maps her response to what she sees onto the social development of the places she visits" (XXI). But not only are her political and social opinions reflected, but she also establishes a link about her own personal situation and the environment in which she finds herself. Her inner unhappiness after Imlay's estrangement, and during Fanny's journey, is projected into the perception of the real, the outer journey being contaminated by her own internal itinerary (Pool 38). In fact, from Imlay's refusal to meet Wollstonecraft and his daughter in Hamburg, it can be seen how the narration takes on a much more pessimistic and sad tone. Therefore, the work of Mary Wollstonecraft is a reflection on the complexity of the human feeling. She is known to be a strong and independent woman, and yet throughout the narration we can see how she is deeply emotionally dependent on Imlay. The two-way relation she establishes with the environment, similar to the relation between her social and political knowledge and the societies she encounters during her journey, are the representations of the value of experiencing. She enriches her knowledge both emotionally and practically through the discoveries she makes during the travel.

On her return, the *Letters* were published by Johnson and were very well received by the public and critics. Robert Southey himself in a letter to his brother wrote: "Have you ever met with Mary Wollstonecraft's letters from Sweden and Norway? She has made me in love with a cold climate, and frost and snow, with a northern moonlight" (quoted in Brekke and Mee XXV). They were translated into numerous languages including German (by Henry Fuseli, the former love of Wollstonecraft), Dutch, Portuguese, and Swedish. A second English edition carried out by Joseph Johnson himself was published in 1802 and a later one appeared in 1886 done by Cassell's Library. Almost a century later two new editions will appear by Caron H. Poston and Richard Holmes in 1976 and 1987, respectively. The edition from which this work will extract its references is the Oxford edition by Tone Brekke and Jon Mee from 2009.

It would be important to mention the fact that both travel narratives were published very close in time, and the voyages from where the stories take inspiration were taking place nearly at the same time. This means that there was not mutual influence in the development of their style and themes, which subsequently lives the question open of whether the coincidence of these two revolutionary travel narratives was by chance, or if there was already an extended feeling among the early Romantics for the need of a change in travel literature. A comparative analysis between both works is a way of approaching

that question in an attempt to clarify the origin and nature of the Romantic Turn in Travel Literature.

3.2 Comparative Analysis of the Sublime and the Picturesque in Robert Southey's and Mary Wollstonecraft's Travelogues.

As we have been discussing in the previous section, the sublime and the picturesque are two categories that have acquired the aesthetic aspect and used as subjectivity markers in the description of natural scenes, assuming a link between the landscapes that the narrator perceives and how he processes them internally. Both works combine the gathering of objective data on the places that travellers visit and add a subjective dimension to the narration of their experiences. Mary Wollstonecraft does it in the form of a journey with two routes, an exterior one, motivated by the commercial objectives of her trip and an interior one for personal exploration that “mirrors the weary struggle to reach the goal of independence and fulfilment that she had argued was the right of every woman to attain” (Beard 75). She frequently recurs to Nature which, and as we will see later, is directly related to the happiness of the human being as an individual. Southey, on the other hand, although his journey also has a personal dimension, his subjective account is more about impressions rather than emotional projection. However, one thing that Southey includes in his work is samples of poetry, both his and Spanish and Portuguese that emphasize the intimacy of his connection with the site as it is “more easy to express my feelings in poetry than in prose” (Southey 63).

From the beginning of *Letters*, Southey already hints the effect the scenery he has witnessed in Spain and Portugal has stricken him. The first verses of the opening poem are not so much about the cultural, historical or political information he could have gathered during his journey, but about the different landscapes he has encountered:

Spain! still my mind delights to picture forth

Thy scenes that I shall see no more, for there

Most pleasant were my wanderings.

