

GSA DISTINGUISHED LECTURE 2025

Colonialism, Racism, and Human Dignity: On the Global Novel in an Age of Refugees

B. VENKAT MANI (University of
Wisconsin -Madison/ German
Studies Association)

Tue, Nov 18, 2025, 4-6 p.m.,
followed by a reception, 6-7 p.m.
(in-person event)

Ehrenbergstr. 26/28
Room 009, 14195 Berlin

Registration: Via
bprogram@zedat.fu-berlin.de
by Nov 10, 2025

Language: English for the talk,
German and English are welcome
during the Q & A



Photo Credit: Dr. Todd Ambelang

Drawing on his current book project, *Tales of Unsettlement*, in this presentation Mani situates the figure of the refugee and the forced migrant at the center of contemporary novels. Mani proposes that “refugee” narratives reveal much more than just the plight and flight of refugees, which has largely been the focus of contemporary studies. Instead, Mani argues that novels of refuge open doors to reframe our thinking of histories of European colonialism and its morphed manifestations in contemporary Europe. Moving narratives of refuge from a marginal to a central space, Mani underlines, opens up possibilities of thinking of the European novel as a site of new political and aesthetic examination of race-, religion-, caste- and class-based discriminations in the contemporary era.

B. VENKAT MANI (University Wisconsin-Madison) is Professor of German and World Literatures. He was former director of Center for South Asia and Center for Global Studies at UW-Madison. He is currently the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation’s Reimar Lüst Fellow (2025-26) at the German National Literary Archives (DLA-Marbach) in Germany, where he is working on his current book project. His publications include *Cosmopolitical Claims* (2007), *Recoding World Literature* (2017; winner of MLA and GSA awards for best book in German Studies), and as editor *A Companion to World Literature* (2020). [Learn more.](#)

PAUL NOLTE (Freie Universität Berlin) will moderate the event. He is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History and chair of the Berlin Program’s Academic Advisory Committee.