



**Sylff**

The Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund

The JU-SYLFF Association invites you to

**JU-SYLFF Lecture Series**  
**Lecture No. 2015-2**

Speaker:

**Dibyadyuti Roy**

Doctoral Fellow and Instructor  
Department of English and Cultural Studies,  
West Virginia University,  
United States of America

Topic:

**Radioactive Masculinity: How the Anxious Indian  
learnt to love the Postcolonial Bomb**

Date:

**July 24, 2015 (Friday)**

Time:

**4.15 pm to 5.15 pm (including Q&A Session)**

Venue:

**Global Change Programme,  
First Floor, Biren Roy Research Laboratory  
Jadavpur University**

## Note on the Speaker

**Dibyadyuti Roy** is a Doctoral Fellow and Instructor in the Department of English and Cultural Studies at West Virginia University, USA, where he teaches courses in advanced literature and writing. He came to West Virginia by way of the University of Glasgow where he completed his M.Litt in Modern Literature, Theory and Culture. His dissertation project explores performances of masculinity within nuclear discourses and have led to him discovering the far-reaching effects of the atomic age on our daily existence. He has current and forthcoming publications on varied fields ranging from Video Game Studies to British Theatre. Besides his scholarly pursuits, he particularly enjoys immersing himself and his students in the wondrous world of speculative fiction and fantasy literature.

## Note on the Lecture

### **Radioactive Masculinity: How the Anxious Indian learnt to love the Postcolonial Bomb**

Shortly after India conducted five nuclear tests in May 1998, the outspoken Hindu nationalist leader Balasaheb Thackeray declared, “[w]e had to prove that we are not eunuchs.” Euphoric celebrations that were simultaneously sparked across the country heralded a moment when India had finally found apparent access—through the thermonuclear bomb—to the global currency of geo-political domination. While Balasaheb Thackeray’s rhetoric assured the polity that the postcolonial bomb had supposedly culminated the crisis of masculinity, plaguing the Indian subcontinent since the onset of colonization, it also emphasized the systemic gendered narrative underlying nuclear discourses. Such representations of “radioactive masculinity”, I argue, trace their lineage back to the Cold War legacy; of nuclear weapons finding resonance in images of white maleness and masculinity. This idealized masculinity is fluid and cannot be tangibly or materially realized, much like the constantly decaying radioactive nuclear bomb on which it is modeled. The desire of trying to achieve this idealized and hardened male body is itself responsible for creating an anxiety; an anxiety of hypermasculinity. In illustrating the unrecognized linkages between the nuclear bomb and anxious performances of Indian masculinity, I show the continued legacy of the Cold War within the Indian subcontinent, as well as its effects on postcolonial subjectivities.