

New Zealand India Research Institute

NZIRI SEMINAR SERIES: 'Female Body, Beauty Pageants, Indian Nationalism, and Globalization: Some Reflections'

by

Sukanya Kanarally

2000, as if a part of logical conclusion to the economic liberalization that began in the early 1990s, marked the 'coming of age' for India in terms of being internationally recognized for its 'beauty' credentials. The Miss Indias not only won several titles on the global stage, but also negotiated with modernity and set standards for femininity and desirability. Being the symbols of beauty, they contributed towards gendering of the Indian nation as well. I intend to discuss the representations of female bodies and their imaging in the national rhetoric of India in the 1990s by deploying the 1996 Bangalore Beauty Pageant and the forms of resistance and appropriation around it for a closer analysis. At the same time, I wish to anchor these observations in my research on the beauty contests held in a Women's College in Bangalore that I worked for along with some of the neighbouring colleges in south Bangalore for over ten years. I try to trace the changes in the very way such contests were organised and staged thus reflecting the larger socio-political scenario in India.

Sukanya Kanarally completed her doctoral studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India and has worked as Associate Professor at Bangalore University for more than 15 years. Gender, Translation, Cultural Studies, and Media Studies have been some of her interests. She has published several translation works from and into English, the recent one being *An Afternoon with Shakuntala and Other Stories*, a collection of Vaidehi's 18 stories with a critical introduction, published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Her own collection of short stories in English is one of the three books forthcoming; the other two being English translation of the autobiographical narratives of Shanta Hublikar, a renowned Hindi and Marathi actress of the yesteryears, and Vijaya, a well known writer and theatre activist in Kannada.

EVENT DETAILS: **Wednesday 7 February, 4.00-5.30pm**
Wood Seminar Room (OK 406)
History Programme, Old Kirk Building Level 4
Kelburn Campus

Limited seating – RSVP to india-research@vuw.ac.nz