

This book traces a conceptual history of literature, leisure and emotions in modern South Asia. Reading colonial capitalism as entwined with the 'myth of the lazy native', it focuses on vernacular literary contestations. It foregrounds otium, leisure and idleness as entangled with emotions and temporalities, in expressions of the self and community. It identifies literary spheres as emotionally evolving, where discourses of leisure are played out in stylistic innovations, negotiations of colonial modernity and postcolonial uncertainties. Highlighting key expressions, discussions, and processes, it explores nostalgia, melancholy, tophilia and haunting as emotions deeply attached to South Asian literary cultures, while resonating with ideas of otium across global modernity.