

Prakash Reddy Kona

on

Romantic Revolution? Between Nostalgia and Utopia

The part that connects romanticism with revolution has dominated the popular imagination since the French Revolution and the successive transformations that spread across Europe in the 19th century. My paper deals with the two dominant moods of nostalgia and utopia only to connect them in important ways. From Blake's poem *The French Revolution* celebrating change to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and *Sentimental Education*, both of which are a scathing attack on populist readings of romanticism and the politics of romanticism when translated into revolutionary ardor, my paper looks at romanticism as an outlook that, not unlike enlightenment humanism, has been subject to countless interpretations by literary writers and historians. I want to examine those points of intersection where the golden past meets the golden future; to examine how an understanding of romanticism intertwined with one of its most important subtexts, revolution, helps us comprehend the meanings-in-context of the terms "modern" as well as "global" in the 20th and 21st centuries; and through a close reading of individual texts show that we are in some ways indebted to the 19th century in how we think and feel about ourselves and the worlds that we inhabit both in our day-dreams and in our realities.

Prakash Reddy Kona is a Professor of English Literature at The English and Foreign Languages University(EFLU), Hyderabad. He completed his doctorate at the University of Mississippi, MS in 1997. His thesis is a comparative analysis of Derrida, Chomsky, and Wittgenstein. His current interests are Women's Studies, Films, Third World Politics and Literature, Classical Humanism and the 21st century as a site of globalization versus radical political movements.

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