



Advanced Centre for Women's Studies

School of Development Studies, TISS Mumbai



invites you to the discussion in *Feminist Visions of Justice*

A Conversation Between

Uma Narayan

Professor of Philosophy, & Andrew Mellon Chair of the Humanities, Vassar College



Tejaswini Niranjana

Visiting Professor, Centre for Indian Languages in Higher Education, TISS Senior Fellow, Centre for the Study of Culture & Society

Resourceful Women and Miraculous Markets

Poor women's access to income generated by market-mediated activities has gained tremendous popularity of late in development discourses. In both "popular" discourses such as those of Nicholas Kristof and in more "official" discourses, such as those from a variety of institutions that advocate micro-credit, the Market is being represented as a site of justice and empowerment for poor Third World women. Access to market-mediated income is depicted as enabling poor women to rescue themselves from both patriarchy and poverty, with an array of additional benefits for their families, communities and nation-states.

Prof. Narayan wants to examine these constructs of Resourceful Women and Miraculous Markets, calling critical attention to underlying assumptions and to what is left out of the picture. How do these discourses relate, for instance, to notions of Justice more closely connected to a Human Rights paradigm?

Looking for the subject of justice

Prof. Niranjana draws on her research and teaching experiences in south-south or more broadly non-western contexts, with a view to exploring how these experiences help problematise normative notions of gender justice and the 'subject' of justice.

She will speak to the questions raised by her in the book *Mobilizing India: Women, Music and Migration between India and Trinidad* (Durham, 2006), in which she examines the formation of 'Indian woman' in two different historical contexts that are tied together by a now-obscured colonial past. She argues that in analysing the formation of 'woman' in India we work with default comparative frames that have for their main reference point the 'western woman'. Would our analytical framework look different, and yield different results, if we were to (a) make visible the implicit reference point, and (b) include other points of reference, especially those from non-metropolitan contexts? What purchase does the question of women's rights have in the two different locations, and what kind of subject is the woman in search of justice? What happens when the normative Indian woman conferred with rights is shaped in contrast to another kind of Indian who is rendered illegitimate in that very process of shaping?

Prof. Niranjana will go on to reflect on teaching about gender-culture in Asian contexts, where she finds East Asian modernities mobilized against South Asian ones. Here we find women again being central to how modernity itself is defined, and therefore also central to definitions of justice and governmentality.

July 30th, 2013 at 4.30 p.m.
Old Conference Hall, Main Campus, TISS