Memory's eye Still loves to trace the gentle Minho's course

And catch it's winding waters gleaming bright

Amid the broken distance. I review

Leon's wild wastes and heights precipitous,

Seen with strange feelings of delight and dread. (Southey XVII)

If we continue advancing towards the letters themselves, at the beginning of the first one we to properly understand what is the nature of that feeling of pleasure that he has obtained from his trip to Spain and Portugal. Upon his arrival by boat on the coast of Coruña Southey describes the landscape this way:

The coast of Galicia presented a wild and desolate prospect; a long track of stone mountains, one rising above another, not a tree or bush upon their barren sides; and the waves breaking at their base with such prodigious violence, as to be visible many leagues distant. The sun shone over the land, and half hiding it by the morning mists, gave a transitory beauty: If the eye cannot be filled by an object of vaster sublimity than the boundless ocean, when beheld from shore, neither can it ever dwell on a more delightful prospect than that of land, dimly discovered from the sea, and gradually growing distinct. (Southey 2)

The analysis of the landscape he perceives is far from the ideal and serene image of beautiful nature and yet, is a source of pleasure and admiration. The enormity of the rocks, the vastness of the ocean, the darkness of the mist, the violence of the waves, characteristics that Burke actually recognized as causes of the sublime, convey a sense of magnificence (which is frightful) of nature compared to the smallness of the individual who observes them, who at first may regard them as beautiful, but at the moment that he understands that he is not fully capable of encompassing such greatness, is when the feeling of the sublime appears. The image that the reader can evoke from this passage may resemble walking along a straight line in which each time one advances further towards a distant horizon in an attempt to grasp it, the landscape in front of him expands greatly, being immeasurable, infinite in the eyes of the traveller and it is when according to Kant, the individual recognizes the transcendence of the experience (Shaw 92) as a feeling of the sublime.

Similar experience does Mary Wollstonecraft report in letter V on her way to Norway when she passes through the town of Quistram: "Approaching the frontiers, consequently, the sea, nature resumed an aspect ruder and ruder, or rather seemed the bones of the world wanting to be clothed with everything necessary to give life and beauty. Still was

sublime” (Wollstonecraft 28). She is potentially saying that what makes something sublime is contrary to what will make it beautiful. The feelings that a sublime scenery arise in her and what a beautiful scenery would be different. As you are getting closer to your destination and the cliffs that are on the seafront appear closer, nature changes in front of the eyes depending on the perspective and takes on a more deadly appearance moving away from the beautiful, and yet it is what makes it sublime. In other words, she is recognizing a clear distinction between beauty and sublimity, and while the one is related to life, the sublime is related to the lack of it.

Here it would be advisable to point out that Wollstonecraft frequently uses sterility and emptiness to describe what for her is a sublime landscape, she constantly refers to barren rocks that can stand as an allegory to her own interior. After her first suicide attempt and her first disappointment with her lover and father of her daughter Imlay, she decides to undertake this journey to help the commercial interests of his beloved in an attempt to regain his love. However, as we have previously mentioned, this travel is an inward journey for her in which, starting from an empty self, she tries to restore her independence and faith in herself and enough self-integrity to permit herself and her child to survive (Harper 50).

If we continue to examine the relationship between the sublime effects of landscape and the feelings that both traveller’s experience when presenting themselves before them, we can detect some slight differences between the approaches of Southey and Wollstonecraft. Wollstonecraft reveals in her letters the explicit link between the Romantic feeling and the sublime landscape. Nature is, at the same time, inspiration and reflection of her internal situation. In Letter VI she notes that nature is the nurse of feeling, that is to say, that it is the source of the emotions that cause impressions in individuals that a posteriori can evoke, sometimes in the form of memories. For example, by recognizing “when a warm heart has received strong impressions, they are not to be effaced” (Wollstonecraft 39), she is remembering the death of her childhood friend Fanny Bloom whom she saw die from childbirth. The impressions that experience of loss and separation left in her, reappeared in her heart when she saw herself separated from another loved one, in this case, her daughter. But those emotions are triggered by the landscape that she is observing “those tremendous cliffs, sublime emotions absorb my soul” (Wollstonecraft 39) because that feeling of loss, of the hopelessness of coming to understand something as

overwhelming as death, can be recognized in the sublime nature also immense and impossible to grasp.

