TEMA

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Romanticism in Great Britain: The Novel and Poetry

El Romanticismo en Gran Bretaña: Novela y poesía.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau declared in The Social Contract: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." The sentence is not British, but it could serve as the motto of the age I am going to discuss. A generation of writers who grew up in the shadow of that idea believed that human beings, and poets above all, had been shackled by convention, by social rank and by reason alone, and they set out to break the chains with feeling, imagination and a new kind of language. That is why Romanticism is not simply a matter of love stories, as the everyday use of the word "romantic" suggests, but a broad cultural revolution in art, music, philosophy and literature.

This topic asks me to study Romanticism in Great Britain through two genres: poetry and the novel. I will first define the movement and place it in its historical context, from the French Revolution to the early 1830s. Secondly, I will examine the poetry of the period, beginning with its two theoretical manifestos and moving through the first generation (Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge) and the second generation (Byron, Shelley and Keats). Thirdly, I will turn to the novel: the Gothic novel, the historical novel of Walter Scott, the novel of manners of Jane Austen, and the work of Mary Shelley. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical and didactic implications of this content for Compulsory Secondary Education and Bachillerato, before closing with a conclusion that returns to Rousseau's chains.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted. For the literary framework I have used Ronald Carter and John McRae's The Penguin Guide to Literature in English: Britain and Ireland, Andrew Sanders's The Short Oxford History of English Literature and Margaret Drabble's The Oxford Companion to English Literature. For dates, biographies and the exact wording of quotations I have checked the British Library, the Poetry Foundation, the Academy of American Poets, the National Library of Scotland and Project Gutenberg editions. As regards the legal framework, I will refer to Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE), which modifies Organic Law 2/2006 on Education, to Royal Decrees 217/2022 and 243/2022, which set the minimum teachings of Compulsory Secondary Education and Bachillerato, and to Extremadura Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022, which establish the curriculum of both stages in our region.