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The Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund

The JU-SYLFF Association invites you to

JU-SYLFF Lecture series

Lecture No. 2018 - 3

Speaker:

Sagar Taranga Mandal

Assistant Professor of English, University of Kalyani

Topic:

In and Out of the Spotlight: Notes on Revisiting the Refugee

Date:

June 12, 2018 (Tuesday)

Time:

3:00 pm-4:00 pm (Including Q & A Session)

Venue:

Global Change Programme,

1st floor, Biren Roy Research Laboratory, Jadavpur University

Note on the Lecture :

The fixed boundaries of camps, safe zones, humanitarian access points, 'jungles' like the one in the French port town of Calais, could be seen to rely on a 'process of designation' (Thompson 43). All of them are co-opted, mobilized as they are by a host of humanitarian agencies, into a narrative of urgency, brought out in graphic terms, calling forth attention to the refugee as well as the relief operation. The leverages, thus generated, are many. From drawing international attention and political concern to securing aid sanctions, the spotlight is capable of floating concomitant narratives: of catastrophe seeking human generosity ('my brethren are suffering out there'), of command ('something needs to be done'), of filtering ('the worse humanitarian crisis in a generation'), the refugee becomes a pivotal point of grievance and effort. Yet this 'theatre of generosity' loses its actors as soon as the media leave the scene of action. It is necessary to look at this selective glare or what I would call 'casual spotlighting' to ascertain more responsible articulations, and in this instance, I find in the narrative journalism of visual storytellers like Kate Evans and Sarah Glidden a desired response to the wider politics of the spotlight. The question of intervention and its relation to care-giving must face up to the belittling of the refugee done through its very own systematic performance of threshold parameters.

Note on the Speaker :

Sagar Taranga Mandal works as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, University of Kalyani. Currently, he is researching on the politics of walls in select graphic narratives from the Middle East. His other areas of interest apart from philately and gourmet include South Asian fiction with a focus on Sri Lanka, Victorian photography, and visual forms of story-telling practiced by Indian tribes like Gonds.