Southey, on the other hand, does not expose in such a clear way the relationship between emotion and sublimity in the narrated descriptions of landscapes. His accounts of the sublime, although they refer to the movement of the soul when observing landscapes of this sort, do not project his inner struggles as in Wollstonecraft's.

I know not how to describe to you the strange beauties of Cintra; it is, perhaps, more beautiful than sublime, more grotesque than beautiful, yet I never beheld scenery more calculated to fill the beholder with admiration and delight. This immense rock or mountain is in part covered with scanty herbage, in parts it rises into conical hills, formed of such immense stones, and piled so strangely, that all the machinery of deluges and volcanos must fail to satisfy the inquiry for their origin. [...] Had I been born at Cintra, methinks no inducement could have tempted me to leave its delightful springs and shades and cross the dreary wilderness that insulates them. (Southey 510)

When reaching the city of Cintra, he encounters a landscape that is difficult for him to accurately reconcile and classify. For this reason, he recognizes that it is sublime, rather than beautiful because of the sensation of admiration and pleasure that it produces and the elements that are found in it are part of the realm of the sublime: immense stones, grotesque forms or the violence of a volcano. It would not be entirely correct to say that there is no intrusion of feelings since we can see how the impression that the landscape makes on the author is so amazing that he recognizes that if it had been his home, he would not have been able to leave it. However, that feeling he is experiencing is not an insightful exploration of his inner struggles, it lacks an emotional connection to his identity.

This difference does not mean that one of the two is not recognizing the nature of the sublime as an agent that affects the individual. On the contrary, these are two different ways of illustrating the sensations that the sublime produces in the individual. In the case of Wollstonecraft, it can be seen how nature and feeling fused in a dimension of fear and darkness due to the emotional situation of the author, while in the case of Southey it can be appreciated the primitive impact that the scene causes on the traveller whom it elevates and envelops.

However, as it has been hinted in the beginning of this section, Southey uses the poetic form to speak his emotions and feelings in a way that Wollstonecraft does not. If it is true that in the narrative fragments of his work Southey's bound with Nature is more materialistic and emotive, in his poems he overturns that situation. Already since Longinus, the poetic language was considered a source of the sublime, which critic John Denis in *Grounds of Criticism* (1704) confirms by attributing to the poet the responsibility of being in charge of raising the spirit (Shaw 31). Drawing from Kant's theory, the German romantic school with Schiller as a maximum representative defended the separation of man and nature due to the superiority of man for his reasoning ability. This capacity allows him to understand the sublimity of nature what further meant the inability to the imagination to do the same, hence Schiller considered that the sublime produced "a mixed feeling... a composition of melancholy....and of joyousness" (Schiller quoted in Shaw 90). In order to overcome this separation, Schiller argues that the only way is joining the transcendental and the sensible as:

what we call nature is a poem that lies hidden in a mysterious a marvellous script. Yet if the riddle could reveal itself we could recognise it in the Odyssey of the spirit, which in a strange delusion, seeking itself, flees itself; for the land of phantasy toward which we aspire gleams though the world of the senses only as through a half transparent, mist, only as meaning does with words. (Schiller quoted in Shaw 91)

Romantic poetry is considered as the perfect way to erase that separation between the ideal and the real. Though the poetic language and the power of word poets bring to the realm of the sensible the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth in quoted in Shauna13) so the poet, according to Mary Wollstonecraft gives us "an image of his mind...marking the impression which nature had made on his own heart" (quoted in Shauna 13).

In the following fragments, Southey offers two windows to his mind and thoughts, and shows two impressions that the sublime scene suggests to him just to reach the same conclusion about man and nature:

But looking joyful on to that abode

Where PEACE and LOVE await me, Oh! most Dear!

