

The Workshop on Literature and Theory in India, Stanford University presents

A Symposium on Sanskrit Literary Aesthetics with the Conference on the Age of Vedanta

Friday, November 15, 6 pm
Stanford Humanities Center Boardroom

Allusion as an Indological problem, Whitney Cox

Departing from well-known debates over the category of translation in premodern India, this presentation begins by suggesting that the question of translation should be subsumed under a larger problem, that of the literary allusion. I then turn to a briefly survey of this problem: despite the widespread practice of allusion by poets writing in Sanskrit and other languages, we possess no emic vocabulary of which I'm aware for the phenomenon of the literary reference or creative citation, outside of critical discussions of plagiarism. While Indology has taken notice of such allusions, borrowings and recastings in a way that is transparently indebted to the *Quellenforschung* of western classical studies, this has remained an undertheorized area in even the best contemporary discussions of Indic literary history. In what is a frankly experimental and preliminary attempt, I propose to adapt some of the conceptual armature found in Ruyyaka's *Alaṃkārasarvasva* as a basis for such a theorization, which I will tentatively test out through readings of alluding passages found in Bilhaṇa's *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* and Kampan's *Irāmāvatāram*.

"Your Enemies' Wives...": Compassion, Cruelty, and Collateral Damage in Sanskrit Royal Panegyric, Lawrence McCrea

A small but significant sub-genre of Sanskrit poetry in praise of patron-kings is devoted to enthusiastically celebrating the physical and psychological torment of the wives of the king's defeated enemy. This seemingly discordant mode of panegyric is first noticed in Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, as posing a problem in the merging of apparently conflicting emotional attitudes in a single verse— compassion for the suffering women, mingled with, and ultimately subordinated to, the glorification of the king who inflicts these sufferings. Most examples of such poetry come down to us as *muktakas*, single verses apparently context free and showing no sign that they are extracted from larger works, but it can be shown that many of the more celebrated examples derive from a single source— a lost encomium by the Paramāra court poet Parimala celebrating his patron Muñja's conquest of Gujarat. This talk will explore some of the key examples of such verses cited the literary-theoretical and anthological literature, focusing especially on examples drawn from Parimala's lost encomium of Muñja, and reflecting on the aesthetic problematic first raised by Ānandavardhana in connection with such verses: Why should the seemingly incidental and unintended suffering of the enemy's wives draw more and more loving attention than those of the presumably more culpable enemy king himself? How is it that the praised king is glorified by inflicting suffering on the innocent?