South Asia and Theories of the Avant-Garde:
The International Scope of South Asian Modernisms

A Lecture by: Dr. Rita Banerjee
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Thursday September 24, 2015
Reception 4:30pm - Lecture 5:00pm
Alexander Library, Pane Room
169 College Avenue

This presentation will highlight the role that translation and multilingualism played in opening up discussions and theories of modernism within the South Asian literary canons of Bengali, Hindi, and English in the early to mid-20th century. The lecture will explore the representations and international scope of literary modernisms in journals such as Kallol, Kavitā, and Krittibās in Bengali, the Nayī Kavitā journal and the Tār Saptak group in Hindi, and the Writers Workshop group in English. Theories of modernism as proposed by critics such as Dipti Tripathi and Acharya Nand Dulare Bajpai will be contrasted with manifestos of modernism, with Agyeya's defense of experimentalism (prayogvād), with theories of translation as proposed by Bhola Nath Tiwari, and with translations of foreign writers and aesthetic forms. In doing so, the presentation will note how the study of modernist practices, translation, and theory in Bengali, Hindi, and English provides insight into the pluralistic, multi-dimensional, and ever-evolving cultural sphere of modern South Asia beyond the suppositions of postcolonial binaries and monolingual paradigms.

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