Even so when Age's wintry hour shall come
We shall look back on many a well-spent year,
Not grieving at the irrevocable doom
Of mortal man, or sad that the cold tomb
Must shrine our common relics; but most blest
In holy hope of our eternal home. (Southey 36)

ANOTHER mountain yet! I thought this brow
Ha surely been the summit; but they rise
Hill above hill, amid the incumbent skies,
And mock my labour. [...]
Up Life's steep road
Painful he drags, beguiling the long way
With many a vain thought on the future day
With PEACE to sojourn in her calm abode.
Poor Fool of Hope! that hour will never come
Till TIME and CARE have led thee to the tomb. (Southey 57)

In the first fragment the traveller is astonished before the sight of the Bay of Biscay with the immensity of the ocean on the one hand and the vast extension of valleys and hills on the other. The happiness and pleasure that inundates him when seeing that sight are such that he does not look at the day of his death with sadness, but with hope, since he considers that he will not stop enjoying it, but that he will finally be able to merge with. In the second fragment, his attitude is slightly different. In this case, he is overwhelmed by the immensity of Nature which seems infinite ("Another mountain yet!") to the point of never being able to monopolize it in its entirety so he is exhausted. Hence, in this case, he considers death as a rest to his continuous struggle, but for the same reason as in the previous poem, because at last, he will be able to be one with nature.

As for the picturesque, Southey proves to be aware of the aesthetic tendencies that were developing at the time and as a *connoisseur*, he contemplates the landscape through picturesque eyes. He refers to the work of one of the picturesque model painters, Poussin, and in his accounts of the sceneries, it can be observed how the elements that call his attention are those considered by Knight as the landmarks of picturesque aesthetics: irregularity and contrast. The picturesque aesthetics were considered a manifestation of good taste, hence when referring to the uniformity that the houses of the municipality of Pombal, Southey branded it as a display of “villainous taste” (389), while the contrasts between the darkness of the alleys and the light of the harbour space was “very delightful” (389).

Pombal ordered all the churches here to be built like houses, that they might not spoil the uniformity of the streets. This villainous taste has necessarily injured the appearance of the city. I passed one morning in walking over the old Moorish part of the town, and, though accustomed to the filth and narrowness of Spanish and Portuguese streets, I was astonished at the dirt and darkness. Yet, the contrast was very delightful, after winding up these close and gloomy ascents, to arrive on some open eminence that commanded the city and the harbour. (Southey 389)

However, Southey's use of the picturesque went beyond its aesthetic significance, becoming a medium for framing his political and historical opinions. As a Protestant Englishman and considering the historical context in which he travelled to Spain, it is not surprising that he reflected his antipathy towards the Catholic and statal authority whom he blames that in a “lovely country, a paradise of Nature but the inhabitants are kept in ignorance by the double despotism of their church and State” (Southey 59). He uses picturesque nature as a representation of the purity, pleasure, or integrity that is devastated by the corruption and falsehood of the Catholic Church and Monarchical Despotism:

The wild boars who inhabit this forest, and the tame swine who are admitted there to board and lodging, have not injured it: even the Monks appear to respect its age and beauty, and satisfied with regularly stripping the bark, suffer the old trees to remain venerably picturesque. But we are now following the Court closely, and never did I witness a more melancholy scene of devastation! His Most Catholic Majesty travels like the King of the Gypsies: his retinue strip the country, without paying for any thing, sleep in the woods, and burn down the trees. (Southey 201)

Mary Wollstonecraft also goes a step further and transcends the established aesthetic limits of the picturesque, and arguably reformulates them to the point that some critics such as Elizabeth Bohls call her picturesque "anti-aesthetic." Wollstonecraft considers that "but few people have sufficient taste to discern that the art of embellishing consists in interesting, not in astonishing" (83). She challenges some of the pictoric-conventional traits and expands the scope of traditional mere contemplative picturesque to a useful approach. In fact, she makes a clarifying note about the purpose of the gardening improvement and advocates for the "utility of the garden has to be remarkable", where the "winding paths have to be submitted to criteria of convenience" and considering that in an attempt to adapt the natural landscape, it is sometimes corrupted by "Artificial curves that interrupt reflection, without entertaining the imagination" (Wollstonecraft 21). Another way to challenge the conventions of the concept is by adapting the elite-related connotation to a "humble and social context" (Bohls 146). If travel writing aims to teach and involve the reader in the story and make him feel what the traveller is experiencing, what better way to do it than to make the encounters more approachable for the reader. The ruins of castles and cathedrals, although also mentioned as a picturesque element, are outnumbered by the huts and humble villages of the peasants for example:

