

Authenticity and Imitation in Translation and Culture

Second Circular: Extended Submission Deadline

For Plato, as it is only too well known, imitation was an unwelcome way of bringing falsity to the world. What is connoted by the word "imitation" is first of all a kind of copying, repetition and/or substitution of that which, otherwise, may be modified by the adjective "authentic", applicable to nouns ranging from "life" and "feeling" to "signature", "document" and, of course, "text". Miles Orvell's categories of "culture of imitation" and "culture of authenticity" which he uses to illustrate the passage from the nineteenth-century celebration of replicas to the modernist aesthetic of the authentic may well serve as a point of departure for looking at a range of possible configurations and ways of positioning of authenticity and imitation in contemporary culture. Since culture, and especially Western culture, may be read as a kind of discourse which "is born of translation and in translation", as Henri Meschonnic phrased it, the triad of authenticity, imitation and translation offers an array of issues which seem to be worth an insight and a discussion as a perspective offering ways of rethinking the role of translation in the perception of culture and everyday practices at the time of fluctuation of meanings, an almost omnipresent absence of authenticity and its imitative replacement by all sorts of simulacra.

Long ago, for John Dryden, imitation was a way of authenticating the translator at the cost of the authentic memory of the author. As he put it in his Preface to *Ovid's Epistles* (1680), "imitation of an author is the most advantageous way for a translator to shew himself, but the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead." This wronged memory of the dead and its spectral survival became, almost two hundred years later in the hands of Emerson, a sign of death of the authentic individual: "Imitation is suicide", as he wrote in *Self-Reliance*. What reverberates in the two statements is not only the old question of constructing graven images and their worship, but also much more recently posited questions of the death of the author and the birth of the reader, of loss and gain in translation, of the invisibility of the translator, of estrangement and defamiliarization, of domesticity and foreignness, of, more generally, a certain politics and poetics of imitation in which authenticity looms large as a constitutive outside to which we inevitably, though sometimes highly critically, relate.

We invite papers and presentations approaching the issues of authenticity, imitation and translation from possibly broadest theoretical and methodological perspectives such as Translation Studies, Literary Criticism, Critical Theory, Cultural Studies, Feminist and Gender Studies, Queer Theory, Philosophy, Sociology, History of Ideas, Colonial and Postcolonial Studies ..., fully realizing that a strictly single-disciplinary approach is nowadays hardly thinkable. We suggest the following, broad, thematic areas only as a topographically drafted chart of the conference:

Authenticity and translation;
Translation and authorship;
Translation/imitation/creativity;
Translation and nostalgia;
Authenticity and ethnicity;
Imitation and representation;
Imitation, translation and loss;
Imitation, appropriation, replacement;
Imitation and the polysystems of culture;
Authenticity, originality, uniqueness;

Authenticity and intentionality;
Estrangement(s);
Ideology and authenticity;
Authenticity and language;
"Monolingualism" of the authentic;
Authenticity, imitation, self-translation;
Authenticity in and of Translation Studies;
Culture, authenticity, simulacra;
Imitation/mutilation/non-translation;
Authenticity and its others.

Keynote speakers confirmed to date include:

Professor Elżbieta Tabakowska

Professor Lawrence Venuti

The conference venue will be located in the main building of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, ul. Chodakowska 19/31, Warsaw.

Conference website: www.swps.pl/authenticity

Abstracts (250 words) should be sent to authenticity@swps.edu.pl by **20 February 2015**.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by **28 February 2015**.

The deadline for registration and payment of the conference fee: **28 March 2015**

Conference date: **7-9 May 2015**

The conference fee of **480 PLN | 115 € | 135 USD** includes conference materials, coffee breaks and conference dinner. Costs of accommodation are not included in the conference fee and must be arranged separately.