

# Dance in Translation: Subjectivity, Failed Spectatorship and Tolerance

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## Abstract

Roland Barthes' concept of *punctum* informs this analysis of crosscultural spectatorship of *Solum*, a performance by Mustafa Kaplan. Series of *puncta* stimulate spectators' interpretations in live or mediated performance where meaning is mostly layered in the visual. The *puncta* "prick" moments from spectators' memory and consciousnesses. They are not within the imagination, but within the images. A "writerly" – as Barthes would call it- performance, such as *Solum*, asks the spectator to multiply the meaning(s) inherent in it, in a constant process of production – or reproduction - each time the performance meets the spectator(s). Spectators, by accepting failure in recognizing the creator's meaning in a performance, engage in a project of subjectivity, and reveal their cultural identity during this translation process. Understanding the process of (mis)translation helps build tolerance.

**Keywords:** *Performance translation, dance translation, translation of the body, cultural translation, mistranslation, cultural memory, crosscultural performance, spectatorship, tolerance, mirror neurons, senses and affect*

*They are like ourselves," he replied. As you might have expected. Naturally. Why should the process of likeness stop or be contradicted here? Why should those telling, representing the scene, not be equated with those they are talking about? Why should they not serve to endorse the conformity of their words? Unless it is that they have been set up as equivalents by the identity, the principle of identity, governing their discourse. Or that they come by this "likeness" – they who are like ourselves who are ourselves alike – through a regulated alternation of replicas in which interference and the background noise of the conversation are turned down, right from the start.*

(Luce Irigaray<sup>1</sup>)

## Dansul în traducere: subiectivitate, ratarea audienței și toleranță

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<sup>1</sup> Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 259.

Conceptul de *punctum* al lui Roland Barthes ne ajută în această analiză a spectatorului transcultural în *Solum*, într-un spectacol al lui Mustafa Kaplan. Serii de *puncta* stimulează interpretările spectatorilor în spectacole live sau mediatizate unde înțelesul este adesea stratificat prin vizual. Aceste *puncta* scot la suprafață momente din memoria sau conștiința culturală a spectatorilor. Un spectacol „cult” – cum l-ar numi Barthes – precum *Solum*, îi cere spectatorului să multiplice înțelesurile inerente, într-un proces constant de producție- sau reproducere- în care de fiecare dată spectacolul se întâlnește cu spectatorul. Spectatorii, acceptându-și incapacitatea de a recunoaște înțelesurile creatorului spectacolului, se angajează într-un proiect al subiectivității, și își revelează propria identitate culturală în timpul procesului traducerii. Înțelegerea procesului traducerii greșite cultivă toleranța.