But I have flown from Norway, to go back to the wooden houses. Farms constructed with logs, and even little villages, here erected in the same simple manner, have appeared to me very picturesque. In the most remote parts I had been particularly pleased with many cottages situated close to a brook, or bordering on a lake, with the whole farm contiguous. (Wollstonecraft 84)

However, not only does she describe landscapes, but she also includes its inhabitants as another compositional element of the scene, in which she positions herself to be able to speak from the perspective of the population, and thus establish a relationship between landscape and the living conditions of its inhabitants.: "But I shuddered at the thought of receiving existence [...] in the solitude of ignorance [...] for the character of the inhabitants is as uncultivated, if not as picturesquely wild, as their abode" (Wollstonecraft 69).

Both writers, aware of the aesthetic picturesque trend of their time, revise the concept providing it with another meaning beyond the aesthetic in a way that allows them to establish connections between the natural landscape and human nature through social,

historical, or political contexts that endow the narration with greater depth, both inquiring and emotional.

4. Conclusion

Both authors, Mary Wollstonecraft and Robert Southey offer in their travelogues a new conception of travel literature. Apart from the informative function of the travelogues inherited from the Enlightenment, they add a sentimental component to their compilations. The subjectivity in their works can be appreciated in their use of the categories of the sublime and the picturesque since they not only use them as aesthetic terms, but they extend their scope to social or political areas in which the reasoning of the authors is reflected.

Both terms are defined concerning the natural scene and as romantic authors, they use nature as a source of inspiration and understanding for their inner struggles. The sublime refers to the feeling of rapture and astonishment at the overwhelming grandeur of nature, while the picturesque category, intermediate between the beautiful and sublime, refers to the arrangement of elements of this quality in the landscape and the feeling that the observer receives when perceiving them. Some qualities of this last category are irregularity, roughness, or contrast.

For Mary Wollstonecraft, the correlation between sublime nature and her inner self revolves around her personal situation and her feeling of emptiness. The sublime scenes refer to huge natural elements such as cliffs, rocks, peaks, most of which are described in terms of sterility or bareness in an attempt to describe his own self. Southey, on the other hand, has two ways of approaching the sublime nature, one of them is more objective in the sense of describing landscapes in physical terms of the sublime, and another more personal in the form of poems, by which he also establishes a relationship between what nature transmits to him and his feelings.

As for the picturesque, both authors rebel against the aesthetic and scholarly limitations of the concept and use it in a more humble and social context to make their encounters more accessible for the readers. Mary Wollstonecraft offers a point of view closer to the inhabitants of the environment and thus establishes a relationship between the physical landscape and human behaviour. Southey also relates the scenery to the historical and political development of the different regions through which it passes showing his opinion about the political and moral situation in Spain and Portugal.

In this way, both authors encourage a new trend in travel literature that reflects the Romantic feeling through the relationship they establish with the environment around them while narrating useful information about places they visit, as well as about the social and political conditions of their populations.

Due to the heterogeneous and complex nature of both works with a variety of styles and even genres within their epistolary narratives, the complete study of both works would require extensive research in multiple aspects within and without the scope of this essay. The historical and social aspects both works comment upon, provide a very extensive field of research for a historical and sociological study. The analysis of Mary Wollstonecraft's work could also be approached from a feminist point of view, but from a more intimate perspective than the rational feminism that she exposes in *Vindication of the Rights of a Woman* (1792). However, due to their revolutionary nature, I consider that it would be of great importance and interest to carry out an in-depth analysis of the influence of these works on later travel narratives in order to better understand not only their role in the Romantic Turn but throughout the evolution of the travel literature genre. In the same way, these works could also be related to travelogues from other countries and how they were received by the public, writers, and foreign critics, especially the work of Southey due to the multiplicity of references to Spanish and Portuguese literature.

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